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Holocaust Museum Observation

It is one concept to read the facts in the text books and to hear the statistics of those murdered in the different camps, but to visually experience the aftermath of Hitler's hand is on a completely different level as far as complexity is concerned. It would be virtually impossible for an individual to not be affected by the Holocaust Museum simply because he or she is slapped in the face with evidence such as pictures, facts, stories, and clothing of the atrocities. If someone doesn't believe that the Holocaust occurred after attending the museum, he or she must have been blindfolded during the entire visit.

Upon entering the exhibits on the fourth floor, one steps off an elevator to come face to face with a large wall hanging of the Ohrdruf camp when the Allies liberated the site and found burnt corpses. When looking at the victims, one can see the pure misery left on the skeletons' face. I became a little teary-eyed when reading the fact that within twelve years, two out of three European Jews were dead.

As one continued on through the museum, he or she would be walking first on a cobblestone walkway that portrayed the streets of a ghetto. The cobblestone would quickly turn into a wooden bridge that ultimately directed an individual into a freight car called a Karlsruhe. It made me uneasy to read that one hundred or more victims were shoved in a single train car. I couldn't believe that the Reichsbahn officials and railroad workers must have suspected the fate of the masses of people when the trains would return empty on each trip. However, despite their

knowledge, it is documented the very few protested or resigned from this position due to the treatment of millions of people. I was also completely taken aback to note that by the summer of 1942, 400 ghettos were in German Occupied Eastern Europe—I guess I didn't realize that so many ghettos had been established.

Once I saw the quantity of shoes, I became frozen in my spot. I couldn't stop staring at the hundreds of shoes that were taken from people no different than me before being murdered or given work clothes. As I stood gazing at the mass of footwear, I noticed a child's lone white shoe. I fought back the tears, but they began to flood my eyes as I thought that could have been my sister's shoe.

As I am speaking of my family, I was reminded of my grandmother when I came across a pile of leg braces from handicapped patients with polio. I am so grateful that my grandmother didn't live in Europe during the time of Hitler's reign because I wouldn't have had the chance to love such an incredible woman or the simple fact that I wouldn't be here today.

It pains me to hear a certain few ignorant individuals on the bus speak about life as it is expendable, even after having attended the Holocaust Museum. I just hope that later in their lives, those materialistic people that are so concerned with getting drunk and finding their next lay might gain an appreciation for life as I have after attending the museum. Before the trip to DC, I held no expectations of what I might encounter in the museum. However, as we are driving home on this bus, I look at the trees and have an undying indebtedness for life and the freedom that we possess as American citizens. I could not ask for anything more.