

Human Rights and Democracy Education
in the Munich Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism
and the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site:
Pedagogical Approaches of Understanding and Learning from the Holocaust

by:

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Abstract.....	3
I. Introduction.....	4
I.1. Overview.....	4
I.1.1. Objectives.....	4
I.1.2. Methodology and Theoretical Frame.....	6
I.1.3. Structure of Thesis.....	9
I.2. <i>Gedenkstättenpädagogik</i> (Memorial Museum Pedagogy)	10
I.2.1. Definition and Development.....	10
I.2.2. Holocaust vs. Human Rights Education.....	13
I.2.3. Possibilities and Limitations of Holocaust- and Human Rights Education.....	18
I.3. Museums' History, Objectives, and Institutional Context	21
I.3.1. Munich Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism.....	22
I.3.2. Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site.....	25
II. Pedagogical Background (Analysis of Student's Education).....	29
II.1. Trends in German Cultural Memory and the Transition between 3 rd and 4 th Generation.....	29
II.2. German School Curricula and External Influences.....	36
II.3. German Students' Knowledge and Personal Prejudices towards Nazi Past.....	42
II.4. Teaching History in a Multicultural Classroom.....	45
III. Empathy, Emotions and "Historical Truth" within Museal Representations.....	53
III.1. Theories of Museal Representation Techniques.....	53
III.1.1. The Possibilities and Limitations of Empathy.....	53
III.1.2. Proximity and Distance in Museal Representations'	56
III.1.3. Historical Authenticity and "Aura".....	57
III.2. Empathy, Emotions and Understanding in Museal Setting.....	61
III.2.1. Victims, Perpetrators and Bystanders in the Munich Documentation Centre.....	61
III.2.2. Victims vs. Perpetrators in Dachau Memorial Site.....	69
IV. Identification of Prototypical Students within Museal Representations.....	82
IV.1. Self-reflection of Hypothetical Students within Museal Setting.....	82
IV.1.1. Possibilities of Self-reflection in the Munich Documentation Centre.....	83
IV.1.2. Possibilities of Self-reflection in the Dachau Memorial Site.....	88
IV.2. Contemporary Relevance in Museal Setting	91
IV.2.1. Contemporary Relevance in the Munich Documentation Centre.....	92
IV.2.2. Contemporary Relevance in the Dachau Memorial Site.....	97
V. Conclusion.....	101
V.1. Synthesis and Comparison.....	101
V.2. Open Questions and Relevance.....	106
VI. Bibliography.....	111

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Abstract

This project seeks to examine what museal techniques are implemented in memorial sites and documentation centres in contemporary Germany in order to convey historical knowledge about the era of the National Socialism and the Holocaust. A comparative examination of two Bavarian institutions and their exhibitions is conducted: the permanent exhibition of the Munich Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism (NS Dokumentationszentrum München, 2015) and the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site (KZ-Gedenkstätte Dachau, since 1965). The thesis analyzes how historical-political knowledge can be used to enhance human rights and democracy education today so that historical events remain relevant in the present and future. Based on the theoretical concepts of “empathy” and “distance” as well as “authenticity” and “aura”, this study examines the potential learning opportunities and processes of prototypical German high school students within these museal representations.

I. Introduction

I.1. Overview

I.1.1. Objectives

In the early 20th century, Spanish philosopher George Santayana stated: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it” (284). With this normative-ethical tenet, Santayana alludes to the importance of learning the lessons of the past in order to prevent negative consequences in the present and future. Retrospectively, throughout the course of history it has been proven that elements of socio-cultural and political developments repeat themselves. Thus, historical awareness can serve as a foundation to soberly face contemporary socio-cultural and political challenges. Regarding German national history, the societal development during the Third Reich illustrated how an ideology of ethnic and cultural superiority led to massive human rights violations – in particular, torture, deliberate starvation, and genocide. However, oral historical accounts of the Holocaust and the Nazi crimes are fading from German public memory, as seventy years have passed since the end of World War II. At the same time, German and international news agencies report about right-wing populist movements and their statements on a daily basis, specifically on certain political parties (such as the AFD – Alternative für Deutschland), right-wing extremist organizations (such as PEGIDA - Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes), as well as racist or inhumane attacks. Thus, trends gravitating towards racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and islamophobia have increasingly appeared on the agenda of contemporary Germany. Parts of German society (especially human rights groups and activists) are worried about this development and are attempting to find solutions for questions such as: How can one work against these ideologies, so that they do not become the new norm? If we return once more to Santayana’s warning, his

statement can be invoked as a call for critical reflection of the Nazi past. Such an invocation highlights historical awareness as the basis for a democratic society, in which justice, tolerance, mutual respect and human dignity are present. However, this triggers two significant questions: how can adolescents, who have no personal or emotional connection to the Nazi past, be made aware of these events? Furthermore, how can these pedagogical processes be used to develop a sense of historical awareness, which also stimulates critical reflection on the present? For these didactic purposes, authentic places such as memorial sites and documentation centres can be essential, as they increasingly operate as places of learning in which the historical background, societal structures, and political development of the Third Reich are well represented. The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in the Federal Republic of Germany (Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland) emphasizes that visiting a memorial site aids in the learning of historical subject matter pertaining to the Third Reich, and encourages visitors to draw connections between the historical past and contemporary socio-cultural and political issues (Rathenow and Ehmann, 45).

This project examines how, on the one hand, memorial sites and documentation centres in contemporary Germany convey historical knowledge of the Holocaust. On the other hand, it analyzes how the value of historical knowledge can be used to impart human rights and democracy education so that historical events remain relevant in the present and future. My research centers on two institutions and their exhibitions in Bavaria: the permanent exhibition of the Munich Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism (NS Dokumentationszentrum München, 2015), “München und der Nationalsozialismus” (Munich and National Socialism); as well as the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site (KZ-Gedenkstätte Dachau, 1965), with focus on the current permanent exhibition in the former

maintenance building “Konzentrationslager Dachau 1933-1945” (Concentration Camp Dachau 1933-1945). Based on the concepts of empathy and distance, authenticity and aura, the potential learning opportunities and processes of a prototypical German high school student will be examined.

I.1.2. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This project comparatively analyzes these exhibitions and institutions, in order to better understand the potential that Holocaust exhibitions hold for contemporary human rights education. Judging the appropriate amount of historical knowledge, or human rights and democracy education is immeasurable, since it depends on various historical, institutional, and pedagogical contexts that surpass this study. Pedagogic and representational museal techniques serve as basis for this project; they are used to draw attention to the tensions between commemoration and historical-political learning, as well as the practical influence they have on the memorial site and documentation centre.

My project is developed from the newly emerging research field *Gedenkstättenpädagogik* (Memorial Museum Pedagogy). It examines the possibilities and limitations of educational methods and goals— particularly the differences in Holocaust education and human rights education, and how they can complement each other (Werker 2016, Zumpe 2012, Rathenow and Weber, 1995). Additionally, it conducts a deeper analysis of museology, with focus on what the diverse representation can express, where the difficulties lie, and from which perspectives one can analyze museal representations. The theoretical concept of *empathy* (Assmann and Brauer, 2011) is employed to analyze whether the museal representations under examination allow visitors to put themselves in the shoes of a given person as a means to understanding the overall

historical context conveyed. I also seek to evaluate the role of empathy in the museal setting and how it enables the visitor to reflect on what they would have done in a similar situation. Furthermore, Mark Phillip's notions of *proximity* and *distance* (2011) are used to examine how the visitor interacts with a given set of historical events or persons within a museum setting in order to explore to what extent they can empathetically relate to a wide spectrum of historical representations. I then examine which forms of authenticity are available in each museum through use of the concepts of *authenticity* (Pirker and Rüdiger, 2010) and *aura* (Walter Benjamin, 1935). Specifically, whether authenticity exists inherently at historical places, or if simulations can generate authenticity and "auratic" experiences will be analyzed. With these theories, I also examine whether authenticity and aura can be didactically used so that students can link the past to the present and future. These aforementioned theoretical concepts, which will be discussed in detail in chapter III.1, help assess how historical knowledge can be conveyed through the exhibitions under analysis, as well as which learning processes of a potential student can occur within them.

After performing preliminary research, I completed site visits to the Documentation Centre in Munich and the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site (March 24 until May 2, 2018). A second visit to the institutions (June 28- July 12) was necessary to review my first impressions and to strengthen my existing research. First, self-guided tours allowed me to acquire a basic understanding of these museal representations; I analyzed the effects of narratives, images and videos. In doing so, I was then able to relate my primary research to the theoretical sources found in my preliminary research. This is not an empirical study; however, observing students in the public space of the museum helped me to understand their behaviour and to see which questions they raised. Secondly, I analyzed how guided tours in these

exhibitions (using both tour and audio guides) approached students, and how they engaged them with the content: specifically, whether the tours' focus was on past events, and whether they related these events to current and personal issues. Lastly, personal talks with curators and tour guides deepened my understanding of particular pedagogical goals of the institutions in question and their motifs behind the exhibition design and specific curatorial approaches.

I developed a set of questions for my visits to these institutions that included the following:

1) What time periods do these exhibitions represent? Do these museums address the present and future alongside the past? 2) How do these exhibitions work with their spaces' authenticity? 3) What perspectives are dominant in these exhibitions, and how are the dynamics between perpetrators, bystanders and victims depicted? Are any voices missing? 4) What artefacts are represented and how are they displayed? Is there a hierarchy between them, or are the artefacts equally evaluated? 5) How are images, photographs, film, and digital media employed? Do these media supplement contextual information and objects? These questions were aligned to analyze the representational techniques used in museums, without taking the actual visitors and their encounters with the museums into consideration. The limitations of museal representations can show where a tour-guide or educator is needed to convey historical facts or contexts. This thesis reflects on the educational mission of the institutions, as well as their potential to affect prototypical students in a moral, cognitive, or didactic way. The goal of this project is to recognize the correlation between museal representations and pedagogical strategies.

I.1.3. Structure of Thesis

The body of this thesis is divided into three main parts: the introductory chapter includes the concept of *Gedenkstättenpädagogik*, as well as a detailed description of the institutions in question. Chapter II serves as the theoretical foundation of the thesis, and details the pedagogical background that contemporary German students receive regarding the history of the Third Reich. This section provides insight into these students' educational background, and highlights what other external influences shape their historical awareness. It also weighs the challenges of teaching in a multicultural classroom. From a pedagogical perspective, the larger educational context of contemporary German students is essential to analyzing their learning processes in a museum.

Chapter III first introduces the theoretical concepts of empathy, proximity and distance, as well as authenticity and aura. In the second part of this chapter, these concepts are applied to the Documentation Centre and Memorial Site exhibitions. Specifically, whether empathy to the historical persons represented can be developed at these authentic places will be evaluated. Moreover, this section explores the ways in which museums can create learning situations for students that enable them to understand the historical societal structures and political developments of the Third Reich.

The main focus of Chapter IV is the possible learning outcomes of prototypical students in the museum. The first subchapter analyzes whether specific parts of the exhibitions enable visitors to apply the gained knowledge on their current lives, which lead them to reflect upon their own opinions and behaviour. The second subchapter examines whether the museums in question address the potential present and future societal or political implications of their subject matter. Furthermore, it analyzes whether students independently draw connections between these

historical representations and contemporary political issues. Through the lens of authenticity and aura, I assess which effects authentic historical places or generated “auratic” experiences can have on the learning process of prototypical students. I conclude by juxtaposing the possibilities and limitations of these museal representations and the potential learning processes they possess.

I.2. *Gedenkstättenpädagogik* (Memorial Museum Pedagogy)

I.2.1. Definition and Development

The number of memorial museums is growing throughout Germany, which reflect on the country’s role in World War II and the Holocaust and attempt to preserve the memory of these events. These numerous museal exhibitions represent the atrocities of the Nazi regime and place the utmost focus on the suffering of Holocaust victims. Initially, Holocaust museums – especially memorial sites – functioned as places to commemorate these victims. Over the last two decades, however, museums increasingly serve as places of learning and are seen as a supplement to the history taught in the classroom within the context of historical-political learning (Rathenow and Weber, 13). Since this project seeks to examine how memorial sites and documentation centres convey history, the educational concepts, goals and methodological approaches of museums need to be taken into account.

Gedenkstättenpädagogik (Memorial Museum Pedagogy) is an emerging discipline that has neither been widely explored nor discussed within existing academic discourses. Notwithstanding, in museum practice and scholarship, it progressively takes on a significant role (Rathenow and Weber, 13). According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, the state’s pedagogical goals to be achieved through museums are: “1) knowledge of the history of site, 2) knowledge of national history, 3) development of anti-racist attitudes, 4) awareness for

democratic values, 5) awareness of the importance of human rights, and 6) knowledge about the history of the Holocaust” (*Discover the Past for the Future*, 51). Although this learning is future-oriented, it is based on the historical past; it allows visitors to draw a connection between history, present, and future by integrating aspects of emotional and cognitive learning (Rathenow and Weber, 14).

Taking into consideration the fact that the broad-spectrum goals within museum pedagogy are continually developing, the following will address the most significant change in *Gedenkstättenpädagogik*: the increasing implementation of human rights education in the context of Holocaust education. A diverse range of opinions exist in regard to the key objectives of this transformation; “is the main intention to convey historical facts and commemorate? Or is the goal to raise awareness of the historical past, in order to shape present and future?”¹ (Ganske, 60). According to Werker, the “first approaches to *Gedenkstättenpädagogik* were based on the terms “Erinnern” (to remember) and “Gedenken” (to commemorate)”² (15). Eberle supports this, by pointing out that the intention of *Gedenkstättenpädagogik* was to be “part of historical-political education. Specifically, it should enable one to deal with National Socialism in a way that either directly refers to the original places of Nazi crimes, or commemorates those who suffered from these crimes”³ (59). This shows that the primary goal of memorial sites was oriented towards the past, with the principal purpose of preserving certain sites and commemorating victims. However, the commemoration of victims loses its meaning for

¹ (All of the translations are the author’s own.) “Dient sie der reinen Geschichtsinformation mit dem Ziel des Gedenkens? Oder wird intendiert, mit Bewusstsein von Geschichte, Gegenwart und Zukunft zu gestalten?”

² “Einen ersten Zugang zur Gestalt der Gedenkstättenpädagogik in Deutschland bilden die Begriffe Erinnern und Gedenken”.

³ “als Teil historisch-politischer Bildung in Auseinandersetzung mit dem Nationalsozialismus begriffen, die sich entweder direkt auf Orte der NS-Verbrechen bezieht oder das Gedenken an diejenigen, die diesem Verbrechen zum Opfer fielen, immer wieder anstoßen und ermöglichen soll”.

contemporary students by virtue of lack of their personal connection and knowledge.

Consequently, educational methods require adjustments on grounds of these socio-cultural transitions.

The change in German cultural memory regarding its National Socialist past from communicative to cultural memory (cf. II.1) led to a shift in the discourse of *Gedenkstättenpädagogik* towards future-oriented concepts. Additionally, the political turn following 1989 had a great influence on the realignments of German memorial sites in the 1990s (Assmann and Brauer, 81). Modern forms of *Gedenkstättenpädagogik* intend to keep historical topics relevant for future generations; the focus is no longer on classic museum pedagogy, but rather on an increasing sense of attention towards the visitor. Memorial sites are progressively developed to become places for historical-political education (Eberle, 59). Boschki et al. argue that this shift has: “[...] shown that education about and after Auschwitz is not merely a ‘history lesson’, but furthermore demands to be a lesson for humanity and tolerance” (144). Furthermore, they underline the significance of establishing a link between the events of the Holocaust and contemporary questions and challenges concerning humanity. The historical context is “important not only for the knowledge itself, but also for the development of ethical-normative principles”⁴ (Ganske, 8). Thus, the idea of conceptual integration of human rights education increasingly became ascendant (Zimmer, 247-248). The new mission of *Gedenkstättenpädagogik* is to sensitize people through critical thinking based on a social learning process that integrates humanist values and pluralism, and that educates students to become democratic citizens (Scheurich, 435). Today, *Gedenkstättenpädagogik* conceptualizes ways to deliver certain values,

⁴ “Geschichtslernen folgt somit keinem Selbstzweck, sondern beruht im Idealfall auf ethisch-normativen Grundsätzen”.

which allow visitors to link contemporary questions to historical events. It also seeks to initiate visitors' self-reflection regarding intolerance and racism, in order to enhance their understanding of democratic values, based on historical knowledge and ethical-democratic education.

I.2.2. Holocaust vs. Human Rights Education

The past, present, and future can be pedagogically connected so that the historical events of the Holocaust can be linked to universal values of human rights. Nevertheless, methodological issues must also be considered in this endeavour; specifically whether one can use the Holocaust for comparative purposes. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights makes a political statement: "There are clear historical links between the fields of Holocaust education and human rights education, though they have developed out of different perspectives and with links to various scientific disciplines" (*Human rights education*, 10). Unquestionably, Holocaust education can work as a versatile tool for human rights education. However, both fields are unique, which indicates that there are some limitations that need to be considered. Eckmann indicates: "...the historical experience and the knowledge of the Holocaust have led to a fundamental reconceptualizing of human rights, and favoured the embrace of human rights worldwide and the broad adoption of the universal declaration" (12). Thus, the violations of human rights are often linked to Holocaust education, which demonstrates how closely both fields are interwoven. Eckmann, however, points out that these links present a different kind of challenge: "the links that are established and vary in each context, depending on the learning context as well as on the context of national history and experience" (14). Zumpe raises the question of whether there is a relation between memorial sites of the Holocaust and human rights per se, or if a connection can be only developed through its pedagogical context (10). This

requires a deeper examination in order to define if Holocaust education can or should be the basis for human rights education. The following section will explain the terms of Holocaust education and human rights education, while analyzing the possibilities and limitations of linking both fields.

Eckmann is correct in stating that “the expression ‘Holocaust education’ is ambitious”, since the term does not clearly indicate, “whether it involves learning about history, literature, or moral issues, or learning about the Jews, or the Nazis, or other victims of Nazi politics. But it is used in recognition of a field and it has an institutional dimension even if the term does not explain exactly what it addresses” (8). The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights uses a more explicit definition, as follows:

“Education that takes the discrimination, persecution and extermination of the Jews by the National Socialist regime as its focus, but also includes Nazi crimes against other victim groups, both for the purpose of deeper understanding and contextualization of the Holocaust and out of a desire to acknowledge and commemorate the suffering of numerous non-Jewish victims of the Nazi era” (*Discover the past for the future*, 18).

According to the above definition; Holocaust education follows the agenda of developing a contextualized historical awareness of the Nazi genocide, with particular recognition of its various victims and their suffering. Thomas Lutz claims that “commemoration and societal recognition is the top priority for the survivors, for whom the aftermath of the Holocaust is central”⁵ (122). Generally, scholars emphasize the importance of Holocaust education, as it can be used to fundamentally understand the historical context, i.e. the atrocities of the National-

⁵ “Bei der ‚Holocaust-Education‘ steht das Gedenken an die Opfer und ihre gesellschaftliche Anerkennung, die für die Überlebenden auch bei der Verarbeitung der Verfolgung von großer Bedeutung ist, an erster Stelle”.

Socialist regime, while offering the possibility of linking past to present, granting today's students the opportunity to self-reflect. Eckmann argues that Holocaust education is essential for the universal learning process of current forms of racism: "Antiracist education is impossible to carry out without some attention to the Holocaust; on the other hand, antiracist education is not limited to the topic of the Holocaust, as it includes present forms of racism" (14-15). Moreover, she explains, "the study of the Holocaust provides many examples of the Nazis' extreme violations of human rights and can help develop awareness of such violations. Of course, Holocaust education also helps students see the need to protect human rights" (Eckmann, 12). She further indicates that both fields are not overly linear (ibid.), thus, teaching and learning about violations during the Holocaust does not necessarily mean that the subject of human rights education is fully covered. One might argue that Holocaust education loses its relevance as the personal connection to the Holocaust gradually fades from German cultural memory (cf. II.1). Due to the fact that Holocaust education does not initially address present and future, the aims and methods of Holocaust education need to be reconsidered in the context of *Gedenkstättenpädagogik*. Mihr asserts: "Holocaust education and its teaching methods are often under scrutiny and revision to determine the impact they will have on future generations" (528). How, then, can Holocaust education be used and extended in order to make it relevant for future generations? And, subsequently, what role can the integration of human rights education play?

Human Rights Education as a theoretical construct is a complex subject, since it addresses diverse topics with different concepts. The UNESCO defines human rights education in the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights as:

"Education, training and information aimed at building a universal culture of human rights, which not only provides knowledge about human rights and the mechanism that protect

them but also imparts the skills needed to promote, defend and apply human rights in daily life”. (*Die Vergangenheit für die Zukunft entdecken*, 27).

In that sense, human rights education has present and future-directed goals, and takes every existing individual into account, regardless of their citizenship or nationality. The fundamental intention of human rights education is to encourage learners to change their perspectives and contribute to a democratic society. This is also supported by Mihr, as she claims that, “the main purpose of human rights education is to use human rights mechanisms and historical narratives, if necessary, as tools to improve, to change, and to impact societal behavior” (535). Furthermore, Mihr points out that human rights education is a broad educational notion, which is not necessarily attached to “any traditional religious, political, historical, or ideological educational concepts” (536). This illuminates the contrast to historical Holocaust education: human rights education is not tightened to specific historical events or time periods.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states, “that every individual and every society [...] shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures [...] to ensure their universal and effective recognition” (UDHR 1948). As the above-mentioned declaration proclaims, “Human Rights Education is essential for any education in cultures that are based on human rights and likewise needs to be included in the curricula of *Gedenkstättenpädagogik*”⁶ (Ganske, 117). In fact, integrating human rights education brings along several questions that need to be answered and evaluated in regard to methods and curricula: What and how can memorial sites teach about human rights? “How

⁶ “Ohne Menschenrechtliche Erziehung kommt die Gedenkstättenpädagogik zukünftig nicht aus, denn sie ist essenzieller Bestandteil jeder Bildung in menschenrechtlichen Kulturen.”

can museum pedagogy conceptually be interconnected in practice?”⁷ (Ganske, 96). The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights points out that, as of now, most extracurricular visits with school classes to museums and memorials have a past-oriented approach, centred on the events of the Holocaust and the represented personal stories (*Human rights education*, 10). Even though human rights values, as such, are barely addressed during the visits, they ordinarily function supplementarily to Holocaust education, where historical events need to be used as a basis to teach about human rights (ibid.). Unquestionably, both disciplines are somewhat in an interdependent relationship, yet not reliant on each other.

In contrast to Holocaust education, human rights education can be used in almost any context of the humanities and social sciences. Hence, one might emphasize the possibility of conveying universal human rights, without focusing on a historical background. Nevertheless, difficulties could arise when the historical context is disregarded. Especially when conducting a visit to a memorial site, students likely would deviate if the information mediated is not based on historical facts they could relate to. This makes it even harder to make students aware of the importance of learning about violations of human rights, as those issues persist globally. In order to reach these pedagogical goals, Shiman and Fernekes argue that the historical past should be the foundation, yet it must not necessarily be connected to the events of the Holocaust: “Human rights education also requires that students examine perspectives other than their own and recognize that human rights problems occur not only in foreign lands but also within their own country and community” (55). According to Shiman and Fernekes, multiple perspectives offer more opportunities to integrate human rights education. Thus, they highlight the interdependence

⁷ “Wie werden Menschenrechtsbildung und Gedenkstättenpädagogik in der Praxis konzeptionell miteinander verschränkt?”

of both fields for reaching pedagogical goals. In summary, human rights education can help students to acquire the awareness to refuse discrimination and racism, whereat the understanding of the past can be vital. As Mihr proclaims: “Human rights education can only be successful if, progressively, it empowers people to take action and to change social behavior in conformity with present human rights norms” (528). This statement clearly points out that human rights education strives for a positive outcome for the students, which potentially can change their point of view. However, this is a theoretical concept; how it looks in practice is fundamentally based on the teacher’s skills and, most importantly, on the student’s engagement in the learning process.

I.2.3. Possibilities and Limitations of Holocaust- and Human Rights Education

Differences between those two fields must also be considered and evaluated. The most obvious distinction between Holocaust education and human rights education is the time-based approach: “Whereas Holocaust education is grounded in the past (usually in the 1930s), human rights education typically begins with current human rights situations and focuses on contemporary abuses occurring worldwide. Human rights education focuses on the present and looks toward solutions for the future while occasionally using historical events of the past” (Mihr, 527). By all means, both disciplines have diverging origins and initial intentions. Holocaust education serves as a starting point for mainly presenting the tangible historical events of the Holocaust. Since this approach is past-oriented it first speaks to a specific group of people, who are basically interested in that topic. As examined above, human rights education on the other side is not clearly attached to a certain political-historical or social-cultural structure. Thus, it addresses that every human

being aims for social transformation and ideally prioritizes human rights as a topic for them, creating a more “humane” society.

Mihr claims that Holocaust education and human rights education are confronted with the following issue: “To what extent will they empower people to take action to generate social change, to promote human rights, and to protect themselves and others from violations of these rights?” (540). She points out that scholars: “widely promoted the concept of Holocaust education to be fundamental to social progress: Societies must learn about an atrocious past in order not to repeat it in the future” (526). From this point of view, both concepts can supplement each other if they have the main goal of affecting the outcomes of the students. Thus, Mihr illustrates that historical knowledge can play a significant role in achieving pedagogical goals; however, it is not necessarily required for students’ understanding, or to strengthen their adherence to the principles of human rights (526). One could argue that, going forward Holocaust education will continue to be theoretical if it does not draw connections to human rights, since students no longer have a personal connection to past events (cf. I.1). However, Wogenstein refers to Mihr and argues that Holocaust education and human rights education are more analogous than they seem: “On one hand, Holocaust education is not simply a provincial conversation about a situated set of historical events. Rather, well-designed and well-implemented Holocaust education can provide not only concrete examples of egregious human rights violations but also opportunities to engage critically in comparative - and prospective - reflection” (545). This is also supported by a statement by the European Union Agency for Human Rights: “Holocaust education has the potential to make a significant contribution to human rights education. If carefully conceptualized and skillfully delivered, it can open minds. Holocaust education can prompt an interest in human rights and provide a foundational starting

point for dealing with them. On the other hand, human rights education contributes tools and perspectives to further develop teaching on the Holocaust” (*Human rights education*, 11).

However, Holocaust education and human rights education have their limits, which in turn have ramifications for the pedagogical processes of memorial sites. There are three main restrictions: first, the initial goals and background of the institutions need to be taken into account. In this vein, Eckmann writes: “Some memorial places are cemeteries, places to mourn, places of memory. We must remember that even the best Holocaust education or human rights education cannot ‘repair’ the Holocaust, cannot undo what has happened, and cannot bring back to life those who were murdered” (14). Eckmann points out that from a contemporary assessment it would be idealistic to believe that Holocaust or human rights education could compensate for the cruel events of the Holocaust. Moreover, she clarifies that each institution has a certain origin and determination that should not be disregarded. Additionally, visiting school classes must be evaluated in advance, as educational practices cannot be applied the same way for every group (cf. II.4). The second restriction confines museums’ pedagogical approaches: as both disciplines are weighted differently, one cannot equate the two. There is the possibility that the Holocaust will be universalized for the purpose of teaching human rights. If the Holocaust were to be compared or equated with any other genocide, there is the danger that its historical facts would lose gravity and be reduced to a vague description of a tragedy – this would eventually defeat the purpose of Holocaust education (cf. IV). The third restriction is the necessity of making clear distinctions between the Holocaust and human rights per se: “Not all human rights violations are steps toward genocide. To make too tight a fit between specific violations and genocide might encourage our students to dismiss as farfetched the relationships being considered” (Shiman and Fernekes, 57). This argument underscores that students must comprehend the historical

background and reasons of the Holocaust to prevent them from equating this event to diverse forms of violations against human rights. Consequently, the understanding of students must be accommodated and factored into pedagogical methods. In summary, Holocaust education and human rights education are not part of the same educational processes, but both are closely linked in today's museum pedagogy.

This project will seek to address the following questions by analyzing strategies and representational techniques of the two institutions and exhibitions under study: How can the Holocaust be taught as a historical and commemorative event and how can it be used to teach contemporary social-political topics at the same time? How can museum representations be used didactically to reflect on issues of human rights and democracy? How are students directed to link historical knowledge with contemporary societal problems? In order to provide answers to the above questions, I will perform a deeper examination of the institutions in question.

I.3. Museums' History, Objectives, and Institutional Context

“Memorial sites and documentation centres are institutions of collective memory, and therefore can preserve memories beyond the lifespan of eye-witnesses for future generations”⁸

(Thiemeyer, 16) (cf. II.1). Gad Yair states that “during the past two decades, Germany has invested extensively in educational projects design to preserve the memory of the Third Reich and the Holocaust” (482). Furthermore, he argues that while an increasing number of memorial sites can be found in Berlin, Munich on the other side “seems to repress the memory of having been the center for the Nazi movement” (ibid.). Therefore this project seeks to analyze two

⁸ “Sie sind Institutionen des kollektiven Gedächtnisses, die Erinnerungen über die Lebensdauer der Erlebnisgeneration hinaus aufbewahren”.

Bavarian institutions, the Munich Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism and the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site. I selected these institutions based on the following parameters: both institutions are authentic places, albeit with different historical backgrounds; the Documentation Centre in Munich has recently opened in 2015 at an authentic place of perpetration, with the goal of teaching about the socio-political context of the Third Reich (cf. I.3.1). The Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site (first opened in 1965) is also located at an authentic location, and has the primary mission of commemorating the camp's victims (cf. I.3.2). Both institutions display the conditions behind the rise of the National Socialist by focusing on the time period from 1918 to 1945. However, they explore entirely different dimensions of these historical events. Despite differences in goals and methods, both institutions similarly examine questions centering on the Holocaust's potential relevance for their contemporary visitors.

I.3.1. Munich Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism

The Munich Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism (NS-Dokumentationszentrum München) was developed through the initiative of a dedicated group of Bavarian citizens who aimed to engage with the historical past. The City of Munich, the Free State of Bavaria, and the German Federal Government equally shared the construction costs, whereas the ongoing costs are financed by the city of Munich (Nerdinger, 10). The Documentation Centre predominantly serves as an educational institution. As the former director of the museum, Winfried Nerdinger, states in the special exhibition's catalogue, "it is a place for commemoration and learning about the history of Socialism"⁹ (Never Again. Back Again. Still

⁹ "Das Dokumentationszentrum München ist ein Lern-und Erinnerungsort zur Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus".

There. Right-Wing Extremism in Germany since 1945¹⁰) (2017, 8). In this way, this institution takes a historical approach, on the one hand, by conveying historical facts and an overarching historical context to the visitor. On the other hand, the institution takes a present- and future-oriented approach. Its main pedagogical methods are outlined on its homepage: “Erkennen, Lernen und Verstehen” (discern, learn and understand). Using these methods, the Documentation Centre confronts the visitors with the following questions: “‘What does this have to do with me?’ and ‘Why should this still concern me today?’” (NS-Dokumentationszentrum München). Max Mannheimer, Holocaust survivor and vice president of the Comité International de Dachau (International Dachau Committee), highlights the importance of engaging with the past: “You are not responsible for what happened. But you certainly are responsible for preventing it from happening again” (NS-Dokumentationszentrum München). In a similar vein, the Documentation Centre grounds its methodology in human rights and democracy education. In doing so, it inspires visitors to draw connections between historical events and current socio-political issues, as well as their own personal experiences.

The Documentation Centre is built on an authentic place of perpetration, located on the former site of the “Brown House” the NSDAP party headquarters from 1930-1945. The building is cubic and compact, with mostly white concrete used on the exterior and interior. While the buildings surrounding the Documentation Centre – such as the neighbouring Academy of Music – are all built in a similar neoclassical style, the Documentation Centre uses modern architecture. At first glance, the white, clean surface of the building seems inappropriate when one considers the brutal and inhuman events that occurred exactly on this site. Melissa Eddy comments in the *New York Times* on its attention-grabbing style: “the striking white form of the city’s new

¹⁰ “Nie wieder. Schon wieder. Immer noch. Rechtsextremismus in Deutschland seit 1945”.

Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism appears oddly misplaced. It is too simple, too clean” (A7). However, the intention of this design was not to present Munich’s history as whitewashed, or as a symbol that the past has been dealt with. Nerdinger argues this in a statement in the *New York Times*: “The structure and its contents were designed to provide sobering answers” (ibid.). These answers are provided within the four floors of the Documentation Centre’s permanent exhibition. The beginning of the exhibition is located on the top floor; the act of going down the stairs physically leads the visitor through the descent of German society into National Socialism.

The Documentation Centre displays information didactically in a chronological order. The exhibition charts the development of the Third Reich by dividing its main themes by time period on each floor: ‘Origins and Rise of the Nazi Movement’; ‘Dictatorship and Society in National Socialism’, and ‘Munich and the War’, and ‘Dealing with the Nazi Era after 1945’. These main topics are introduced on thirty-three large, black, vertical panels. Additionally, the exhibition uses horizontal tables with facsimile photographs, documents, and texts on each floor, to provide supplementary information related to the main panels. The exhibition also employs film projections and media stations.

The exhibition leads the visitor to empathize with the thoughts and feelings of a prototypical citizen of Munich during the Third Reich. This is performed structurally, through the exhibition’s chronological setup and focus on domestic socio-political developments. Furthermore, the exhibition represents a wide spectrum of closely intertwined groups – such as perpetrators, victims, and bystanders – through back-lit biographies; these help illustrate the perpetrators’ motives and their scope of actions. This set-up also helps the visitor understand the complexity of guilt and responsibility in this era. The exhibition’s timeline does not conclude

with the end of World War II, but also provides information on contemporary (Neo-) Fascist movements. The tour ends with a media board showing up to date reports concerning racism and human rights violations today. This encourages the visitor to individually reflect on personal and moral questions, such as the importance of human rights.

Furthermore, the exhibition presents information in a neutral, unemotional tone, which makes it hard to empathize with the groups it represents. The new museum director Mirjam Zadoff explains in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* that “she wants to change this, so that a more personal connection between visitor and historical victims can be established. She suggests that this could be done, for instance, by highlighting biographies of victims. Additionally, she argues that the visitor’s individual experience is key and not based solely on historical knowledge, and could be used to create further links to the visitor’s present”¹¹ (Wetzel, 36).

I.3.2. Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site

The Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site (KZ-Gedenkstätte Dachau) is the second institution under study in this thesis. The Comité International de Dachau initially opened it in 1965, as part of their fight “for the establishment of a memorial site on the grounds of the former concentration camp” (KZ-Gedenkstätte Dachau). The Bavarian Memorial Foundation became the site’s sponsor in 2003, with the goal of representing the ethics of victimhood to “preserve and shape the memorials as evidence of the crimes of National Socialism, as sites of remembrance of the victims’ suffering and as sites of learning for future generations; to furthermore support

¹¹ “Dabei wolle sie unter anderem einzelne Elemente herausgreifen und als Schlaglichter stärker betonen; sie denke etwa an Opferbiografien. So könnten die Besucher persönliche Bezüge herstellen und damit leichter mit den Inhalten der Ausstellung in Beziehung treten. Es gehe nicht nur um Wissen, sagt Zadoff, sondern auch um persönliche Erfahrungen”.

historical research and to contribute to keeping the knowledge of the historical events alive” (KZ-Gedenkstätte Dachau). The site’s main goal is to ensure that education about and commemoration of the past will promote remembrance. However, the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site also pursues further educational objectives: it teaches about the past to reach future, human rights-oriented goals. The former director of the Memorial Site Barbara Distel holds hopes that “the transmission of historical facts could influence the visitors’ contemporary, but also future thoughts and behaviours”¹² (Distel quoted in Lutz, 264). This can lead to greater self-understanding within the contexts of nationality, history, politics, and culture, as well as to the moral development of the individual and society. Today, the Memorial Site is seen as a place to understand the inhumanity of the Nazi regime. It also serves as an international place for remembrance and learning. Visitors from all over the world aim to visit this historical place, either to have an authentic experience, or to pay respect to the victims who suffered under the National Socialist regime. American tourists make up the largest visitor demographic (Lutz, 49). One could argue that this is not surprising, considering that American troops liberated the Dachau Concentration Camp on April 29, 1945 – a visit to this site has the potential to contribute to their own national-historical identity as liberators.

For the purposes of this project, I mainly focus on the exhibition in the former maintenance building “Konzentrationslager Dachau 1933-1945” (Concentration Camp Dachau 1933-1945), where a new exhibition on the history of the Dachau Concentration Camp was created between 1996 and 2003. This exhibition follows the leitmotif of the “Path of the Prisoners,” which presents the lives of the prisoners within the camp (KZ-Gedenkstätte Dachau).

¹² “Die Vermittlungsarbeit verbindet sich mit der Hoffnung, dass Wissen über historische Fakten heutiges und zukünftiges Denken und Handeln der Besucher beeinflusst”.

The overall representation contains information beginning with the emergence of the National Socialist regime and ending shortly after the liberation of American troops. The exhibition introduces the visitor to the camp, by providing a historical background on the rise of the National Socialist regime. By detailing the economic situation of this era, as well as the suppression of all other political parties, the exhibition answers the frequent visitors' question of how the National Socialists could gain such power. This section of the exhibition functions in a way similar to the introductory part of the Documentation Centre: it allows visitors to understand the conditions surrounding the rise of Nazism, and the consequences this had for the German society, especially for minority groups. Furthermore, the Memorial Site emphasizes historical facts concerning daily life at the camp. Here, first-hand accounts, biographies, and drawings of the prisoners are provided. They emotionalize the site's overall factual and documentary exhibition style.

The exhibition almost exclusively puts its focus on the life of the victims within the concentration camp. The thematic exhibition rooms order historical information in a mostly chronological format. These provide information about the methods used by the National Socialists to suppress the human dignity of the Jewish population, political opponents, homosexuals, and other victim groups. Additionally, specific data covering the stages of suffering and death is provided, whereby the role of perpetrators, as well as their brutality and inhumanity, are presented in a distanced way. However, other historical persons, such as citizens of Dachau who lived around the Camp, do not receive particular attention. Furthermore, the war as such, as well as other greater political and socio-historical contexts, are barely addressed. Thus, the exhibition does not encourage a multiplicity of perspectives. Instead, it dominantly creates possibilities for the visitor to empathize with the victims. On the one hand, the visitor

feels closer to these past events through personal encounters with survivor testimonies, artefacts, videos, and images of the unimaginable. Through these experiences and visuals, one is exposed to the striking “realness” of the tragedy. The narrative leads one through the institution and steers the visitor towards the commemoration of the victims’ suffering. On the other hand, the visitor is not being manipulated by one master-narrative. Rather the exhibition mostly presents its data without detailed introductions or conclusive comments. This provides the space for the visitor to connect with the subject matter on their terms.

This Memorial Site treats the events of the Holocaust as an individual historical topic, and does not draw connections to other genocides, or contemporary human rights violations. Based on an overload of information, as well as its didactic strategies, the exhibition sets the stage for these historical events to be considered in a strictly national as well as local context. Therefore, the students will – in all likelihood – not connect what they have learned to current issues. Furthermore, the Holocaust is portrayed as a singular event in the Memorial Site, as the institution contains many places that allow commemoration of the victims who suffered and died at this very place and thus, out of respect would not be compared to current political issues. Throughout the institution, the panels “Never again” provide a sense of emotional continuity, but do not offer insight or information towards any deeper meanings. Without pedagogical guidance, the past events will remain historical facts, which call for commemoration and to avoid forgetting what happened at this site. They serve as a warning to visitors that this should never happen again. The memorial room at the end of the main exhibition leaves the visitor with his or her own emotional reaction and does not provide any further moral lectures or warnings.

II. Pedagogical Background (Analysis of Student's Education)

Since this project seeks to examine how prototypical German students learn from history in the context of a museum visit, it is important to illuminate students' identities and their potential learning processes. As mentioned above, this is not an empirical study. This will however take into account the various historical understandings of contemporary prototypical German students in grade 9 and 10 (approximately 14-15 years old). Students cannot be generalized as "visitors" per se; there are many factors that have an impact on their historical awareness. Thus, the following chapter will first describe trends in German cultural memory, with special consideration of the transition between the third and the fourth generation. Secondly, it will examine current German school curricula, as well as external influences that shape the historical understanding of adolescents, such as the family, peer-groups, and mass media. In addition, the psychological reasons behind students' limited interest and reservation towards historical topics of the Nazi past, will be analyzed. Lastly, the challenges of teaching in a multicultural classroom will be examined. These facets need to be considered, in order to understand how differently groups could react in either of the exhibitions.

II.1 Trends in German Cultural Memory and the Transition between the 3rd and 4th Generation

More than seventy years after the end of World War II, the crimes of the National Socialists still hold a crucial place in German historical awareness. Yet, trends in public memory in the post-war generations changed as the German society tried to come to terms with the traumatic events that occurred during the Third Reich. When using the term "generation", it must be clear that generations are continually changing, and therefore, this term cannot be used like any other

factual data. Rather, it indicates common imprints of time-referenced similarities of historical and cultural constellations in a society.

For the majority of the immediate post-war generation, two dominant stances within German society are particularly conspicuous, namely; repression of dealing with the past on the one hand and acknowledging themselves as victims on the other hand. German historian Norbert Frei claims that “the tendency to turn a blind eye were on the agenda then, along with amnesty for convicted war criminals and the desire to draw a line under the phase of political cleansing already implemented by the Allies” (412). The denazification process also came across as suppressing, and broadly speaking people wanted to proceed in their lives and leave the past behind them. Furthermore, Frei describes that the German population, “constructed a picture of themselves [...] in which they were understood as ‘Hitler’s first victims’” (413). “As result of Germany’s loss of the war, the majority of the population saw themselves confronted with consequences, such as: flight and displacement, expulsion, homelessness and trauma”¹³ (Thiemeyer, 86). According to Aleida Assmann, the Germans took over the role of victims to deny and to disguise their historical responsibility (*Suffering*, 196). Regardless of their intentions or stances, it is clear that with the prevailing self-assessment of the German population, topics of guilt and responsibility were mostly pushed aside – at least for the majority of the collective – and no real dealing with the historical past happened in the immediate post-war generation.

This changed however, in the 1960s with the second post-war generation, where increasing criticism of, “the unresolved past and the readiness for self-examination” led to a re-evaluation of the events of the Holocaust (Frei, 412). “War Children” initiated the main

¹³ “Die hohen Verluste der letzten Kriegsmonate und Flucht, Vertreibung und die Gewalt der Besatzer nach Kriegsende hatten die Deutschen schwer traumatisiert”.

motivations, as they were driven by “rationality and sobriety along with a pragmatic recognition and acceptance of a new democratic style and democratic norms” (Frei, 414). In 1966, a globally connected political protest generation developed with the attempt to assume responsibility. The societally acknowledged new historical assessment of the brutal and inhumane deeds of the National Socialist regime and the responsibility of most Germans were publicly voiced (ibid.). Here, the older generations were criticized and made accountable for the deeds of the Holocaust (Hanke, 29). Through encumbering the parent generation with guilt, the second post-war generation tried to distance themselves from the past and to hazard a chance for a new beginning. However, Frei argues that this new approach was beheld sceptically from parts of society and led to a “socio-political conflict” and a quasi counter-movement in the 1970s (414). Due to this confrontation, the conflict issue of the Nazi past receded into the background.

Beginning in the mid 1980s, a third generation took on remembrance again. This time period can be seen as the peak of the changing perception of history and a “final shift” in the historical assessments. Most notably, the 1990s can be characterized by the curiosity in Germany to have a public controversy with the National Socialist past (Rensmann, 180). One significant event was the Walser-Bubis controversy, which occurred on October 11, 1998 in the St Paul’s Cathedral (Pauluskirche) in Frankfurt. Here, German author Martin Walser addressed the status of remembrance of the Holocaust and criticized the “ritualization” of collective guilt the Germans were confronted with (Walser, 12). Walser’s statement received huge support, which alludes to the contemporaneous historical development in the 1990s and the view of many Germans (Lorenz, 367). Walser’s approach does not inherently reject guilt of Germans, but rather proclaims that the topics should disappear from the public sphere and be anchored in individual memory (Rohloff, 59). Clearly, the late 1990s were the beginning of a new era, where the

modern German society increasingly accepted guilt and responsibility for their crimes and infringement of human rights. Frei describes how since then, public debates about the Third Reich have developed in another direction. It has no longer been based on political or social interrelations, rather on the stories of individual people, or of a collective, depicting their sufferings, crimes, or fates (416). The concentration of the German historical consciousness has not been on collective guilt and responsibility, but more on what can be learned from moral issues of the historical past.

Today's generation is located in the transition phase from the third to the fourth generation. Frei points out that up to the third generation, "the debate about the Nazi past has been passed on to them as a cultural praxis, and that this debate has taken place in an arena where eyewitnesses are present. This will not be the case for the youth of the near future" (412). Certainly, the death of the witnesses, as well as growing temporal distance, will set the stage for the historical past of the National Socialist regime to lose its relevance for newer generations, and for cultural memory and understanding to change in many areas. One can assume that extreme shifts within cultural memory will not be as turbulent any longer, but will likely stay steady. Therefore, three decisive factors are shifting in the transition phase between the third and fourth generation: a switch from communicative to cultural memory, the ways to retain individual and collective memories, and the approach by newer generations to memorializing past events.

The first crucial point that needs to be addressed is the change within German memory culture, its relation to the National-Socialist past, and its associated transition from communicative to cultural memory. In the 1980s, Jan Assmann, developed his theory of communicative and cultural memory, in which both belong to the collective memory, while

having a different memory frame (*Kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 50). Communicative memory is based exclusively on everyday communication and deals with the immediate past. Thus, the passed-on living memories are often arbitrary or unorganized (Assmann, *Kollektives Gedächtnis*, 10). Communicative memory exists for a time frame of 80 to 100 years, which encloses accordingly about three to four generations. In fact, applied to the German historical awareness, the memories of the Holocaust are directly shared and thus part of the communicative memory up to this day. However, this is changing as the people who witnessed World War II and the Holocaust are dying or will die soon. Their living memories will not be existent, and hence cannot be shared anymore. Consequently, memories of the Holocaust need to be anchored in cultural memory in order to be kept alive. In this sense, cultural memory is based on preserved knowledge of past incidents in a collective.

Due to the above-mentioned changes in regard to the decrease of living memories of witnesses, a second point should be considered: the need to retain war and Holocaust memories. According to Werker, the process of generational shift involves a “mediatisation of memories”¹⁴ (11). Media will be the only tool that newer generations will have to access historical events. Without gathering or recording these memories, the information provided in them would disappear from the cultural memory or become myths. There are diverse ways to keep these memories alive, for instance through literature or films. Museums can also play a significant role in this matter (cf. I.3). Yet, this presents the newly emerging challenges for memorial sites and documentation centres to address historical events, when considering that the Holocaust and the time of National Socialism lose their meaning for today’s generation. To make it clearer, “the

¹⁴ “Mediatisierung von Erinnerung”.

second post-war generation did not witness World War II and the Holocaust by itself – they experienced the social-cultural, economic and psychological impacts of it, and were exposed to the traumatic experiences of their parents or grandparents”¹⁵ (Krause-Vilmar, 2). Therefore, the immediate post-war generation had a closer connection regarding those traumatic events, dealing with negatively-charged topics such as the accusation of collective guilt and responsibility. In contrast, the newer generations, especially the fourth one, cannot relate to the topics or any nostalgic memories that might have emerged. Knigge describes this transitional process as “‘historicization’, where the years of National Socialism and the memories of the Holocaust progressively subside to”¹⁶ (448). The historical events will be increasingly attached in the cultural memory and shape the collective memory, since they cannot be passed on in a communicative way anymore. Werker indicates that history will gradually only be conveyed through secondary sources; at best they will be available in written testimonies and interview recordings. Consequently, he predicts that “historical scholarship will lose its privilege of interpretation”¹⁷ (11-12). The memories of witnesses will not be directly available and thus become a part of history for itself. In that sense, newer interpretations and assessments of past events will most likely not fundamentally change or be re-evaluated. Nonetheless, the mediatisation of past events allows one to access the historical and cultural inheritance of a collective.

¹⁵ “dass Heranwachsende der dritten und vierten Generation andere politische und kulturelle Rahmenbedingungen als selbstverständlicher wahrnehmen als noch ihre Eltern und Urgroßeltern. Verfolgung, Terror und Diktatur sind für sie Begriffe, die mit keinerlei Erfahrungsinhalten gefüllt sind”.

¹⁶ “Damit sind die Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus und die damit verbundene Erinnerung an den Holocaust zunehmend einer *Historisierung* unterworfen”.

¹⁷ “Damit verliert die Geschichtswissenschaft ihr Deutungsprivileg”.

This, however, leads to the reasoning on how past events will be perceived by newer generations. The culture of remembrance is also progressively changing in regard to the confrontation of the crimes of the National Socialists. For example, what meaning will commemoration develop for late post-war generations? Jeismann points out that “the perspective from the past will be handled differently in the present: Contemporary approaches of history no longer ask what happened, but how the narrative can be envisioned”¹⁸ (73). Certainly, this does not mean that factual knowledge of the past is irrelevant, but rather it should be taken into account what meaning history holds today. This portrays the challenge of keeping National Socialist history relevant for present and future; it must be linked to the present society. Dietfried Krause-Vilmar indicates that “the perspective on historical topics such as persecution, terror, and dictatorship, is also changing because the newer generations are exposed to different political and cultural circumstances”¹⁹ (2). Today’s German society has a completely different social and cultural background: it is based on democracy, everyone has freedom of speech and human rights are valued and striven for, by at least a majority of Germans. As mentioned in the introduction (cf. I); in the last few years, new waves of right-wing extremist political parties and organizations (such as; AFD, PEGIDA) have increasingly appeared within Germany. Certainly, their often-racist worldview has an influence on the German society, which should not be disregarded. Yet “dealing with the historical past often seems strange and detached for the newer generations”²⁰ (Ganske, 46). Emotional topics such as guilt and responsibility become gradually

¹⁸ “Daher ginge es im Rahmen gegenwärtiger Erinnerung nicht mehr um die Frage ,was geschah, sondern wie das Geschehene erzählt und vergegenwärtigt werden soll”.

¹⁹ “politische und kulturelle Rahmenbedingungen als selbstverständlicher wahrnehmen als noch ihre Eltern und Urgroßeltern. Verfolgung, Terror und Diktatur sind für sie Begriffe, die mit keinerlei Erfahrungsinhalten gefüllt sind”.

²⁰ “Dementsprechend wird die Auseinandersetzung mit der NS-Geschichte als fremd und damit weniger persönlich bedeutsam wahrgenommen”.

meaningless and unconnected, because of the temporal distance. Frei claims that, “for the Germans, the Nazi past will remain a political and moral commandment as well as an intellectual challenge also in the twenty-first century” (416-417). Agreeing with Frei, the memories of the historical past can shape the present and future in today’s society as a moral warning that it should never happen again. Yet, it also presents a challenge for museums to implement this future-oriented approach in their methodological framework.

II.2 German School Curricula and External Influences

Since the topics of World War II and the Holocaust continue to play a crucial role within German cultural memory, it is particularly important to examine the main influences that shape the student’s historical awareness. The information young adults receive and gather determine first and foremost how extensive their knowledge of the historical past is, and also what position they hold in relation to it. The following will, therefore, illuminate the school-based background of student education in Germany. It will also address what other influences young adults are exposed to, such as family, peer-groups, and mass media. All of these influences shape historical awareness, as they contribute to the process of forming one’s identity, and they need to be considered by teachers and tour guides in historical-political education.

Indeed, “the German school curricula emphasize the examination of National Socialism and the Holocaust”²¹ (Ganske, 39). Based on a state survey from the Conference of Ministers of Culture (Sekretariat der ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland), all federal states in Germany are required to approach the topics

²¹ “Auch in den deutschen Schulcurricula ist die Auseinandersetzung mit Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust fest verankert”.

of National Socialism and the Holocaust in their history curricula (4). Furthermore, historical topics of the Third Reich are also subject-specifically discussed in secondary education within the disciplines of German studies, religion and ethics (ibid.). “In all states of Germany, an elaborate analysis of National Socialism starts in grade 9/10”²² (Rathenow and Weber, 21). This is supported by Ehmann, who claims that not a single student leaves school without dealing with these topics at least once (179). This shows that even in today’s society, where the historical events are not in the communicative memory anymore, students still hear and learn about them in school. In addition, The Conference of Minister of Culture claims that all over Germany, the school-curricula emphasize the importance of extracurricular excursions, such as a visit to a memorial site (4). As discussed in chapter I.2, visits to memorial sites serve increasingly as supplementary learning places in the historical-political education of students. Yet Rathenow and Weber point out that “in some states within Germany the topic is already discussed in grade 5, and a visit to a memorial site should not be conducted that early”²³ (ibid.). Students at that age are neither emotionally capable of processing that information, nor able to figure out conclusions. Rathenow and Weber note that students cannot cognitively confront the cruel politics of the National Socialists, the genocidal measures they took, or the breaking apart of people. Students are also emotionally overwhelmed by photos of the unimaginable, which reveal the atrocities of that time. Therefore, Rathenow and Weber suggest a visit to a memorial site for students of an age group of 14 or 15, as they claim that even though young adults are exposed to socially supported television and violence consumption, only at this age they are able to process

²² “Wie bereits erwähnt, erfolgt eine differenzierte Auseinandersetzung mit dem Nationalsozialismus erst in der 9. Und 10. Klasse”.

²³ “Obwohl schon in den 5./6. Klassen einiger Bundesländer entsprechende Grundkenntnisse vermittelt und Haltungen angebahnt werden sollen, verbietet sich ein KZ-Gedenkstättenbesuch in diesem Alter”.

depictions of violence intellectually and psychologically (21). Historical learning is not only based on cognitive understanding, but rather on mental and emotional processes, which have a repercussion on one's self-reflection. Oerter and Montada point out that the brain of a young adult develops rapidly, so self-reflection is vital during this period (309). Young adults are trying to find a personal identity within the transition phase from childhood to adulthood. In that sense, historical-political learning can help adolescents during that time to reflect upon themselves and to create an identity, based on human values. In general, it must be said that learning about the Holocaust depends on the teachers' methods, the content and goals. Consequently, the effect on the student can vary and finding one's identity develops individually. Schools provide the possibility of learning from history, yet gained knowledge only shapes the awareness of the individual to a certain extent. Thus, further external influences, such as the other societal interactions a young adult is exposed to, need to be evaluated.

Individuals encounter diverse forms of historical narration within their social milieu, such as the values and norms from their family, peer-groups, and mass media. As mentioned above, external influences have an effect on development and play a part in shaping an individual's identity, as well as the acquirement of their perception of specific historical periods and events. Therefore, it depends whether historical events are communicated in the family circle at all. If so, the question arises: from which perspective are the facts presented? Unquestionably, the family can have a totally different view than what is taught in school, public memory, or prevailing historical narratives; in some instances, these can be contradictory to predominant views in the discipline of history. Eckmann points out that memories create a collective identity and memory within the circle of the family, where a difference is made between "us" and "the others", which often happens unconsciously to convey identity (67). Even if the Holocaust is not discussed, the

“us” and “the others” dichotomy can create an image of the others, which could fundamentally change how students will approach historical topics. If an individual is confronted with a certain positive or negative historical perspective since their childhood, those images and beliefs are anchored in their brain and are seen as “historical truth”. Most likely a visit to a memorial site will not completely change the stance of a student. However, one can argue that an authentic place can serve as a learning place, where through emotional learning students can be sensitized to question themselves.

The family is not the only influence a young adult is exposed to. In the transition phase between childhood and adulthood, friends and the feeling of belonging to a group play a central role and therefore individuals often change their attitudes. As Yaniv states, “When facing the opinions of peers on a given issue, people tend to filter and integrate the social information they receive and adjust their own beliefs accordingly” (5). So, individuals often adapt to the views of their friends and peer-groups, which can also contribute to their awareness of history.

Unquestionably, friends and peer-groups can have a humanistic, democratic outlook, which can consequently have a positive influence on an individual. However, this is only one side of the equation. As Myers and Bishop warn, “it has been shown that people sharing similar extreme opinions, such as racial prejudices, tend to strengthen their judgment and confidence after interacting with one another” (778). Applied to social-political attitudes it is often not surprising that young adults move into a racist or antifascist direction, even if their parents taught them differently. Here it must be added, that notwithstanding the topics of World War II and the Holocaust are not necessarily discussed within a group of friends, their implicit stances and social interactions with others can be the basis for an immoral approach to the historical past. A visit to a memorial site with these students can undoubtedly manifest problems. If, for example, a

tour is interrupted due to inappropriate comments or behaviour, it could hinder other students from emotionally engaging in the themes and issues depicted and, in the worst case, prevent their learning processes.

As discussed above, contemporary students have a decreasing historical knowledge of World War II and the Holocaust (II.2). Yet they are “permanently exposed to images of the Holocaust and the National Socialism through Western media”²⁴ (Assmann and Brauer, 88). Thus, the immense influence of mass media, which enormously shape the historical awareness and political stance of contemporary adolescents should not be underestimated. Andreas Huyssen claims, “it is no longer possible, for instance, to think of the Holocaust [...] as a serious ethical and political issue apart from the multiple ways it is now linked to commodification and spectacularization in films, museums, docudramas, Internet sites, photography books, comics, fiction, even fairy tales [...] and pop songs” (29). In fact, adolescents have easy access to any historical topic through the internet, via search engines, academic websites, and internet forums. Additionally, social media users (of e.g. Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) provide political and historical statements, images, videos and memes. Even though the youth generation might not pay special attention to the given information or visual presentations confronted with through mass media, it is unconsciously received and anchored in their minds which influences their historical perception and evaluation.

Assmann and Brauer assert that nowadays, “the contemporary youth generation predominantly receives historical knowledge of the Holocaust and the National Socialism through Hollywood films”²⁵ (88). Furthermore, in the context of teaching about the Holocaust in

²⁴ “vorwiegend durch die Darstellung in Filmen und Bildern der Massenmedien vermittelt”.

²⁵ “Besonders für die nachgeborenen Generationen ist das Wissen vom Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust [...]. Das Hollywoodkino ist immer mehr zum Vermittler von Geschichtswissen geworden”.

a classroom are major films such as Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993), Oliver Hirschbiegel's *Downfall* (2004), or Agnieszka Holland's *Europa, Europa* (1991) integrated. These films are "typical" historical representations of the 1990s; portraying either a particular event, or the stories of individual people or of a collective group depicting their sufferings, crimes, or fates (cf. II.1). Clearly, one might argue that for newer generations representations and story-telling through films are a helpful source to grasp historical events, as they make tough concepts easier, by providing the context via images. Furthermore, films can be impactful when they lead young adults to dealing critically with history and to ask moral questions. Yet Wineburg et al. describe the power of films, "as part of a cultural curriculum, more influential and memorable than the curriculum included in most history classes, and threatening to render history instruction irrelevant in the 21st century" (Wineburg et al. quoted in Nokes and Ellison, 142). As a matter of fact, feature films are a hybrid of fact and fiction; this tension is core to the entertainment value of the film. However, it could become difficult if young adults accept the fictive contents in all its facets as "historical truth". This can push back historical facts and lead to a distorted understanding of history. Even if the film helps to understand the historical context and provides details about certain events, it portrays mostly one interpretation and steers the awareness of the viewer in a specific direction.

In summary, historical understanding by contemporary adolescents is in a large part shaped by the multidimensional influence of mass media. Assmann and Brauer claim that "students' historical awareness is based on an 'unsorted fund of images' about the historical past which they gather through mass media"²⁶ (88). Therefore, students can have totally different or

²⁶ "Die Jugendlichen bringen an diese Orte heute immer weniger historisches Wissen, aber dafür einen unsortierten Fundus an Bildern mit, die sie beiläufig in ihrer westlich massenmedialen Umwelt aufgenommen haben".

distorted understandings of history, indicative of the diversification of trends in contemporary German cultural memory. Consequently, teachers and tour guides need to consider that every individual student has a different historical awareness and certain expectations, which will have an impact on their impression, as well as on their learning process, during a visit to a historical museum.

II.3. German Students' Knowledge and Personal Prejudices towards Nazi Past

As examined above, the German population is confronted with the past events in everyday life, through schools, mass media, news and several other external influences. One might conjecture that German youth should be experts in this historical topic, but is this the case? The question of what contemporary young adults really know, and what their attitude is regarding the Holocaust, will be addressed in the following.

Nina Ritz, who works as a leader at the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, states in an interview with Gerhard Fischer for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* that due to the growing temporal distance from the National Socialist' time, the knowledge about the Holocaust tends to decrease. The reduction of knowledge on behalf of the students seems unexpected, especially since the topic is widely discussed in the public sphere. However, results of empirical studies in recently published news have shown that a gap of knowledge for contemporary students exists. In an anonymous article in the June 2012 issue of the *Süddeutsche* for instance, the header predicates that “students in Germany know little about their history”²⁷, as the newspaper further reveals that students were even overwhelmed by the question whether the Nazi regime was a

²⁷ “Studie der FU Berlin – Schüler wissen wenig über deutsche Geschichte”.

dictatorship or a democracy. Indeed, this exposes the fact that many German students are unfamiliar with basic information, such as the political form of governing of the National Socialist regime and the leader Adolf Hitler – in short, the context to understand the socio-political development that let the National Socialists to rise in power and to exert their cruelty. In a further article in *Die Welt* from September 28, 2017, an unknown writer published in its title that “four out of ten students did not know what Auschwitz was.”²⁸ The article describes that about 40% of the surveyed students from the age of 14 years could neither identify nor give details about the Holocaust. The lack of knowledge about the Holocaust has the potential to constrain the possibilities of teaching about historical events. Especially in the context of a visit to a memorial site, the students’ learning processes could be limited. Prior existing knowledge about the events that occurred at the authentic place, such as the scope of cruelty and inhumanity, as well as the victims’ suffering during the time of the Third Reich, can help students to prepare in advance to deal with these sensitive topics. A visit to a memorial site can be overpowering already due to the scope of information and impressions visitors gather. Yet, if students learn about the historical past during a museum visit for the first time, it can be emotionally overwhelming, since there is usually not much time to process all the new data. Clearly, the information can sensitize them to learn about the historical past at the authentic place; but because of the emotions produced, students might not really grasp the overall context, and will rather have a distorted understanding of historical events. Thus, it could also be argued that prior existing knowledge could be beneficial for one’s perception and experience within the museal representations. Nonetheless, regardless of the challenges that a lack of knowledge brings along,

²⁸ “Studie zu Geschichtsunterricht – Vier von zehn Schülern wissen nicht, was Auschwitz ist”.

all the articles discussed above – the interview with Nina Ritz, as the articles in the *Süddeutsche* and *Welt* – lucidly portray that contemporary young adults in Germany have considerable knowledge gaps about the National Socialist past.

The question arises, what has caused this? Is it actually the absence of knowledge, or are there any specific reasons behind it? German education researcher Astrid Messerschmidt describes the stance of German students as “an aversion to historical topics, as ‘too much’ learning about history, and the impression that everything has already been conclusively covered”²⁹ (35). According to this statement, the reaction of German students reveals that there is not necessarily a knowledge gap. Rather it signifies a process of “resistance” to be confronted with the Nazi past. It could be argued that students converge with a certain distance to the historical incidents because they do not have a personal or emotional connection to the topic and, therefore, they do not understand why the events need to be discussed in depth. Ganske, however, assumes that “guilt-laden topics are the causal problems behind this reaction, as she claims that it is understandable that students react with annoyance and turn away, if there is a constant and the demand of assumption of collective guilt and responsibility”³⁰ (41). Even if historical events are often used as a moral warning that the events should never happen again, contemporary students could feel as if the historical inheritance of guilt is projected on to them and so they seem on edge. This could lead to the result that students consciously choose not to listen, in order to be disengaged. Brumlik in contrast, “designates this psychological reaction

²⁹ “Artikuliert wird ein Überdruß gegenüber der Thematik, ein ‘Zuviel’ an Geschichte und der Eindruck, alles sei schon abschließend auf- gearbeitet, bei gleichzeitigem Mangel an differenziertem Wissen”.

³⁰ “Kommt dann noch die Forderung zur kollektiven Schuld- und Verantwortungsübernahme hinzu, ist es verständlich, dass sich Schülerinnen genervt von der intensiv geführten Debatte und ständigen Problematisierung abwenden”.

more on a pedagogical praxis that is not reflected”³¹ (129). Through the temporal distance and the loss of a personal connection, the historical events seem meaningless for the students’ own lives and thus are often put on the same level as any other past incident. Therefore, from a pedagogical perspective, there is the need to bridge past events with the students’ present. Through reflection and explanation, students could see the need to learn from history and to discover what meaning it could have for their own lives (Ganske, 41). In summary, one can say that the ostensible lack of knowledge is based on a self-protective reaction, since contemporary German students can and do not want to identify themselves with any accusation of guilt or responsibility. This presents the challenge for adapting pedagogical approaches in the museal context, in order to arouse student’s interest and to keep them engaged to learn about the historical past. Certainly, with newer approaches of implementing human rights and democracy education in *Gedenkstättenpädagogik* (cf. I), the focus would not mainly be on Holocaust education with its negatively-charged topics, but rather on universal issues of human rights violations. This would allow contemporary German students to address the past from a modern angle, as they could recognize the historical past as part of their national history that can be learned from. Yet, the question remains: what meaning does the history of World War II and the Holocaust hold for students with a migrant background in German classrooms?

II.4. Teaching History in a Multicultural Classroom

Germany is a country of immigration; in the 1950s and 1960s migrant workers, mostly from Italy, Turkey, Greece, Spain, Morocco, Tunisia, and Yugoslavia were invited to Germany because of a worker shortage (Hanewinkel and Oltmer). In the late 1980s, when Mikhail

³¹ “sieht die Gründe für Abwehrreaktionen eher in einer unreflektierten pädagogischen Praxis”.

Gorbachev announced policies of liberalization – glasnost and perestroika – and the borders were opened, the so-called “Russian-Germans” immigrated to Germany (ibid.). The year 2015 marked a new era for a flow of migration based on political instability. Refugees, especially from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq (which make up 40% of the total number), escaped to Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt, 70). Without question, immigration ensures perpetually socio-cultural changes. However, it should be added, that global transitions and developments also play a significant role in these processes. Due to these facts, an intertwining of national and cultural backgrounds has led to the development that the topics of World War II and the Holocaust do not take place in one clearly defined national framework any longer. Werker points out that “new challenges in the discourse of *Gedenkstättenpädagogik* need to be considered since the 1960s, on grounds of the societal transformations wrought by the processes of globalization and migration”³² (14). Therefore, the following section will specifically analyze what challenges and possibilities arise in teaching about Nazi Germany and Holocaust in a multicultural classroom when visiting a memorial site.

The study of prototypical German students has shown that – based on the influences in particular from school, family, peer-groups, and mass-media – their understanding regarding the national past varies (cf. II.2). Yet, with the consideration of the multicultural backgrounds in classrooms, additional aspects need to be taken into account; such as the cultural, ethical, social upbringing, and individual experiences these students bring along. The educator Micha Brumlik “points towards the increase of multicultural clustering within German school classes, especially

³² “Resümierend ist zu konstatieren, dass sich für eine „Erziehung nach Auschwitz“, die seit den 1960er Jahren postuliert wurde, die gesellschaftlichen Rahmenbedingungen durch Prozesse der Globalisierung und weltweiter Migration grundsätzlich geändert haben”.

in the former Western states”³³ (143). Moreover, he indicates that “more than 50% of students have various ethnic backgrounds in some classes and, thus, they do not have ethnical German background knowledge”³⁴ (ibid.). Clearly, this is not the case in every classroom to this extent, but it changes the needed objectives of pedagogical programs. The diversity in terms of education, background, and level of language of these students needs to be considered. Primarily, it was debated whether a migratory background could be named as a cause for the absence of interest in national German history. Viola Georgi examined young adults with migrant background and the meaning of history for them in a survey. According to her, the results refute the assertion that no interest exists. Instead, they emphasize that history is central for their question of belonging. Therefore, it is more about the students’ position in a social-cultural cluster.

Another aspect is that students with migration backgrounds cannot be put under the category of “immigrants” and simply be generalized. Hence, the various groups of students, their historical context, and their experiences need to be evaluated. According to Wetzel, the main groups in German classes are students with Polish, Russian, Arabic, Turkish and Kosovar roots (*Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*, 143). They have been socialized with different familiar narratives; students with Polish, Russian or former Yugoslavian descent especially bring along their own understanding of victimhood in World War II. From a pedagogical view, the questions arise: Will history continue to be taught from a national perspective? If so, would students feel excluded in German society, since history does not establish identity for them? Or will

³³ “verweist auf eine multikulturelle Sozialstruktur durch den teilweise erheblichen Anteil von Jugendlichen mit Migrationshintergrund vor allem in westdeutschen Städten”.

³⁴ “finden wir im allgemeinen Schulwesen Klassen, in denen mehr als 50 Prozent der Kinder kein ethnisch deutsches Hintergrundwissen besitzt”.

pedagogical methods be adjusted and revised, due to the changed demographic of students? Pawletta indicates that “the historical-political education will reach its limitations with those students, if their cultural background remains disregarded”³⁵ (143). This shows the need to restructure didactic approaches to historical content on part of schools and memorial sites, and to re-educate teachers. In order to keep history relevant, teachers can promote the interest and motivation within a multicultural classroom by including students with non-ethnic German background and their understanding. Insights to restructuring history classes and memorial sites lead to reasoning through how students, who do not have a German background, could learn from history, and how diverse perspectives could be integrated. One might argue that by virtue of the heterogeneous society that developed in Germany, pedagogical approaches should be accommodated accordingly. Kößler supports this, by saying that it is unrealistic to expect to keep a homogeneous memory, based on the diverse stories that were conveyed in families (50). This points out the need to establish a universal but also dynamic memory, so that German students as well as students with a migratory background can contextualize collective memory within their own history and identity. This would, first of all, mean taking away existing ‘borders’ between the students by redefining the term “nation”. Political scientist Manfred Schmidt defines nation as a large body of people, united in a social community, with reciprocal obligations that can be differentiated from other collectives based on descent, language, cultural habits, or sense of belonging (467). According to this definition only people with an ethnical German background are included in this collective and people with a different ethnicity do not have a chance to be a part of it. Brumlik indicates that “in a multicultural society, nation must find an integral,

³⁵ “Bleibt also ihr kultureller Hintergrund unberücksichtigt, läuft die historisch-politische Bildung Gefahr, Menschen aus dem Bildungsprozess auszuschließen”.

democratic form, as the affiliation should not be judged by the ethnic background, but rather there should be free will to access a collective”³⁶ (144). It is a future-oriented approach with democratic lines: Everyone can belong to a collective body that they choose, and learn from the same cultural-historical inheritance, since it is not fundamentally based on the same ethnic-historical past. According to Wetzel, cultural memory means the belonging to a societal collective and can be cooperative for personally learning about history (*Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*, 144). Therefore, individual identity can be formed; it creates a connection to “national history”. Thus, even a person with immigrant roots can develop such a connection, if they want to belong to the collective. Mihr claims: “If there is a personal or societal connection between the learner’s present environment and the gruesome events of the past, then the chances of grounding such a moral imperative increase greatly” (527). If the gap between students with immigrant background and the German national history is mostly bridged, it will become easier to make these students aware to see the importance of learning from the historical past, and to ensure the continuity of democracy.

In academic scholarship, there is a discussion about the implementation of multiperspectivity as an essential component in the learning process for contemporary students. “Multiperspectivity in this sense could mean presenting different historical situations through juxtaposing perspectives of perpetrators and victims, or diverse perceptions by victims, which could enable one to evaluate and understand a more diverse picture of history”³⁷ (Lutz, 271).

³⁶ “In multikulturellen Gesellschaften muss Nation zu einer integralen, demokratischen Form finden. Nicht die ethnische Herkunft sollte über Zugehörigkeit entscheiden, sondern der freie Wille zum Eingehen einer Gemeinschaft”.

³⁷ “Als „multiperspektivisch“ werden Beschreibungen derselben historischen Situation aus der Sicht verschiedener Beteiligter benannt. Das kann die Gegenüberstellung von Opfer- und Täterperspektive wie auch die unterschiedliche Wahrnehmung durch verschiedene Opfer sein. Aus den Facetten jeder einzelnen Perspektive lässt sich sodann ein Gesamtbild zusammensetzen”.

Subsequently, students without a German background can understand the complexity of historical events, individual choices and their consequences, learn from them, and understand the past, while German students can also benefit from the new knowledge. If the Holocaust remains a purely German topic, it could indicate that the Germans are still dealing with collective guilt. “This could lead to a problem within the classroom, because German students would react with reservation (cf. II.3), and students with migratory backgrounds could blame ‘German’ students”³⁸ (Werker, 14). In order to prevent these reactions within a multicultural classroom, it would be helpful to address historical facts with diverse perspectives of historical persons or events. This could be beneficial for contemporary students to soberly face the historical past and to gain a deeper understanding of the overall picture.

Consequently, based on Holocaust education, human rights education could be integrated as a part of museum pedagogy (cf. I.2). Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider introduced the concept of “Universalization of Holocaust-Memory”. That means that the representations of the Holocaust are universalized; the Holocaust develops as a reference point for measuring all current crimes against human rights and genocides (20). According to this transition in commemorating the Holocaust, the focus is no longer exclusively on the victims of the National Socialist regime; it serves as an example of how inhuman people can behave, by referring to a construct that can lead to such atrocities and, accordingly, the consequences. Wogenstein states: “Yet, Holocaust education often aims not only to prevent large-scale genocide but also to raise awareness about other forms of discrimination and dehumanization-violations of human dignity

³⁸ “Dies kann zu problematischen Unterrichtssituationen führen, in denen divergierende Deutungsperspektiven in Schuldzuweisungen von jugendlichen Migrantinnen und Migranten an „deutsche“ Jugendliche münden und dies wiederum zu Abwehrhaltungen von deutschen Jugendlichen führt”.

and equality that bear similarities, if only partially or to a certain degree, to the evolution of Nazi policies” (547). Thus, multiperspectivity in the context of mainstream society could mean approaching historical events from divergent perspectives. Morsch et al. propose the concept of “role taking”, by claiming that different perspectives of other students in the class would provide everyone with a learning opportunity from a different point of view (28). Here, students with a different ethnic background could talk about their own experiences of discrimination, migration, fear, and flight, which could raise their interest in learning about historical events. Combining the Holocaust and other genocides to present the foundation for democratic coexistence can also achieve this. By focusing on commonalities and differences, dealing with historical knowledge can foster diverse cultural memories and serve for a better understanding. However, it needs to be stressed that the events of the Holocaust should neither be downplayed, nor be understood through mere comparison. Thus, the respective context needs to be included, while discussing current cultural-societal or political issues.

In summary, the examination of contemporary students in Germany has shown several factors that need to be considered when visiting a historical museum. When evaluating a group, the different levels of historical education play a crucial role. Furthermore, forms of personal relationship to the historical past are mostly dependent on their knowledge that are either shaped by their families or friends. In addition, students with a non-ethnic German background can have a completely different historical understanding. Thus, every student in a group has individual expectations before visiting a museum, and consequently different emotional involvement. If all these facets are not considered, the potential of conveying history might not fully be used. In conclusion, the examination of contemporary German students provides the foundation to

analyze the pedagogical potential of the exhibitions under study. Yet, the question arises: how can one create a learning space for these diverse students in the museal setting?

III. Empathy, Emotions and “Historical Truth” within Museal Representations

Documentation centres or memorial sites can function as great places of learning for visiting students to grasp the complex structures of the National Socialist system and the Holocaust. This chapter juxtaposes the museal techniques of the Munich Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism and the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site. In doing so, it examines whether prototypical German students are put in a position in which they can empathize with the represented persons in these exhibitions, as well as what role emotionalization plays in this process. Furthermore, it analyzes how authenticity can be didactically employed to approach prototypical students, and whether it is possible to bridge the gap between past events and the ways in which the past is understood in the present. The first part of this chapter discusses the methodological concepts of empathy, proximity, and distance, as well as authenticity and aura. In the second part, these concepts are applied to the museal representations of these two institutions. This is done in order to scrutinize, on the one hand, how historical knowledge can be transmitted through these exhibitions. On the other hand, it will examine what learning processes of potential students could emerge in the context of a museum visit.

III.1. Theories of Museal Representation Techniques

III.1.1. The Possibilities and Limitations of Empathy

In the context of the museum empathy plays an important role, since it can prompt students' learning about historical events and support attempts to understand “historical truth”. The complexity behind this term becomes explicit when one considers the large scope of definitions that are applied to it in scholarly discourse. Thus, empathy can take on multiple forms that vary across different museal settings, according to museums' individual pedagogical missions.

Assmann and Brauer define empathy as “allowing for a re-experience of someone else’s experience, through the act of putting oneself into somebody else’s shoes, or through replicating other people’s feelings”³⁹ (76). The museal technique of generating empathy by projecting somebody else’s feelings onto one’s own feelings, can be generated by emotions and is most likely to be used in representations of victims and their suffering. In this sense, triggered emotions, such as shock, fear, and terror are based on the initial event and persuade visitors to have emotional responses to exhibition design (Arnold-de Simine, 41). Silke Arnold-de Simine describes this process as an unconscious reaction, in which “empathy through emotional contagion” allows visitors to mirror other people’s emotions (Arnold-de Simine, 46). This provides the possibility for the emotionally engaged visitor to feel similar to what a historical person could have felt.

However, empathy cannot be conveyed one on one. Arnold-de Simine argues that, “empathy is often not sufficiently distinguished from other emotional engagements such as identification, concern or solidarity” (Arnold-de Simine, 44). Certainly, empathy does not allow one to identify entirely with a historical experience, as the experiences of victims can never be fully embodied by a visitor. In accordance with this observation, Dominick LaCapra argues with his concept of “empathic unsettlement” that if one puts themselves in the position of the other, the difference of that position must be recognized (78). Furthermore, LaCapra clarifies, “The role of empathy and empathic unsettlement in the attentive secondary witness does not entail [. . .] identity” rather “involves a kind of virtual experience” – one that is distinctly separate from one’s own personal experience (ibid.). In this sense, even when visitors feel empathy for a

³⁹ “Gleichartigkeit erlaubt dann ein „Hineinversetzen“ in und „Nachbilden“ von fremden Gefühlen und ermöglicht damit ein Nacherleben fremder Erfahrungen”.

represented person in the museum, particularly the victim, they will be consciously aware of this unsettling. This can be helpful for visitors to understand the traumatic experiences of victims, without overly identifying with them. As Coplan states: “Only by preserving a sense of alterity can we relate to the other as another and at the same time ‘share in the other’s experience in a way that bridges but does not eliminate the gap between our experiences’” (16). Arnold-de Simine notes that a clear differentiation between the self and the other – the subject and the object – must exist, because “an over-identification with victims of past injustice and violence [...] would lead to the appropriation or colonization of the identities of those remembered by those who remember them” (46). Furthermore, over-identification could hinder one’s understanding of historical persons’ perceptions or experiences, which could eventually colour their understandings of the overall picture.

In this case, empathy is more important than identification, since it allows one to change one’s perspective. There is also an educational aspect of empathy that could lead prototypical students to consider a multiplicity of perspectives regarding historical circumstances and impact these students’ future decisions. These varied perspectives do not only include those of victims, but also that of other historical figures such as bystanders and perpetrators. The goal in using these different points of view in an exhibition is not to foster sympathy through emotional means, but to let visitors grasp the positions and opportunities of historical figures. This could lead visitors to compare different historical perspectives and decisions, in order to reflect on what they would have done in a similar situation. Both institutions under study in this thesis include a variety of historical figures and circumstances in their exhibition structures: in doing so, they foster a cognitive understanding in the visitor, through which they learn about the historical past, and relate it to the present and future.

III.1.2. Proximity and Distance in Museal Representations'

In addition to the concept of empathy, proximity and distance will be taken into account. Mark Phillips introduces these concepts by addressing the relationship between the visitor and a given historical person or event. He does so in order to discern the extent to which visitors empathetically operate towards historical persons within the wide spectrum of representations. For the concept of historical representations, two current trends of proximity and distance are highlighted. Proximity is used in this context to reflect on micro-historical approaches that focus on a single historical person or event and are then applied towards a greater understanding of the historical past (Phillips, 89). Furthermore, the idea of distance ('objectivism') is understood here as: "a kind of clarity that comes with the passage of time" (ibid.). Due to temporal distance, as well as the lack of an emotional or personal connection between the visitor and historical events, one can claim to gain a more lucid understanding of the whole picture; this can be considered as a more synthetic or bird's eye view of history. However, in the discipline of history, Phillips points out that "it is essential to recognize that there is no fixed stance, either of detachment or proximity, that is best suited for all contexts, purposes, or genres" (95). He does not indicate what the appropriate historical approach might be, but rather addresses the variability of historical representations "it also takes in all points along a gradient of distances, including proximity or immediacy, as well as remoteness or detachment" (Phillips, 89). Thus, distance can help evaluate the balances and tensions found in historical representations, as Phillips states: "especially the convergence of formal, affective, ideological, and cognitive elements" (86).

Every representation of historical events and experiences deals with proximity and detachment in constructing a past the visitor can engage with (Phillips, 92). Phillips argues that "every historical representation manipulates distance, as an issue that is also registered in every

visit to a museum” (89-95). In creating distance, “questions can be directed to a history’s *ideological* implication as well as its *affective* coloration, its *cognitive* assumptions as well as its *formal* traits” (89). In this sense, historical distance does not simply imply that the past can be understood by the passage of time; the visitor’s preoccupation with sociocultural, political, or ethical attitudes of individuals, as well as their contemporary perception of history, determines the extent to which the visitor is engaged. In summary, Phillips’s concept of proximity and distance is useful in the analysis of museal representations and the ways in which the visitor engages with given historical figures or circumstances within them. In this chapter, individual parts of the Documentation Centre and the Memorial Site will be examined, without attempting to evaluate the correct amount of empathy or distance they employ. Rather, the aforementioned theoretical concepts will be used to highlight the varying degrees of proximity and distance, in order to highlight possibilities and limitations for learning through historical representations history.

III.1.3. Historical Authenticity and “Aura”

According to Lutz, “many scholars emphasize that visitors’ encounter with authenticity and aura at a historical place can bridge the past to the present, which can in turn be used didactically for students to learn about the historical past”⁴⁰ (81). However, the question arises of what authenticity actually means. The following section does not focus on the literal definition of authenticity, but rather emphasizes the ways, in which it can create reality. Although existing scholarship predominantly understands authenticity as a synonym for “historical truth” (Pirker

⁴⁰ “Die originale Begegnung, das ‘Authentische’, ‘die Aura’ wird von Fachdidaktikern als besonders wertvoll hervorgehoben, da dies den Abstand zwischen Schüler und Vergangenheit punktuell überbrücken kann”.

and Rüdiger, 14), its meaning is far more complex. Pirker and Rüdiger identify two dominant modes of authenticity. The first mode, “Authentisches Zeugnis” (heritage or material witnesses), is the expression of the “historical genuineness” that an original object or place possesses. This category includes objects, ego-documents, and “auratic places” (Pirker and Rüdiger, 17). The second mode is “Authentisches Erleben” (authentic witnessing), which concentrates on the subject – the visitor and his feelings. This is not rooted in an object’s originality and its impact on the visitor, but rather the ways in which it evokes “authentic feelings”. This form of authenticity creates a “probable past” through contemporary methods, while for instance “replicas” and “re-enactments” belong to this category (Pirker and Rüdiger, 17). In comparison to the first mode, which rests on the originality of the past, the second mode is based on the present. This is due to the fact that the subject is focused on the “authentic experience” that needs to be produced. An original object or space can express its authenticity, while the subject can generate “authentic experience”.

Walter Benjamin’s theory of aura is useful in the study of museology, to understand the differences between the two aforementioned modes of authenticity. Benjamin argues in his famous essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (*Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*) (1935/1936) that aura is fading due to the increasing possibilities for reproduction and the evolving technology of artwork, which also transforms the ways in which reality is presented, as well as the observer’s perception of it: “Benjamin’s theorizations of authenticity were derived from art and are therefore object-oriented” (Rickly-Boyd, 271). The authenticity applied in a museal setting, however, could refer to originals (or the site’s terrain) as exponents of the past. Thus, past and present can be linked for the visitor: “Its presence in time and space [das Hier und Jetzt], its unique existence at the

place where it happens to be” (Benjamin, 214). Accordingly, aura is generated through the visitor’s engagement with uniqueness, whereby their experience is dictated by an “auratic” feeling. The visitor’s pre-existing knowledge of an original artefact or place must also be taken into account when constructing their perception of them as evidence of “historical truth” (cf. II.3). The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights clarifies this: “In order for students to experience this feeling of authenticity, i.e. of closeness, reality or genuineness, they first need to have acquired the knowledge of what happened at the *site* and of its historical context” (*Discover the past for the future*, 15). Kaiser further highlights that original places contain a special aura, which is created by pre-knowledge of what happened there (23). Thus, visitors need to have knowledge about the origin or historical meaning of an original in order for an aura to be generated.

Original objects or authentic places are tangible remains of the past, which can be linked with the present and thus possess aura. Yet, this leads to the question of what function authenticity and aura serve in the examination of history as a construction of the past. Pirker and Rüdiger claim that “even though it is structurally impossible to have direct access to the past and to generate original experiences, there is the desire in postmodern societies to have “auratic” experiences”⁴¹ (19). Furthermore, Rickly-Boyd argues that visitors often “‘accept staged authenticity’ as a protective substitute for the ‘original,’” even though this could lead to “violations of historical or cultural accuracy” (273). Indeed, “museums often present dioramas, replicas, simulations, models or artists’ impressions of objects, scenes or the like, with the role of

⁴¹ “Trotz der Einsicht in die strukturelle Unmöglichkeit, Vermitteltes vom Medium zu trennen und ‘ursprüngliche’ Erfahrungen hervorzurufen, scheint sich in der ‘postmodernen’ Gesellschaft geradezu eine Sehnsucht nach auratischen Erfahrungen verbreitet zu haben”.

the visitor increasingly recognized as integral to the experience” (Hede et al., 1397). Holtorf concludes that it is not necessarily the actual originality of the object counts, but rather the “pastness” that can be felt, experienced, and connected to one’s existing cultural-historical understanding, in order to create authenticity (127-128). The notion of authenticity and aura has shifted in regard to the final transition phase of living memory of the Second World War, as the visitor is embraced as an “active contributor” in the museum (Hede et al., 1397). Through simulations in museums, the visitor is immersed in the past and gains “auratic” experiences, while feeling a sense of authenticity. “The visitor can then gradually become part of an experience, which does not keep them at a distance”⁴² (Thiemeyer, 123). Generally speaking, “auratic” experiences are individual, genuine and not communicable. This process goes beyond cognitive understanding, and involves an emotional response that influences perceptions of historical authenticity. Indeed, each museum has its own individual understanding and forms of authenticity and aura. Both institutions under study function as authentic places, yet the question arises of how they employ the historical uniqueness of place, and whether student’s experiences at these historical places can generate authentic feelings. I will examine how the concept of authenticity can be didactically used to convey historical knowledge, as well as how it shapes the experiences and historical evaluations of prototypical students within a museum setting. Additionally, I will determine the extent to which their pre-existing existing knowledge is fundamental, in order to fill the gap between past events and their present understandings of past events.

⁴² “Der Besucher wird Teil eines Erlebnisses und bleibt nicht auf Distanz zu den Dingen”.

III.2. Empathy, Emotions and Understanding in Museal Setting

III.2.1. Victims, Perpetrators and Bystanders in the Munich Documentation Centre

The Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialisms' main objective is to communicate to its visitors the role that Munich's governmental structures and society played in National Socialism (cf. I.3.1). As visitors learn about the social-cultural and historical-political past events, they are held at a cognitive distance by the exhibition's structure in order to receive an overview of how society functioned in this era. Based on the representations of different historical figures, such as perpetrators, victims, and bystanders, the following analysis will illustrate that the Documentation Centre predominantly employs techniques that create cognitive distance between historical subject-matter and visitor.

The Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism represents the stories of individuals and specific events not to evoke empathy, but to allow visitors to understand the relational background of historical events. For instance, on the third floor the 12th panel, entitled "The End of Rule by Law and Democracy," depicts the dynamics between different groups – namely the intertwined connection between victims and perpetrators. The panel charts the humiliation of Jewish lawyer Michael Siegel. However, in doing so, it predominantly represents social-political changes and the exclusion and persecution of minority groups by the National Socialists. The panel's main photo and its survey text depict both victims and perpetrators: the photo leads the visitor to initially identify with victimhood, while the text focuses primarily on perpetration. It is doubtful that visitors could fail to notice panel 12 in the exhibition, unless they use the elevator. The exhibition works its way down from the fourth floor. When visitors walk down the stairs from the top to the third floor, the enlarged photo of Michael Siegel leaps out at them. It shows a barefoot man with a large sign around his neck; his face set in an emotionless

expression. As the visitor converges upon the panel, the blurry background portraying several armed men in uniform becomes more noticeable. The visitor quickly realizes that this representation deals with a dangerous scenario. Aleida Assmann argues that “textual narratives and images function differently; images appeal simultaneously to the viewer and thus can be more eloquent than any narrative”⁴³ (*Erinnerungsräume*, 220). Indeed, the photo on panel 12 conveys a strong message; the visitor cognitively receives the facial expression of the represented victim. In this case, through “cognitive assumption”, the historical distance between the visitor and the historical figure depicted is reduced (Phillips 86). Visitors attempt to understand the role of the victims through reasoning, which forms part of their intellectual experience. Automatically, cognitive-logical questions arise, such as: Who is this man? Why was he arrested? What eventually happened to him? Thiemeyer points out that, “regarding comprehension of history, the cognitive and emotional aspects of this process cannot be separated”⁴⁴ (240). When we apply this argument to the Documentation Centre, we can see that the visitor’s cognitive confrontation with the aforementioned photo can additionally elicit intense emotions in the visitor. This in turn influences their perception of historical facts. The photo on panel 12 draws the visitor closer to the victim’s individual experience. Thiemeyer also raises the question of “whether an abstract, analytical description of wartime atrocities can generate compassion in an exhibition, or whether images are needed to provoke emotional reactions in the visitors?”⁴⁵ (*ibid.*). Furthermore, he mentions that emotional incentives in learning history can be

⁴³ “Im Gegensatz zu Texten sind Bilder stumm und überdeterminiert: sie können sich ganz verschließen oder beredter sein als jeder Text”.

⁴⁴ “Kognitive sind von emotionalen Anteilen der Geschichtsbetrachtung nicht zu trennen”.

⁴⁵ “Erzeugt das abstrakte, analytische Wissen (Verstehen) um Kriegsgräuelp Mitgefühl oder bedarf es starker emotionalsierender Bilder, damit sich Museumsbesucher von den Gräueln im Krieg berühren lassen (Verständnis)?”

helpful. However, he also argues against emotionalization in the transmission of history (ibid.). Unquestionably, emotional images can excite visitors to engage in a topic. Prototypical German students especially need stimulus to learn about their country's National Socialist past (cf. II.3). If the photo was not emotionally charged, there is the possibility that students would find the representation tedious and therefore undermine their potential learning process. Several scholars claim that empathy that is solely generated through emotionalization is not the only way to understand historical events: "Strong emotional engagement can also hinder students in terms of contextualizing historical events within the time and place in which they occurred, which is an important element of historical thinking and reasoning" (Savenije and de Bruijn, 832). Accordingly, when the student is emotionally overpowered they can be manipulated into a specific reaction, which might interfere with their capacity to form an individual opinion concerning the subject matter. Returning to the emotionalization of the photo in panel 12, this could cause visitors to subconsciously desire a meta-experience, in order to better understand the historical context. This is due to the fact that they lack information, which can cause their attention to deviate from the photo towards the textual overview provided.

While the role of the victims is embedded in the text, its main focus is on the perpetrators. *Ipsa facto*, the goal is to emphasize the intertwined connection of the two groups.

This tone is apparent throughout the text:

"On March 9, 1933, the National Socialists seized power in Munich's City Hall. They occupied and destroyed newspapers offices and the Trade Union House. [...] In March 1933 alone, the Political Police arrested some 5000 opponents of Nazism in Bavaria. By May, 1933 of them had been brought to the newly constructed Dachau Concentration Camp."

Historical facts about the victims are represented with the same neutral tone as the perpetrators. This factual-analytical approach does not enable empathy or evoke any further emotions, such as sadness or shock. For example, the last sentence of this text's first paragraph expresses somewhat emotionlessly that minority groups were brought to the Dachau Concentration Camp: "In its first months, 18 people were murdered or driven to suicide there". Through this factual description, one gains insight about "historical truth", while receiving no further information about the brutality and inhumanity experienced by prisoners of the concentration camp. This could set the stage for visitors to distance themselves from the events represented here. This representation is not emotionalized and thus, empathy with victims in particular is not established in this specific sentence. Savenije and de Bruijn refer to Mark Phillips' concept of proximity and distance, in their claim that historical empathy is "both a cognitive and affective endeavour, the extent to which museums can actively foster this process is dependent on the ways in which they construct temporality (the degree of distance or proximity from the past) and engagement in their exhibitions and educational resources" (834). Indeed, visitors are drawn closer to these past events through the photo; the text, in contrast pulls them back to a further distance. Visitors, presumably, will not be aware of the way the text is presented. Namely, it interferes with the emotional excitement created by the photo and instead facilitates the visitor to understand that the overall representation deals with the societal construct of the Third Reich. Thus, they must individually engage with the representation to grasp the overall connection between photo and text. Their shifted focus towards the text does not imply their detachment from the photo. Once more, the contrast between perpetrators and victims is emphasized on the photo and text: perpetrators carried out their cruelty on victims and these victims suffered because of inhuman deeds.

Students might be disappointed, since they would have expected to gain more emotional data concerning the fate of Michael Siegel, or to experience more generally how victims felt during this time of oppression and persecution. The text below the photo provides the following information: “On March 10, 1933, lawyer Michael Siegel (1882-1979), a well-respected Munich citizen of Jewish heritage went to the City’s police presidium in an attempt to secure the release of a client. SS men deployed as ‘auxiliary police’ beat and humiliated him, forcing him to walk through the streets to the main train station barefoot, with his trousers legs cut off and with a sign around his neck”. This information is more emotional than the remainder of the main text. Despite this, the visitor is provided with answers to the aforementioned cognitive-logical questions: the visitor learns who Michael Siegel was, what position he held in society, as well as the reasons for his arrest and public humiliation. Since the text’s narrative stops abruptly, without providing more details, the visitor does not get a closer look into Siegel’s individual experience. Thus, the visitor is kept at a cognitive distance, which has the potential effect of illustrating Siegel’s fate under a general status of victimhood. Certainly, one could argue that the narrative in the museal frame does not need to be emotionalized in order for visitors to empathize with historical figures. Contemporary German students especially should have enough pre-knowledge about German concentration camps (cf. II.2). Hinton et al. state: “A great deal of current research suggests that a certain amount of emotional involvement is a prerequisite for long-lasting educational effects” (Hinton et al. quoted in the European Union Agency for Human Rights, *Die Vergangenheit für die Zukunft entdecken*, 23). However, certain difficulties and limitations of emotionalization need to be addressed. If the representation would have provided more historical facts about the experience of Michael Siegel, for instance, the emotional engagement of visitors would most likely increase and empathy with this historical figure would be enforced. In that

way visitors could receive a better understanding of the historical person's experiences, but never fully embody these experiences. This also holds the danger that the students are led towards focusing heavily on one facet of individual experience, which they then might generalize for all victims. However, as examined above, emotionalization in the context of historical learning can hinder students' ability to contextualize the events in an overall historical picture. In this case, it is doubtful that they would understand the contextual relationship between Nazi policies and atrocities.

The representation of different historical figures and their social ranks during the Third Reich mainly serves as basis for the comprehension of society's multidimensionality. Through this representational frame, the close connections between perpetrators and victims within the social system can be recognized. Thus, empathy with either victims or perpetrators is not created. Rather this representation enables visitors to understand how society functioned and how it was split apart. Teachers and tour guides can make students aware of how fast the transition from democracy to dictatorship happened and what consequences it held. Since contemporary German students do not have living memories of this historical past, modern educational methods on the part of the Documentation Centre are performed with this in mind. For instance, by practically providing diverse perspectives, so that insight into the greater historical context of this era is made possible.

The method of multiperspectivity in the Documentation Centre is not only represented through the connections it draws between perpetrators and victims, but also in its depictions of the roles and perspectives of bystanders and allegedly "ordinary" Germans. On the third floor, panel 16 indicates with its headline, "Ignoring, Gawking, Participating," that there are different forms of bystanders that hold varied societal positions. This panel highlights that their roles

cannot be evaluated as right or wrong. The panel's photo shows two females riding their bikes, with their hands raised in the "Hitler Salute". In the background stand two, armed men, which do not attract the viewer's immediate attention. A National Socialist reporter took this photo in 1937, before the start of the war. Thus, it represents societal changes in Germany. Since there are no precise facts provided about the women, and no clear message transmitted through the photo its contents remain open to interpretation.

Visitors would most likely perceive the women as supporters of National Socialism because their hands are raised for the "Hitler Salute". However, this photo can be used to create a learning situation: by examining the photo from various perspectives, it can be perceived, not just as a representation of these specific women, but also the position civilians were placed in more generally. The "Hitler Salute" was part of an affirmative element of normality during the era of National Socialism, underscoring that the world cannot simply be examined in terms of good and evil. Teachers and tour guides could raise questions, such as: How can one determine that those women are supporters of the National Socialist system? Do they just lift their hands, just because they are going with the flow? Or, could these women also be seen as victims, because they are suppressed of the National Socialist system? These questions can help students to engage with the topic and understand the intricacy behind it. Students might feel more open to share their opinions, since there is no singular right or wrong answer. While this approach enables students to remove topics such as guilt and responsibility from their analytical frameworks, it also complicates their evaluation of historical reality. Empathy can be created to a certain degree, where students can distance themselves from opinions shaped by their foreknowledge. This enables them to evaluate historical subjects from different perspectives, and consequently understand diverse historical perspectives (cf. II.3). Nonetheless, visitors cannot

entirely delve into a constructed experience of the past, which illuminates the complexity of providing an overview of the societal system of that time, in which multiple standpoints need to be taken into account.

In contrast to this photo, which leaves room for interpretation, the text approaches the topic from a contemporary stance evaluating the position of German citizens. The main text provides factual data about social-cultural changes in the National Socialist era, for example in religion and overall freedoms. This contextual information broadens visitors' understanding of the extensive dimensions of National Socialist power, and the ways in which it penetrated all facets of German society. However, positive changes for the individual are also listed in the accompanying text: "Private satisfaction, made possible in part by loans to newlywed couples, the construction of new apartments and the prospect of someday getting a 'Strength through Joy' automobile (aka Volkswagen), encouraged feelings of belonging to the Nazi Community". The emphasis on these positive examples could cause a prototypical student to feel a connection to the historical events. Even though contemporary students know about the end of the Third Reich, they can presumably empathetically relate to the people who took advantage of the promises of National Socialism. Additionally, visitors will once again be moved when confronted with the end of the panel: "As a result, the majority of Germans went along with the regime, accepting the exclusion of minorities with widespread indifference and tolerating racism in everyday society". Here, the main text didactically steers visitors with its clear message conveying that Germans supported the National Socialist regime. It also evaluates their position as a "knowing" collective and transmits this as non-ambiguous "historical truth". Thus, the visitor is not enabled to criticize or question this statement. Savenije and de Bruijn argue: "The narrative structure of historical representations affects how people relate to historical events and figures presented in a narrative"

(834). Certainly, the text here allows prototypical students to see a multiplicity of perspectives and understand why so many Germans believed in National Socialist ideologies. Additionally, students can learn to reflect on representations critically and to be more cautious when judging the behaviour of the German population, through the contemporary approach of the panels' photo. To conclude, the chronological setup pre-establishes a hierarchy of information: the main vertical black panels present topics that convey an abstract and simplified societal construction of German history. Thus, this museal representation is narratively held together by representations of societal development. By highlighting the role of German civilians, the closely intertwined relationship between perpetrators, victims and bystanders is clarified.

III.2.2. Victims vs. Perpetrators in Dachau Memorial Site

The main focus of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site is on victimhood. Using the concept of the "anonymen Häftling" (model of the anonymous prisoner), it highlights a generalized experience of violence and suffering (cf. I.3.1). Even though the exhibition does not place special emphasis on the transparency of the National Socialist system, the historical Dachau Concentration Camp system is integrated. Its historical representations bring the visitor closer to learning about past events, through the shifting modes of proximity and distance. It does not fully enable the visitor to have empathy with given historical figures. Similar to the Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism, visitors are kept at a representational distance, in order for them to grasp the overall picture – in this case the victims' suffering. First, this subchapter examines the diverse forms in which victims are represented. It explores the extent to which the visitor becomes emotionalized, as well as whether empathy with historical figures is generated at the authentic place. Furthermore, emerging challenges and

limitations concerning the depiction of perpetrators' roles in this museal representation will be analyzed.

The factual overview of the main exhibition at the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site includes several individual biographies of "victims", which emotionalize the visitor at the authentic place and facilitate closer proximity to the historical past. However, the goal of these biographies is not to evoke emotional empathy in a sense, which might persuade that visitors believe to experience the represented victim's fate. The individualized accounts rather serve as evidential examples of "historical truth". In drawing connections between the biographies and the other parts of the exhibition, visitors can grasp the scope of suffering undergone by the inmates.

In the *Schubraum* (Shunt room) for instance, two portraits introduce the inmate Fritz Grünbaum: the first was taken prior to his imprisonment; in it he is smiling while wearing a hat, and looks like an artist. The second photo shows Grünbaum during his time in the concentration camp; he looks into the camera with an emotionless expression. Visitors do not need to have prior knowledge of the historical context in order to observe that these photos depict Grünbaum's drastic transformation (cf. II.3). In the second photo, he has lost any individual features and looks instead like any other prisoner. The nature of the photos' contents, particularly this transformation, emotionalizes visitors. Furthermore, strong emotional responses, such as sadness or shock, are intensified through the gravity of the authentic place where the biographies are located. As visitors enter the *Schubraum*, they learn about the first phases of the dehumanization process that occurred there. In this room, the prisoners lost everything that externally distinguished their individual identities: their belongings were taken away and their names were replaced by numbers. A feeling of "realness" is created when students consider the historical

facts about this inhumane treatment and thereupon shift their focus towards the individual biographies (cf. III.1.3). It is debatable, whether such a representation would hold such a powerful, emotional effect if it was shown in a history book or other form of media. These individual accounts are especially effective by virtue of the authentic place. Visitors are not solely kept on a cognitive distance to the suffering, as their emotions are stimulated to a greater degree. This representation at the authentic place draws the visitor closer and does not only stimulate them to learn more about the represented figures, but also to abstractly experience life in the camp.

However, the text accompanying the photos puts a stop to this process of emotionalization, and instead holds the visitor at a cognitive distance: “The Viennese cabaret artist, Fritz Grünbaum, was known both in Germany and Austria. He wrote sketches, poems, [...] In March 1938, Fritz Grünbaum was arrested in Vienna for being a Nazi opponent and a Jew”. After the text further provides overtly information about which concentration camps Grünbaum was sent to, the last sentence concludes: “He died on January 14, 1941, just three months before his 60th birthday”. Even though the text provides personal data about Grünbaum, visitors are not enabled to delve into his life, based on its factual-objective tone. Here, it should be taken into account that today the desire of post-war generations exists to have authentic experiences of past events, or more precisely, to subjectively relive the past from a victim’s perspective (cf.III.1.3). If students expect to be as emotionally attached to a memorial site as they are when watching a film about the past, they may be disappointed. Since the 1990s the majority of feature films about National Socialism and the Holocaust either portray a particular event, or the fates of individual people, in which the viewer can become a part of the represented experience and develop empathy with the characters depicted (cf. II.2). However, with regard to individual

victims within the museal setting of the Memorial Site, visitors are not enabled to immerse themselves in the historical past and empathize with the victims. Nowhere is the visitor given insight into Grünbaum's thoughts, fears, or the personal harassment he endured. Additionally, Lutz' statement that "victims are represented as acting subjects with their individual personalities and their own identities"⁴⁶, can be questioned (199). In the Dachau Memorial Site, victims are mostly represented as passive human beings, in a mass of other victims. As shown with the Grünbaum example, no personal striking facts are highlighted. This allows individual victims to become "anonymous individuals" for the visitors. After visiting the Memorial Site, visitors have a high probability of not remembering Grünbaum as a person, due to the lack of individual details to anchor him in their memories. As a matter of fact, since Grünbaum is not the only victim portrayed, visitors could also easily lump together all of the individual victims' stories. In this sense, there is not much in the exhibition to emotionally cling to. Thus, they are not enabled to feel empathy, whereby they can put themselves in the shoes of others – in this case Grünbaum – and reflect on choices they themselves may have made in a similar situation.

This highlights the complexity of how individual victims were treated within this institution. As Boldt asserts, "in memorial sites the 'victim' appears abstract and concrete at the same time"⁴⁷ (301). The photos of Grünbaum emotionalize the visitor, whereas the text does not facilitate close proximity to the historical past, but rather promotes the effect of dissociation. Contemporary young adults do not have a personal or emotional connection to the memories of the Holocaust (cf. II.1). Thus, Simone Lässig "emphasizes the importance of not having an abstract representation of the Holocaust, but rather a greater degree of concretization and

⁴⁶ "Oft werden sie lebensbiografisch als handelnde Subjekte mit individueller Persönlichkeit und eigener Identität gezeigt".

⁴⁷ "In der Gedenkstättenarbeit erscheint das 'Opfer' abstrakt und konkret zugleich".

individualization”⁴⁸ (206). However, questions arise around how concrete a representation has to be: Do students need more dramatizations in order to grasp a historical person’s fate? Could inducing further emotions allow students to feel what victims went through? By exemplifying a singular victim and emphasizing the different stages of suffering they experienced, could students gain a greater understanding of genocides’ larger contexts? “Several scholars speak about the potential difficulties that could arise through the use of individualization in an exhibition: if an individual’s fate is removed from its historical context, students could be affected, but would not necessarily understand why people during that time were persecuted and murdered”⁴⁹ (Lutz, 202). In this sense, too much emotionalization can overwhelm students and lead to passivity, which could hinder their understandings of relations in the given historical period. Additionally, when too much emphasis is placed upon singularized aspects in an exhibition, this could lead to the neglect of historical awareness concerning the coherence and development of the overall historical context (Mütter and Uffelmann, 379). If the focus is on individual aspects, one could be driven to identify with the historical persons and consequently misinterpret the presented perceptions and experiences of victims (cf. III.1.1).

If we return once more to the Dachau Memorial Site, the victims’ biographies on display exemplify the fact that specific individuals, such as Grünbaum, suffered and died there. Yet, one must be aware that this representation is not about individual fate. More precisely, for the Memorial Site the suffering and experience of Holocaust victims cannot be comprehended through a micro-historical approach of individualized stories. The visitor is kept at a

⁴⁸ “Distanziert ist die Erinnerung der neuen Generation ohnehin, sie bedarf deshalb weniger der Abstraktion als vielmehr der Konkretisierung und Individualisierung”.

⁴⁹ “Werden die Einzelschicksale aus diesem Zusammenhang gerissen, besteht die Gefahr, dass Besucher zwar betroffen sind, jedoch nicht nachvollziehen können, warum die Menschen verfolgt und ermordet wurden”.

representational distance, which challenges them to become actively engaged in linking the individual biographies to the context of the overall exhibition. In this way, empathy can be developed, as it comes through the space, in order to grasp the large picture of historical events. It should be added that there is no need to dramatize or provide further emotional elements about the individual biographies, as the authenticity of the whole exhibition could emotionally seize the visitor. Furthermore, it needs to be considered that there are diverse methods of conveying historical knowledge. The individual biographies of victims can be didactically used to initiate an emotional learning process for students. However, if only individual fates were utilized in this museal representation, it would not fulfill its goal of providing an overall picture of the diverse groups of victims and their experiences of suffering.

The Dachau Memorial Site does not merely represent individual victims alone, but also integrates their stories with the more generalized experiences of all victims groups who suffered in the concentration camp. Certainly, different groups of victims are emphasized in the site's historical representation in order to understand the complex system of suffering. The Memorial Site attempts to present the scope of an unimaginable historical genocide by depicting the collective fate of the inmates held there. Thus, it does not directly create empathy, but rather pursues student understanding regarding the camp's larger historical context. First, visitors are slowly introduced to the progress of suffering in the *Schubraum*. In room 6 of the main exhibition, the visitor is confronted with a concrete classification of the different victim groups as follows: Jews, Homosexuals, Political Prisoners, Sinti and Roma, Asocial, Jehovah's Witnesses, Preventive Custody Prisoners, Emigrants, First Foreign Prisoners, Austrian Prisoners, Sudeten German Prisoners, and Czech Hostages from Kladno. Students may be surprised about the diverse groups represented here, since they most likely would have expected to mainly see

information concerning the persecution of Jewish people. This reminds the students once more that the Holocaust was not solely based on racial ideology, but that there were a wide range of reasons for oppression and atrocities. Moreover, the concept of multiperspectivity enables students to understand the large picture (cf. II.4). This goes beyond the empathy that a prototypical student could have with a singular victim, and instead provides them with the ability to change perspectives. This museal representation creates a place of learning for students, which differs from a classroom. Teachers and tour guides can initiate the learning process by introducing these diverse victim groups with questions, such as: How would you feel, if you were persecuted for your religion? Or, if you have been harassed or mistreated because you are attracted to the same sex? How would it feel to be scared, because you have a non-German ethnic background? These are only some examples, but they have the ability to set the stage for students to engage with the historical subject matter. Students live in a completely different social-cultural society and school groups in Germany today are considerably more heterogeneous than ever before. Nevertheless, universal questions such as these allow the students to approach the past from contemporary angles. Multiple perspectives can also strategically help students to contextualize historical events and to broaden their understandings of the past.

Nonetheless, such a representation of a victimhood collective depicting the suffering of different groups also brings challenges. While the institution's goal is to include all groups who suffered at the Dachau Concentration Camp, in doing so, it provides a bulk of new information for visitors to take in. One could easily become confused, since throughout the exhibition new groups of victims are integrated. Students might lack contextual understanding about why these groups have not been mentioned where the diverse victim groups are primarily introduced in room 6. At this point, teachers and tour guides could explain how the development and different

dimensions of persecution extended throughout Europe over the course of the war. Otherwise, students could easily mix up the victim groups and not be able to grasp the full meaning and structure of the National Socialist system. If students explore the site themselves they are pressured to decide on what parts of the exhibition to focus on, as it lacks a predefined hierarchy of information in its curatorial framework. Lutz points out “the visitors might get tired and lose the overview and thus interest in the exhibition”⁵⁰ (202). During a guided tour, however, the visitor is not given enough time to process all the historical knowledge provided. Certainly, when students get overwhelmed and lose interest, it could lead to a forfeiture of individual engagement. Thus, teachers and tour guides need to be aware that passivity of students fosters their detachment to the historical topic represented.

Regardless of whether the exhibition focuses on an individual, or various groups, visitors cannot completely empathize with the victims it represents. In this way, the institution faces a difficult task of representing victims, because it needs to consider the fact that even if it develops empathy in the visitor they can never fully embody the experiences of victims (cf. III.1.1). Diverse scholars discuss these limitations of empathy as, for example, Boldt asserts that the victims’ pain and humiliation cannot be relived (302). In the same vein, Kaiser claims that: “any attempt at obliterating this difference is not only false and could lead to a trivialization of the victims’ suffering, but, at least from a German point of view, it would also be illegitimate because it would be a move towards avoiding acceptance of the special German responsibility for what took place in the past” (Kaiser, 24). Thus, in memorial sites the paramount educational method for getting students to understand history should not be based on identification with the victims. Since students might not be able to differentiate between empathy and identification, it

⁵⁰ “Besucher ermüden eher, verlieren den Überblick und damit das Interesse an der Ausstellung”.

is recommended that a guided tour highlights this. Apart from the fact that individualization would replace the victims' experience with the imagined experience of the visitor, there will be always an unbridgeable gap between the visitor and the historical past – as LaCapra mentions in his concept of “empathetic unsettlement”. Nonetheless, empathetic approaches can help students comprehend the dimensions of the overall NS system and the victims' suffering. Thus, reviewing the learning process is advisable because it helps students process the impressions they have collected and understand the importance of visiting a memorial site. Here, teachers and tour guides play a significant role: with preparatory work beforehand, they can influence the attitude of students to a certain degree. This is also essential when considering that students do not only encounter representations of victims, but also of perpetrators within the museal setting.

In the Dachau Memorial Site, curators encounter a challenging task when it comes to representing perpetrators, due to the possibility of developing sympathy for perpetrators and justifying their deeds. Furthermore, there is the danger that the representation of perpetrators is more impactful, which could lead to a greater focus on perpetrators than on the victims' suffering. According to Lutz, the dispute over how to depict perpetrators in memorial sites is significant, because it serves our understanding of the crimes committed by the National Socialists (92). This highlights the importance of including perpetrators in historical representations of this period, to let visitors grasp the complex historical context of National Socialism. Even though the Memorial Site has existed since 1956, perpetrators were firstly integrated when the permanent exhibition was re-designed in 2002/2003 (Haus der Bayerischen Geschichte).

The perpetrators' story and that their organization is an integral part of the Memorial Site's exhibition, which is repeatedly discussed in the chronological setup. In room 5 for

instance, visitors are confronted with evidence about the Concentration Camps' planners, the commanding officers, and the hierarchy of command. However, while their deeds are emphasized, the perpetrators represented simply serve as a contrast to the victims. Even the colour scheme illustrates the differentiated evaluation of perpetrators versus victims in the exhibition: perpetrators are presented on black panels, while victims are presented on white ones. Furthermore, room 5 does not represent the perpetrators by themselves, but instead has placed black video boxes with testimonies of survivors, who talk about the cruelty and inhumanity of the SS. This representational technique gives the victims a voice, and their suffering is once more emphasized in the context of the perpetrator's brutality. This technique provides the visitor with an element of moral guidance, as it pushes aside any chance of glorifying the perpetrators. Furthermore, the overall setup of the exhibition steers the emotions of the visitors in one direction, as it sensitizes their awareness of the suffering of the victims: after the visitors walk through the so-called *Schubraum*, where experiences of suffering are especially highlighted, the representation of the perpetrators follows. Based on this counter-balancing approach, the visitor develops a biased attitude and is kept at a distance regarding the perpetrators. Thus, these representational techniques ensure that visitors cannot empathize with the perpetrators. Instead their experiences are used as a contrast to those of the prisoners. Aleida Assmann points out the importance to openly discuss the deeds of those who were responsible, especially since perpetrators are concerned with remaining invisible and to not being recognized in public (*Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, 81-82). Thus, in order to construct an adequate representation of the historical past, perpetrators need to be integrated. Students can realize the divergence of perpetrators and victims and devote respect and commemoration for the victims.

However, the Memorial Site could consider through their curatorial approach ways in

which they can prevent visitors from empathetically relating to the perpetrators they represent. In the Dachau Memorial Site perpetrators are portrayed, yet, not to focus on their personality, but rather to accentuate their inhumanity and brutality. Clearly, one could argue that at the Memorial Site perpetrators are often represented as too human and somewhat harmless. The following example however will show that there is no need to dehumanize perpetrators in this historical representation, in order to keep the visitors on a distance. On panel 5.2 there is an illustration of Theodor Eicke, with the headline: “The Dachau Concentration Camp under Commandant Theodor Eicke”. This title already alludes to the fact that this representation does not deal with Eicke as person, but rather focuses on his role and responsibility as leader. As the main text describes: “After he was appointed commandant on June 26, 1933, Eicke imposed Camp rules and regulations regarding the treatment of prisoners on October 1st, 1933. His aim was to intimidate, humiliate and terrorize the prisoners”. Even though this text discusses Eicke as an individual perpetrator, his deeds are not justified in the slightest. According to Thiemeyer, “individualization leads to emotionalization, which potentially result in sympathy for the represented individual”⁵¹ (186). As mentioned above, there is the danger of representing the perpetrators in a way that the visitor can empathize with. However, through the objective focus on Eicke’s deeds, the display provides no chance to empathize with him as a person. This representation does not present him in a situation where he did not have a choice, and therefore emotionalize the visitors and lead them to pity him. Thiemeyer argues that “the conflict of perpetrators is intensified, since their deeds are only understandable through individual motives

⁵¹ “Individualisierung bedeutet Emotionalisierung und damit tendenziell Sympathie für den dargestellten Menschen”.

and actions”⁵² (187). However, he points out that this contradiction provokes cognitive dissonance in the visitor, which leads them to contemplation and a deeper examination of the perpetrators’ role. Lutz highlights “the significance of learning about perpetrators at memorial sites, as it strengthens visitors’ historical knowledge and allows them to form their own judgements about the Nazi past”⁵³ (92). Therefore, presenting perpetrators in a neutral, objective light, can help visitors to make individual assessments of the perpetrators’ position. One could argue that there is no moral guidance or critique on perpetrators, which would offer an educational lesson for the students. Although as mentioned above, visitors are already distant from the perpetrators. This influences their evaluation of historical persons and events and does not leave them to develop moral conclusions on their own.

In conclusion, this chapter has illustrated several points that need to be taken into account in an exhibition aiming to accurately represent the Holocaust. An example of this is the providing of information about historical structures, political concepts, and sociocultural developments to the visitor. Furthermore, the integration of perpetrators, victims and bystanders at an authentic place can be essential, in order for students to understand the closely intertwined relationship between these diverse groups. Moreover, I examined that evoked emotions in students can create a learning process, to deeply engage with the institution’s content. Emotional aspects can facilitate proximity to the historical past and to an extent steer student morally. Yet, over-emotionalization has the potential to lead to too great of a focus being placed on individual

⁵² “Bei Tätern verschärft sich dieser Konflikt dadurch, dass ihre Taten erst durch die individuellen Motive und Handlungsoptionen verständlich werden”.

⁵³ “Die Auseinandersetzung mit den Tätern ist aus der Sicht der Gedenkstätten für das Verständnis der NS-Verbrechen von großer Wichtigkeit. Denn gerade diese markiert den Unterschied zwischen einer empathischen, jedoch nur auf moralisierenden Forderungen beruhenden Beschäftigung einerseits und einer sachlichen, auf historischem Wissen aufbauenden, die eigene Urteilsfindung stärkenden inhaltlichen Auseinandersetzung mit der NS-Zeit andererseits”.

aspects of represented historical events or persons, which might result in passivity on part of the visitor. In both institutions under study, visitors are maintained at a cognitive distance that allows them to grasp the larger historical context through diverse perspectives and develop empathy for different historical persons. Finally, emotionalization can be helpful to provoke students' interest and supplement cognitive understanding, in order for students to grasp the historical past and relate it to present and future.

IV. Identification of Prototypical Students within Museal Representations

A documentation centre or memorial site can serve essentially as a learning place for students to grasp the complex historical structures of the National Socialist system and the Holocaust. Since contemporary German students that are 15 and 16 years old, mostly neither have a personal nor an emotional connection to past events (cf. I.1), the question arises, whether the topics of World War II and the Holocaust will solely be historical for them? It can be seen as pedagogical success, if historical events are not only understood, but stay relevant and the learned values can be applied to one's life. Boschki et al. note: "Through confrontation with historic topics, learners not only acquire an understanding about past situations, but also about the present and – more importantly – their very selves" (145). Therefore, the following will examine if a visit to an authentic place sensitizes students to ask themselves present- and future-related questions, such as: "What does this have to do with me?" As well as, "Why should this still concern me today?" The first part of this chapter will analyze the possibilities and limitations of self-reflection in museal representations. Specifically, what parts of these exhibitions give students the chance to link their gained historical awareness to their individual lives? The second part will examine which parts of these exhibitions legitimately allow prototypical German students to relate the represented historical topics to human rights and democracy issues today.

IV.1. Self-reflection of Hypothetical Students within Museal Setting

Evoked empathy and emotions, in the frame of museology, can set the stage for visitors to reflect upon themselves. Since both examined institutions create empathy merely on a distant level, it should be examined whether students are able to learn from the gained historical knowledge, and if the knowledge can serve as a basis to question their own perspectives. This section will

analyze representations of “extraordinary” historical persons and whether these representations lead students to ask themselves what they would have done in a similar situation. Furthermore, it will be examined to what extent the audio guides in the Documentation Centre morally steer the students and prompt self-reflection.

IV.1.1. Possibilities of Self-reflection in the Munich Documentation Centre

In the Munich Documentation Centre, one way for visitors to reflect upon themselves comes from the great emphasis on individual resisters in the exhibition. Looking deeply into the amount of represented groups of perpetrators, victims, and bystanders, resisters in their role as “heroes” get special attention. In fact, the visitor is confronted, on each floor, with panels and horizontal side table displays depicting resisters and their individual religious and ethical intentions. A media projection of a constant change of biographies also creates the impression that as many resisters as possible are integrated.

One example is Georg Elser – a young man who attempted to kill Hitler with a bomb on November 8th, 1938 in the *Bürgerbräukeller* (where Hitler held annual speeches for party celebrations). His story is depicted on the small panel 20.4, with the header “An Example of Individual Courage”. Already, the header is evaluative, which inspires students to take a deeper look at this “extraordinary” person. The panel shows a photo of Georg Elser, while the text next to it starts with the words “Swabian cabinetmaker Georg Elser (1903-1945) wanted to prevent the coming war”. This introduction communicates the message that Elser was neither an intellectual, nor had a high-ranking position in society. Students most likely will not notice little details like this, yet, teachers could underline this fact, by pointing out that everyone, regardless of their education or profession, can fight for changes. More importantly, Elser’s initial cause –

namely, to stop the war – is stated in the introductory text as basis to avoid misjudging his deeds as unethical. It could be argued that if his deeds were listed first, it would be harder to steer students morally; they could either be fascinated by the fact that Elser built a bomb, or bring into question whether he can be represented as a “hero” given his attempt at murder. However, the focus of the given information is on courage and on the individual intention of stopping the war. It does not ethically justify murder per se, but rather distinguishes Elser from a typical German citizen.

The rest of the panel provides ample data about Elser’s preparation building the bomb, the failed act, and how he was detained and eventually shot in the Dachau Concentration Camp. The neutral-objective tone creates distance between the visitors and the occurrences. The last sentence is put in a single paragraph, where once again the individual choice is emphasized: “Georg Elser is an example of the remarkable courage of an individual, who heeded only the voice of his own conscience”. Through the analyzed statement, the representation does not keep prototypical students in a large representational distance, but moderately prompts them subconsciously to ask themselves what they would have done in this situation. Yet, it could also be argued that visitors do not have a chance to openly think about the representation, due to the fact that the header and the last sentence are evaluative; visitors are manipulated in one direction, specifically, to be impressed by Elser’s endeavour. At this part teachers and tour guides could debate Elser’s role and the overall contextual background, as it could help students stay actively engaged. Following questions for instance could initiate a discussion: What was Elser’s position in society? What differentiated him from the majority of the German population? How would you describe Elser? Here, it could be emphasized that even though his life as a German was not endangered at that time, he was also not persecuted by the National Socialists; moral justice led

him to this extraordinary deed.

Visitors are also didactically guided through the museal technique of featuring the representation of Elser in the contextual setup. If this panel were represented in the context of many other resisters, this most likely would have been unnoticeable. However, students will be fascinated by the representation of Elser when heading towards panel 20.4, students must walk through a hall, which confronts them with foreign policy addressed on the right side of the wall and domestic political laws discriminating against Jews on the left-hand side. In addition, panel 20.4 seems out of place in the otherwise organized exhibition, since it is right in front of the main panel 21, which talks about the war. Students would possibly expect that the Documentation Centre's main content would reasonably deal with the war and negatively charged topics such as guilt and responsibility, as the institution is built at an authentic place of perpetration (cf. I.3.1). Yet, panel 21 describes the war in a factual way, explaining historical developments in the time span from 1939 to 1941. Furthermore, of all these represented political, and social-cultural movements, the story about Elser is placed between the representations of perpetrators and victims, and demonstrates that if he had been successful, it would have had an enormous impact on the entire German population. Therefore, the representation of Elser's deed receives more attention than the actual war; through the exhibition design Elser stands out as a hero. This does not necessarily mean that the exhibition manipulates students to glorify Elser as person, but it can steer the visitors to reflect upon themselves.

The use of audio guides provides another way for self-reflection. The Documentation Centre offers audio guides in diverse languages, such as German, English, Hebrew, French, Spanish, Russian, Polish, and Italian. Special tours for students, though, are exclusively provided in German and serve as an educational mandate for German students. Compared to the other

offered audio guides they are not as factual, but rather emotionally and didactically oriented towards young adults, in order to keep them interested. Right at the beginning, the audio guide introduces students to the task of detecting historical connections and to thinking about how the history of National Socialism relates to them personally. By asking for their personal assessment, it forces the students to question themselves. The audio guide for students mainly leads them to a selection of main panels showing them the societal development in Germany during the Third Reich.

The audio guide session can be divided into three parts: An introduction, with a question engaging students to learn more about the presented topic; the main message providing historical facts, often accompanied by music, changing voices, original recordings, and noises; and lastly, a personal question, about one's stance or point of view on topics in a social-cultural cluster, in order to link gained historical knowledge to their personal lives. For instance, the audio guide at panel 13 confronts the students with the following questions: "Exclusion starts already on a small scale; for example, when someone wears different clothes, has a different musical taste, or is a fan of another soccer club. Have you ever experienced someone being excluded? What can you do against it?"⁵⁴ With this approach, it can clarify to students that the image of the other can start with minor ostracism and is not necessarily based on a distinctive political mindset or ethical background. These questions are taken out of the national-historical context and allow every student to question their stance towards others (cf. II.4). Since it addresses the diverse interests of students, such as music, fashion, or sports, it is likely that everyone can find a personal

⁵⁴ "Ausgrenzung beginnt bereits im Kleinen; zum Beispiel wenn jemand andere Kleidung trägt, einen anderen Musikgeschmack hat, oder Fan eines anderen Fußballvereins ist. Hast du schon einmal erlebt, dass jemand ausgeschlossen wurde? Was kannst du dagegen tun?"

connection to it.

Furthermore, the audio guide sensitizes students to question their own socio-political stance. An example is the question at panel 31: “Where have you encountered right-wing extremist ideas? What are your arguments against xenophobia and racism?”⁵⁵ These questions do not let the students deny that racism and xenophobia exist in society but put it out as a fact. In addition, the second question proposes that students find specific arguments against racism. Students most likely will not think about these societal issues, unless they have experienced them personally. Yet it can motivate them to deeply engage with this topic – not just to consolidate their knowledge that it is immoral, but to give them the chance to define the reasons behind those ideologies. This could set the stage for students to stand up against any form of social marginalization and to prevent the spread of anti-democratic thinking in the present and future.

The offered audio guides can help students achieve a successful learning process in the main exhibition of the Documentation Centre. Since students listen individually to the audio guides, they are personally addressed, and it might hinder them to pin the handling with this topic to other classmates. Compared to open discussions within a group, students in this case are given free space, which could prevent them from feeling uncomfortable talking about sensitive themes, especially when they have had personal experiences. Through this array of personal questions, contemporary students are sensitized to link the historical themes.

⁵⁵ “Wo bist du schon einmal rechtsextremen Gedankengut begegnet? Was für Argumente hast du gegen Fremdenfeindlichkeit und Rassismus?”

IV.1.2. Possibilities of Self-reflection in the Dachau Memorial Site

The possibilities of self-reflection in the Dachau Memorial Site cannot be equated with the Munich Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism, since the goals in each institution are pivotally different. In the Memorial Site, with its focus on victims, perpetrators are mostly represented as a contrast point, where the groups are distinguished upfront in black-and-white. As examined in chapter III.1.2.1, the depiction of the model of the anonymous prisoner presents the historical stages of suffering. Even though individual fates are integrated, victims are presented as non-acting subjects, which consequently does not enable self-reflection.

However, there are potential parts at the exhibition, where juxtaposing attitudes and behaviours of individual imprisoned are represented, which could lead students to reflect upon their attitudes and what they would have done in a similar situation.

For instance, on panel 8.4, the lives of prisoners in special function (Kapos) are represented. Examples of different Kapos are provided, and how they made different decisions in similar situations. A positive example is Karl Frey, with the description: “Possibilities to work against the terror and extermination system of the SS”, who had the courage to stand up against the guards of the concentration camp, even though it meant that he put his life in danger for others. Next to the information about Karl Frey, negative examples of prisoners with special functions and their inhumane and brutal actions towards the other prisoners are listed. The text presents both; “good” and “bad” examples in a neutral tone, without reference to moral or educational lessons. It is striking that the dichotomy of the represented individuals is not explicitly emphasized, as they get the same value in the representational mode. Through the somewhat generalized illustration, the deep meaning is not immediately fully exploited and keeps the visitors at a distance. The question arises, whether students can react cognitively to the

contrast without explicit pedagogical guidance. Will they recognize the contrast despite the neutral narrative of the different examples? Clearly one might argue that students could walk away from the representation, without understanding the crucial meaning behind it, even though this representation has the potential to highlight individual behaviour, which could emotionalize students to engage deeper and to reflect upon themselves.

The exhibition, however, avoids manipulating visitors didactically, emotionally, or through a narrative frame toward one specific interpretation. Unquestionably, students could take away a moral lesson. If the deeds were clearly divided into good and bad examples, they would be enthralled by the brave behaviour of Frey and say that he did the right thing. At the same time, students could judge the behaviour of the “negative” examples and agree that the Kapos acted immorally. Yet it could be argued that in this sense students would evaluate the Kapos’ position upfront, without grasping what the representation is really about. Since prototypical students presumably do not have prior existing knowledge (cf. II.3) about the Kapos’ role in the camp system, they first need to comprehend the historical context, in order to put themselves in the shoes of the other person and to truly self-reflect. At this point teachers or tour guides could provide information about the Kapos’ role, to make students aware of the precarious situation they were in: SS-guards delegated duties to the Kapos, often they had to supervise other prisoners, were responsible for administrative work, but were also used for “dirty” work; to afflict damage or pain to the other prisoners. Therefore, it “is no surprise that they were intensely disliked by other inmates” (Pierpaoli, 165) Yet, if they did not obey or “undertake such duties”, they were under the “ever-present threat of death or harm to their families” (ibid.). With didactic questions, teachers and tour guides could initiate students to thinking about the representation more in depth: What other possibilities did Kapos have in their position? Can you really say that

the people in the “negative” examples acted immorally, for just following rules? Are the Kapos perpetrators or also victims? Through intensely engaging with the historical context, emotional responses, such as pity and sadness, could be generated. That way students can develop empathy for the “good” and “bad” Kapos, which allows them to change their perspective (cf. II.4). This could automatically lead students to ask themselves what they would have done in this situation. In this case, black-and-white thinking can be rescinded and rather the complexity of guilt and responsibility should be explained or discussed. This is similar to the representation of the two women raising their hands for the “Hitler Salute” in the Documentation Centre (cf. III.2.1), where it was examined that one cannot just evaluate the world in simple terms of good and evil. Applied to the representation at the Memorial Site, as students learn about the position of Kapos and understand that diverse points of history need to be taken into account, they will most likely be more cautious when evaluating the Kapos’ historical role. Thus, it could be argued that if the exhibition was over-didactic by simply juxtaposing the deeds of the Kapos, there would be no room for students to understand and critically think about the overall picture.

Nonetheless, it is possible that visitors will oversee this information, due to the overload of presented facts in the exhibition, unless they receive some guidance to the presented moral challenges. Thus, teachers and tour guides could point out this representation: this panel does not provide a typical example, it could be used to excite and motivate students to learn from it and to understand that individual choices can make a huge difference. Regardless of what historical knowledge students have, or what their ethnicity is, this is a universal topic, which can help students to think about moral issues and their role in a collective. Certainly, there is no scale that determines what the right museal technique would be to integrate human rights and democracy education, so that students can learn from the past for the future. Yet, the representation of the

Kapos gives students the chance to question their own perspectives, if they are willing to profoundly engage with the topic.

IV.2. Contemporary Relevance in Museal Setting

Similar to the examination of whether personal connections to students can be established, it needs to be taken into account to what extent the institutions under study are interested and able to link past events to contemporary social and political issues. New museology emphasizes, “the responsibility of museums to reflect on current social issues and facilitate public debate” (Arnold-de Simine, 8). As a result of social-cultural and political changes, contemporary young adults have a more heterogeneous perspective on the National Socialist regime. Therefore, Ganske claims, the change of remembrance culture – based on temporal distance – demands new pedagogical approaches for memorial sites (46). Today, the Holocaust is often seen as moral counterpoint for current issues (Leggewie and Meyer, 19). The memories of the Holocaust are increasingly taken out of context, whereby the Holocaust is universalized and not necessarily seen as a one-time event (ibid.). This modern approach could help visitors gain a general understanding of topics with complex structures, such as genocide. With this in mind, the following section will analyze the parts of the exhibitions that allow the visitor to relate its historical topic to current human rights and democracy issues. This section will also point out where the approach of the exhibition remains solely in the vein of Holocaust education. Moreover, the role that the authentic place plays in historical political learning will be examined.

IV.2.1. Contemporary Relevance in the Munich Documentation Centre

The Documentation Centre pursues its educational objectives by drawing clear connections from the past to the present. This is done to sensitize its visitors to the concepts of human rights and democracy. The main exhibition, for example, presents the headlines of its main panels in the present tense as a representative technique; the overall setup illuminates the German societal development during the Third Reich, yet, through the present tense form the representation could stand for a general model of society. For instance, on the fourth floor, the headline on panel 10 reads: “The Path to Power – Democracy can Fail”. Since this representation deals with past events, one would assume that the headline would be written in the past tense; “Democracy failed”. It is debatable, whether students would implicitly notice the use of this grammatical tense during a one-time visit, or whether they could recognize the overall connection it draws to the antidemocratic traits of the National Socialist regime. Regardless of whether these titles are interpreted as meaningful for the purpose of teaching history, or drawing connections to certain social-political forms, the meaning of the term “democracy” needs to be explained – it is not necessarily clear for students what this political term means (cf. II.3). Here, teachers and tour guides could play an important part in either providing an explanation of this term, or initiating a discussion about it to facilitate student engagement. Teachers and tour guides could highlight the exhibition’s use of the present tense in its headings, which gives the impression of an ongoing process. In doing so, educators could use the historical context provided, in this case National Socialist, as basis to examine the ways in which a society can function or develop.

Due to the fact that the aforementioned headline does not specifically mention Germany during the Third Reich, this could easily be segued into a discussion about the current political situation in Germany. For example, the new waves of right-wing extremist political parties and

organizations (such as the AFD and PEGIDA) that increasingly appear within Germany could be discussed (cf. I.1.1). Certainly, the racist worldviews of these parties and organizations have an immense influence on German society, which should not be disregarded. Thus, the past could be linked to the present by comparing the sociocultural and political systems and developments during National Socialism.

Furthermore, through its generalization the headline does not explicitly relate to a specific country and could therefore be compared to other political systems and societies. At this point, students from an immigrant background could share their experiences about their countries of origin, or what they have heard from their parents. Indeed, multiperspectivity can broaden students' understanding of past events (cf. II.4). However, contextual connections must be clarified in order to prevent students from equating diverse societal constructs with each other. This can be avoided, for instance, by clarifying that not all dictatorships result in genocide when teaching students about the National Socialist regime. All together though, the representation of the outcome, and the impact from the destruction of society during the Third Reich, is a helpful way for visitors to understand human rights and democracy issues. Thus, the gained knowledge does not solely remain historical, but could make students attentive to the values of the democratic state they live in and aware of the fact that they should never take these values for granted.

Another part of the main exhibition that could be used didactically to link the past to the present is the integration of original film footage taken at the authentic place of the Documentation Centre. First, a "historical experience" can be generated for visitors by their presence at the original place coinciding with their viewing of this authentic footage of past events. Furthermore, the museal technique of juxtaposing different time periods by projecting

them on film simultaneously, prompts visitors to reflect on moral-philosophical and political issues.

On the third and fourth floors, visitors can encounter the footage showing four short silent black-and-white film clips (each less than two minutes). These project sequences of past incidents on loop. The exhibition's architectural design fashions a sublime visual experience for the visitor: screens attached to the window allow one to watch the film clips and simultaneously look outside the window directly at the original place where the portrayed historical events took place. Furthermore, due to the open floor plan on parts of the third and fourth floor, visitors are steered to view each short film from either floor. Two of the film clips hanging one above the other both document historical events that occurred at the *Königsplatz* (Kings Square), set in different time periods. The film clip on the fourth floor represents the meaning of the *Königsplatz* terrain, which was used for political purposes during the Third Reich. Moreover, further details about the footage's content are provided on panel 19, printed on a concrete wall next to the windows. The former *Ehrentempel* (Temple of Honour), which used to be at the *Königsplatz* "became a 'sacred place' of pseudo-religious ritual". In short, the film depicts different parades, in which Adolf Hitler comforts a little girl and lays a wreath in front of a memorial. On the third floor, the footage depicts the procedure of the *Ehrentempel* being blasted in 1947, shortly after World War II, from different perspectives.

The *Königsplatz* serves as a tangible remain of the past, which enables the visitor's immediacy to the past (cf. III.1.3). On the other hand, these film clips manage to overcome the limitations of time and to connect the visitor with the original place. Edith Blaschitz claims that "digital technologies in the context of contemporary *Gedenkstättenpädagogik*, promise new dimensions of sensual experiences, meaning that the simultaneity of visual experience and one's

presence at the authentic place brings to close proximity of spatial and temporal presence of the viewer and the historical moment”⁵⁶ (51-56). The integration of film clips at the authentic place can be didactically used differently than in the classroom: students are at the place where the events being portrayed occurred, which might lead them to an express amazement: “Wow, this actually happened right here”. As students acknowledge the representation as evidence for “historical truth”, they are able to believe or experience authenticity. Assmann and Brauer note that “film links the historical place with the historical past: viewers are invited to participate imaginatively, which allows viewers to re-experience past events in a symbolically mediated way”⁵⁷ (90). Visitors become active contributors through their engagement with the place, whereas film footage can supplement this by generating a visual and somewhat “auratic” experience of the historical events.

However, the exhibition also reflects that students cannot become fully immersed in an authentic historical experience of a stage set based on the museal technique of juxtaposing simultaneously projected time periods. Furthermore, through its architectural design, the exhibition opens up the views to the authentic place. Although this is not an unobstructed view, as it self-reflects on the difference between past and present. Consequently, visitors are not preoccupied with the past – they are instead placed in the position of a marked observer between distance and proximity. As examined in chapter I.3.1, the Documentation Centre displays information in a didactic and in chronological way, charting the development of the Third Reich

⁵⁶ “Damit verheißen die digitalen Technologien im Bereich der zeitgeschichtlichen Vermittlungs- und Bildungsarbeit neue Dimensionen von Wahrnehmungserlebnissen [...]. Die dadurch ermöglichte Gleichzeitigkeit von visuellem Erleben und der Anwesenheit am Ort des Geschehens nähert sich [...], der räumlichen und zeitlichen Anwesenheit der Betrachter/innen im historischen Moment”.

⁵⁷ “Die Bilder von historischen Filmen, die den historischen Ort mit der historischen Zeit verknüpfen, laden demgegenüber die Betrachter zur imaginativen Teilnahme ein [...] ein symbolisch vermitteltes Nacherleben ermöglichen”.

along a timeline, so that the visitor can empathize with a prototypical citizen of Munich during that time. Through the exhibition's design, visitors have the opportunity of viewing the footage on either floor. Therefore, no information is held back, allowing them to gain insight into what happened a few years later. One might argue that this curatorial approach disrupts the sense of empathy that the visitor builds with a typical Munich citizen. However, in the majority of cases, visitors are already aware of the outcome of World War II. Despite this, the juxtaposing of different time periods through these film clips highlights the contrast between German sociopolitical changes during and after National Socialism for students. Students are aware that they are in the "here" and "now", as they shift their eyes between the screens. In this way, they cannot delve into the past, especially not when perceiving the authentic place that is right in front of them. In this sense, cognitive learning is facilitated: students can grasp the context, concepts and structures of the past, which can create a learning experience in which their gained knowledge can be applied to the present day. The representation of sociopolitical changes can prompt students to think about current moral-philosophical and political issues. Thus, the *Königsplatz* as an authentic place can serve as a symbol of how quickly societies can change. The awareness through the integration of film clips can be used didactically to link the past to the present.

We have seen that these projected film clips at the authentic place have the capacity to help visitors draw connections between past and present. However, in doing so, some challenges arise due to the museal setting. As mentioned above, panel 19 is printed on a concrete wall and not in large-format on a black vertical panel, as the other thirty-three main topics are (cf. I.3.1). Thus, panel 19 is rather unobtrusive: if students tour the exhibition by themselves and follow the black panels without paying special attention to the panel numbers, they will presumably miss

this specific panel. One must also independently make the connection between panel 19 and the film clips, since this is nowhere indicated in the panel's text. This could result in students not really understanding the message of the footage and instead believing that it serves an entertainment function to loosen the overall factual exhibition. Furthermore, there is no information about the film clip from the third floor, which could prevent students from seeing the connection between both videos that represent historical occurrences on the *Königsplatz* in different eras. In this sense, visitors might not perceive the authenticity of the place. In the Documentation Centre, authenticity is not "apparent" and must be generated. This stands in contrast to the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, where visitors come expecting to encounter authenticity. Therefore, teachers and tour guides play a significant role in didactically steering students towards to connect the past and present. This enables them to grasp certain historical meanings so that they can be linked to the present. This can be as a long-lasting learning outcome, especially if local Munich students walk by the *Königsplatz*, and are always reminded of how fast a society can change. In this way, they are also reminded that they should cherish and defend their contemporary democratic state.

IV.2.2. Contemporary Relevance in the Dachau Memorial Site

Compared to the Documentation Centre of the National Socialists, it is more complex to find reference points in the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, which connect past events to the present. This is due to the fact that this institution focuses on the documentation and remembrance of the past. Thus, the question arises of whether a visit to the Memorial Site can sensitize students to reflect upon current ethical and political issues.

Several scholars emphasize that the past can be bridged to the present through an encounter with authenticity and aura at a historical place (cf. III.1.3). Assmann and Brauer claim that “memorial sites are a ‘here’ without a ‘now’”⁵⁸ (90). If we apply this to the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, we can examine how visitors learn about the dehumanization process that prisoners had to go through in the *Schubraum* (cf. III.2). The visitors’ presence at the original place in which inhumane events occurred, provokes a moment of shock when they come to the realization that these events truly happened at that exact spot. Consequently, a feeling of “realness” can be generated where aura is expressed. The American historian Charles Steven Maier contradicts the argument that aura can help students to understand what happened at the original place. Maier warns that “memories associated with historical places could become passive experiences – they remain melancholic and almost restful in their grief [...] their aesthetics overpower their moral dimensions”⁵⁹ (332). Accordingly, aura mostly serves past-oriented approaches and does not initiate reflection on the meaning of the past for the present. Conversely, one could argue that aura and authenticity are conducive as evidence for “historical truth”, as the original place is a tangible remnant of the past, in the present (cf. III.1.3). “Even though students are physically brought in closer proximity to the past within spatial dimensions, they will be aware of the time differences”⁶⁰ (Assmann and Brauer, 90). Visitors cannot immerse themselves in a construction of the past and feel empathy for the victims (cf. III.2). However, the experience of being temporary present at the authentic place can

⁵⁸ “In diesem Sinne sind die Gedenkstätten ein Hier ohne Jetzt, [...], in das die Besucher einsteigen”.

⁵⁹ “Mit Orten verbundene Erinnerungen laufen Gefahr, passiv zu werden – sie bleiben melancholisch und nahezu bequem in ihrer Trauer [...] Ihre ästhetische Dimension überwältigt ihre moralische Dimension”.

⁶⁰ “Während sie sich an diesem Ort an die Vergangenheit in der räumlichen Dimension physisch annähern können, wird zugleich die Differenz in der Zeitdimension erfahren”.

encourage visitors to bridge past events to the present. While visitors contemplate the violations against human rights that took place in the Dachau Concentration Camp, they might appreciate their own individual liberties. This can also lead one to think about various facets of current global issues, such as slavery, torture and discrimination. Therefore, it can be reasoned that there are parts within the main exhibition of the Memorial Site, which hold the potential for didactically use in future-oriented learning.

Indeed, the historical events of World War II and the Holocaust have a significant function for historical-political learning at an authentic place. Lutz argues that conveying historical knowledge in memorial sites is key and serves as a basis in achieving educational goals. Furthermore, the past is considered significant and can be linked to the present (66). As mentioned above (IV.2), the Holocaust is often used as a counterpoint regarding current issues. However, the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site's intention of commemorating the victims should not be disregarded. Due to the fact that this exhibition represents sensitive topics, it is also debatable whether comparing the Holocaust to any other political issue should be conducted during a visit. Here, one might argue that bringing up other topics or comparisons, would distract the flow of learning and delving into the historical past. It could also result in students failing to understand historical connections or mixing up diverse forms of genocides, as they have to take in so much information and impressions throughout a visit. Thus, teachers and tour guides play a significant role by evaluating the prior existing knowledge and cognitive receptiveness of individual student groups and deciding whether comparisons such as these should be conducted during a tour.

Regardless of whether the Holocaust is compared to other genocides during or after a visit, it should not lead to the juxtaposition of diverse genocides for the purpose of performing a

hierarchical evaluation of which one was worse. Rather this should be done to help students gain a deeper understanding of the multidimensionality of human right violations, by discussing related historical-political or social-cultural topics such as death, escape, expulsion, fear and hunger. Since German students tend to distance themselves from the historical past of National Socialism (cf. II.3), this method allows students to approach the topic from a different angle than guilt and shame. Additionally, teachers or tour guides need to ensure that students do not distance themselves from the topic by refusing to see it as German national history. To a greater degree, linking past events to the present can make students aware that certain topics are still relevant today. Certainly, there is no measurement that determines, the ethical threshold when shifting away from historicity, towards present-and future oriented teaching. It mainly depends on the ability of teachers and tour guides to convey the importance of the historical past in order to go beyond the representations of the exhibition and have future-oriented approaches and make students aware of current political issues. The Memorial Site as an authentic place is not necessarily there to remember or to identify, but rather to warn and urge visitors of their social and political responsibility within today's society.

V. Conclusion

V.1. Synthesis and Comparison

This thesis juxtaposed the pedagogical and curatorial techniques of the Munich Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism and the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site. On the one hand, it analyzed how these institutions convey historical knowledge of the Holocaust. On the other, it examined whether these exhibitions draw connections to contemporary socio-cultural and political issues. The Documentation Centre in Munich is located at an authentic place of perpetration and predominantly serves as an educational institution to teach about the greater historical context of the Third Reich. However, in doing so, it also pursues present- and future-oriented goals (cf. I.3.1). In contrast to this, the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site is located on an authentic site of victimhood and with its primary mission to commemorate and enable learning about the victims' fate – hence, it is mainly past-oriented (cf. I.3.2). Even though both institutions have almost contradictory origins and educational objectives, a visit to these authentic places can be essential for contemporary German students to learn about the historical structures, political concepts, and socio-cultural developments of the Third Reich.

The pedagogical background of prototypical German students served as a basis for this project; the possible learning situations that could emerge in the context of a museum visit were examined (cf. II). First, I considered that German cultural memory today is in transition from the third to fourth post-war generation. Due to this growing temporal distance from the events of World War II and the decline of living memory, there is the danger that the lessons from the National Socialist past will lose their relevance for newer generations. Students' historical understandings and political viewpoints are influenced: learning about the Third Reich is part of

the history curricula in all federal states in Germany. Additionally, historical-political information is also communicated to students from their families, peer-groups, and the mass media. However, contemporary German students also react with reservation when it comes to the Nazi past, as they do not want to identify with the topic of German guilt and responsibility. Generally, every student within a group has a distinctive level of knowledge and individual expectations prior to visiting a museum, and consequently different emotional involvement that in turn influences their individual learning processes. Accordingly, I have examined these two institutions with all of these factors in mind.

While the Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism and the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site have different historical focuses, they pursue a comparable goal; they allow visitors to grasp the greater picture of National Socialism and the Holocaust. Both institutions operate with similar museal techniques in certain parts of their exhibitions, as they employ methods to create cognitive distance between the visitor and their historical-subject matter. Visitors are neither enabled to dive into the past, nor to embody the experience of a historical person within these museal settings. As examined in chapter III, the representations of individual accounts are employed to elicit an emotional response from the visitor. We have seen this through the photo of Michael Siegel on display in the Munich Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism (cf. III.2.1), and the photos of Fritz Grünbaum in the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site (cf. III.2.2). Visitors are emotionalized to some extent, which works as a stimulus for them and facilitates their learning about past events by prompting their interest and receptivity. However, it has been seen in both institutions that over-emotionalization does not serve for a better historical understanding. Rather, it obstructs students from contextualizing the events and may lead to generalizations, especially regarding the matter

of victimhood. Furthermore, I demonstrated that too much emotionalization manipulates the visitor towards a certain interpretation. This is due to the fact that it leads to passivity, and accordingly, does not enable visitors to conceive their own individual assessments of past events. In the Documentation Centre, as well as in the Memorial Site, the text panels create a representational distance due to their factual-objective tone. In this vein, students are hindered from focusing on the fates of individuals. Instead they can grasp greater sociocultural changes: in the Documentation Centre, this focuses on the ostracism of minority groups; while in the Memorial Site, personal biographies serve as concrete examples of the suffering of individuals at this place.

Students are steered to use their cognitive capacities to understand the multidimensionality of past events; several facets need to be taken into account, in order for students to grasp the overall picture. As examined in the Documentation Centre, the photo of the two women raising their hands for the “Hitler Salute” does not convey a clear message and leaves the representation open for various interpretations. The represented women could be either analyzed as perpetrators, bystanders, or victims. This ambiguity can be used didactically to help students consider different perspectives. The analytical tone of the text steers visitors morally, while the overall representation clarifies the closely intertwined relationship between all the historical groups through its integration of typical German civilians. In the Memorial Site, the complex system of suffering and the collective fate is represented through the inclusion of the different victim groups that suffered at the Dachau Concentration Camp. This also aids visitors to vary their perspectives. In this sense, students are kept at a distance whereby the representation of historical events and people can didactically be used to comprehend the historical scope of victims’ suffering. Moreover, the representations of perpetrators, for instance

of Theodor Eicke, allows visitors to comprehend the complex historical context of National Socialism. Consequently, there are diverse museal techniques and educational approaches that can help students learn about the historical past while visiting a historical place.

This project also analyzed whether the representations within the institutions link the past to the present, particularly the possibilities and limitations of self-reflection and contemporary relevance. Even though these museums' representations of historical figures' "extraordinary deeds" are almost contrary to each other, visitors of both can be sensitized to reflect on what they would have done in a similar situation. In the Munich Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism, the representation of Georg Elser, who attempted to kill Hitler (cf. IV.1.1), somewhat manipulates students to see Elser as a hero. Through the museal setup, the representation of Elser is emphasized and centered in between representations of victimhood and perpetration. Unquestionably, the evaluated text didactically steers students. However, teachers and tour guides can create a learning situation by explaining the historical context of his deeds, which can prompt students to ask themselves if they would have had the same courage. In contrast, the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site avoids manipulating the visitors didactically or emotionally toward one definite interpretation, which keeps visitors at a distance. The ambiguous position of Kapos is provided, who had to make a similar decision but with a different outcome (cf. IV.1.2). Additionally, in contrast to the Documentation Centre, the Memorial Site does not emphasize the positive example of Karl Frey. In this way, the dichotomy between the represented individuals is treated the same way, as the neutral tone remains the same throughout the text. Teachers and tour guides can didactically utilize this representation to provide information about the historical background of Kapos to allow students to engage with the topic. Students' understanding of the context might enable them to develop empathy from

either perspective. By altering their perspectives, students can broaden their overall historical knowledge, reflect upon themselves and consequently critically evaluate historical events or persons.

Moreover, this project analyzed that in both institutions in question, the authenticity of place can be used to relate the past to the present and serves as tangible remain of the past (IV.2). In this sense, the visitor's presence at the authentic place facilitates closer proximity between spatial and temporal presence and the historical moment. In the Documentation Centre, cinematic documentation about past events, as well as the actual presence of a visitor at the original place, creates an "auratic" experience in bridging the past to the present. Through the museal technique of juxtaposing different periods that are simultaneously depicted, as well as through architectural design, the exhibition enhances self-reflection on the difference between past and present. Students can grasp the historical context, concepts, and structures, which can create a learning situation where the knowledge gained is applied to present-day scenarios. In the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, I examined that authenticity of the original place can be didactically used for future-oriented learning by discussing current forms of inhumanity, racism or genocide. This can help students gain a deeper understanding of the multidimensionality of human rights issues, when reviewing related historical-political or social-cultural topics such as death, escape, expulsion, fear, and hunger. To a greater degree, linking past events to the present can make students aware that these topics are still relevant. Overall, both institutions examine similar questions of why the Holocaust is still relevant for the individual visitor today.

V.2. Open Questions and Relevance

This project takes interdisciplinary approaches into account, such as museology, pedagogy, history, psychology, and politics. Nonetheless, there are certain aspects that were not yet considered, but could be helpful in performing a deeper analysis regarding students' learning about the historical past in the context of a museum visit. Even though their educational background was taken into consideration in this project, their possible learning outcomes could only be hypothetically stated. The results might have been more concrete if an empirical study were to be conducted, which would provide insight into how students learn before and after visiting a museum. Additionally, an empirical study could provide distinct data about the students' expectations, particularly in regard to authenticity.

Despite the fact that increasingly heterogeneous classrooms were comparatively addressed throughout the examination of this project, personal surveys could be essential to make specific references to the diversity in cultural, ethical, and social upbringing, as well as individual experiences of German students. Indeed, the Documentation Centre has well-defined educational goals that make students aware of its present and future relevance. Thus, an empirical study could answer whether or not students actually saw these links or whether the topic of National Socialism remains merely historical to them.

Moreover, further studies about the background of teachers and tour guides would be essential, as the significant role that educators play in students' learning processes during a museum visit, was examined throughout this project. Here, it needs to be factored in that contemporary teachers themselves often do not have a personal or emotional connection to the past events, since they are also in the transition phase between third and fourth post-war generation. Another reason could be that educators have a partially different historical

understanding, due to their non-ethnic German background. However, since a high degree of professional expertise is required from educators, a deeper analysis would be helpful to examine their education backgrounds: Do they receive special training or seminars? Do they attend conferences? How do they acquire pedagogical methods with which to approach contemporary students with historical topics of National Socialism and the Holocaust? Applied to the examination of the two institutions in question, it was shown that educators require a profound historical understanding in order to effectively convey historical facts. Teachers and tour guides are of particular importance in conveying the overall context to students. In the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site for instance, this could be exploring the different dimensions of persecution that extended throughout Europe during the war (cf. III.2). Generally, educators need to be prepared to answer unexpected questions or to provide explanations, and be sensitive to students' needs. Additionally, teachers and tour guides' creativity can act fundamentally in the creation of a learning place for students at the authentic places, so they can engage in depth with the represented topics. It was shown in both institutions that educators help students to approach history from different angles, in order to broaden their understandings and learn to critically evaluate historical events. Furthermore, they hold a great responsibility in their role as educators, as they can morally and didactically steer students. By going beyond the exhibitions' representations, educators can assist students to establish links between the past and the present. In the Documentation Centre they can morally steer students to reflect upon their personal attitudes and behaviours (cf. IV.1.1), whereas in the Memorial Site they can make students aware of current political issues (cf. IV.2.2). The examination of the institutions in question has shown that teachers and tour guides hold the position as mediators by bridging the representations to the

students' understanding. Thus, the learning outcome of students is very much dependent on them.

Another point that needs to be addressed is the discussion of implementing human rights and democracy education in the discipline of *Gedenkstättenpädagogik*, as it is seen as an indispensable part of historical-political learning (cf. I.1.1). Through the analysis of the institutions in question, especially the Documentation Centre, it has been shown how the integration of human rights and democracy education can theoretically look. Yet the question arises of how it can be practically envisioned, especially in a commemorative memorial site such as the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site. Here, one challenge that should not be disregarded concerns the initial goals and backgrounds of memorial sites, as Eckmann states: "Some memorial places are cemeteries, places to mourn" (14). The Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site's mission is the remembrance of the victims' suffering and thus out of respect for survivors and the families who still have a personal connection to these events the memorial sites meaning should not be underplayed. In this vein, several scholars point out the existing tension between commemoration and historical-political education within historical places (Eberle 2008, Ganske 2014, Werker 2016). Due to the growing temporal distance to the past events of the Holocaust, the historical past as such loses relevance for newer generations. Consequently, there is the need to provide connections to the present and future in museums to keep history relevant. As discussed, a more present- and future-oriented approach could take the form of universalizing the Holocaust: however, comparing the Holocaust to any other genocide leads to the danger that its historical facts would lose gravity and be reduced to a vague description of a tragedy (cf. I.2.3). Thus, universalization could ultimately defeat the purpose of Holocaust education, and it does not necessarily promise that students will be made aware of the importance of current

human rights issues. A statement by the European Union Agency for Human Rights, however, claims that Holocaust education and human rights education can work supplementarily, “if carefully conceptualized and skillfully delivered,” to teach about past events and to sensitize students to dealing with the importance of human rights and democracy (*Human rights education*, 11). Certainly, there is no scale that determines what the right amount of integration of human rights and democracy education would be when teaching about the Holocaust. Moreover, a positive learning outcome, whereby students have a mind-changing moment of their lives cannot be guaranteed. Nonetheless, the examination of the Documentation Centre and the Memorial Site has revealed the necessity to further develop and incorporate new educational concepts, goals, and methodological approaches of human rights and democracy education in contemporary museums.

In conclusion, historical places do not merely symbolically represent what happened at these very places, such as acts of cruelty and inhumanity, but they also provide opportunities of learning about past events. This project demonstrates how essential a visit to a memorial site or documentation centre can be, due to the possibility that students can link the historical past to contemporary sociocultural and political issues (cf. I.1). This is particularly important when looking at the sociocultural and political changes within Germany in recent years. New waves of right-wing populist movements and right-wing extremist organizations, as well as racist or inhumane attacks on minorities groups progressively occurring (cf. I.1.1). Returning to Santayana’s solemn advice, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it,” a visit to a historical institution can be a starting point to see the relevance of learning from history, to warn about the effects of past inhumanities, and urge students to take social and political responsibility within today’s society (284). Applied to contemporary German students, this could

imply standing up against racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and islamophobia – as these things increasingly appear on the agenda of present-day Germany.

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