

Holocaust memory and the horizon of national identity: Canada's National Holocaust Monument (NHM) as a means for shaping Canadian identity

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Holocaust memory and the horizon of national identity: Canada's National Holocaust Monument (NHM) as a means for shaping Canadian identity

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Introduction

While the ostensible purpose of Holocaust commemoration is to honour the millions of lives exterminated under the Third Reich, a community's decision to remember the Holocaust is often compelled by a variety of interests. This is because the Holocaust has in recent decades become a free-floating symbolic signifier that can be applied to a variety of subjects regardless of their (dis)similarity to the Nazi persecution of European Jewry; that is, the Holocaust is a symbolic vessel through which various issues, interests, and agendas can be transmitted (Poole, 2010). Different social, political, and cultural contexts will therefore have a significant impact on the way that the Holocaust is remembered and how that memory is used (Young, 1993). When the federal government announced in 2011 that

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Canada would become home to its own national memorial to the Holocaust, one could anticipate that this decision was motivated by something more than a desire to remember the dead. The process of establishing national memorials to the Holocaust is instrumental in the ‘nationalization’ of the Holocaust – the process in which Holocaust memory is shaped by the socio-cultural dynamics of a particular nation-state – so that one might expect the creation of Canada’s National Holocaust Monument (NHM) to address some particularly Canadian concerns (Linenthal, 1995; Carrier, 2005).

In the present study, I attempt to identify some of the primary motivations underlying the NHM – which will be completed in late 2015 – by examining the discourse produced by the policy makers and influencers involved in the memorial’s creation. Through an analysis of the discourse produced in parliamentary debate, during public ceremonies, and in online and print media, I identify sev-

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“The Holocaust is a symbolic vessel through which various issues, interests, and agendas can be transmitted”

eral dominant themes that reveal some of the main reasons for establishing the memorial. After establishing a theoretical and methodological framework for the study of Holocaust memorials, I discuss two major themes that have emerged from the discourse surrounding the NHM: the ethical and the global. In both cases the monument is framed as the embodiment of certain ‘Canadian’ values, although each theme reveals that these values are being communicated to different audiences.

In one instance, the NHM acts as a mirror that reflects Canadian values back towards Canadians, thereby reinforcing their centrality to the national identity. In the other, the NHM becomes a beacon that projects these values to the international community in an attempt to legitimise Canada as an actor in global society. Based on these related functions, I argue that Holocaust memory and the NHM are being used to broadcast Canadian values in two directions – inwards to Canadian society and outwards to the global community – in an attempt to shape the nation’s domestic and international identities.

Holocaust Monuments in National and Global Perspective

The majority of academic research on Holocaust monuments considers them a product of the nation-state in which they were conceived and constructed. By developing Maurice Halbwachs’ work on collective memory, James Young pioneered the study of Holocaust monuments as products of their national milieus in his 1993 study *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*. Young’s analysis works from the premise that monuments are not just static artistic objects but also public memorials; they are collective creations made meaningful through the multitude of competing interpretations that society projects upon them (Young, 1993, p. vii-xiii, p. 1-15). Because the nation-state has been one of the most dominant social structures since the 19th century, he argues that national context often has such a strong impact on monuments that they become “indigenous, even geological outcroppings in a national landscape” which are “invested with national soul and memory” (Young, 1993, p. 2). Most studies follow Young’s lead by taking a nation-oriented approach to monuments, with most major research addressing memorials in Germany, Israel, and the United States (Engelhardt, 2002).

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In recent years, some scholars have begun to insist that, rather than looking at memory exclusively from a national perspective, it must also be examined as a product of global society. Like Young's work, this research is based on the premise that memory is fundamentally linked to identity and that, for much of the 20th century, the nation-state has been integral in identity formation. However, this newer research also acknowledges the significance of global society, suggesting that the growing pace of globalisation is eroding the integrity of the nation-state and giving way to transnational communities. Some believe that the concept of memory itself must be reworked in light of globalisation, and Aleida Assmann argues that, while the Holocaust might not become a global 'memory' in the traditional sense, it "has spread to become a universal symbol with global resonance" (Assmann, 2010, p. 114).

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In their major study on Holocaust memory in global society, Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider argue that, rather than 'totalizing' memorial culture, "national and ethnic memories are transformed in the age of globalization rather than erased" (Levy & Sznaider, 2006, p. 3). Because "shared memories of the Holocaust...provide the foundations for a new cosmopolitan memory," Holocaust memory is a significant force in the process of globalisation (Levy & Sznaider, 2006, p. 4). The globalising impulse of memory is transferred to monuments and memorials. In his study of Holocaust memorials as an emerging artistic genre, Harold Marcuse not only attempts to define the 'Holocaust memorial' by conducting an international survey of prominent monuments, but concludes that a defining feature of these memorials is that "they are addressed to transnational audiences" (Marcuse, 2010, p. 54).

While these perspectives differ in regards to which contexts are most significant in the production of collective memory, they agree that monuments – and the memories they embody – are the dynamic products of social interactions. In his analysis of the United States Holocaust Memorial

Museum (USHMM), Edward Linenthal argues that the ‘Americanization’ of the Holocaust was a consequence of the debates comprising the planning and negotiation of this national memorial, many of which played out before ground-breaking for the physical structure (Linenthal, 1995). Peter Carrier takes a similar, albeit more refined, methodological approach in which he offers the “definition of a monument as a social process” (Carrier, 2005,

“Monuments – and the memories they embody – are the dynamic products of social interactions”

p. 22). He explains that “people do not identify directly with a monument, for its significance is contingent upon meanings acquired by its interactions with and translation via secondary media of speeches, rituals, reports, forums, conferences, exhibitions and political statements. Monuments are rather catalysts of complex social and political communication” (Carrier, 2005, p. 219). Thus, Carrier emphasises the ‘rhetorical negotiation’ of monuments – the debates, disputes, and controversies surrounding their creation – because it is this discourse that generates a coherent social memory.

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In line with this approach, I conducted a discourse analysis of the debates surrounding Canada’s NHM, treating the memorial as a rhetorical device that has stimulated national discussion on the Holocaust. The data for this analysis came from the discourse produced in the parliamentary debates surrounding the National Holocaust Monument Act (NHMA) and its predecessor bill C-442, public ceremonies marking milestones in the memorial’s development, online and print media, and interviews conducted with individuals responsible for the monument.

This data was coded to identify dominant and recurring themes within it – those ideas that seem most embedded in the national conception of the Holocaust. By distilling this discourse into a set of themes and sub-themes, it was possible to understand the constellation of ideas that have formed around ‘the Holocaust,’ and thereby understand what Holocaust memory means in a Canadian context.

This sort of analysis entails certain freedoms and limitations, in particular that all concepts and definitions are tentative and subject to change. Discourse analysis demands that, rather than impose specific definitions on one’s subject, definitions must emerge from the data. So instead of adhering to strictly delimited ideas of such concepts as the Holocaust, memory, and globalisation (all of which are hotly contested), I began with very broad understandings and allowed more refined (and contextually specific) concepts develop in the discourse. The specific constellation of ideas in which a concept is located may vary between sources and even contradict one another, although my general goal is to identify general trends that can be observed within Canadian Holocaust memory.

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Canada’s Ethical Relationship to Holocaust Memory

By integrating the Holocaust into a binary framework, Canadian discourse on the NHM has allowed Holocaust memory to emerge as part of a larger ethical system. At its simplest, a binary system contains two opposing elements that are fundamentally at odds and cannot be reconciled with one another. Adding more elements into such a framework produces an increasingly complex relationship system in which every element is either congruent with or oppositional to every other element within it. Because such a system allows a set of basic assumptions to transform into a complex worldview, binary oppositions can be useful ideological tools.

As I will discuss, the discourse surrounding the NHM has produced a binary system based on two sets of values: one associated with hatred, and the other with rights. At one end of the opposition, the historical event now referred to as the Holocaust is considered to be the embodiment of hate-based values. By presenting these values as distinctly

“The Holocaust is framed as an antithesis to the Canadian values system”

non-Canadian, the Holocaust is framed as an antithesis to the Canadian values system. At the other end of the opposition, Holocaust memory is seen as something that promotes values based on rights. By framing these as core Canadian values, Canada is linked to the Holocaust vis-a-vis these shared values. The effect is to produce two clusters of ideas that appear to stand in opposition to one another: at one pole is the Holocaust, hate-based values, and the non-Canadian; at the other end is Holocaust memory, rights-based values, and the Canadian. As I will demonstrate, this dichotomy functions to define what is and is not Canadian, and in doing so is used by politicians and public officials to demarcate the parameters of the Canadian identity.

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At one end of the binary is the Holocaust itself, which Canadians can understand only in its capacity as a completely foreign other. This sort of framing is not unique to Canadian memory, and Tim Cole (2004) has argued that the USHMM in Washington presents the Holocaust as “the very antithesis of American values” (p. 134); it is something that Americans can relate to and understand only as a point of extreme contrast. In Canada, the Holocaust is similarly framed as the ‘antithesis’ of contemporary Canadian values, which can be known only by virtue of the

fact that it is so un-Canadian. Tim Uppal, the Conservative Member of Parliament (MP) who introduced bill C-442, An Act to establish a National Holocaust Monument, in Parliament and who has continued to be involved with the monument's development, reflects on the 'foreignness' of the Holocaust as it pertains both to himself and other Canadians:

As a student growing up in Edmonton...those events [of the Holocaust] seemed distant and dated. They happened before I was born, to people I didn't know much about, in countries on the other side of the world... For our young people today it is even more remote. For people privileged to live in a country like Canada, the Holocaust can seem wholly foreign, something that people have difficulty understanding because they cannot relate to its atrocities and horrors... In today's Canada, those who are honoured to call it home would have tremendous difficulty identifying with the deep horrors of the Holocaust. (Parliament, 2010a, p. 3)

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The Holocaust appears distant and foreign not just because of its temporal and physical proximity, but also because Canada is a 'privileged' country where the 'atrocities and horrors' of state-mandated hatred do not occur. Its otherness is due in part to the fact that such horrors are inconceivable to Canadians; however, its foreignness is also firmly rooted in the value system, which is purported to have inspired those atrocities and allowed them to occur. This otherness arises from the way in which the Holocaust is presented as the embodiment of intolerant, hate-based values that stand in opposition to those possessed by Canadians. The Nazi worldview from which the Holocaust emerged was a product of what MP Glenn Thibeault refers to as 'hate-inspired ideologies' (House of Commons Debates, 2010a, p. 5454). This hate-based outlook produced intolerance towards those who deviated from the social norm, leading to the widespread acceptance of bigotry, racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, sexism, and

ultimately resulting in violence and genocide (House of Commons, 2009, p. 7815, p. 7818; House of Commons Debates, 2010a, p. 5454).

In addition to identifying these values as central to the Nazi worldview, they are further defined as antithetical to those values that are esteemed by Canada and other democratic nations. Uppal explains that “the horrific events of the Holocaust are a stark testament to what can happen when humanity and fundamental basic rights are discarded” (Parliament, 2011, p. 7); this sentiment is echoed on the homepage of the NHM’s government website, which states that the Holocaust “was a crime that challenged the fundamental values all civilized peoples hold dear” (Foreign Affairs, 2013, Index). Because hate-based values and rights-based values (discussed below) are mutually exclusive categories, society can embrace only one set of values or the other; Canadian values and Nazi values are incompatible. The Holocaust is therefore presented as a consequence of two related actions: accepting hate-based values while, by definition, rejecting Canadian ones.

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The notion that the Holocaust stands in opposition to Canadian values does not mean that the event should be disregarded entirely; rather, it invites Canadians to remember it. Brian Jean, the Conservative MP who was parliamentary secretary on the committee responsible for the study of bill C-442, suggests that any event of such ‘magnitude’ should be remembered, noting that “Our government appreciates the importance of remembering and understanding all events throughout history, even those that are inconsistent with the values of Canadians” (House of Commons, 2009, p. 7820). The reason for remembering such non-Canadian values is clarified by Tim Uppal, who explains that the failure to remember them “invites a return to the terror of those dark years, and losing those very things which we hold most dear” (House of Commons, 2009, p. 7814). Canadians must remember the values that led to the Holocaust in order to recognise them and ensure

that they do not manifest again. The creation of a national monument is justified by the fact that the Holocaust was caused by the withdrawal of those values that modern democracies hold dear. It is only by remembering those values for which they do not stand that Canadians are able to remember those values for which they do.

The need to preserve Canadian values results in the other end of the binary that associates Holocaust memory with values based on human rights. In his presentation to the committee responsible for studying the bill, Tim Uppal indicates that “As Canadians we pride ourselves on a nation that values and demands respect towards other people, affords a personal dignity to all people, and provides an environment of tolerance and understanding” (Parliament,

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“The National Holocaust Monument will serve as a symbol of Canadian value and diversity as much as it will be a memorial”
– Tim Uppal

2010a, p. 3). In contrast to the hate-based worldview of the Nazis, Canadians are accepting of social difference and support such values as democracy, freedom, diversity, social justice, equality, and human dignity (House of Commons, 2009, p. 7820; Parliament, 2011, p. 21). These also happen to be the same values that are allegedly promoted by the memory of the Holocaust; a national monument will therefore become a physical embodiment of these values and help to maintain their presence in Canadian society.

Nowhere is this attitude expressed with more certainty than on the NHM’s government website (which is hosted

by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development). Directly under the banner on the website's homepage is an emphatic quotation from Tim Uppal which reads: "The National Holocaust Monument will serve as a symbol of Canadian value and diversity as much as it will be a memorial for the millions of victims and families destroyed" (Foreign Affairs, 2013, Index).ⁱ Further down the page in regular type, the 'fundamental values' to which this refers are identified as "freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law" (Foreign Affairs, 2013, Index). The monument will of course commemorate the millions of victims who died under the Nazi regime, as does any Holocaust memorial. But just as much as this, it will also function to enshrine Canadian values. Given the fact that this quotation is the most prominent feature of the webpage apart from the banner reading 'National Holocaust Monument' – in conjunction with the fact that this homepage is one of the top items listed in a Google search for 'holocaust monument Canada' – suggests that this function may be the most important aspect of the forthcoming monument (or at least the one that most people will have encountered). Indeed, statements along these lines appear too frequently to cite here. Reviewing almost any part of the discourse surrounding the NHM reveals that a central purpose of the monument is to instrumentalise Holocaust memory in the promotion of Canadian values.

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In effect, this binary system functions as a boundary marker that delimits the outer edge of the Canadian identity. The Holocaust is presented as the embodiment of non-Canadian values and thereby represents a value system that is outside the purview of today's Canadian society. Holocaust memory, however, is framed as something that

ⁱ That this quotation indicates 'value' in the singular is presumably a typo. The speech from which this statement has been taken – Uppal's introduction of bill C-442 during its first reading in Parliament – refers to

'values' in the plural. Furthermore, it is clear from the quotation's context that it refers to 'values' such as 'freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.'

promotes Canadian values and thus represents a value system that is within that purview. Together – and as a binary they are always together – these two opposing sets of values project the horizon of the Canadian identity; they

“The NHM will become a physical articulation of these values and thereby a concrete manifestation of national identity”

create a clearly defined edge that separates those things Canadians extol from those they condemn. The NHM will become a physical articulation of these values and thereby a concrete manifestation of national identity. And so long as the monument is presented as an embodiment of those things prized by Canadians, it will also implicitly motion towards those things abhorred by them, and in doing so will reinforce Canadians’ self-perception. To put it another way, the creation of a national memorial is an act of world-view maintenance in which the Holocaust and its memory are used as symbols of Canadian values for the sole purpose reinforcing those values. In this way, the NHM does not function to memorialise the Holocaust and its victims, but is rather instrumentalised as a mirror with which the Canadian identity is reflected back towards Canadians.

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Using Holocaust Memory to Encounter Global Society

A further function of the NHM and Holocaust memory in Canada stems from the country’s status as an actor within global society. There are a multitude of definitions of globalisation, each of which highlights a particular process and varies to different degrees of specificity. In line with

my methodological approach, I intend to use a broad, flexible definition. By globalisation, I mean the process by which people, goods, capital, information, and ideas (including cultural ideas) are transmitted quickly and easily across international borders and large geographical distances. By global community (or society), I mean the webs of communicative relationships that have emerged from this process.

In this era of modern globalisation, membership to the global community has an increasingly powerful influence on the nation-state, the individuals within it, and the ways in which they communicate, relate to one another, and conduct their affairs. As will be demonstrated, by actively citing the significance of the Holocaust and its memory to the global community, the discourse surrounding the NHM positions Canada within global society by constructing an international persona.

Canada has long used the Holocaust as a way to relate to the international community, for its immigration policies during the Second World War were in part a way for the country to develop a national identity within global society. According to historian Patrick Reed, Canada's movement of 446 mostly Jewish refugees from the Iberian Peninsula during the Second World War marks the country's entry into global society. Reed observes that, as a consequence of the 1931 *Statute of Westminster's declaration* that Canada was no longer a British colony, the country suffered an identity crisis in that it entered a "transitional stage between colony and nation" (Reed, 1996, p. 114).

The Second World War brought this crisis to light by revealing how dependent Canada was on British and American policy while also providing the country with opportunities to express its autonomy through policy-making; one such opportunity was manifest in Canada's Iberian Refugee Movement. In response to domestic and international pressure to act upon the refugee crisis that had developed

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in Europe, Canada announced it would accept 446 refugees from Spain and Portugal for the duration of the war.

Because this policy simultaneously responded to domestic and international demands, maintained a sense of national unity in spite of a divisive issue, and demonstrated the country's ability to act as an independent decision-maker, Reed concludes that the movement "represents a progressive step in Canada's halting transition from inward-looking isolationism to outward-looking internationalism; from, if you will, national adolescence to adulthood" (Reed, 1996, p. 18). That is, Canada's treatment of the Iberian refugee crisis represents an important developmental period in the nation's history, for it allowed the country to establish national unity while also carving out a niche in the global community. Even before the Holocaust had become a memory, Canada was responding to these events as an actor on the world stage.

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Recent trends in Canadian Holocaust commemoration reveal the extent to which memorial activities reach beyond the national realm and into the global. A noteworthy example of this is the *Wheel of Conscience*, a memorial to the 1939 voyage of the *MS St. Louis*, a ship carrying mostly Jewish refugees from Europe, which sought – and was systematically denied – entry to Cuba, the United States, and finally Canada. Since its unveiling in January 2011, this memorial has resided at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 in Halifax – the historic site through which many immigrants entered the country during the 20th century. This location not only recognises the *St. Louis* and the plight of European Jewry as a part of the Canadian narrative, but also acknowledges Canada's role as an actor in the global community.

Such precursors to the NHM suggest that, once completed, this monument will reach into global society and act as an interlocutor between Canada and the rest of the world. In fact, this dimension of the NHM can already be witnessed

in the discourse. In Tim Uppal's sponsorship speech during the second reading of bill C-442 in the House of Commons, he explains that "Canada is a nation of hope and opportunity, a beacon to those around the world seeking to find a new home and brighter future" (House of Commons, 2009, p. 7814) and that "This monument is a statement

**"The NHM is not meant only for
Canadians, but also for non-Canadians"**

made by Canadians to the world" (House of Commons, 2009, p. 7815). Canada is not just recognised internationally, but is in fact a point of reference (i.e. 'a beacon') that other members of global society use to measure 'hope and opportunity.' Acknowledging its important role in this community, Canada communicates with others nations and intends to use the NHM as part of this communication. The NHM is not meant only for Canadians, but also for *non*-Canadians.

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Invoking Globalisation in Canadian Holocaust Discourse

Perhaps the most common way in which the NHM invokes global dialogue is by observing that Canada is the only Allied nation still without a national Holocaust memorial. This is an often-heard refrain in the discourse, and has been repeated multiple times in Parliament, during ceremonies, and in the media. The argument is generally presented like this:

Like many, I was surprised to learn that Canada remained the only allied nation without a Holocaust monument in its nation's capital... By placing the

monument in the nation's capital, at the seat of government, we accord an appropriate respect and acknowledge the gravity of this terrible event. Great Britain, the United States, France, all our allies have understood the importance of remembering the Holocaust and so should Canada. (House of Commons, 2009, p. 7815)

In similar statements, it is further observed that Canada is one of few Western nations without a monument, and that former Axis countries such as Germany and Austria have recognised the national significance of this event (House of Commons, 2010b, p. 6982; Debates of the Senate, 2011b,

“Despite her personal beliefs, Grosman framed the monument as something with global significance”

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p. 1858). This is a noteworthy way of framing the debate because it suggests that Holocaust memory does not have its own intrinsic value, but that its worth is determined by general consensus; the majority of Western nations already commemorate the Holocaust – including those responsible for the atrocities – and if they have recognised its importance at the national level, then ‘so should Canada.’ In this regard, Canada is not merely interested in building the NHM for the benefit of its own citizens, but to project a certain image to the international community.

Laura Grosman, the young woman who initially approached her MP with the idea for a national memorial, responded in the negative in conversation when asked whether she thought the monument has significance on the international scale, but makes reference to the impacts of globalisation:

It doesn't speak to keeping up and...ensuring that we're aligned with other countries. I think it speaks to our collective history and our memory as a country... It has nothing to do with the other countries. I mean, that's definitely a way to convince people. I'll admit that the easiest way to convince people was to say, 'Well, you really want Canada to fall behind? The other Allied nations have one'... I became political! So it did come in handy in that sense. (L. Grosman, personal communication, November 13, 2012)

Grosman was adamant that the monument serves a purely national function, but also admits that she promoted it by suggesting it does serve an international purpose. Despite her personal beliefs, she framed the monument as something with global significance. Judging by the popularity of this argument in parliamentary and other debate, this has become one of the predominating attitudes towards the NHM.

A further way in which global society has been invoked is by identifying anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial as international – rather than domestic – threats. This theme is significant because a distinctly Canadian discourse on the Holocaust first took shape in the 1980s with the domestic trials of Ernst Zündel, a German expatriate living in Toronto, and James Keegstra, a high-school teacher in Eckville, Alberta. In 1984, Zündel was charged for the publication and distribution of a tract that argued the Holocaust had never happened. The same year, Keegstra was charged for teaching a revisionist and anti-Semitic version of world history to his high school civics classes. Both cases were ultimately brought before the Supreme Court of Canada and, through their prominence in the media, stimulated national discourse on the Holocaust (Bercuson & Wertheimer, 1985, p. xii, p. 150-151; Davies, 1989, p. 77).

Despite the domestic origins, concern about denial and anti-Semitism has since acquired an international outlook.

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In several instances, the NHM is considered necessary because, “Worldwide, there has been an increase in the number of major violent manifestations that are anti-Semitic in nature. This increase is linked to Holocaust denial and

“It is the shift from national to global concerns that represents the new face of Holocaust memory in Canada”

questioning the legitimacy of Israel. Similar events are being reported here in Canada” (House of Commons, 2010a, p. 5450). A national monument, so the reasoning goes, will increase awareness of the Holocaust at home and abroad, decrease denial, and thereby reduce anti-Semitism.

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Although Tim Uppal acknowledges that deniers and anti-Semites exist in Canada, he makes no explicit reference to either Zündel or Keegstra, referring instead to high profile deniers in the global community such as Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the former President of Iran (Parliament, 2010a, p. 3). Although a distinctly Canadian memory of the Holocaust began to take shape in response to anti-Semitism and denial as domestic threats, it is their presence on the international stage that has continued to sculpt this memory. While continuing to maintain a Canadian perspective, it is the shift from national to global concerns that represents the new face of Holocaust memory in Canada.

The NHM as a Catalyst for Global Dialogue

Some questions arise from this: Why has Canada invoked global society in the discussion of its own national Holocaust memorial? Why does it matter whether or not other

countries participate in Holocaust commemoration? The answer is that one of the monument's functions is to reach into the global sphere and actively engage Canada in the dialogue of globalisation. The Holocaust is remembered around the world, and while it may adopt a particular dynamic based on its national context, it also contains universal characteristics (Marcuse, 2010). Holocaust memory is observed globally, has considerable symbolic gravity, and easily captures people's attention. If a country wants to participate in dialogue with the global community, Holocaust memory can be an effective way to do so. To understand the relationship between Holocaust memory and global society, it might be more effective to replace the question 'Why does the NHM invoke global dialogue?' with 'Can the NHM be used to enter global dialogue?'. It is not that Canada needs to justify the NHM by invoking globalisation, but that Canada can engage in globalisation by invoking Holocaust memory.

On the surface, Canada must commemorate the Holocaust because it has a formal international obligation to do so. In 2009, Canada became a member of the Taskforce for the International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research (ITF; now the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, or IHRA). Canada demonstrated further commitment to the organisation in 2013 when it assumed the IHRA chair, making the country host to the IHRA's activities for the year. The IHRA "is an intergovernmental body whose purpose is to place political and social leaders' support behind the need for Holocaust education, remembrance and research both nationally and internationally" (IHRA, 2014, About the IHRA), and currently has 31 member countries. Any 'democratic' nation can apply for membership, although acquisition of full membership occurs in stages based on adherence to educational and commemorative initiatives (IHRA, 2014, Membership Criteria).

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As a newer member of the IHRA, Canada has already demonstrated some form of commitment to education, remembrance, and research, but will need to show its continued devotion to these areas. The creation of a national monument is a definite step in that direction. Thus, the ITF/IHRA is referred to repeatedly during discussion of the NHM (House of Commons, 2010a, p. 5450; Debates of the Senate, 2011a, p. 1801; Debates of the Senate, 2011b, p. 1857-1858), and the monument is acknowledged as something that will “help Canada in its effort to fulfill this pledge” to the organisation (Debates of the Senate, 2011b, p. 1858). Canada has a commitment to the global community to remember the Holocaust, and the NHM will help to fulfill it.

However, this does not answer the question of why Canada seeks to enter global dialogue on the Holocaust. There was no obligation to join the IHRA, and the country received its membership freely and without coercion. Canada could have chosen to remember the Holocaust in its own way, without the need for an international organisation to dictate the terms of remembrance. So the question remains: Why would Canada willingly join an international organisation devoted to the memory of the Holocaust?

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One answer suggested by policy makers is that, by participating in Holocaust memory at the global level, Canada is able to validate itself to the international community. Based on the IHRA’s website, one of the universal features of Holocaust memory seems to be that it promotes values such as democracy, freedom, and human rights (IHRA, 2014, Stockholm Declaration). By demonstrating support for Holocaust memory, Canada simultaneously indicates its support for these values and thereby aligns itself with those nations that share them. In a sense, publicly broadcasting one’s commitment to Holocaust memory is a way of identifying who one’s allies are.

Rabbi Daniel Friedman, chair of the development council responsible for fundraising and supervising the monument’s

realisation, motions towards this purpose. When confronted with the same question posed to Grosman – whether the monument serves an international function – he responded affirmatively:

Yes, in as much as we are currently the only Allied nation without a monument in the capital. So that's a deficiency on our part – internationally. You know, when we talk about internationally we talk about international: the aim of the nation-state to gain legitimacy in the international society. This is a deficiency in the ability to be a legitimate holder of the values that we do hold dear. (D. Friedman, personal communication, December 6, 2012)

According to Friedman, rabbi at Beth Israel Synagogue in Edmonton and a doctoral candidate in International Relations, it is important for Canada to become a 'legitimate holder' of democratic values and that this can be at least partly achieved by demonstrating a commitment to Holocaust memory.

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The creation of a national monument will not only ally Canada with those countries that already have one, but will also create allies with any country that possesses democracy as a core value. Thus, by erecting the NHM, Canada will be validated as a 'legitimate' member of the global community (insofar as that community includes 'democratic' states) and can begin to build allies within it. Once an accepted member of this global network, it can begin to benefit from its new partnerships.

As a member of global society, Canada is able to engage not just in the trade of economic goods, but also ideological resources such as Canadian values and Holocaust memory. No one is more explicit about this than Brian Jean, who states directly during the debate of bill C-442 that "Democracy, freedom, human rights and the rule of law are the things we stand up for in Canada and the things we try

to spread around the world” (House of Commons, 2009, p. 7820). In conversation, Jean clarified how Holocaust memory fits into this process:

People look at Canada not only as the greatest economic power of this century, but also as people that will stand forward for those that are more vulnerable and less able to take care of themselves – whether it be sub-Sahara Africa – with some of our donations, etc. through CIDA [Canadian International Development Agency] or personally. But also from the standpoint of we are a small nation in people but we are large in resource and also determination. And I think this particular monument goes to state exactly that... When world powers stand up to dictators, I think it becomes a better world. When world powers succumb to dictators and choose fascist regimes over democracy – democracies such as Israel – something’s definitely wrong. (B. Jean, personal communication, November 21, 2012)

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“We are a small nation in people but we are large in resource and also determination. And I think this particular monument goes to state exactly that.” – Brian Jean

When asked to clarify if he meant that Canadians ‘stand up’ against dictators by offering military assistance he responded that, more importantly, the country provides economic protection:

I believe that not just militarily but also we have a tremendous economy. We are the richest country in the world by far, and we will be for the next fifty years

according to the OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development]. I think that we should use that might to encourage peace and to leverage other countries to understand that that's what we will accept and not accept the opposite, which is what's going on in, for instance, China and other non-democracies. So, I think that, for instance, CNOOC [Chinese National Offshore Oil Corporation], they want to invest 15.2 billion dollars in the oil sands – which is my riding. Well, that's nice and all, but I'm not really that attracted to a Chinese-state owned oil company owning a resource in northern Alberta, to be blunt. Am I happy with Israel owning it? Absolutely. Am I happy with the United States owning it? Yes. Am I happy with other investors that believe in democracy and capitalism? Absolutely. Anybody from any country as long as it's a democracy and believes in the rule of law. And I think that's how we can encourage people to move towards that position. (B. Jean, personal communication, November 21, 2012)

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In the same stream of thought, Jean refers both to material exports (oil) and ideological exports (Canadian values and Holocaust memory). That Canada has lots of resources (oil, in particular) makes it a great economic power and, according to Jean, the monument 'goes to state exactly that.' Therefore, the NHM embodies both Canada's values and its economic status. Because of the intimate relationship between these, the country must take its values into consideration when engaging in foreign trade. In particular, Canada must not trade with non-democratic nations because to do so would be to compromise its core ideological beliefs. For Jean, the threat of economic sanction from Canada becomes incentive for non-democratic states to adopt democratic values, and he hopes that these values will spread as a result. Holocaust memory can be a useful tool in this process because, by indicating which countries possess democratic beliefs, Canada can decide which nations are viable trading partners.

Foreign trade is one of several global dialogues that Canada enters via the NHM. The NHM also joins some of the more expected dialogues, such as those relating to defense (House of Commons, 2009, p. 7815), support for the State of Israel (House of Commons, 2009, p. 7819; Parliament, 2011, p. 26), and, of course, those on genocide, human rights, and crimes against humanity (House of Commons, 2010a, p. 5454; Debates of the Senate, 2011b, p. 1858). Through its association with Canada's resources and foreign trade, Holocaust memory becomes a foreign export in its own right.

The country has a definite interest in exporting its values to other states. To spread Holocaust memory is to spread democracy, thereby increasing the number of Canadian allies and increasing the amount of trading partners the country has. Admittedly, Holocaust memory is never explicitly referred to as a foreign export, although this is an implicit part of the discourse surrounding the NHM. For policy makers such as Jean, standing up for Canadian values is not a purely ideological practice but an economic one too, and in order to promote them it is necessary to take certain measures in the trade of material goods; because Holocaust memory can be used to facilitate this process, it is inseparable from international economic practice. Overall, the most important thing to recognise is that Canadian policy-makers are using Holocaust memory as an entry point to several global dialogues – commemorative, ideological, economic, etc. – and consequently have become active participants in certain global dialogues.

This global discourse suggests another way in which Holocaust memory is instrumentalised. In the previous section, I demonstrated how the NHM acts as a form of worldview maintenance by embodying Canadian values and then reflecting them back towards the country's own citizens. From the global discourse, it becomes clear that the NHM is also being used to maintain a public persona. A persona is the image one projects into their social environment, which

does not necessarily reflect their psychological disposition; in this case, Canada's persona is the one it projects to the international community, which may differ from its domestic identity. While Canada's domestic and international identities do largely correspond when it comes to the NHM, more important is that policy makers are actively involved in manufacturing and promoting a particular identity to global society. Canada's international identity is not haphazard, but the product of calculated effort by public individuals who seek to proclaim who Canadians are and how they align themselves politically. As with the ethical discourse, the NHM embodies values and ideology, but in the global discourse it projects them outward into global society. In effect, the creation of the NHM is an attempt to regulate the national identity in a way that facilitates a particular type of interaction with global society.

“Holocaust memory becomes a
foreign export in its own right”

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Conclusion

Its ability to represent both everything and nothing – it has great symbolic power although its symbolic meaning is fluid – has allowed the Holocaust to be instrumentalised in the promotion of ideological agendas, a phenomenon that can be witnessed in the discourse surrounding Canada's National Holocaust Monument. This discourse has utilised the Holocaust's floating symbolic value to construct Holocaust memory as something that, to some degree, represents Canadian society. At least for the individuals responsible for it, the NHM has become (or will become, once erected) a physical embodiment of Canadian values that can be used to communicate those values to several different communities.

Since its conceptualisation, the NHM has become a part of Canada's manufactured image that is projected simultaneously in multiple directions: inwardly to Canadian society, and outwardly to global society. Domestically, the memorial consolidates those values prized by Canadians in order to remind the country's citizens that these values are central to the national identity, thereby reinforcing Canadians' self-perception. Internationally, the monument takes a similar set of values and presents them to global society to illustrate who Canadians are and what they stand for, thereby managing the country's public image. In a way, Canada's Holocaust memorial defines what it means to be Canadian – both as a sovereign state and as part of a larger global network.

“Canada’s Holocaust memorial defines what it means to be Canadian – both as a sovereign state and as part of a larger global network”

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Given its vivid life in public discourse even before the physical structure is complete, the NHM supports those views that consider public monuments to be dynamic social organisms that grow and transform as they interact with the communities around them. While its ostensible function is to present a memory of past events, on a deeper level the NHM embodies the interests and values of those surrounding it. Particularly significant about this monument is that it does not just reflect the concerns of its national context, but also of global society. Consistent with recent trends in the study of collective memory, the current analysis demonstrates that one cannot examine national memories without also addressing how those memories are transformed in the age of globalisation. Though a monument itself may appear to be a static stone figure that changes

little as time flows, the memory contained within it is as alive as the communities who surround it.

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