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Fine art contextual studies

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How Do We Remember?

Using at least 3 examples discuss the social,
political and historical aspects of commemoration.

The Holocaust (30 January 1933 – 8 May 1945).

The Holocaust is something that we must never forget it is an important and unique part of history, it was not considered as a part of the war but as equal to it. This historic horrific act caused around 6 million deaths of Jews and approximately 5 million deaths of non-Jews. The elimination of the Jewish population had no political or economic justification, it was Adolf Hitler's aim in life because he blamed Jews for everything bad that had happened in Germany, he blamed them for the loss of World War 1. Hitler came to power over Germany in 1933 with this he put his plan into action and the first Concentration camp was built, Dachau. Hitler manipulated and deceived the German population and the outside world with the use of propaganda to gain further support of his ideas, which filled the media of Germany with pro-Nazi material. Everything that was published such as newspapers, radio, books, TV, art, music and movies were all controlled by the Nazis so that they could filter what the public saw, which was preventing the acknowledgment of the Holocaust.

Although Jews were the main victims, many other people were targeted based on both racial and political ground this included LGBT individuals, the physically and mentally disabled, Roma (gypsies), Poles and other Slavic peoples, Jehovah's Witnesses, and members of political opposition groups. (JewishVirtualLibrary.org Non-Jewish Holocaust Victims)

The Holocaust is constantly remembered around the world. With its day of remembrance, Jan 27th, teachings in schools, media, and many memorials in different countries such as Auschwitz (Poland).

Most of the concentration camp sites in Europe have been converted into museums or memorials, but Auschwitz-Birkenau remains the best-known between 1941 and 1944 1.1 million prisoners were murdered. Auschwitz is one of the most popular holocaust memorials to visit today. The place remains intact, the railway tracks which the prisoners arrived on is still in place.

Anne Frank's House (Amsterdam).

Anne Frank was a young Jewish girl who hid in this house along with her family and two others so that they were not found by Nazis. In this time Frank kept a diary which has become massively popular because it is a first-hand record of what it was like to be a Jew going through in WWII. In this diary she describes trying to avoid the Nazis and what it was like being in a concentration camp, also Frank was only 13 when she went into hiding so this diary is from a child's perspective. The hiding place in the house has been preserved but the rest of the house is a museum.

Yad Vashem (Israel).

Israel is Jewish country, which was left with a huge emotional scar from the Holocaust, Yad Vashem is a place of memory, it includes an impressive history museum, a gallery of relevant art, a synagogue, many memorials and more but the most breath taking and shocking is the hall of names, a cone shaped wall surrounded in photographs of Holocaust victims and bits of pages of testimony. This represents the amount of deaths and I can imagine if I was physically there to see it, it would make it all the more personal and heart clenching. Yad Vashem also honours non-Jews who risked and lost their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust.

Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (Berlin, Germany).

It's a 19,000 square metre plot filled with 2,711 concrete slabs arranged into a grid. They have various sizes, some as small as the height of your ankle, others towering over your head. These slabs have deliberately not got information with them such as names of any victims or where they died or even tally of the dead. Some people have criticized this but this is a memorial that allows you to see and feel the ridiculous scale of the Holocaust.

The post-war generation is obviously unable to remember the Holocaust on how it actually was, all they remember well all they know of the Holocaust, is what the victims have passed on to them in their diaries, what the survivors have remembered to them in their memoirs. They do not remember actual events but remember from books, poems, photographs, movies, and video testimonies they have seen over the years. ("Remembering" The Holocaust)

September 11, 2001

On 11 September 2001, known as 9/11, 4 commercial airplanes were hijacked including United Airlines Flight 93, American Airlines Flight 11, American Airlines Flight 77 and United Airlines 175. Two of the planes were purposely crashed into the World Trade Center buildings, Twin Towers, New York, the third plane crashed into the Pentagon in Arlington, VA, and the fourth plane flight 93 crashed in Pennsylvania. Due to these horrific events approximately 3 thousand people were killed.

The Twin Towers attack caused over 2700 deaths, the Pentagon attack caused 184 deaths, and the Pennsylvania attack caused 40 deaths. Also, with that 343 firefighters and

paramedics were killed, 23 police officers and 37 Port Authority police officers. Almost 10000 others were treated for injuries (History.com - 9/11 Attacks) These attacks didn't just take and ruin the lives of the ones in the events, it also had a huge emotional impact on many. For example, 1,300 orphans were created. 17 babies were born whose fathers were lost. 20 people who lived within a one mile of the Twin Towers got PTSD. Approximately 422,000 of New Yorkers suffering from PTSD. It may have been a one-day attack but it left a lifetime effect on many people. (Theguardian.com 9/11 in numbers)

9/11 Memorial is a memorial dedicated to the memory of the greatest tragedy in American history, the terrorist attacks. It is situated in the same place as the twin towers once stood. It was opened on the 10th anniversary, September 11, 2011, of the attacks. It was designed by two architects, Michael Arad and Peter Walker their idea was selected out of 5,201 submissions from 63 countries, through a design competition. The memorial includes two massive waterfalls and reflecting pools, both approximately an acre in size, there are more than 400 trees that surround the reflecting pools, it also has the names of the victims all the way around it.

Many memorials have been created to remember 9/11 such as,

Heath Satow's "Reflect" which is created with a damaged, rusted L-beam which was from the collapsed World Trade Centre buildings. There are two hands holding this and these hands are made with 2,976 birds which are interlocking together to represent each and every individual who lost their lives from the attacks.

Zurab Tsereteli's "To the Struggle Against World Terrorism" (but also known as "Tear Drop Memorial"). On the day of the attacks while Tsereteli was in his hometown in Moscow and driving to work he passes the American Embassy, and he witnessed many people were gathering outside the gates to pay sympathy, he saw a mass of crying people which stuck in his head, so he used the image of a tear in his memorial.

