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TRANSNATIONAL 9/11 MEMORIALS: AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM AND GLOBAL MEMORIES OF TERRORISM*

Erika Doss

Abstract: Since the terrorist attacks on America on September 11, 2001, hundreds of 9/11 memorials have been built in the United States and around the world. The global circulation of 9/11 is unusual, as permanent commemorations of the tragedies and disasters of particular nations are typically confined to those nations. Examining the aesthetic forms, subjects, and locations of transnational 9/11 memorials, this article considers how and why 9/11 memories circulate globally on visual and material terms. Why, for example, do other nations commemorate terrorist attacks against the United States? What are the cultural and political determinants motivating such memorials? What are their intended effects? Such questions are at the core of a growing transnational studies movement that is especially attentive to the people, places, and products of an increasingly interconnected world.

Zusammenfassung: Seit den Terrorangriffen auf die Vereinigten Staaten am 11. September 2001 wurden hunderte von Mahnmalen zur Erinnerung an 9/11 in den USA und in vielen anderen Ländern rund um den Globus errichtet. Diese globale Verbreitung ist ungewöhnlich, da auf Dauer gestellte Erinnerungen an Tragödien und Katastrophen die Grenzen der davon betroffenen Nationalstaaten in der Regel nicht überschreiten. Mahnmale zum Gedenken an 9/11 stellen hier eine Ausnahme dar. Der Beitrag fragt nach den Gründen der globalen Ausbreitung dieser spezifischen Erinnerung und analysiert die Formen, Inhalte und Standorte dieser transnationalen Mahnmale. Im Zentrum stehen dabei Fragen, die auf ähnliche Weise im Kontext anderer, transnational perspektivierter Ansätze gestellt werden: Aus welchen Gründen erinnern andere Nationen an die gegen die USA gerichteten Terrorangriffe vom 11. September 2011? Welche kulturellen und politischen Faktoren motivieren die Errichtung solcher Mahnmale außerhalb der USA? Und welche Interessen und Absichten sind damit verbunden?

In the years since the terrorist attacks on America on September 11, 2001, hundreds of 9/11 memorials have been created. These include local and regional memorials scattered throughout the country and three national memorials sited where the attacks occurred: The *Pentagon Memorial* at the headquarters of the *United States Department of Defense* in Arlington County, Virginia; the *Flight 93 Na-*

- * This article is a revised version of a paper delivered at the Fifth International Conference: Transnational American Studies organized by the Center for American Studies and Research, American University of Beirut, January 7, 2014. I thank Ingrid Gessner and Zoe Thrumston for their help with this project.

tional Memorial in southwestern Pennsylvania; and the *National September 11 Memorial* in New York, whose two huge pools occupy the footprints of the former Twin Towers (Figure 1). In December 2013, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that more than 11 million people had visited New York's memorial since it opened in 2011.¹



Figure 1: The South Pool, National September 11 Memorial, New York. Designed by Michael Arad and Peter Walker. Dedicated September 11, 2011; this photo October 17, 2012 (Courtesy Creative Commons)

Still other 9/11 memorials – more than fifty permanent installations to date – have been built in countries ranging from Australia and New Zealand to Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Germany, India, Ireland, Israel, and Spain (Figure 2). Memorial services have also been held on the anniversary of 9/11 in many African, European, and Middle Eastern countries.

1 Michael Howard Saul: New York Sees Record High Tourism in 2013, in: *The Wall Street Journal*, December 10, 2013.



Figure 2: Donadea 9/11 Memorial, Donadea, Ireland. Dedicated 2003; this photo April 2013. Nine-foot limestone block replica of the Twin Towers inscribed with the names of firefighters and first responders who died at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2011 (Photo Rachel Schwartz)

This global circulation of 9/11 memorials is unusual, especially as permanent commemorations of the tragedies and disasters of particular nations are typically confined to that nation itself.² Terrorist bombings in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005, for example, are remembered, respectively, in the *Atocha Bombing Memorial*, a glass tower next to the Madrid station where 191 people were murdered in a series of coordinated attacks on the city's commuter trains, and the *7 July Memorial* in London's Hyde Park, an installation of 52 stainless steel pillars representing those who were killed in the bombing of London's public transportation system.³ Although extensively reported and widely condemned by global media, neither of these terrorist attacks have been commemorated on the global scale of 9/11.

- 2 Memorials to the millions who perished in the Holocaust are transnational exceptions.
- 3 See the special issue „Remembering the 2005 London Bombings: Media, Memory, Commemoration“, in: *Memory Studies* 4 (2011) 3, pp. 263–335.

Examining the aesthetic forms, subjects, and locations of transnational 9/11 memorials, this article considers how and why 9/11 memories circulate globally on visual and material terms. Why, for example, do other nations commemorate terrorist attacks against the United States? What are the cultural and political determinants motivating such memorials? What are their intended effects? Such questions are at the core of a growing transnational studies movement that is especially attentive to the people, places, and products of an increasingly interconnected world.⁴

9/11 Memorial Taxonomies

Memorials are typically built to recognize and preserve memories, to remember and often honor people, events, and places. Claiming specific histories and marking particular social and political interests, memorials possess enormous „symbolic capital“ and as such can influence perceptions of social order, national identity, and political transition. In recent decades, memorial making and other commemorative practices have noticeably proliferated: an excessive phenomenon that I call *memorial mania* and define as an obsession with issues of history and memory accompanied by certain urgent and intense feelings to express those issues in public contexts.⁵ Today’s memorials may be best understood as „archives of feeling“, as visual and material bodies whose meanings correspond to their emotional, or affective, states. Pairing discussions of certain memorials with the affective conditions in which they are imagined, made, and experienced yields fresh insights about the nature and degree of their symbolic capital.⁶

America’s 9/11 memorials, for example, are unambiguously contextualized by feelings of grief and loss. Their abundance was further conditioned by the shock of foreign attacks on the nation and by widespread feelings of fear about terrorism’s impact on American vulnerability, accompanied by equally emotional demands for national stability, unity, and defense. Many American 9/11 memorials are informed by ‚security narratives‘ that interpret and explain the dangers facing the nation – such as terrorism – and simultaneously justify the actions taken by and on behalf of the nation – such as the war on terror. While attached to the historical realities of terrorist attacks on America on September 11, 2001, many 9/11 memorials employ discourses of innocence, courage, and heroism to

- 4 See, for example, Ingrid Gessner: The Aesthetics of Remembering 9/11: Toward a Transnational Typology of Memorials, in: *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 6 (2014), forthcoming.
- 5 Erika Doss: *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America*, Chicago 2010, pp. 2, 9–10; on „symbolic capital“ see Pierre Bourdieu: *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge 1977, pp. 114–120.
- 6 Ann Cvetkovich: *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*, Durham, NC 2003, p. 7.

submerge the political logic of those attacks and to bolster, instead, desired American ideals of national unity, order, and power.⁷

There is no single ‚style‘ of 9/11 memorials. There are, however, shared materials, forms, texts, and affective conditions that coalesce to define, and manage, the memory and meaning of terrorism. Some 9/11 memorials are quite modest, consisting of plaques listing the names of the dead or groves of trees planted through the *Living Memorials Project*, an initiative of the *U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service*. Appropriating traditional funerary forms, these 9/11 memorials especially address emotional needs to grieve and mourn the dead.

Some 9/11 memorials imitate the vertical shapes of the Twin Towers, reaffirming their formerly lofty presence on the New York skyline to infer that they, and those who died on 9/11, are not forgotten. Some appropriate the commemorative codes of certain war monuments – such as the large scale and figurative style of the *U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial* in Arlington Cemetery – and remember 9/11 on similarly heroic and triumphal terms. These memorials are usually dedicated to the firefighters and emergency personnel, now called „first responders“, who risked their lives to save others at the World Trade Center. Others, such as *De Oppresso Liber* (2013), a bronze statue near the World Trade Center that features a U.S. Green Beret riding an Afghan pony, pay tribute to American military personnel engaged in the war on terror.⁸ These 9/11 memorials are informed by the emotional range of moral and political obligations associated with gratitude: with giving thanks to those who serve.

Many 9/11 memorials, especially those featuring twisted metal from the Twin Towers, speak to the affective conditions of rage and retribution. The City of New York donated tons of iron girders from Ground Zero to other cities eager to acquire genuine 9/11 artefacts. These pieces of deformed metal are understood as commemorative anchors that authenticate the horrible consequences of terrorism: their rough materiality substantiates the veracity of terrorist attacks that were repeatedly described at the time as „like a movie“. Featured in memorials throughout the United States, these fragments further serve to unite all-Americans in shared 9/11 memories (Figure 3). Indeed, these metal remains are often viewed as venerated relics that embody American innocence, pain, and sacrifice.

7 Doss: *Memorial Mania*, 2010, pp. 147–167.

8 Erika Doss: *De Oppresso Liber and Reflecting Absence: Ground Zero Memorials and the War on Terror*, in: *American Quarterly* 65 (2013) 1, pp. 203–214.



*Figure 3: Napa 9/11 Memorial, Napa, California.
Designed by Gordon Huether and Gretchen
Stranzi McCann. Dedicated 2013; this photo
September 2013 (Courtesy U.S. Air Force;
photo Ellen Hatfield)⁹*

They are further understood as symbols of national anger. As the designers of the *September 11 Memorial* at the Texas State Cemetery in Austin state: „We want people to feel the relics that were washed in the blood of the innocents. We want people to recognize the horror, understand the sorrow, the righteous wrath, the resolve and remembrance.“ This memorial features two battered steel girders and two text panels, one stating, „These steel columns were salvaged from the World Trade Center at Ground Zero, New York City“, and another featuring excerpts from President George W. Bush’s address to the nation on October 7, 2001, when he announced the start of Operation Enduring Freedom (the U.S. invasion of Af-

- 9 The names of the victims of the 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon are etched on the four glass panels that anchor the center of the sculpture, which includes four steel beams salvaged from the Twin Towers.

ghanistan) and declared: „We will not waiver, we will not tire; we will not falter, and we will not fail. Peace and Freedom will prevail.“¹⁰

Affective conditions of grief, gratitude, and rage are reinforced in American 9/11 memorials through photography and memento making. In contrast, for example, with nineteenth-century monuments of stern and unapproachable men on horses, contemporary memorials of all kinds are especially oriented toward intimacy, materiality, and ‚felt experience‘. Memorial visitors take snapshots and make videos, determined to ‚never forget‘ their feelings at these sites by creating visual ‚memory aids‘. At New York’s *September 11 Memorial*, many visitors make rubbings of the names of victims etched on the bronze parapets surrounding the two pools. Popularized by visitors to the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* in Washington, D.C. in the early 1980s and now common at memorials worldwide, this custom corresponds to visceral desires for intense experiences that authenticate the event or subject of commemoration, and further evoke empathy and attachment. Touching the names of the dead listed on 9/11 memorials, and imprinting them on pieces of paper, serves to physically and emotionally connect visitors to the ‚reality‘ of 9/11 and produces souvenirs, Susan Stewart suggests, that authenticate their experiences.¹¹

Transnational 9/11 Memorials

Not including the 19 perpetrators, 372 foreign nationals were killed during the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001: just over 12 percent of the total number of victims (2,977). People from 92 different countries were killed in the World Trade Center. Many transnational 9/11 memorials pay tribute to the foreign victims of 9/11 and, as such, expand 9/11’s history and memory beyond a focus on American victims and affective conditions. Others are couched in desires to affirm friendly foreign relations. And still others co-opt the terrorist attacks of 9/11 to produce memorials dedicated to different subjects and events.

Transnational 9/11 memorials include both permanent installations and temporary remembrance ceremonies. Numerous countries held memorial services in the days following 9/11, and conducted annual observances over the next decade. Many of these events were organized by local authorities, and others by U.S. diplomatic missions. In September 2005, for example, more than a dozen different September 11 commemorations were held in Italy, including the dedication of the *World Trade Center Memorial* in Padua, which was commissioned by government officials from the Veneto Region. In London, 2,000 people, including 9/11 family members, attended tenth anniversary 9/11 memorial services organized by

10 Christy Hoppe: State’s Sept. 11 Memorial, in: Dallas Morning News, September 12, 2002, p. A-29; John Shelton Lawrence: Rituals of Mourning and National Innocence, in: *The Journal of American Culture* 28 (2005) 1, pp. 35–48.

11 Susan Stewart: *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, Baltimore, MD 1984.

British officials and held in St. Paul's Cathedral. In Paris that year, thousands participated in a 9/11 spectacle organized by *The French Will Never Forget, Inc.*, a non-profit corporation committed to „French-American friendship“. Held at the Palais du Trocadéro, the event opened with a procession of children carrying U.S. and French flags and included a candlelight vigil, laser-light show, and two temporary ten-story replicas of the Twin Towers.

Diplomatic cables obtained by *WikiLeaks* reveal that many U.S. embassies also organized 9/11 observances. In 2002, the U.S. Embassy in Amman and the *Arabic Book Program* coordinated a „September 11 Commemoration Book Set“, a three-volume collection of translations into Arabic of American literary and political texts that was distributed throughout Jordan.¹² On September 11, 2005, the embassy in Vilnius, Lithuania organized an interfaith service in memory of all victims of terrorism since 9/11.¹³ In Abu Dhabi that year, the U.S. Embassy organized a 9/11 ceremony that was attended by ambassadors from 25 Muslim countries and was extensively covered in Arabic and English language media outlets. In 2009, following on President Obama's call that September 11 be remembered worldwide as a „National Day of Service and Remembrance“, the U.S. Embassy in Cotonou, Benin organized the first community blood drive at the Mosque of Cadjehoun, and staff at U.S. embassies in Malta, Niger, Côte d'Ivoire, and other missions planned similar volunteer and interfaith ceremonies.¹⁴

These examples suggest that many transnational 9/11 memorials are motivated by desires to pay homage to the victims of 9/11, to express solidarity with U.S. policies regarding global anti-terrorism, and to improve foreign relations with America. Memorials organized in Amman, Ankara, and Abu Dhabi represent U.S. efforts to generate Middle Eastern partners in the war on terror, especially by highlighting shared struggles and suffering. As Nancy McEldowney, Deputy Chief of Mission for the U.S. Embassy to Turkey, remarked in a 9/11 ceremony held in 2005:

„Whether the bomb goes off in New York or Istanbul, whether it is Zarkawi or Kurat Karayilan, by standing together at this monument today we send a clear message. Americans stand together with their Turkish brothers in condemning the PKK and its terrorist violence just as we condemn al-Qaida.“¹⁵

- 12 Invitation to Order September 11 Commemoration Book Package, U.S. Embassy Amman, June 25, 2002, Diplomatic Cable 02AMMAN342, URL: http://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/02AMMAN3423_a.html, last accessed: May 5, 2014.
- 13 First-Ever Interfaith Gathering in Lithuania, U.S. Embassy Vilnius, September 13, 2005, Diplomatic Cable 05VILNIUS959, URL: <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2005/09/05VILNIUS959.html>, last accessed: May 5, 2014.
- 14 Benin: Blood Drive Muslim Community Project, U.S. Embassy Benin, October 27, 2009, Diplomatic Cable 09COTONOU515, URL: <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/10/09COTONOU515.html>, last accessed: May 5, 2014.
- 15 9/11 Events in Ankara, Istanbul Generate Positive Press Play, U.S. Embassy Ankara, September 12, 2005, Diplomatic Cable 05ANKARA5305, URL: http://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/05ANKARA5305_a.html, last accessed: May 5, 2014. The PKK is a terrorist organization focused on Kurdish separation from Turkey.

Likewise, in her remarks that year in Abu Dhabi, U.S. Ambassador Michele Sison stated that 9/11 was a blow „to the entire international community“, and praised the United Arab Emirate for being a „staunch ally in the international fight against terrorism“. ¹⁶

Permanent transnational 9/11 memorials are built for similarly symbolic and diplomatic purposes. Their locations vary: some are installed in public airports, cemeteries, gardens, and plazas, while others are found on the private, guarded, or otherwise restricted grounds of U.S. embassies and military bases. ¹⁷ Likewise, they are commissioned by different parties: by foreign government officials interested in asserting their alliance with the United States, by U.S. diplomats and citizens who link their tributes to the American victims of terrorism with international concerns, and by other groups with different agendas.

Many transnational 9/11 memorials appropriate the designs of American 9/11 memorials. Some, including memorials in Stresa, Italy and Jerusalem, reproduce the U.S. flag. Others, including memorials built in Copenhagen (Denmark), Oberviechtach (Germany), Donadea (Ireland), Be'er Sheva (Israel), Rome (Italy), Tijuana (Mexico), and Moncalvillo (Spain), feature stone, glass, or metal shafts that replicate the Twin Towers, albeit at miniscule scale. Few transnational 9/11 memorials reference the two other targets of 9/11: The Pentagon and United Airlines Flight 93. Likewise, few evoke the affective conditions of fear, rage, and retribution that are evident in many American 9/11 memorials.

References to gendered terms of courage, heroism, and sacrifice are shared, however. A gaining number of transnational 9/11 memorials, both temporary and permanent, are dedicated to the 343 firefighters who died at the World Trade Center. In Sydney, the tenth anniversary of 9/11 was commemorated in a *Memorial Stair Climb*, an event during which firefighters meet in high-rise buildings to climb 110 flights of stairs, often wearing full firefighting outfits and carrying heavy gear, „as a tribute to their fallen brothers“. ¹⁸ (Each of the World Trade Center's Twin Towers featured 110 floors, and 343 firefighters died during 9/11 rescue operations.) First organized in 2003, the *Memorial Stair Climb* has become a truly transnational event: in 2011, 55 such climbs were held around the world.

Some transnational 9/11 firefighter memorials originate in outreach projects organized by U.S. service organizations like the *International Fire Relief Mission*, a group that donates used firefighting equipment. In 2012 in the Republic of Georgia, local officials expressed their gratitude for a fire truck and assorted gear by dedicating a large 9/11 park landscaped with 343 trees (Figure 4). As Georgia's State Deputy Governor remarked: „It's very important that this memorial garden and monument is dedicated not only to heroically perished firefighters,

16 UAE 9/11 Commemoration, U.S. Embassy Abu Dhabi, September 12, 2005, Diplomatic Cable 05ABUDHABI3883, URL: https://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/05ABUDHABI3883_a.html, last accessed: May 5, 2014.

17 9/11 memorials were erected at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan, Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait, and Kelley Barracks in Darmstadt, Germany, among other U.S. military bases.

18 9/11 Stair Climb Mission Statement, 9-11 Memorial Stair Climbs, URL: <http://www.9-11stairclimb.com/about.html>, last accessed: December 22, 2013.

but it is a symbol and a demonstration of friendship between the American and Georgian nations.¹⁹ Like their American counterparts, transnational firefighter memorials reaffirm gendered constructions of heroic manhood. One-third of those who died on 9/11 were female, including female first responders. Most 9/11 memorials, however, especially those dedicated to firefighters, discount those figures in deference to themes of masculine courage and sacrifice.



Figure 4: 9/11 Memorial, Mtskheta, Republic of Georgia. Dedicated 2012; this photo April 2012 (Photo Ron Gruening)

Other transnational 9/11 memorials simply feature trees and/or plaques. In 2002 in Cambridge, North Island, New Zealand, local authorities planted a small tree and a bronze marker reading, „In memory of all those who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks against the United States of America on 11 September 2001“. In Bridgetown, Barbados in 2003, U.S. embassy staffers planted a Cassia Fiscula, a flowering tree native to southern Asia, and erected a stone monument „to honor

19 Givi Maisuradze quoted in Rick Martley: Former Soviet country unveils vast 9/11 memorial, FireRescue.com, April 16, 2012, URL: <http://www.firerescue1.com/fire-products/fire-apparatus/articles/1272494-Former-Soviet-country-unveils-vast-9-11-memorial>, last accessed: December 30, 2013.

those Americans who lost their lives and loved ones in the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States“.

Barbados aside, American oaks are typically the tree of choice in transnational 9/11 memorials, probably because the oak was appointed America’s official „National Tree“ in 2004. In Madrid, ten American oaks were planted in El Parque Juan Carlos on the tenth anniversary of 9/11. In Paris, an American oak was planted in 2002 in Luxembourg Gardens, next to the original bronze model of the *Statue of Liberty*. A plaque, small and tarnished, features this text:

„This American oak is dedicated to the memory of the victims of September 11, 2001 in the United States of America. Gift of the American community in Paris as a symbol of Franco-American friendship, planted on January 30, 2002 by M. Christian Poncelet, President of the French Senate in the presence of The Honorable Howard Leach, Ambassador of the United States of America to France, Princesse de La Tour d’Auvergne, Président of French Heritage Society/FVMF, Paul Girod, President of the French-American Friendship Committee of the French Senate.“

American expatriates – in this case „the American community in Paris“ – organize permanent 9/11 memorials to demonstrate their enduring attachment to the United States. The repetition of the text in French and English indicates that the memorial is intended, however, for more than a monolingual American audience.

Similarly, a memorial erected in 2001 in Lisbon features text in Portuguese and English that reads: „Tribute of the people of Lisbon to the victims of the attacks perpetrated in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001.“ Designed by Portuguese cartoonist Augusto Cid, Lisbon’s 9/11 memorial was the first erected outside the United States and was symbolically sited at the intersection of Avenida de Roma and Avenida dos Estados Unidos da América. Cid based the twenty-foot memorial on photographs of the shredded metal facade of the ruined Twin Towers that were widely circulated in newspapers and on TV in the days following 9/11 (Figure 5).



Figure 5: 9/11 Memorial, Lisbon, Portugal. Dedicated 2001; this photo May 2012 (Photo courtesy Waymarking.com)

Memorials in Canada, Germany, Israel, Italy, and New Zealand, among other countries, feature distorted metal remains from the Twin Towers. Their global distribution is similar to the manner in which pieces of the Berlin Wall were scattered all over the world in the 1990s, and equally revered as authenticating historical artefacts. Their affective conditions differ, however, as fragments from Ground Zero connote pain and suffering while those from the Wall embody liberation and freedom. Typically obtained through diplomatic and military channels, in a transnational context metal pieces from the Twin Towers represent both the authenticity of 9/11 and the legitimacy of being a loyal U.S. ally. A 9/11 memorial in Pompeii, Italy, for example, features a thirty-foot span of mangled steel from the Twin Towers inserted into a large block of lava stone from the slopes of nearby Mount Vesuvius. The design, said speakers at a 9/11 ceremony in 2011, „symbolizes the solid bonds of brotherhood between the U.S. and Italian people“.²⁰

20 News and Events: Pompeii[i], September 11, 2013, Consulate General of the United States, Naples, Italy (11 September 2013), URL: <http://naples.usconsulate.gov/news-events/pompeii-september-11-2013.html>, last accessed: December 30, 2013.



Figure 6: 9/11 Living Memorial, Jerusalem, Israel. Dedicated 2009; this photo February 2010 (Courtesy Wikipedia commons; photo Dr. Avishai Teicher)

The *9/11 Living Memorial* in Jerusalem's Arazim Park, designed by Israeli artist Eliezer Weishoff and dedicated in 2009, is especially promoted as a symbol of Israeli-U.S. alliance, and is often used for state ceremonies featuring Israeli and U.S. officials (Figure 6). The 30-foot bronze sculpture, which depicts an unfurled American flag morphing into an eternal flame and incorporates steel fragments from Ground Zero, is located in an open plaza that seats 300 people and is circled by low walls etched with the names of 9/11 victims. Israel, which lost four citizens in 9/11, has built the largest number of transnational 9/11 memorials to date (over a dozen), including memorial parks, squares, and traffic circles. Many have been developed by Dov Shefi, father of an Israeli businessman killed on the North Tower's 106th floor. And some have been built on land that is contested as being Israeli property, where Palestinians and Bedouin Arabs have been forcibly dislocated. As Shefi told President George W. Bush when they met a few years after 9/11: „I managed to persuade 10 mayors in Israel to build 10 Memorial-Monument[s] to perpetuate all the thousands victims of 9/11, including the four Israelis.“²¹ Paying tribute to the victims of 9/11 and demonstrating the strength of

21 Dov Shefi: Meeting with President Bush, in: Voices of September 11th, URL: http://www.voicesofseptember11.org/dev/memorial_content.php?idbio=130623967&idcontent=400439028, last accessed June 20, 2014.

Israeli-U.S. ‚bonds‘, Israel’s 9/11 memorials help justify that nation’s territorial expansion and settler colonialism: another form of terrorism, some argue.²²

Padua’s *Memoria e Luce*

Dedicated in 2005, Padua’s 9/11 memorial – called *Memoria e Luce*, or „memory and light“ – was similarly motivated by government officials aiming to affirm enduring U.S.-Italian relations (Figure 7). Despite its recent economic and political crises and its preferred reputation as a „force for peace“, Italy is a strong U.S. military ally, including deploying ships, planes, and troops to Operation Enduring Freedom. Still, in March 2003, only 22 percent of Italians supported intervention in Iraq.²³ Erected two years later, Padua’s 9/11 memorial strongly asserts American ideals on Italian soil, and friendship between the two countries. Designed by American architect Daniel Libeskind, who emigrated from Poland in 1959, the 56-foot tall memorial is located in the middle of Padua in the well-trafficked gardens of the Porte Contarine, and is laden in heavy-handed symbolism.



Figure 7: *Memoria e Luce World Trade Center Memorial, Padua, Italy. Designed by Daniel Libeskind. Dedicated 2005; this photo June 2009 (Photo Pam Klobáska)*

- 22 See, for example, Bashir Abu-Manneh: Israel in the US Empire, in: Elleke Boehmer, Stephen Morton (eds.): *Terror and the Postcolonial: A Concise Companion*, London 2009, pp. 226–253.
- 23 Jason W. Davidson: *Italy-US Relations Since the End of the Cold War: Prestige, Peace, and the Transatlantic Balance*, in: *Bulletin of Italian Politics* 1 (2009) 2, pp. 299, 302.

A vertically hinged sculpture made of glass cladding and steel, *Memoria e Luce* resembles an „open book“ with a huge steel beam from the Twin Towers inserted on its left side (or „page“) and its right side left blank. The book design references Padua’s reputation as a center of learning (the University of Padua is one of the oldest in the world, numbering Galileo among its esteemed lecturers) and tolerance (despite Italy’s dominant Catholicism, Padua is famous as a center of Talmudic studies and has maintained a continuous Jewish presence since the 11th century). It also reifies particular American myths: Libeskind explains that the memorial’s „spine“ is aligned with the latitude of New York City and echoes that city’s symbolic identity as a port of entry to, and exemplar of, American ideals of freedom and liberty. As he writes: „The Light of Liberty shines through the Book of History. This Book is open to the memory of the heroes of September 11th (...). The eternal affirmation of Freedom is inscribed on the Statue of Liberty, as seen by millions of emigrants coming to America.“²⁴

Piercing his „Book of History“ with a twisted piece of 9/11 steel, and orienting the entire memorial toward New York and the *Statue of Liberty*, Libeskind dramatically conveys terrorism’s threat to the United States. While his assessment is certainly valid, it promotes notions of American exceptionalism at the expense of terrorism’s global dimensions. One critic remarks that Libeskind’s recent memorial projects show a conservative adherence to „a narrative embedded in half-truths“ and „a refusal to look critically at international political reality“.²⁵ *Wiki-Leaks* documents reveal that when *Memoria e Luce* was dedicated, local citizens protested that the „City of Padua should have built a memorial to commemorate all of the victims of war and not just those from 9/11“.²⁶

Indeed, while *Memoria e Luce* is acclaimed by architects, ambassadors, and Italian politicians, its reputation among many Paduans is more contested. One resident writes:

„As elegant as it is, I do not believe that the Paduans truly feel much of anything for this monument. It is a strange testimonial because it primarily displays a tragic American problem (...). Did the politicians in Padua believe that their medium-small city would appear more important on a world-scale with this kind of ‚international‘ monument? Is it appropriate here? I am an American here and even question it sometimes.“²⁷

24 Daniel Libeskind: *Memoria E Luce*, 9/11 Memorial, Museum Without Walls, URL: http://culturenow.org/entry&permalink=14044&seo=Memoria-E-Luce-911-Memorial_Studio-Daniel-Libeskind, last accessed: December 28, 2013.

25 William J.R. Curtis: Daniel Libeskind, in: *The Architectural Review*, September 21, 2011, URL: <http://www.architectural-review.com/daniel-libeskind/8620025.article>, last accessed: December 28, 2013.

26 9/11 Activities in Italy, U.S. Embassy Rome, September 15, 2005, Diplomatic Cable 05Some 3088, URL: http://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/05ROME3088_a.html, last accessed: July 5, 2014.

27 *Memoria e Luce*, An American in Padua, June 23, 2009, URL: <http://americaninpadua.blogspot.com/2009/06/memoria-e-luce.html>, last accessed: December 30, 2013.

The memorial was vandalized in 2012 – some of the glass panels were shattered by rocks – which suggests that some Paduans ‚truly feel‘ that *Memoria e Luce* is more of an irritant than a symbol of U.S.-Italian friendship.

Global Memories of 9/11

Despite their differences in motivation and design, transnational 9/11 memorials assert that 9/11 was a global phenomenon with global consequences: a series of terrorist actions that destroyed a world financial center located in New York, killed citizens from 92 different countries, and launched the „Global War on Terrorism“ (GWOT), a „war without borders“ pursued by the U.S. and its allies. Ironically, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 have globally eclipsed those inflicted on other nations, such as Spain in 2004 and Britain in 2005, because of enduring notions of American exceptionalism: the idea that the U.S., both because of its new nation formation in the late eighteenth century and its ideological endorsement of concepts like freedom, liberty, and individualism, is different from and more significant than other nations. American 9/11 memorials emphasize this exceptional state in references to American innocence and heroism, and many transnational 9/11 memorials do much the same. Not all 9/11 memorial audiences share these assumptions of American exceptionalism, however, as the response in Padua suggests.

Indeed, the variability of contemporary cultural globalization complicates clear or precise distinctions between U.S. and transnational 9/11 memorials. Several 9/11 memorials in the United States, for example, are dedicated to and designed by foreign nationals. In 2011, Japanese artist Junkyu Muto, who was born in Sendai, Japan in 1950 and lives and works in Italy, was commissioned by New York’s *Japan Society* to create one of his signature *Circle Wind* sculptures, abstract marble renderings that resemble a Moebius strip and symbolize eternity, as a memorial to the 24 Japanese citizens who were killed on 9/11. Future plans include placing Muto’s 9/11 memorial in a sculpture garden at the World Trade Center.

And in 2004, British artist Anish Kapoor, born in Mumbai in 1954, was commissioned by the *British Memorial Garden Trust, Inc.*, a non-profit organization founded by the British Consulate and the *St. George’s Society* in New York, to design *Unity*, a sculpture commemorating the 67 British citizens who were killed on 9/11.²⁸ Kapoor’s sculpture consists of a 20-foot granite block with a highly polished interior cavity. As he explains:

„Into the center of the stone is carved a very long thin chamber with a reflective chamber. The reflective chamber forms within itself a column of light (...). What I tried to do is to pro-

28 Anish Kapoor quoted in: Kapoor to create 9/11 memorial, in: BBC News, April 1, 2004, URL: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/3588717.stm, last accessed: January 2, 2014.

vide a moment of quiet, a moment of I hope contemplation (...). What the work needs to do is have authority, sobriety, and I hope a certain contemplative clarity.²⁹

Unity will be installed in the Queen Elizabeth II September 11 Garden (formerly called the British Garden), a small pocket park located in Hanover Square, a few blocks east of the World Trade Center in the Financial District in Lower Manhattan. The park also pays tribute to the commonwealth nations – including Australia, Canada, and Jamaica – who lost citizens in the terrorist attacks of 9/11. As Jamaica's Consul General to New York, Geneive Brown Metzger, remarked during a 9/11 memorial service held in the park in 2011,

„The Jamaicans who perished in the attacks on the World Trade Centre will never be forgotten by their families and homeland. This memorial in the heart of New York City is a fitting tribute and I am honoured to be able to lead the official recognition of their sacrifice to their adopted homeland.“

Kapoor similarly observes, „I think it's interesting that the city authorities in New York have thought it correct to allow there to be a British memorial, and I hope they will allow that to others“.³⁰

Kapoor's remarks about the emotional reception of his forthcoming 9/11 memorial – feelings of sobriety, quiet reflection, and „contemplative clarity“ – and his approval of more inclusive, or less strictly „American-centric“ memorials, suggest the different agendas that shape transnational commemorations of 9/11. While many transnational 9/11 memorials reify American symbols and tropes from flags to freedom and, in various firefighter monuments, embrace hegemonic assumptions like authoritative masculinity, others qualify those assumptions by claiming 9/11 for themselves. Some expressly pay homage to 9/11's global range of victims: the eleven Australians, three Brazilians, eleven Germans, 41 Indians, 16 Mexicans, and many others who were killed on September 11. The text accompanying a memorial dedicated in 2003 in St. Catherines, Ontario reads: „This site is dedicated to the 27 Canadians, including those with strong ties to Canada, who lost their lives in the tragic events of September 11, 2001.“ Likewise, a 9/11 memorial in Ottawa asserts: „In remembrance of the Canadians Lost, September 11, 2001“ (Figure 8). And a *9/11 Remembrance Garden* in Mawson Lakes, South Australia, located at the headquarters of the *Australian Workers Union* (AWU) features a plaque that reads: „In fond memory of our mate Andrew Knox, past AWU industrial officer, victim of terrorism, New York City, 11.9.2001.“

29 Anish Kapoor quoted in: Watch and Listen: Sculptor Anish Kapoor, in: BBC News, April 1, 2004, URL: http://news.bbc.co.uk/media/audio/39991000/rm/_39991823_kapoor07_kapoor_int.ram, last accessed: January 2, 2014.

30 Geneive Brown Metzger quoted in: Permanent Memorial in New York for Jamaican 9/11 Victims, in: Jamaica Observer, January 3, 2012, URL: <http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/Permanent-Memorial-in-New-York-for-Jamaican-9-11-victims->, last accessed: January 17, 2014; Kapoor quoted in: Watch and Listen: Sculptor Anish Kapoor.



Figure 8: 9/11 Memorial, Beechwood Cemetery, Ottawa, Ontario. Dedicated 2002; this photo May 2011. The bronze plaque on this stone cairn lists the names of the 24 Canadians killed on 9/11, as well as two other people married to Canadians (Photo courtesy Waymarking.com)

Obviously, these and other transnational memorials challenge the notion that 9/11's victims were exclusively American. In addition, while many transnational 9/11 memorials replicate the Twin Towers in their designs, they recast them as representative buildings of the *World Trade Center*, not just as symbolic icons of the United States – which most American 9/11 memorials uncritically assert. That is not to say that these transnational 9/11 memorials – or any memorials referencing the Twin Towers – actually or effectively critique the World Trade Center as a monument to global capitalism. Rather, they dispute 9/11's strictly *American* narrative of terrorist victimization.

Perhaps the strongest challenge to assumptions of 9/11's affective and political exceptionalism is 9/11's appropriation as a signifier of other nation's traumas and tragedies. In Canada, the 1985 terrorist bombing of Air India Flight 182, which killed 329 passengers and crew, is now called Canada's „own 9/11“. In Koriyama City, Japan, a memorial to the victims of the disastrous 2011 tsunami is being made from mangled steel beams salvaged from the World Trade Center,

shaped into the form of a giant crane. The tsunami itself is now called „3/11“, a numerical shorthand that follows 9/11’s signature reference.

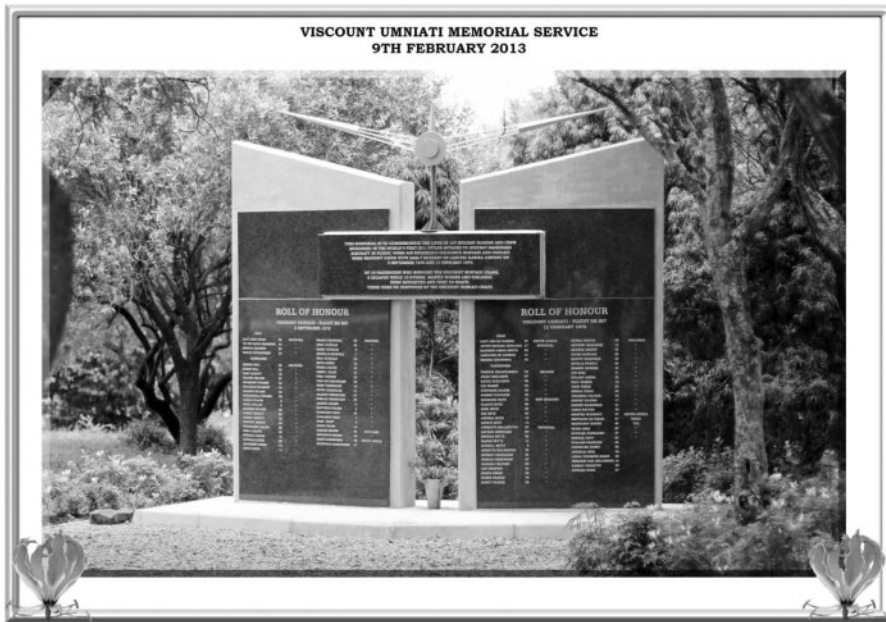


Figure 9: Invitation to Remembrance Day ceremonies, February 9, 2013, at the Viscount Memorial, Voortrekker Monument, Pretoria, South Africa. Viscount Memorial dedicated 2012; this photo January 2013 (Photo Tiggs Grey)

In South Africa, a memorial commemorating the victims of what some call „Rhodesia’s 9/11“ was dedicated in 2012 (Figure 9). In 1978 and 1979, ZIPRA (Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army) insurgents shot down two Vickers Viscount Air Rhodesia airplanes with surface to air missiles, killing 107 people. The *Viscount Memorial* features the names of the murdered passengers and crew, an abstract symbol representing a plane, and text stating that these acts of terrorism were „the first 9/11 styled attacks to destroy passenger aircraft“. Located on the grounds of Pretoria’s *Voortrekker Monument*, itself a problematic site of colonialist and Apartheid memory, the *Viscount Memorial* co-opts 9/11 in order to re-cast Rhodesia as victim, rather than racist perpetrator, and thereby re-map Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in the global imagination. As one supporter of the memorial remarks,

„The whole world already knows and condemns the Lockerbie and Twin Towers 9/11 styled terrorist attacks. There is no better catalyst for gaining international recognition for our cause

than to publicize Rhodesia's 9/11. Ironically, what once shattered the Nation now holds the key to winning back our honour.³¹

Transnational 9/11 memorials prompt us to ask ‚who counts?’ in the memory of 9/11. While some destabilize the idea that 9/11 was only or all about American victimization, others deploy 9/11's affective apparatus to assert their own political authority: redefining oppressors as victims, as in the case of the *Viscount Memorial* in South Africa, or justifying acts of state sanctioned terrorism, as in the case of Israel building 9/11 memorials on land seized from others and restricted to Israeli citizens.

Conclusion

Transnational 9/11 memorials are the products of an increasingly intensified flow of cultural capital across national borders. Their diversity suggests that this flow is uneven: while these memorials may assert American identity and values globally, they are also subject to the issues and concerns of the geographies in which they are located. Many transnational 9/11 memorials ‚bear witness’ to U.S. grief and loss, demonstrating mutual feelings of compassion for America's victimization by foreign terrorists. Some, especially memorials made by valued U.S. allies and in countries where terrorism is a significant threat, extend these feelings of sympathy to reference their own histories of terrorism and to express solidarity with U.S. global anti-terrorism initiatives. These transnational 9/11 memorials are intended as gestures of political good will, as calculated markers of alliance and friendship with the United States. Still other memorials usurp 9/11's historical significance and memory for their own purposes. Critical consideration of these distinctions among transnational 9/11 memorials suggests that while the terrorist attacks on America on September 11, 2001 are globally recognized and remembered, there is neither global consensus about 9/11's meaning and symbolic capital, or about the global power and authority of the United States.

31 From the blog *The Photographic journey of a bulldog*, comments from Keith Nell posted January 27, 2013, URL: <http://visitstothepark.wordpress.com/2012/09/04/rhodesias-911-attack-a-memorial-and-unveiling-of-the-monument/>, last accessed: December 30, 2013.