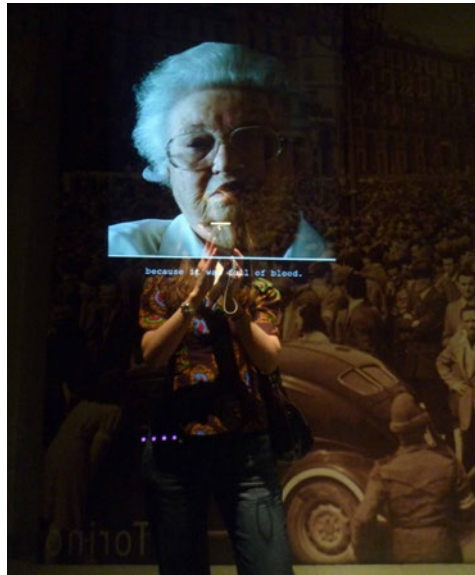


## Chapter 5

# COMMUNICATING

## Witnesses to History as Didactic Tools



**Figure 5.1.** The mirror-image in one of the steles with video testimonies at the Museo Diffuso © Steffi de Jong

### The Visitor's Mirror Image

During one of my visits to the Museo Diffuso, I took a picture that shows a reflection of me in one of the steles with the video testimonies. Apart from myself, the stele also mirrors a sepia-brown photograph of a street view (see Figure 5.1). My head is not as well reflected as the rest of my

body. It is at the height of the video testimony and it is covered by the head of the witness to history on the testimony. The picture illustrates the way in which the Museo Diffuso wishes its video testimonies to be received by visitors. The exhibition makers talk of a 'morphing effect' between the visitor and the witness to history (Bosi interview 2010). The term 'morphing' usually describes the digitally programmed changeover of one portrait into another, made famous by the video clip for the Michael Jackson song 'Black or White'. In the Museo Diffuso the exhibition makers have tried to create an effect in which the visitors visually merge with the witnesses to history. When the visitors look into the mirror of the black stele, they see their body with a face that has partly become that of the witness to history. The face of the witness to history on the video testimony is oversized, so it covers the whole face of the visitor. The sound only works properly if the visitor stands upright and looks directly at the witness to history.

Museums have an educational mission, and this is even more the case for Holocaust and Second World War museums than other museums. The Museo Diffuso wants its visitors to have changed by the end of their visit. In lieu of a visitor book, the Museo invites visitors to write down their thoughts about the exhibition on Post-it notes glued onto a wall. On its website, it publishes pictures of these Post-it notes. Most of them praise the partisans for having fought for freedom or point out the need to continue the fight against injustice. 'I have been overwhelmed by the Resistenza and the will of the partisans against the fascist regime', reads one of them. Another one states: 'Let's defend our constitution!' On a third one, somebody has written: 'We should never stop, we have to continue fighting for freedom. A big thank you to all the partisans that have helped us to reach this freedom.' What the Post-its demonstrate is the way in which the Museo Diffuso wishes its visitors to leave the exhibition – as different people from those who entered: more aware of the war history of Turin, but also more responsible towards their environment, more tolerant and more politically interested. For many of the visitors, this seems to work, at least up to the wall with the Post-its. This transformation is, as the mirror image demonstrates, to take place via identification with the witnesses to history: the visitors are invited partly to take on the identities of the witnesses to history for the time that they watch the testimonies.

As in the Museo Diffuso, most museums invite visitors to relate to witnesses to history. Video testimonies are didactic tools that can be used by museums both to transmit educational messages and to affect their visitors. In this chapter, I will analyse the messages that are transmitted

with the help of video testimonies and the means that are used in order to transmit those messages. I will focus on the ideas of secondary and tertiary witnessing. As we have seen in Chapter 3, the concept of secondary or tertiary witnessing was first used with reference to the testimonies of Holocaust survivors. It describes how the testimonies of survivors are and should be received by later generations. I will here extend this concept and reflect on how it can be used with reference to witnesses other than Holocaust survivors. The primary question for this chapter will therefore be: what kind of secondary or tertiary witnesses are visitors invited to be in the respective museums? This question entails asking which groups and which individuals are actually chosen to give testimony. I will therefore scrutinize who is chosen as a witness to history – and consequently who is not. In the last section, I will move outside of the walls of the museums and will analyse the effects of making video testimonies available online.

## **The Didactics of Museums**

Education has been one of the most important functions of museums since the appearance of the first public museums with the foundation of the British Museum in 1753 and the opening up of the galleries of the Louvre in 1793 (cf. Bennett 1995; Rees Leahy 2012). In the nineteenth-century age of nationalism, museums became a means to educate the masses on how to become responsible citizens in the newly created nation states. This education was, on the one hand, linked to the objects shown in the museums. National museums like the British Museum or the Louvre exhibited artefacts that were considered to be the nation's most important artworks, as well as conquests from abroad. In this way, they presented to their visitors both the nation's heritage and its military and political strength in the world. The British Museum in London, for example, became home to a collection of Egyptian artefacts that Napoleon had brought to France from his military campaigns and that Britain in turn had claimed as booty (Vedder 2005: 161). The most common way to order objects in those museums was teleological. The newly formed nation state appeared as the climax of history. Visitors, as citizens, were invited to consider the nation state as a logical consequence of historical events (cf. Anderson 1983).

But education also happened on a more subtle, less obvious, but even more pertinent level. According to Tony Bennett, the nineteenth-century 'exhibitionary complex', the system of museums, exhibitions and fairs

that popped up at the time, served not only to make the crowds more knowledgeable about ‘their’ history and culture, but also to discipline them. Bennett (1999: 334–35) argues:

The exhibitionary complex was also a response to the problem of order, but one which worked differently in seeking to transform that problem into one of culture – a question of winning hearts and minds as well as the disciplining and training of bodies ... through the provision of object lessons in power – the power to command and arrange things and bodies for public display – they sought to allow the people, and en masse rather than individually, to know rather than be known, to become subjects rather than the objects of knowledge. Yet, ideally, they sought also to allow the people to know and thence to regulate themselves; to become, in seeing themselves from the side of power, both the subjects and the objects of knowledge, knowing power and what power knows, and knowing themselves as (ideally) known by power, interiorizing its gaze as a principle of self-surveillance and, hence, self-regulation.

Thus, the architecture of museums and exhibition halls forced visitors not only to look at the objects, but also at themselves. Many museums had galleries from which the visitors could contemplate the museums’ architectural structure; the way in which objects were ordered; as well as the other visitors in the museum. The museal structure was panoptic. It allowed visitors to get an overview of their own history and culture and, at the same time, it urged them to be disciplined (Bennett 1999: 341; Macdonald 2003: 4). Particularly in Britain, the need to organize fairs, open up galleries to the public and found museums was often considered a necessity in educating the working classes to become proper and orderly citizens of the nation state (Bennett 1999: 344ff). Museums moulded people into adopting bourgeois codes of behaviour such as speaking in low voices, walking slowly and demurely, and not touching the exhibited objects (Rees Leahy 2012). How much this behaviour has been internalized by visitors since it was introduced in the nineteenth century can be exemplified by the fact that hands-on exhibitions are now required to point out that exhibits can be touched. Equally, any exhibition that presents history in a nonteleological, nonlinear manner tends to have to explain its choice.

The messages that are transmitted by exhibitions and the means to transmit these messages have of course evolved over time. Many museums do still communicate blatantly nationalist messages, but in an ever-greater number of museums, messages of tolerance, multiculturalism, respect for the Other, and human rights have been added to or replaced those purely nationalist messages. A large number of national museums no longer wish their local visitors to leave the museum as good citizens of the nation state,

or their foreign visitors to be impressed by their respective national cultures; they want all of them to leave the museum as responsible global citizens.

At the same time, although interactivity has always been a concern for museums (Griffiths 2004, 2008), it is probably fair to say that since the new museology (Vergo 1989) and the appearance of digital media in museums, interactivity as a didactic tool has reached a new level. Many museums do not just exhibit objects anymore; they ask their visitors actively to engage with those objects. Steven Conn has recently even provokingly asked: ‘Do museums still need objects?’ (Conn 2010). The example of the Museo Diffuso shows that museums can be founded without any intention of exhibiting objects, now or in the future. Like in the Museo Diffuso, it is now often ideas and the wish to educate – rather than the existence of a collection or the wish to collect – that leads to the foundation of museums. Thus, when the – now failed – project of a national history museum in the Netherlands was launched in 2006, it was launched as a consequence of the realization that the Dutch did not know enough about their own history. There was, however, no plan as to where the collection for the museum would come from. Early plans for the museum even foresaw a museum without objects (van Hasselt 2008).

Video testimonies are one of these new tools that museums use in order to communicate specific educative messages to their visitors. As has been shown in Chapter 4, video testimonies can be presented as primary museum objects, as comments to those primary museum objects or as design elements. This possibility of using video testimonies for multiple purposes also makes them particularly apt to transmit multiple messages.

## **The Didactics of Memorial Museums**

As observed in the Introduction, memorial museums combine the function of honouring the dead of the memorial with that of providing the contextual explanations common to history museums (Williams 2007: 8). The particular messages that are communicated of course differ from case to case. Nevertheless, three main didactic messages can be discerned. First, memorial museums provide their visitors with historical knowledge of a period, an event or a place. Visitors should ideally leave the exhibition with a deeper historical knowledge than when they entered it. Second, as memorial institutions, memorial museums are about remembering and mourning the dead. They generally have a rather solemn tone. This solemnity becomes especially apparent when, as in the case of the Imperial War Museum’s Holocaust Exhibition, the exhibition is part of a larger museum

complex. The Holocaust Exhibition is located on the last floor of the Imperial War Museum, far away from the gloss of weapons, boats, planes and uniforms on the previous floors. The visitor has to pass a guard when entering the exhibition, who asks them to switch off their mobile phones and informs them that, unlike in most of the Museum's other exhibitions, they are not allowed to take pictures. Children are not allowed in the space. Inside the exhibition, it is quieter than in any other part of the museum, and the exhibition aesthetics are purer and more minimalistic. Third, the transmission of the supposedly global values of human rights has come to play a particularly important role in memorial museums. In the case of the Museo Diffuso, its full name – the Widespread Museum of the Resistance, Deportation, the War, Rights and Freedom – makes it apparent that the message is as much about the Second World War in Turin as it is about democracy, tolerance, freedom and human rights. Avner Shalev, the director of Yad Vashem, again observed at the museum's opening that 'it is Yad Vashem's hope that the compassion generated by the new Holocaust History Museum will give visitors a more meaningful experience, raising their personal commitment to higher moral values today and in the future' (Goldstein 2005: 7). This third didactic message of memorial museums underlies the first and the second messages and is transmitted via those messages.

The combination of critical evaluation of a historical event, commemoration and the transmission of norms and values is nowhere as vital as in the case of memorial museums located on the sites of mass suffering, such as concentration camps. With the imminent disappearance of the last witnesses of the past, as well as a heightened perception of the need to learn from the past, the educational role of concentration-camp memorials – and hence their function as museums – has become ever more important. While, especially in Western Germany, they were for a long time first and foremost the location of commemorations, concentration-camp memorials are now, as the former director of the Ravensbrück memorial, Sigrid Jakobeit (2002: 22), observes, 'national sites of memory in Europe with historical, museological, pedagogical and especially humane duties'. That video testimonies are increasingly inserted into the exhibitions of these memorials is also a consequence of this extension of duties. The witnesses of the past that used to gather around the monuments on the occasion of memorial ceremonies have, on the verge of their disappearance, passed from a pure memorial space into a museal and openly didactic one.

## Secondary and Tertiary Witnessing

As we have seen in Chapter 2, Dori Laub has argued that it is the listener who allows the narration of the trauma of a Holocaust survivor in the first place. According to Laub (Felman and Laub 1992: 57–58), the listener should act as an interested counterpart and partly take on the survivor's trauma:

the listener to trauma comes to be a participant and a co-owner of the traumatic event: through his very listening, he comes to partially experience trauma in himself. The relation of the victim to the event of the trauma, therefore, impacts on the relation of the listener to it, and the latter comes to feel the bewilderment, injury, confusion, dread and conflicts that the trauma victim feels. He has to address all these, if he is to carry out his function as a listener, and if trauma is to emerge, so that its henceforth impossible witnessing can indeed take place. The listener, therefore, by definition partakes of the struggle of the victim with the memories and residues of his or her traumatic past. The listener has to feel the victim's victories, defeats and silences, know them from within, so that they can assume the form of testimony.

As was alluded to in Chapter 3, Ulrich Baer (2000) has defined this second-generation reception of survivor testimony as 'sekundäre Zeugenschaft' (secondary witnessing).<sup>1</sup> For Baer, secondary witnessing does not merely describe the way in which survivor testimonies are received by a second generation; rather, it is a normative concept that determines how the testimonies of Holocaust survivors should be received. Baer (2000: 11), like Laub, considers the act of secondary witnessing as a moral and ethical duty. First, it is only through secondary witnessing that the witnesses' testimonies become possible: 'For the truth of the extreme traumatic experience to be revealed, the eyewitnesses need some kind of audience that can be conceived as secondary witnesses, as witnesses through imagination, as "witnesses of memory" ... When the original witnesses want to talk, their burden has to be shared'. Second, the secondary witnesses not only have to listen to the testimonies, they also have to evaluate them critically and pass them on to future generations. For Baer, a critical evaluation of the testimonies does not cast doubt on their genuineness; rather, it is a necessity in order for the testimonies to survive the test of time. Critical evaluation therefore assures that testimonies do not end up in the archive, but become part of the canon (Assmann 2006: 54). Baer (2000: 19) observes:

If the testimonies are left to themselves in the name of a sacrosanct authenticity, they will disappear in an avalanche of documents. History does not tell itself on

its own, and the testimonies that radically put into question our conception of culture, language and humanity, and that bring us to the verge of what is knowable and conceivable, are everything but self-evident. The testimonies of the survivors require critical and creative replies.

The secondary witness is therefore not merely an active witness to the survivors' testimonies, in a way, she or he also becomes a second-generation witness to history. She or he gives testimony on the survivors' testimonies. For Baer (2000: 18), secondary witnessing is thus also about taking responsibility for the present and the future: 'If we leave testimony to the victims themselves, we are missing the chance to look at the suffering of others in connection to our own history and to become aware of our own role and responsibility in this history and in the present.' In this sense, secondary witnessing also means learning from history. It means evaluating the present and planning the future in relation to the past.

While they invite the listeners to relate to the survivors, both Baer and Laub rule out a full identification with the victims. Laub (Felman and Laub 1992: 58) observes that 'while overlapping, to a degree, with the experiences of the victim, he [the listener] nonetheless does not become the victim – he preserves his own separate place, position and perspective; a battleground for forces raging in himself, to which he has to pay attention and respect if he is to properly carry out his task'. Baer (2000: 18) specifies that secondary witnessing 'is not about identifying with the victims. With the attempt of identification, the brutal assault to the identity of the victims that characterizes the traumatic experience is passed over and misconceived in favour of a psychological satisfaction of the listener through a projection of the self on others'. Thus, while the listeners should relate to the survivors, partly absorb their trauma and pass it on, they should not imagine themselves as survivors. While the designers of the Museo Diffuso imagined a morphing between visitor and witness to history, Baer and Laub promote transference in the psychoanalytical sense. The listeners are supposed partly to absorb the witnesses' trauma, help the witnesses work through their trauma and transmit their testimony to future generations. They will thereby – according to Baer – become more responsible citizens.<sup>2</sup>

As we have seen in Chapter 3, Caroline Wake has criticized the concept of secondary witnessing for ignoring the mediation of video testimonies and has therefore proposed the concepts of hypermediate and immediate tertiary witnessing. Like Laub and Baer, Wake underlines the moral need of an emotional engagement with the witnesses to history. The medium of the video testimony might even facilitate this process. First, Wake argues, the video testimony 'witnesses for the witness'. It thereby takes away 'the



burden of repetition' from the primary witnesses who do not have to repeat their stories in front of new audiences (Wake 2013: 132). Second, the video testimony allows the spectators to act out 'ethically ambiguous responses' and work through them without putting more distress on the witnesses to history. Third, it allows the viewers to practise listening and to rehearse to become secondary witnesses (Wake 2013: 133). The exhibition of video testimonies in museums could be considered as favourable, especially in respect to the latter two ethical functions of video testimonies. However, as we will see, museums leave their viewers only marginal spaces of individual interpretation. Moreover, while the medium of video testimony might help to take away the burden of giving testimony again from the primary witness, it also allows their testimonies to be cut, reassembled and moulded into a narrative that they were not originally part of. In this way, it allows the curators to guide the responses of the visitors and to define the conclusions that they draw from them.

The idea of secondary witnessing has also been criticized for naively presupposing the existence of a homogeneous memorial community. Thus, Ulrike Jureit (Jureit and Schneider 2010: 87) observes that the concept of secondary witnessing has the potential to evoke in the secondary witnesses the feeling that they are the direct inheritors of the survivors' memories: 'This concept of secondary witnessing, when it is not used as an analytical instrument for the interpretation of current speaker positions, stands for a generational strategy of self-accreditation, that sees itself in a hereditary relationship to the Holocaust survivors and that derives interpretive authority from them.' For Jureit (Jureit and Schneider 2010: 86ff), the moral obligation that Baer defines for secondary witnessing – the need to listen to testimonies, pass them on and interpret them so as to learn from them for the present and future – has been converted into a feeling of moral superiority by those who consider themselves secondary witnesses: they come to see themselves as the direct inheritors of the survivors.

Jureit (Jureit and Schneider 2010: 86ff), who concentrates on the German memorial context, observes that many of those who assume the role of secondary witnesses to Holocaust survivors are the direct descendants of the perpetrators, or at least of the bystanders (Hilberg 1992), the majority of the population who watched or tried to ignore what was happening. Jureit suggests that by identifying with the witnesses, those who see themselves as secondary witnesses avoid memories that are more difficult to accept: the memories of their own families who either participated in the crime or at least did not intervene. For Jureit and Schneider (2010: 11), German memorial culture is defined by identification with the victims, which in turn leads to what they call an 'Erlösungsversprechen'

(promise of redemption), based on the idea that ‘whoever remembers the massive German crimes candidly and intensively enough can hope for conciliation or even redemption from hereditary guilt’. They propose a different memorial culture that would ask questions that have rarely been addressed so far, such as ‘what was deemed good about National Socialism?’ (Jureit and Schneider 2010: 16). They therefore argue for the inclusion of uncomfortable memories in the cultural memory of the Holocaust and the Second World War.

It is not only in Germany that the idea of secondary witnessing begs the question of whom exactly we can, and should, be secondary witnesses to. Will it be possible to become a secondary witness to perpetrators, for example? And even if we concentrate on the victims, is it possible to be a secondary witness to somebody with a completely different sociocultural background from our own? What about morally challenging memories? What about the memories of survivors who stole food from others or who denounced their friends in order to save their own lives? The public presentation of video testimonies in museums considerably increases the number of potential witnesses to the witnesses to history’s testimonies. In what follows, I will analyse the groups of witnesses to history that are chosen for the video testimonies and will scrutinize the types of secondary – or rather tertiary – witnessing that visitors are invited to enact in the different museums.

### *Victims*

By far the largest number of video testimonies in Holocaust museums involve victims. If the introduction of video testimonies into museums is about giving a voice back to the victims, it is also, following the idea of secondary and tertiary witnessing, about passing on their memories to visitors. It is about not forgetting – ever. This memorial goal is accompanied by several secondary didactic messages. Video testimonies with victims, while being used to induce visitors to become immediate tertiary witnesses, are also used to give them lessons in history and morals, and to affect them emotionally.

### *Tertiary Witnessing and Teaching History*

As I have observed in Chapter 4, victim testimonies are generally represented in two forms in museums: as ‘biographical video points’ concentrating on the biography of an individual witness; and as ‘topical video points’ illustrating a specific topic. Topical video points are

more frequently used than biographical video points. The Imperial War Museum and Yad Vashem, for example, only use topical video points.

Topical video points provide the visitors with historical information. Most commonly, they are used as sources that communicate what cannot be represented by other objects: experiences or feelings. Recurring themes in the video testimonies with victims are hunger, fear, loss, mistreatment, torture and death. Thus, in the Bergen-Belsen Memorial, where liberation is represented through the pictures taken by the British liberators of emaciated prisoners sitting between heaps of corpses, the topical video point 'Liberation' adds the views of the liberated to those of the liberators. Some of the testimonies are merely descriptive, giving additional information to what can be seen in the pictures. Thus, one witness remembers: 'Then loudspeakers were driven around the camp, and they told us in several languages, "You're free now, but you can't leave the camp, the war isn't over yet. You'll all get food and water. Stay calm. You can go wherever you please inside the camp, but you mustn't leave the camp. The war isn't over yet"' (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 254). Other testimonies are more personal. They illustrate what it was like to be emaciated and half-dead:

We realized that the end was near, because the SS men and the SS women were walking around wearing white armbands and a white flag of surrender was hanging over the camp. So we knew that it was coming to an end. But we also knew that we couldn't last much longer. I knew that I was losing strength by the hour. (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 254)

Another survivor remembers:

I went out and someone pointed at a tank near the entrance to the camp, and they said it was a British tank. But it didn't get through to me anymore, it didn't seem to make any difference. My mind was so weakened and exhausted, it just didn't make any difference. I knew my mother was dying, I knew I couldn't last much longer. (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 254)

However, the historical messages forwarded with the help of topical video points are not limited to personalized topical knowledge. Curators are generally careful to arrange extracts in such a way as to instruct visitors on how to interpret the historical information they are confronted with. In this way, they forward one particular historical narrative to the detriment of others. In the case of the topical video point 'Liberation', for example, the curators have arranged the extracts in such a way as to prevent liberation from appearing as closure or as a happy ending. Instead,

liberation is exhibited as part of the whole tragedy of the Holocaust. The Bergen-Belsen Memorial's representation of liberation here echoes the Fortunoff Archive's and especially Lawrence L. Langer's treatment of video testimonies as what Noah Shenker has called 'anti-redemptive' (cf. 2015: Shenker 23–26, 52–55). Only one survivor remembers euphoric outbursts by the prisoners: 'The people were terribly excited when the word "freedom" came through the loudspeaker. The tanks were accompanied by a jeep with a loudspeaker. They said that from that point on, we were under the protection of the Anglo-American troops. Everyone was free. Everyone shouted "Hurrah!" The trees could hear how happy the people were' (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 255). This positive statement is immediately corrected by another, more desperate one. One witness remembers:

I looked to the right, I looked to the left and I thought, 'We're free to do what? To die?' We're free, but what does that mean, being free? We're lying on the ground, without food, without water, in a state you can't describe. It's impossible to describe it! How are we free? What does that mean, being free? Free to do what? (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 255)

The next witnesses recall not being able to react at all because of their weakness: 'I was lying on my bed; I was very weak by then. Then I heard somebody say, "Free, free! English! Australian! Soldier! English!"' – 'When the English arrived, they lifted me up, one held me here and one down there. I was only skin and bone – I weighed 29 kilos. You may not believe it, but my shoulder would have fit through this' – 'I couldn't be happy about it, I just couldn't. It was incomprehensible. You lived in a daze. I didn't really register it at all. Also, my sister was dying. I tried to do something for her, but she couldn't eat anymore' (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 255). The very last statement in the video testimony summarizes the previous ones and closes the video testimony on a negative note, one that suggests that liberation was not the end of suffering: 'There was no euphoria. We knew we were liberated, but somehow I couldn't perceive that this was the end. I was, for want of a better word, in a stupor. I knew what was going on, but I couldn't perceive it. And I was lethargic, I didn't laugh or smile, I couldn't be happy' (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 255).

As a general rule, the last statements in the video testimonies in museums have been chosen very carefully. It is those sentences that, one expects, will stay with the visitors for a long time, and it is with those sentences that the curators advance their most important messages. In the Bergen-Belsen Memorial, the negative last statement in the topical

video point 'Liberation' is taken up and pursued in the following topical video points. Thus, the following video point 'Living on between Loss and New Beginnings', which treats life in the Displaced Persons Camp, ends with the sentence: 'The next stage for us was to get our strength back, to transform our previous life into a new one, to start to build our own life with commitment and with the will to get back to society' (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 331). The last topical video point in the exhibition, 'Emigration', ends with the following words:

We were willing to go any place. They were looking for seamstresses in Australia, we registered to go to Australia. They were looking for farmhands in Canada, we registered to go to Canada. Wherever they were recruiting, we always were willing to go, as long as we'd get out of there. Because staying in Germany was a strain on us every day. (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 363)

The last sentences of the topical video points 'Living on between Loss and New Beginnings' and 'Emigration' suggest that the struggle for life was not over after liberation, but, on the contrary, continued in the Displaced Persons Camp. The curators leave the visitors with a criticism of postwar German politics and, in this way, invite them to take responsibility for the past.

In contrast to topical video points, biographical video points concentrate on the biographies of individual survivors. Although the complete testimonies on which they are based have been heavily edited and reduced to a few minutes, biographical video points nevertheless come closest to the idea of secondary and tertiary witnessing as advanced by Laub, Baer or Wake. With biographical video points, visitors are invited to concentrate on the experiences of one single witness. Interestingly, all of the biographical video points in the Bergen-Belsen Memorial and most of those in the Neuengamme Memorial do not concentrate not on the witnesses' experience in the camp, but on their journey to the respective camps. The videos end with their arrival at the camp. The biographical video points are used to present the victims as active individuals – for example, when a partisan fighter remembers her contribution to the Warsaw Uprising – or to illustrate the suffering that preceded the suffering in the camp – for example, when a witness to history recalls life in the ghetto or the death march.

In addition, also here, we find a concern with history education. The individual witnesses to history who are chosen for the exhibitions often critically reflect on their experiences. Thus, in the Bergen-Belsen Memorial, Wanda Broszkowska-Piklikiewicz (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation

2010: 120), who fought in the Warsaw Uprising, puts into perspective the Polish wartime propaganda:

The love of our country, its traditions, its history, the entire patriotic education, all that had a much higher significance than politics. This is our home country – back then people didn't talk about the defence of the home country yet – that started later, during the occupation. I believe that all children of the Polish intelligentsia received such a deeply patriotic education. People were taught that the home country was the most important thing in the world.

Of course we knew that Hitler had come to power, that the Kristallnacht had happened. We knew about all of these terrible things, even if nobody suspected that this was only the beginning of this horrible catastrophe in Europe. What I heard as a child was that the Germans had nothing to eat, just their stew, that their tanks were made out of cardboard and so on. There would be no war. 'We won't give up a single button!', that was the slogan our leadership had given out. And then they came on their motorcycles, dressed like creatures from another planet that you see on television. That was terrifying, the clash between the propaganda and the reality. They were strong, impressive, crushing.

Through Wanda Broszkowska-Piklikiewicz's testimony, the visitors themselves are induced to reflect on propaganda and patriotism in general. They are invited to evaluate the past and the present critically. Broszkowska-Piklikiewicz is not primarily presented as a heroic resistance fighter; in the testimony she does not talk much about what she did during the Warsaw Uprising. Instead, she appears as somebody who has learned from life.

Other stories in the biographical video points invite the visitors to reflect on their decisions in everyday life. Giuseppe Cigognetti, for example (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 108), a former Italian prisoner of war, remembers:

When we arrived in Fallingbosten camp, there was a street lined with apple trees, and apples were lying on the ground. But woe betide anyone who picked up an apple ... There was an older woman with a child, and she spit at us. That really affected me, that a woman, a mother, would see this column of prisoners going by and pretend to spit at us ... There were apples all over the ground. We were very hungry, but because of the guards, we couldn't pick up a single apple.

In contrast to Giuseppe Cigognetti, Catherine Morgan (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 229), who arrived in Bergen-Belsen on a death march, remembers acts of humanity in the most hostile circumstances:

And then I recall vividly we went across either a huge lake or a huge river. And it was frozen, but we didn't know how thick the ice was. So again the 'brave' soldiers took a few of us and sent us ahead to see if the ice was strong enough to

hold us. When we came back, they marched us across. This was when I had the one and only nice encounter I remember. I understood later that he must have been a Wehrmacht soldier, because he was elderly. I was obsessed with cleanliness despite the fact that I was starved. Hunger wasn't the first issue. I was forever washing myself in the snow and trying to keep myself as 'near' as I could. And he observed me and called out to me, saying, 'Come here, young girl, you'll see that one day you'll look beautiful. You'll comb your hair and do yourself up nicely.' And I was always dreaming of a hot bath and how nice it would be. But that was the only good word I ever heard. It stayed with me all those years, I'll always remember that.

Both Giuseppe Cigognetti and Catherine Morgan's testimonies present the visitors with a range of responses to inhumane situations. They invite them to evaluate what they would have done themselves, and thereby to reflect critically on and draw lessons from the past. Would they have offered an apple to the prisoners or have spat at them? Would they have comforted the young prisoner or have despised her?

Both topical video points and biographical video points are thus crafted in such a way as to transmit knowledge on particular historical events to the visitors, while at the same time instructing them on how to interpret those events. Through the choice of extracts for the video testimonies, through the arrangement of those extracts and through the choice of last sentences, curators forward certain historical narratives and certain interpretations of the past to the detriment of others. The narrative of the topical video point 'Liberation', for example, would change considerably if the euphoric statement of the witness to history remembering that 'the trees could hear how happy the people were' was chosen as its last statement instead of the one of the witness to history who remembers that she 'couldn't be happy' (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 255). Liberation would then have appeared as a happy ending.

### *Tertiary Witnessing and Moral Education*

Apart from being used in order to give history lessons, many of the video testimonies are also designed to give moral lessons to the visitors. Many museums show video testimonies in which victims reflect on their life after the Holocaust, typically at the end of their exhibitions. These final video testimonies allow the visitors to take into consideration a victim's entire life and to consider the traces that the past has left on their psyche. It is also with these last video testimonies that the curators forward the most poignant didactic messages.

Thus, one of the survivors in the final video testimony in the Imperial War Museum observes that she is often asked how she has been able to

forgive, given that she has German friends. 'Forgive? I forgive nothing!', she observes. Another survivor, Rudy Kennedy, observes that he 'has an animal instinct for nasty people'. He mistrusts people instantly. It is his experiences during the Holocaust that have given him this instinct, he says. With these and similar statements, visitors are encouraged to reflect on the issues of forgiving and leaving behind the past, but also on the traces that the past has left on the survivors.

In the final video testimony in the Bergen-Belsen Memorial, Rudolf Weiß (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 372), who had been persecuted as a 'gipsy', talks about the discrimination that he has had to face until this day:

The worst thing is all this discrimination. The people here, in this building, are good friends of ours, but as soon as we go elsewhere, it's over. Then there's trouble. And the things they ... 'Look, there are Gypsies. Watch out they don't steal anything.'

I've often wanted to say, 'Now look out. I've been experiencing this for such a long time...' But it seems it's impossible to get rid of it in Germany. My father suffered it, I've suffered it, and now my children suffer as well.

It happens again and again that people remind us of it. But we haven't done anything. We have all these problems because of it, it's impossible! Here in this building and around it, it's alright. But in Minden, there are people who've always been against us. I don't know why that is, whether it's inbred or something like that, I don't know. I couldn't tell.

With this extract from Rudolf Weiß's testimony, the Holocaust is put into a larger historical perspective, and the xenophobia and prejudices that led to mass murder are presented as phenomena that have endured to this day. Visitors are encouraged to reflect on discrimination in their own society and to remember that the circumstances leading to the Holocaust have not been entirely overcome.

In a second extract from the final video testimony in the Bergen-Belsen Memorial, Henrietta Kelly (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 372) reflects on the legacy of the Holocaust for herself and for the world in general:

It didn't happen in another lifetime or to somebody else, it happened to me in my childhood. I always react as a true refugee. I'm in contact with other survivors in London, and I see in them what I know is mine. They don't see it in me, because I sound so English. They can't believe it with me. Well, some do, but on the whole, people don't really understand it at all. I don't blame them, because I sound like an Englishwoman, don't I? I couldn't be more [English], but I'm not. I'm a foreign woman, and what happened to me shouldn't happen. But presumably it happens to others everywhere in the world now. Perhaps not with such careful planning. It's



the planning that makes it different, the clever, high-tech ability, which was put to such a rotten use. But of course people are being tortured, maimed and damaged all over the world in this day. We all know it, don't we?

Through the choice of Henrietta Kelly's testimony, the curators address several questions that have been the subject of discussion in Holocaust memory and Holocaust studies since the end of the war. Like most of the witnesses to history in the topical video point 'Liberation', Kelly refrains from presenting liberation as closure. As integrated into British culture as she might seem, she continues to feel like a foreigner and a refugee. The extract also allows the curators to address the issue of learning from the Holocaust. For Kelly, no lessons have been drawn. Genocides are still happening every day without anybody intervening. However, while addressing this issue, she insists on the difference of the Holocaust from other genocides and therefore on its uniqueness. On leaving the exhibition, visitors are invited to reflect on their own actions and the human suffering that is going on in the world, without, however, questioning the unique character of the Holocaust. Kelly's testimony therefore allowed the curators to stress the need to learn from the Holocaust and at the same time to emphasize the topos of the Holocaust as a civilizational break (Diner 1988).

Some of the clips for the video testimonies in the final exhibition chapters explicitly invite visitors to become tertiary witnesses. 'Nobody has learned. Maybe a testimony like mine is to be a warning for future generations', says the survivor Kitty Hart in the Imperial War Museum. Another survivor observes: 'I have survived in order to give testimony.' In the final video testimony in the Bergen-Belsen Memorial, Rudy Kennedy (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 373) reflects on the postwar years and his difficulty in finding an audience for his stories:

I didn't talk to people because they would not believe me. They couldn't believe me. Nobody can believe what really went on. Nobody asked me. They said, 'Oh, you were in a camp!', and changed the subject. For 50 years, nobody asked me, 'What happened to you? Where were you? How was it?' Even from the Jews here. They couldn't cope with it.

Well, [my children] thought I had some tattoo which went wrong, I don't know. I told my children that it was my telephone number until my oldest daughter said, 'Dad, we checked it out, there's no such telephone number. What is it?' And eventually I told them.

This extract from Rudy Kennedy's testimony, while inviting visitors to become tertiary witnesses, also casts into doubt the possibility of verbalizing the experience of the Holocaust and of initiating a dialogue with people who have not had the same experiences.

As with Kennedy's testimony, the incomprehensibility – both for the victims themselves and for the visitors – of that which is being narrated and the difficulty of finding the right words are underlined in many video testimonies. The witnesses to history frequently break off sentences, search for metaphors or observe that they cannot find the words to describe what they have seen. Thus, in a topical video point entitled 'Mass Death' in the Bergen-Belsen Memorial, one witness to history stops talking because she does not want to, or cannot, verbalize what she is about to say – namely that the starved prisoners started to drink urine: 'But there was no water. There was no water. Not to mention food. There was nothing at all. But water! Water! That was terrible! To be without water ... The girls drank ... *Excuse me*' (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 234, my italics). Another survivor reflects on the impossibility of describing hunger: 'Hunger is something – it's impossible to comprehend. *It's impossible to understand!* In Bergen-Belsen I saw with my own eyes: a man was sitting there and he took flesh from a dead person, from what was still there, so that he could eat it' (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 234, my italics). 'We died like ... *I can't even tell you.* And lice! Millions of lice! Millions!' (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 235, my italics) recalls a third one. Apart from breaking off sentences, witnesses to history also frequently resort to metaphor. In the Imperial War Museum's audio stations in the chapter on the 'Final Solution' and Auschwitz for example, several of the witnesses to history observe that on their arrival they thought that they had come to a 'mad house' or a 'lunatic asylum'. The repetition of words, the pauses, the metaphors and the recurring observations that what is being recalled cannot be put into words underline the horror of the situation and the difficulty of comprehending the Holocaust. In accordance with the theory of secondary witnessing, a complete identification with the witnesses to history is in those video testimonies suppressed. Since it seems impossible to find words for what has happened, the visitors are here invited to become witnesses to this incomprehensibility.

### *Tertiary Witnessing and Emotionalization*

In Chapter 2, I observed that one of the strongest criticisms of how video testimonies are used in TV documentaries is that they are cut to short statements of a few seconds and that 'objectivity is increasingly replaced by emotionality' (Keilbach 2008: 141); that video testimonies are, in Frank Bösch's (2008: 67) words, reduced to an 'MTV-format'. Tony Kushner (2001: 92), analysing the use of video testimonies in the Imperial War Museum's Holocaust Exhibition, has used a similar argument: 'it has

become a trope of Holocaust documentary tradition when the camera zooms in on the crying survivor at the critical moment in narrating loss'. It is true that in museums, crying survivors can occasionally be seen, but museums do not seem deliberately to choose extracts in which survivors break into tears. The statements that witnesses to history give in the video testimonies in museums are also generally longer than the ones in TV documentaries, and a dramatic musical score or a dramatizing voiceover commentator are missing.

Nevertheless, also in the video testimonies in museums, visitors are encouraged to engage emotionally with the witnesses to history. Incidentally, the stories that are chosen, while being the most interesting ones, are also the most graphic and therefore affecting ones, as the following examples show: 'Naked corpses ... And all I did was look for my mother. I could remember that my mother had black hair. So I went to the corpses and looked at their heads to see if my mother happened to be among them. But I never found her', remembers Yvonne Koch (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 235) in the topical video point 'Mass Death' in the Bergen-Belsen Memorial. In the Imperial War Museum, the survivor Roman Halter talks about how his best friend Karl Eschner turned away from him, joined the SS and finally denounced and mistreated him. Another witness remembers hiding her engagement ring underneath her tongue, hoping that it would not be found during the check-up before entering the camp – thereby risking her life. In a third testimony, a survivor recalls an SS woman taking a toad and throwing it to the floor, declaring: 'This is what I would like to do to all of you.' The emotional effect of these extracts is intensified by the fact that the extracts are excised from entire testimonies and set alongside other, similarly graphic and emotionalizing ones. What visitors are left with in the video testimonies in museums is the 'best of', so to speak – a series of the most emotionally engaging clips.

An affective result is also created through the arrangement of the different extracts. The video testimonies in the museums often end in emotional climax: with the death or deportation of loved ones. Thus, in the Imperial War Museum, the video testimony on the ghettos closes with a witness remembering how her brother volunteered to be deported instead of his mother. The mother refused. The witness pleaded with her to agree, saying that she could live without a brother, but that she could not live without a mother. The end of the story is left open. The visitors never get to know what happened either to the mother or to the brother. Similarly, in the Bergen-Belsen Memorial, the biographical video point with Esther Reiss (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 203), who recalls her life in

the Lodz ghetto, ends with the deportation of her mother and her two siblings:

The Germans came and fired shots into the air. Everyone had to get out, my mother, my two sisters, my brother and I – critically ill. They took my brother and sister out of the yard to the truck. I pulled my mother to my side as they had not taken me, but the policeman dragged her away. I said that it was better for a mother to be there if her children were being taken away. No one could imagine where they were going.

I thought that it would be better for the children if my mother stayed with the two others. I went upstairs, collected their rucksacks and gave them to them. I said, ‘Mother, perhaps we’ll come too’. I meant my sister and I. Mother said, ‘Children, stay at home until we return’. And they were taken away on the truck and my sister and I stayed behind.

Comments in writing at the end of the testimony tell the visitor that ‘Esther Reiss’s mother and her two younger siblings were deported to the Chełmno extermination camp and murdered’.

The secondary witness is, as observed above, supposed to ‘feel the bewilderment, injury, confusion, dread and conflicts that the trauma victim feels’ (Felman and Laub 1992: 57). However, the idea of secondary witnessing as proposed by Baer or Laub foresees that the secondary witness will watch the whole testimony and follow the survivor through her or his experiences. Entire testimonies can be tedious and long. In museums, the video testimonies are arranged in such a way as to facilitate the visitors’ emotional engagement. To come back to Dori Laub, the visitors are presented with the moments of ‘dread and conflicts’, but not with everything inbetween. The visitors become tertiary witnesses to meticulously selected and mediated extracts of the video testimonies.

*Representing ‘The Millions Who Simply Disappeared’ But Remaining Close to the Visitors*

Like other museum objects, video testimonies are representative (‘Vertretung’) of a larger entity. As we have seen, in Holocaust museums this entity is in the first place all of the victims of the Holocaust who are not and cannot be part of the exhibition. ‘Very few people had to speak on behalf of the millions who simply disappeared. We had to universalise their experiences while at the same time retaining the intimate and personal’, observes interviewer Annie Dodds about the video testimonies in the Imperial War Museum’s Holocaust Exhibition (cited in Kushner 2001: 91). In the Imperial War Museum, this universal value of the testimonies is underlined by the way in which the video testimonies are exhibited. The

names of the witnesses to history are often only shown at the beginning of the video testimonies, and in the chapter on Auschwitz and the so-called 'Final Solution', both the names and the faces eventually remain hidden from the visitors. It was with surprise that, after having finished the exhibition, the curators realized that it was possible to follow certain individual witnesses' biographies over the course of the exhibition (Barker interview 2009). In the Imperial War Museum, the biographies were never meant to stand for themselves alone. Indeed, in many extracts, the witnesses to history speak in the first-person plural rather than in the first-person singular. When I made the curators aware of this and asked whether it was a curatorial choice to use the clips with this feature, Suzanne Bardgett observed that it had happened by chance. For her, the use of the first-person plural can be explained by the fact that many survivors always talk in the name of the other victims and those who went through the experiences with them (Bardgett interview 2009). Whatever the explanation for the use of the first-person plural might be, it underlines the representative ('Vertretung') function of the video testimonies.

In most museums, the representative function of the witnesses to history for 'the millions who simply disappeared' is underlined by the presentation of a diversity of experiences and sociocultural backgrounds. To speak in museum terms: one specimen from each subgroup of the larger whole is included in the exhibition. In the Imperial War Museum, this diversity is particularly underlined in the very first video testimony, which is presented in the lobby. Here, the witnesses to history talk about their prewar lives. Testimonies of upbringing in a poor family follow those of upbringing in a rich family; those of happy childhoods those of difficult ones; witnesses to history with a religious background speak after witnesses with a secular background; and Jewish witnesses have been put next to a Jehovah's witness. One of the motivations behind the exhibition of video testimonies in the Imperial War Museum was to show that the victims of the Holocaust were ordinary people. Annie Dodds knew from a survey of British schoolchildren's attitudes towards Jewish victims of Nazi persecution that many children had come to the conclusion that the victims themselves had done something to deserve their fate (Barker interview 2009). The opening video of the exhibition disrupts a potentially stereotyped view of the victims of the Holocaust as 'the Jews'. However, the diversity shown at the beginning gradually disappears over the course of the exhibition, when the witnesses' experiences become merely examples of a common theme. This has the unfortunate effect that the narrative of the exhibition follows the rationale of persecution for racial reasons: a diverse group of ordinary people was

rendered equal according to racist laws and turned into a homogenous victim group.

In concentration-camp memorials, diversity is often represented as national diversity. In the second room of the Neuengamme Memorial, 'Different Groups of Prisoners', the prisoners are grouped according to their country of origin. By classifying the victims in this way, memorials avoid National Socialist classifications and thus a second codification of the survivors according to the reasons for their persecution. Although prisoners were often ordered by nationality in the camps, they were not persecuted because of their nationality, but for racist and political reasons. A classification by nationality also assumes the characteristics of the memorialization of concentration-camp victims that, since the first ceremonies, has consisted in the different nations remembering 'their' victims. However, classification by nationality also tends to homogenize differences within the different national groups. The experiences of a German political dissident and a German Jew before, during and after the war were very different. These differences only become apparent when the visitor watches the video testimonies. Moreover, after the war, many victims migrated to countries that were far away from the ones they were originally from, so that their nationalities have changed over the years. This migrant identity of the witnesses to history is rarely taken into consideration when classifying the video testimonies – although it is of course frequently alluded to in the video testimonies themselves. By classifying them according to national groups, the survivors are therefore often made representative of a subgroup that might not be representable – and, one imagines, a given witness might not want to be representative of.

Although the museums try to represent the diversity of the victims, their depiction generally tends towards homogenization. Both physically and with respect to their sociocultural background, the witnesses to history often resemble the museums' main target audience. It was, for example, a criterion for the selection of witnesses to history in the Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum that they spoke English. In fact, most of them are British residents. Considering that the majority of Holocaust survivors did not migrate to the United Kingdom and that most of them have not been socialized in British culture, this is therefore a fairly unrepresentative sample. Not only have the witnesses to history here been socialized in Britain, all of them physically resemble ordinary British people. None of the witnesses wears a kippah, the small round hat worn by religious Jewish men, for example, and none of them has a long beard or payots, the side-locks typical of strictly orthodox

Jewish men. Although most of the witnesses to history in the Imperial War Museum's Holocaust Exhibition are Jews, none of them can be optically recognized as such. According to the wish of the exhibition makers, the witnesses to history in the video testimonies in the Imperial War Museum appear as very ordinary indeed. Despite the fact that all of them are immigrants and some of them speak with a strong accent, they are people who the majority of British visitors will relate to without a problem. Similarly, in the Bergen-Belsen Memorial, where the majority of the witnesses to history are Jewish, none of the witnesses can optically be recognized as such.

The witnesses to history in the Imperial War Museum and in the Bergen-Belsen Memorial contrast with those in Yad Vashem. In Yad Vashem, some of the witnesses to history on the video testimonies – though not the majority – wear a kippah or are otherwise recognizable as Jews. Some of them also give testimony on holding Jewish rituals in the most hostile of circumstances. Shmuel Daitch Ben Menachem, for example, recalls blowing the shofar, the horn blown on Jewish New Year Rosh Hashanah, in the Kovno ghetto. Religious subjects are rarely approached in the other museums that I have analysed here.

The diversity of witnesses to history in the museums mirrors the visitors to the museums – and for that matter the people on the streets in the respective cities. While orthodox Jews and men wearing a kippah characterize the street picture in Jerusalem, they are far less common in London or in Germany. However, Yad Vashem has also been criticized for its lack of ultra-orthodox testimony. Meir Wikler (2012), in an article in the Israeli Daily Newspaper *Haaretz*, has observed that while 'according to some experts 50%–70% of those murdered by the Nazis, were "traditionally religious Jews" ... in the rooms of Yad Vashem only one of the 50–60 video monitors playing taped testimonies of Holocaust survivors shows a Haredi Jew'. This video testimony, Wikler argues, was only introduced after criticism was raised that Yad Vashem's representation of Holocaust victims was one-sided. Wikler (2012) observes that 'by choosing to record and display taped testimonies of mostly secular Jews, Yad Vashem is giving a distorted picture of the religious affiliations of the survivors'. Yad Vashem has contested Wikler's accusations (Rosenberg 2012). However, although it is true that there is more religious content in the video testimonies in Yad Vashem than in other museums, it also remains true that the large majority of video testimonies in Yad Vashem do not show strictly orthodox Jews.

The majority of Jewish victims of the Holocaust came from Eastern Europe, particularly Poland (cf. Hilberg 1985: 1201ff). Many of them

were religious or orthodox Jews from the Jewish quarters in the bigger cities and from the so-called 'shtetls'. Several explanations can be advanced for why this group is only rarely represented in museums. First, religious Jews were the largest victim group and there are consequently fewer survivors who can be interviewed. According to an estimation by Raul Hilberg (1985: 1212f) around 3,000,000 Jews of an original population of 3,351,000 in Poland were murdered, for example. Second, strictly orthodox Jewish communities tend to be fairly secluded communities. For interviewers coming from outside of these communities, it can be difficult to approach survivors and to convince them to be interviewed. Yad Vashem for example launched a special campaign to collect video testimonies with strictly orthodox Jews together with the strictly orthodox Ginzach Kiddush Hachem Archive (Goldstein 2007: 4) Third – and I contend that this might be the most important reason for not using video testimonies with orthodox Jews – the Holocaust is, as I have observed in Chapter 1, interpreted as 'Hurban' by many orthodox Jews; as one attempt in a series of attempts to destroy the Jewish people. This interpretation is neither compatible with the main academic interpretation of the Holocaust as a unique event, or as a 'civilisational break' (Diner 1988) in Western academia, nor with the Zionist narrative according to which the State of Israel has risen out of the ashes of the Holocaust as presented in Yad Vashem. Thus, by leaving out the testimonies of strictly orthodox Jews, museums leave out the extremist voices – the voices that do not fit into the narrative of the exhibitions and/or that might disturb visitors.

Interestingly, while orthodox Jews are largely absent from the video testimonies in exhibitions, they are amply represented in historical photographs depicting prewar Jewish life, and life in the ghettos, in, for example, Yad Vashem and the Imperial War Museum. Thus, in the lobby of the Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum, visitors can watch a video representing prewar Jewish life. In the video, which is inter alia underlain with Klezmer music, the visitors see men in long black coats, with black hats and thick beards. In the pictures in the exhibition and in the opening film, Jewry appears as something exotic whose disappearance has to be lamented; it is folklorized. Unlike the Jewish survivors in the video testimonies, prewar Jews are presented as extraordinary rather than ordinary; as quite unlike the visitors to the Museum. Both in the Imperial War Museum and in Yad Vashem, the contrast between the video testimonies and the historical pictures suggests that orthodox communities disappeared during the war. They are presented as the Jewish culture that was destroyed, while the video testimonies depict present-day Jewish life as secular.



*Exhibiting Ethically Challenging Testimonies*

In her autobiography *Landscapes of Memory*, Ruth Klüger (2003: 70) relates the following incident:

I sit in the student cafeteria with some advanced Ph.D. candidates, and one reports how in Jerusalem he made the acquaintance of an old Hungarian Jew who was a survivor of Auschwitz, and yet this man cursed the Arabs and held them all in contempt. How can someone who comes from Auschwitz talk like that? the German asks. I get into the act and argue, perhaps more hotly than need be. What did he expect? Auschwitz was no instructional institution, like the University of Göttingen, which he attends. You learned nothing there, and least of all humanity and tolerance. Absolutely nothing good came out of the concentration camps, I hear myself saying, with my voice rising, and he expects catharsis, purgation, the sort of thing you go to the theatre for? They were the most useless, pointless establishments imaginable. That is the one thing to remember about them if you know nothing else.

As this extract suggests, having been in a concentration camp might not have made all survivors more humane or tolerant. On the contrary, the inhumane conditions in the concentration camps pushed some victims towards decisions that, judging from hindsight, can seem ethically challenging. Primo Levi (1988: 36) has described the camp as a 'grey zone' in which the difference between good and bad became blurred. He observes that 'it is naïve, absurd, and historically false to believe that an infernal system such as National Socialism sanctifies its victims: on the contrary, it degrades them, it makes them resemble itself, and this all the more when they are available, blank, and lacking a political or moral armature' (1988: 40). He writes that in the majority of cases, the behaviour of concentration-camp prisoners ranged from collaboration to 'immoral' behaviour dictated by 'a daily struggle against hunger, cold, fatigue, and blows in which the room for choices (especially moral choices) was reduced to zero' (1988: 50).

However, in the video testimonies in Holocaust museums, survivors are generally presented as morally unimpeachable. The survivors that are shown in most Holocaust museums are shown as innocent, suffering individuals. In the video testimonies, the survivors talk about their prewar and wartime life, the inhumane conditions on the train journey to the camp and the horror in the camp, torture, mass death and slave labour. Stories of solidarity and mutual help can also often be found. In memorial museums, the transmission of the values of human rights and democracy generally happens through the provision of negative examples. By showing the worst, repetition – it is hoped – will be prevented. Survivor testimony therefore has the function of repudiating the deeds of the perpetrators. Stories that might potentially compromise the image of the innocent victim are generally left out.

There were, first, the so-called 'Funktionshäftlinge' (prisoner functionaries), those prisoners who were given administrative duties by the SS, or chosen for the supervision of forced labour, such as the 'Blockälteste' (block eldest) or *Kapos*, and who, more often than not, abused their positions and actively participated in torture and mass murder. Levi (1988: 40) observes that while they were the minority in the camps, privileged prisoners were the majority of those who survived. Prisoner functionaries, however, are largely absent from the video testimonies in Holocaust museums. Nevertheless, they are occasionally represented through the memory of other survivors. In one of the audio testimonies in the Imperial War Museum, for example, one witness remembers the welcoming speech by a block eldest, who observed: 'You have come here to die. I myself will quite happily kill a few of you.' Another one observes that the worst killing was done by the *Kapos*. The Neuengamme Memorial again presents several prisoner functionaries in the memorial books with prisoner biographies.

There are, second, the stories of having stolen food, denunciation or lack of support for other prisoners in order to secure one's own survival. Of the museums that I visited, only Yad Vashem has included stories of deeds that, in hindsight, might seem morally questionable. 'I had entered a jungle and in a jungle only predators survive', observes one survivor in Yad Vashem about his arrival in the concentration camp. The writer Roman Frister, on the other hand, tells the story of how one day he discovered his cap had been stolen. He knew that without a cap, he would not survive the morning's roll-call. During the night, he stole some other prisoner's cap and in the morning appeared at the roll-call, knowing full well that somebody else would be shot instead of and because of him.<sup>3</sup> In a second video testimony, Roman Frister recalls not helping his father up when he fell on one occasion, thereby guaranteeing himself survival. He still feels guilty about this incident, he says. Yad Vashem has also included a video testimony with Jewish partisan fighters who relate how they shot people, burnt whole villages and blew up a train, and thus how they performed deeds that from the point of view of somebody who is not in the situation of war could appear criminal.

Yad Vashem further presents stories that might seem ethically challenging not because of what the survivors did, but because of how they reacted emotionally. Thus, Rita Weiss recalls being struck by the beauty of the notorious camp doctor Josef Mengele:

and then suddenly I felt a hand on my shoulder, turning me around. It was Mengele. He was very handsome, like a movie star. His beauty was beyond description: So

well – groomed with such a finely detailed face – if you saw his pictures you know. My sister whispers to me in Hungarian: ‘Say you are 19.’ He looks at me, mesmerizes me, as one does a snake, and I’m simply speechless, I say nothing. And then he says: ‘What are you doing here?’, kicks me and I fly to the right.<sup>4</sup>

It does not take much imagination to read this tale as a tale of sexual attraction as well as one tale of fear.

The stories in Yad Vashem depict the survivors as far from innocent. Roman Frister paid for his life with that of others, maybe even with that of his father. The partisans actively killed other people. Rita Weiss, in a situation that will mean life or death, is struck by the beauty of the man she should despise most. Yet, at the same time, these stories show the victims as individuals who are actively fighting for their survival and who therefore took decisions and reacted in ways that for those who have never been in the situation, might seem morally questionable.

It is certainly no coincidence that this darker side of survival is presented in Yad Vashem rather than in the European museums. Unlike German Holocaust museums, Yad Vashem does not have to look back on a long history of denial or repression. Unlike the Imperial War Museum, it does not have to present the survivors as ‘ordinary’. What is more, to an Israeli audience, stories of partisan action such as burning villages and shooting potentially innocent people might not seem as morally compromising as they do to some European audiences. As has been observed already, the main message advanced by most museums that I have analysed is: ‘never again!’. This ‘never again’ is ultimately a message of peace. In most Western European museums, armed conflict is presented as an insufficient method for solving conflicts – or at least as the last resort. In Yad Vashem, the main message is ‘never again us’. This ‘never again us’ explicitly includes armed resistance. Yad Vashem was founded in order to remember and honour especially those European Jews who took part in the resistance movements. The foundation of Yad Vashem was preceded by long discussions on how heroism should be defined: as armed resistance alone or also as the attempt to keep one’s dignity and observe Jewish rituals in the most inhumane conditions (Haß 2002: 93ff; Kurths 2008: 140ff)? The dilemma was never fully resolved and is still visible in the denomination of Yad Vashem as ‘the Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority’. The current exhibition in the Holocaust History Museum still has a very large and extensive chapter on Jewish resistance and partisan fighters when compared to other Holocaust museums. The partisan fight is here directly linked to the war of independence. The last chapter of the exhibition stresses that many of the fighters in the war of independence were Holocaust survivors.

Thus, Yad Vashem counters the image of passive victims simply enduring their fate by showing them as active and fighting individuals.

However, the exhibition also presents the victims' attempts to keep their dignity in the most hostile of conditions as a form of heroism. Many video testimonies deal with and stress the daily struggle for survival in the ghettos and in the camps. Roman Frister, for instance, also tells a story of torture:

In winter I stole an empty paper cement sack and used it as an undershirt beneath my inmate's uniform because it was very cold. The Nazis discovered it. And I was forced to stand between two barbed fences for 8 hours. It was winter and the temperature was minus 10 or 12 degrees. I wore a thin summer inmate uniform. I stood there and knew that I had seen people who couldn't stand there for two hours and would touch the electric barbed-wire fences in front of them and behind them just to end their suffering. I tried with all my strength to keep a clear mind. I remember that at first I thought about my childhood experiences. Then I tried to play chess in my mind. Later, I remembered how when I was five years old, I used to climb into my father's warm bed in the morning. After some time I needed to urinate. I fought my bladder because I thought that this is proof that I'm still in control, still a human being. But of course, I didn't succeed. At first it was a great relief, because the hot urine that poured down my legs warmed them. But after exactly two minutes the urine turned into ice. I only remember that when the time passed and the Nazi came for me, I innocently asked him what time it was and he innocently said 2 a.m. Suddenly he realized ... that he had answered an inmate, a Jew, a subhuman, which was beneath his dignity. He did it instinctively. He got angry and slapped me twice. That's when I knew that I was alive.<sup>5</sup>

With these and other similar stories, Yad Vashem points out that whatever morally questionable decisions some witnesses might have taken, it was ultimately the circumstances that forced them to take those decisions. Presenting only the stories in which the survivors appear as innocent victims might indeed mean leaving out part of the truth. Ultimately, it might entail reducing survivors to their status as victims and not presenting them as fully active individuals with positive and negative character traits.

The video testimonies with victims are thus used in order to give history lessons to the visitors and in order to transmit moral lessons that should be drawn from the Holocaust. These lessons are transmitted by making the visitors engage emotionally with survivors. In order to do this, curators choose extracts from video testimonies that are in accordance with the general narrative and didactic goals of the exhibition, and that allow visitors to relate easily to the survivors. In the majority of museums, extremist voices or survivor testimony that might compromise the view of the innocent victim are avoided, while the chosen extracts depict suffering graphically.

These extracts are arranged in such a way as to engage the visitors emotionally and to advance certain interpretations of historical events and certain moral messages to the detriment of others. These narratives – as well as the messages that are advanced through them – might not always be in accordance with the desires of the witnesses to history themselves. The above-mentioned survivor of Bergen-Belsen, who remembers that the trees could hear how happy people were at liberation, probably prefers to remember liberation as a happy ending. The topical video point in which his testimony has been integrated presents his memory as questionable at least. By choosing and arranging extracts from complete video testimonies for the exhibition, the curators construct their very own narratives and interpretations of the events. The way in which testimonies are presented in the museums also means that the individuality of the witnesses to history must take a back seat – even in the ‘biographical video points’. The visitors are not invited to become tertiary witnesses to the individual survivors themselves; they are invited to become tertiary witnesses to the narrative that the curators constructed.

By framing witnesses to history in such a way as to place their eyeline on the eyeline of the visitors, by highlighting emotional responses, by choosing the most affective extracts from the entire video testimonies and by choosing individuals that visitors can easily relate to, curators clearly entice visitors to have an emphatic engagement with the survivors. In her reflections on memorial museums, Silke Arnold-de Simine, criticizing Alison Landsberg’s idea of a prosthetic memory, observes that awakening empathy in the visitors is one of memorial museums’ most important goals. Referring to Berys Gaut, she differentiates between ‘affective identification (in which we imagine a feeling), empathy (in which we actually feel *with* someone) and sympathy (in which we feel *for* someone and care for their well-being)’ (Arnold-de Simine 2013: 111).

Empathy has been rated positively as a response to survivor testimonies and trauma. Thus, Dominick LaCapra defines an ‘emphatic unsettlement’ (2001: 41) that should be the basis of receiving survivor testimonies. For him, ‘empathy may be understood in terms of attending to, even trying, in limited ways to recapture the possibly split-off, affective dimension of the experience of others. Empathy may also be seen as counteracting victimization, including self-victimization. It involves affectivity as a crucial aspect of understanding’ (2001: 40). He sees empathy as a counterforce to ‘identification’, which he defines as ‘the unmediated fusion of self and other in which the otherness or alterity of the other is not recognized and respected’ (2001: 27). Similarly, Jill Bennett (2005: 10) defines empathy as ‘grounded not in affinity (feeling for another insofar as we can imagine

being that other) but on a feeling for another that entails an encounter with something irreducible and different, often inaccessible'. For Alison Landsberg again, empathy is a crucial element to her idea of prosthetic memory. She defines empathy as 'not an emotional self-pitying identification with victims but a way of both feeling for and feeling different from the subject of inquiry' (Landsberg 2004: 135). In this, sense, empathy is in line with Laub and Baer's concept of secondary witnessing: the viewers of testimonies have a moral obligation towards the witnesses, but they do not become the witnesses. For LaCapra and Bennett at least, empathy is prescriptive: with the concept of empathy – and a very specific definition thereof – they define how testimonies should be received.

However, such an emphatic response cannot be secured from the visitors, nor might the consequences be those that are wished for. In fact, Arnold-de Simine (2013: 121ff) sees a danger in the focus on empathy as a means to educate the visitors to become better citizens. For one thing, she argues, in museums, empathy is based on the idea of a mirroring of feelings or of 'two persons reacting with the same emotions to the same situation' (Arnold-de Simine 2013: 121). Empathy makes reference to the idea of the supposed equality of all human beings – and especially on a transcultural and timeless equality of how they feel and express those feelings. Empathy therefore 'does not help to understand that people in a very different historical or cultural context from my own might have very different experiences and that these experiences depend on the way that they are treated due to their sex, class or "race"' (Arnold-de Simine 2013: 123). A too acute focus on empathy, she observes, can foreclose systemic and historical explanations. Similarly, Elke Heckner (2008: 78) argues that 'encouraging identification across ethnic and racial lines without addressing the inherent risks of appropriation seems a questionable pedagogical device'. As we have seen above and as Sheila Watson (2015: 289) has also observed, museums rarely contextualize the emotional responses of witnesses to history or 'place them in a historical context that recognizes that the language of emotion changes over time as do the ways in which it can be expressed'. In fact, people are more likely to be emphatic with people of their own ethnic group (Arnold-de Simine 2013: 121). Indeed, as we have seen, museums seem reluctant to include video testimonies with victim groups that are unlike their main target audience. Further, it is easier to feel emphatic with some feelings than with others (Arnold-de Simine 2013: 123). Again, as exemplified above, museums do indeed leave out ethically challenging testimonies.

Most importantly perhaps, empathy does not necessarily entail moral actions, nor does lack of empathy entail cruelty (Arnold-de Simine

2013: 121). Some people with Asperger's syndrome or autism, for example, are unable to feel empathy, but they are not acting cruelly as a consequence. Similarly, perpetrators can feel empathy and still commit cruel acts (Arnold-de Simine 2013: 121). A story that is too drastic might further lead to the opposite effect to the one that the curators desired: 'cognitive realization that helping would require a big sacrifice on the part of the witness might dampen the empathy someone feels' (Arnold-de Simine 2013: 111). Viewers could even turn to blaming the victims themselves for the situation that they are in so as to relieve their own distress (Arnold-de Simine 2013: 112).

Empathy as defined by LaCapra or Bennett arguably requires some training and a clear idea of how to approach the testimonies. Such an idea cannot necessarily be expected from most visitors. With their choices of video testimonies and the extracts from those video testimonies, the curators facilitated a potential identification with the victims. This identification might, as Arnold-de Simine (2013: 123) observes, prevent visitors from considering their own involvement in a discriminatory system. If we take the examples above of the comforting SS man or the woman who spat at the prisoners, it is, for example, more likely that visitors will imagine themselves reacting in the 'morally correct' way rather than seeing themselves in the role of the evil perpetrator or the sadistic bystander. In the worst-case scenario, an excess of empathy might even lead to what Arnold-de Simine (2013: 59) calls 'traumatic nostalgia' or 'dark nostalgia', the wish to have experienced a traumatic event oneself. This wish, in turn, is only possible because of a safe temporal distance from the events in question. As I have observed elsewhere, such a feeling of 'dark nostalgia' can in fact be extracted from the comments posted under the video testimonies and other posts with a biographical content that are found on the social media sites of memorial museums (de Jong 2015) – for example, when users ask for a victim's concentration-camp number in order to get a memorial tattoo. Trying to induce empathy in the visitors is therefore a challenging means to educate them – the right degree of distance and identification cannot be secured, nor will the outcome necessarily be that of 'raising [visitors'] personal commitment to higher moral values today and in the future', as the director of Yad Vashem, Avner Shalev hopes (Goldstein 2005: 7).

### *Perpetrators*

In 2011, the social psychologist Harald Welzer published a polemical article in the *Gedenkstättenrundbrief*, a journal dedicated to all possible questions

regarding the politics and didactics of memorials. In his article, Welzer argues that German memorial culture, particularly for the younger generations, has become shallow. According to him, German memorial culture concentrates too much on remembrance of the victims and a perceived need to fight forgetting. However, he observes, Holocaust memory has reached a point where the importance of remembering the Holocaust and of commemorating the victims is no longer called into question. Younger generations do not remember a time when the history of the Second World War and the Holocaust were repudiated and repressed. Not unlike Schneider and Jureit in their criticism of the idea of secondary witnessing, Welzer (2011) argues for a 'modernisation of the praxis of communicating history'. For one thing, he observes, German memorial culture concentrates too much on single perpetrator groups and not enough on the question of how a modern Western society was, in a short time, able to turn into what he calls an 'Ausgrenzungsgesellschaft', a society based on social exclusion. He therefore argues that 'the objectives of memory culture should ... not centre on the monumentalised horror of the extermination camps, but on the unspectacular, everyday life of a society that became ever more criminal, or rather that changed the normative codes of what is desirable and objectionable, good and bad, proper and criminal' (2011). Modern didactics of history, he writes, should explain that 'under certain circumstances not only the bad people decide to adopt inhuman behaviour, but also the good ones' (2011). He foresees a new type of museum for the communication of human rights and active citizenship as developed by Dana Giesecke, based on the model of science centres, such as the Klimahaus in Bremerhaven (Welzer and Giesecke 2012). Such centres should also, and especially, include positive examples of active citizenship:

If learning from history should have a sense, then that it should lead to the development of a sensibility for the potentials of contemporary constellations that can lead to good or to bad ends and to an ability to differentiate between the options that will lead to humane conditions and those that will lead to inhumane ones. It is clear that the development of such a sensibility cannot centre on negative history alone, but also has to include examples of successful and happy cohabitate. (Welzer 2011)

At least within the *Gedenkstättenrundbrief*, Welzer's article provoked both discussion and angry responses. Ulrike Schrader and Norbert Reichling (2011) of the Arbeitskreis NS-Gedenkstätten und Erinnerungsorte in Nordrhein-Westfalen e.V.' (Working Team Memorials of National Socialism and Sites of Memory in North-Rhine Westphalia) accuse Welzer of depicting a memorial culture that has long been overcome: 'One or



two generational changes have led to ever more relaxed didactics that have abdicated moral imperatives and contributed to discursive, interactive and experimental means of communication, that are free from the nervous “concernment” and eagerness to persuade of the 1970s and 1980s.’ Similarly, Habbo Knoch (2011), who was then director of the Bergen-Belsen Memorial, accuses Welzer of a lack of differentiation. Knoch observes that Welzer does not take into consideration the heterogeneity, spatial diffusion or grassroots character of German memorial culture. Knoch himself pleads for a historically differentiated process of learning from history. For him, Welzer’s concept of an ‘Ausgrenzungsgesellschaft’ is too general and all-embracing, and does not consider the complexity of German wartime society. However, he grants that Welzer is right in observing that ‘ways have to be found in order to strengthen the relevance of historical learning for a complex present and future’ and suggests that memorials should concentrate more on rights as a ‘central medium of modern societies’ (Knoch 2011).

I grant that Welzer’s overall disavowal of German memorial culture disregards its complexity. Moreover, Welzer’s proposal for interactive learning centres might, if not executed very thoughtfully, run the risk of being kitsch. However, Welzer is right in observing that most memorials and Holocaust museums – not merely those in Germany – shy away from presenting the multiple layers of individual and collective responsibility. Identification or empathy with the perpetrators, as is promoted in the case of victims, is here prevented. Most museums do not show testimonies with perpetrators, for example. Perpetrators are part of the exhibitions of course, but unlike the victims, they are not given a voice.

*(Not) Exhibiting Perpetrator Video Testimonies*

Of the museums that I have analysed, the only one that has introduced a testimony with an SS guard is the Neuengamme Memorial. The testimony is an audio rather than a video testimony. In order to protect her family, the female SS guard asked that only her initials U.E. be used. According to her own narrative, U.E. was sent to guard a prisoner transport from one camp to another only once. Her testimony exemplifies the challenges that can arise when using perpetrator testimonies in exhibitions. For one thing, U.E. puts her actions into perspective and gives the impression that she regrets what she has done. She recalls an SS man telling her that the step between guard and prisoner is a very small one; if she and her colleagues did not want to guard the prisoners, she might very well end up on the other side. Reflecting on this event, U.E. observes that she sometimes wonders whether she took the right decision; whether a step to the other

side would not have been the better step to take. She thus presents her decision as quasi-obligatory. Refusing to carry out the task given to her appears in her testimony as a sacrifice – one that with a safe temporal distance from the events she thinks that she should have taken. However, besides this moment of reflection, the testimony is predominantly apologetic. For around half of the testimony, U.E. does not talk about her job as an SS guard, but about her problems getting the time she spent in prison after the war recognized for her pension. She refuses to consider her own acts as criminal and underlines that she was ‘dienstverpflichtet’ (conscripted) and therefore had no option than to do what was asked of her. She recalls giving food to the prisoners, and the prisoners pleading for her and her colleagues to stay with them. Therefore, she does not understand why people keep accusing her of having done a bad deed. The testimony ends with the words: ‘Well, they were not mistreated. Not in any way. But I do not want to trivialise anything either. It was bitter and hard.’ She does not specify for whom it was bitter and hard.

Judith Keilbach (2003: 163), who has analysed the representation of witnesses to history in German TV documentaries, observes that testimonies by perpetrators often end in concealment or extenuation, which, she argues, can be explained in several ways:

As a form of self-suggestion which, in the perpetrators’ memory, turns lies into truth; as a missing conception of the unlawfulness of their own acts in which their deeds are not considered as criminal acts, but, for example, rationally explained; or – and this is especially the case for ‘public’ statements in front of a camera – out of fear of prosecution.

The testimony by the SS guard at the Neuengamme Memorial demonstrates these sorts of behaviour exactly. U.E. does not consider her own deeds as criminal acts. Through her testimony, she asks for compassion and understanding.

The challenge involved in giving voice to perpetrators by presenting their testimonies is of course that they appear human – exactly the effect that is sought in the depiction of victims. The black-and-white depiction of early exhibitions, in which guards were bloodthirsty torturers and prisoners innocent, helpless sufferers, will no longer always be possible. Many grey areas inbetween the two might appear. As was already shown in Chapter 4 in relation to the video testimony in the Walther Werke, the Neuengamme Memorial does not shy away from presenting those grey areas, and it is in this context that U.E.’s testimony needs to be interpreted. In its exhibition on the SS (of which the audio testimony with U.E. is a part), audio and video, as well as written, testimonies with survivors present an inside

view on life in the camp and the relationship between prisoners and the SS. Most of these testimonies speak of terrible deeds, but occasionally positive memories appear. Thus, on an audio station close to that with the interview with U.E., several survivors remember J. Hille, the commander of the satellite camp Oberheide, who tried to hide and save two children, but was ultimately forced to send them to Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp, where they were probably murdered. Of course, such stories, like the memory of the SS guard U.E. described above, carry the danger that visitors take away the impression that everything was not so bad after all. In the Neuengamme Memorial, such an interpretation is foreclosed by the exhibition surrounding the testimony. Above the table with the audio station, extracts from testimonies by former prisoners remembering torture and mistreatment are, for example, beamed onto the wall. When listening to the audio testimony, the visitor will also see those testimonies. The testimonies on the wall indicate that U.E.'s testimony should be received with a grain of scepticism or at least put into perspective.

While most of the museums that I have visited have decided against the inclusion of video testimonies from perpetrators, most of the exhibition makers that I interviewed observed that maybe this decision should be reconsidered (Barker interview 2009; Garbe interview 2009; Gring interview 2009). James Barker of the Imperial War Museum even went so far as to observe that while the victims' right to have their say must be the priority for all museum exhibitions dealing with the Holocaust, the absence of a meaningful discussion of the motivation and behaviour of the perpetrators at a personal level makes any attempt to understand the subject as a whole incomplete (Barker interview 2009).

Barker's observation demonstrates how mainstream and socially accepted victim testimonies have become. This has not always been the case. In the same vein as re-education programmes in Germany, early Holocaust exhibitions foregrounded the deeds of the perpetrators. Habbo Knoch (2009: 205), for example, observes that the early Holocaust exhibitions of the 1960s and 1970s were characterized by 'a rather appellative and documentary-testimonial style, that tried to induce emotional responses and to transmit selective information, inter alia, through the use of blow-ups of photographic pictures. The diversity of victim groups ... were not at all or only marginally part of the public representation of the Holocaust'. The absence of perpetrator testimonies and the prevalence of victim testimonies in the present exhibitions can in this sense also be explained by the fact that the present exhibitions are reactions to those early exhibitions. Although the perpetrators were of course not given a say in those early exhibitions, the focus was here on their deeds. Now, this

focus on the perpetrators has been complemented by the memory of those deeds by the victims.

Another explanation for the lack of video testimonies with perpetrators is that it can be difficult to convince them to be interviewed by the staff of a concentration-camp memorial or a Holocaust museum, and particularly to obtain consent for the exhibition of their video testimony. Staff of both the Bergen-Belsen Memorial and the Neuengamme Memorial observed that they found it challenging to get in contact with perpetrators (Garbe interview 2009, Gring interview 2009). However, Diana Gring (Gring interview 2009) of the Bergen-Belsen Memorial underlined that the efforts made to this end were rather marginal. Only one interview with a former female SS guard was carried out by the Memorial. Gring observed that had there been more video testimonies with perpetrators, their inclusion into the exhibition would have been an option; however, the single status of the video raised questions of representativeness. It is interesting to contrast the museums with TV documentaries where ample testimonies with perpetrators can be found (Bösch 2008; Keilbach 2008). Unlike in museums, the directors of TV documentaries seem to be willing to represent perpetrators and the perpetrators seem to agree to be interviewed.

While video testimonies are missing, in most museums, the perpetrators appear on black-and-white pictures from the archives showing them in their SS uniforms or as the accused in pictures from their trials. The pictures locate the perpetrators far away in history – and thus also far away from the realm of the visitor. Quite unlike the victims on the video testimonies, who look like the visitors' grandfathers and grandmothers, the perpetrators look as if they belonged to another world. Most museums further tend to give preference to high-ranking SS officials. Thus, in both the Imperial War Museum and in Yad Vashem, famous members of the SS elite are presented through black boxes with their portraits and their biographies.

Authors who have reflected on the benefits of identification or empathy with perpetrators have referred to Kaja Silverman's distinction between 'idiopathic identification' and 'heteropathic identification' (Silverman 1992: 205; van Alphen 2002: 178ff; Pettitt 2017: 134ff). Idiopathic identification can be compared to Silke Arnold-de Simine's (as opposed to LaCarpa, Bennett or Landsberg's) understanding of empathy as a mirroring of feeling: 'idiopathic identification involves a process in which the self appropriates the thoughts and feelings of the other, internalising them as one's own' (Pettitt 2017: 135). In idiopathic identification, 'one takes the other into the self, on the basis of a (projected) likeness, so that the other becomes or becomes like the self' (van Alphen 2002: 178). In heteropathic

identification, on the other hand, ‘the self-enacting of the identification takes the risk of temporarily and partially becoming (like) the other’ (van Alphen 2002: 178). Here, ‘the self ... is externalised at the site of the other’ (Pettitt 2017: 136). We could argue that what is promoted through the camera frame and the chosen extracts of video testimonies with victims is a form of ‘idiopathic identification’ – although a form of ‘heteropathic identification’ is of course what is desired by theorists like Baer, Laub, LaCapra, Bennett or Simon.

An emphatic engagement with perpetrators is certainly no less problematic than an emphatic engagement with victims. However, the problem with an exclusive identification with the victims, Ernst van Alphen (2002: 178), argues, is that:

although useful to realise how horrible the Holocaust was, it is also a way of reassuring visitors about their fundamental innocence. To put the case strongly: this reassurance is unwarranted, and unhelpful in achieving the ultimate goal of Holocaust education to prevent history from repeating itself. Victimhood cannot control the future. In contrast, soliciting partial and temporary identification with the perpetrators contributes to an awareness of the ease with which one slides into a measure of complicity.

Both Pettitt and van Alphen argue that heteropathic identification would allow such an identification while still providing a safe distance from the Other.

Van Alphen’s reflections are geared towards contemporary art, while Joanne Pettitt’s are geared towards literature. Both argue that art, and respectively literature, allow for a safe fictional space in which an emphatic identification with perpetrators can be acted out. This begs the question whether heteropathic identification with real perpetrators might be possible at all – or even desirable. It will be impossible here to answer the first question. Pettitt (2017: 4), for example, observes that because of the cultural representation of the SS as the epitome of evil, we are likely to immediately reject the discourse of a perpetrator in literature. If this might be the case for literature, it is likely that it would as much or even more be the case for real perpetrator testimonies. As witnesses, perpetrators lack trustworthiness. As in literature or art, the emotional engagement of the visitors with real perpetrator testimonies in exhibitions would of course depend on the means of their representation. At the moment, the museums present visitors with individuals who appear far removed in time and to whom visitors will find it difficult – and one imagines undesirable – to relate to. In this way, the museums fail to address the complex questions of delinquency. They do not ask what was deemed good about National

Socialism and how a society of exclusion came about, the questions proposed by Jureit and Schneider, Welzer or van Alphen as a foundation for a new memorial culture. In order to address these questions, it might be worth representing the perpetrators as equally human as the victims, as – to use Christopher Browning’s (1992) famous phrase – ‘ordinary men’. This might involve showing them as people who – like the survivors – had a life after the Holocaust and who reflect on their life from hindsight. The medium of the exhibition would certainly allow for a framing of those testimonies that would allow for an emphatic engagement, while still keeping a critical distance in the sense of heteropathic identification. What is more, such a juxtaposition of perpetrator testimonies to victim testimonies might be one way to prevent a possible overidentification with the victims.

### *Giving the Word to the Second Generation*

As the only museum to have included a testimony with a perpetrator in its exhibition, the Neuengamme Memorial is also the only museum to address the legacy of the SS for subsequent generations. At the end of its exhibition on the SS, the Neuengamme Memorial presents a video testimony with the children and grandchildren of former SS men.<sup>6</sup> The museum text accompanying the video reads:

Only few children of perpetrators start looking for the traces that their parents left. They are too afraid to find out what deeds their father was responsible for as a member of the SS. Researching their family history is easier for those who have never met their father or their grandfather. The greater distance makes it easier for grandchildren to look into the history of their family under National Socialism. Almost all families of perpetrators have in common that the time of National Socialism and the behaviour of relatives was not talked about.

Indeed, none of the interviewees in the video testimony in the Neuengamme Memorial ever met her or his father or grandfather. All of them relate that in their families, the SS membership of their relatives was hushed up. Some interviewees started to do research on their respective relatives when triggered by some crucial experiences in their personal lives: for one, it was the birth of his son; for another, a visit to Auschwitz; while a third witness became aware of his family history when he decided not to do military service and his mother told him that she had some documents about his father that he could hand in to the *Bundeswehr* so that he would be exempted from the service. They point out that it would have been more difficult for them to do the research if they had known their fathers or grandfathers personally. One of the witnesses, Heiko Tessmann, the grandson of the commandant at the police-prison Hamburg-Fuhlsbüttel,

stresses that the media only focuses on the SS elite, while small families remain in the shadow. He therefore founded the association *Rückgrat e. V.* (Backbone – in German the term is also used as a metaphor for courage) for the purpose of learning from history, through which he has distributed a CD-ROM with documentation on his grand-father.

The video testimony with the children and grandchildren of SS men in the Neuengamme Memorial exemplifies the challenges of coming to terms with a difficult family history. It also shows a possible means for framing perpetrator testimonies. Not unlike the final video testimonies with victims, the video testimony serves to give visitors a lesson in morals. The relatives of the perpetrators appear as role models for the visitors. They exemplify the way in which the past should be dealt with. With the video testimony of the relatives, visitors, and especially German visitors, are invited to take responsibility for their past.

Thus, while visitors are invited to relate to the testimonies of victims and to become tertiary witnesses to their suffering, such a relationship is prevented in the case of perpetrator testimonies. In contrast to victims, museums create an abyss between visitors and perpetrators: the perpetrators are presented as historical figures, whereas the victims are presented as individuals living amongst us. Therefore, as observed and criticized by Jureit and Schneider and Welzer, Holocaust museums concentrate on victims and bypass more complex questions of delinquency. Visitors are encouraged to convey to the future the memories of those who suffered, not of those who were the cause of this suffering.

### *Bystanders*

While video testimonies with perpetrators can hardly ever be found in museums, concentration-camp memorials such as Bergen-Belsen or Neuengamme now often include video testimonies with bystanders (Hilberg 1992) – locals who lived close to the camps. Such testimonies serve to illustrate the close connection between the local population and the camp. Especially in Germany, they serve to show that people knew – and that they knew more than they were (and are) willing to reveal at first; they serve to counter the denial that was prevalent amongst Germans in the first decades after the War. In this way, they also serve to show visitors how they should have acted – or rather how they should not have acted. As in the case of victim testimonies, curators create new narratives and guide the visitors' interpretation of the video testimonies through the way

in which they order the different statements and through the aesthetical presentation of the witnesses to history.

### *Showing Different Layers of Delinquency*

Unlike direct relatives, residents have a less direct and less personal relationship with the perpetrators – and might therefore, one imagines, be less afraid to speak out. Unlike the perpetrators themselves, they have less need to conceal certain events or to excuse themselves. Neither perpetrators nor victims, bystanders have been in the situation in which most visitors to the museum probably would have been. They would therefore be the perfect means to approach the more difficult questions concerning the time of National Socialism. However, the museums analysed here shy away from going the full length in this respect.

In both the Bergen-Belsen and Neuengamme Memorials, the bystanders who are presented in the video testimonies were mostly children or teenagers at the time of the war. Whatever they might have done, they are therefore excused by their age. Sneaking to the camp to watch the prisoners fighting over an apple, as one of the bystanders remembers in the video testimony ‘Locals Remember the Bergen-Belsen and Wietzendorf POW Camps (1941/1942)’ at the Bergen-Belsen Memorial, appears like an act of youthful folly for somebody who was not older than fifteen; the same behaviour would appear sadistic in a grown-up. In the Neuengamme Memorial, one of the video testimonies with residents can be found in the exhibition on the SS.<sup>7</sup> Here, a witness who was a young skipper on a canal barge at the time remembers doing business with the camp – until he decided he did not want to see such misery anymore. Another witness recalls having seen a prisoner being beaten to death with a shovel. Other residents relate having passed prisoner columns on an almost daily basis and even entering the camp – for which a ticket was issued. Some remember having been afraid of the SS; others recall a rather untroubled relationship. One witness observes that many residents had family connections to the SS and that one of his relatives was married to an SS guard. The young age of the bystanders in the video testimonies of course serves to counter the argument advanced by many members of the German population in the postwar years that they knew nothing or that they ignored the brutality of life in the camps: if children managed to go to the camp and see how prisoners were murdered, grown-ups must certainly have known more. At the same time, the focus on children averts the eyes from grown-ups – and thus from individuals who would be more like the majority of visitors.

Even young bystanders of course occasionally attempt to excuse their deeds. The dramaturgy of the video testimonies with bystanders is



therefore meticulously constructed so as to correct apologetic testimonies and to stress denunciatory ones, as exemplified by the video testimony 'Locals Remember the Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp'. This video testimony contains extracts from the testimonies of six residents. It starts with a section on what and how much the locals actually knew about the concentration camp. The first four bystanders observe that they knew very little – not even what a concentration camp really was. 'A concentration camp – well, what is that? And then they said, Bergen-Belsen, there's a concentration camp there. We didn't know, we really didn't', remembers Horst W. (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 266). Marianne Z. (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 266) relates: 'All we knew was that they had to go to the camp. But what kind of people they were and all that ... You did not dare to ask any questions.' Paul J. (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 266) remembers: 'A concentration camp – I thought it was something where people were being reeducated or something like that. But that it was so miserable there ... What it meant, concentration camp...' 'Well, concentration camp ... It was not until 1944, when all the prisoners started arriving, that the term actually meant anything to you', observes Horst L. (Lower Saxony Memorial Foundation 2010: 266). This first section of the video testimony closes with a statement by Ilse L. that puts all of these previous testimonies into perspective: 'Well, you won't find a single person in the village who hadn't heard something, from somebody else, about the terrible things that were going on near here.' By choosing this last sentence for the staged discussion of knowledge about the camp, the curators reveal the statements by the previous witnesses to be at least somewhat disingenuous. If Ilse L. had heard something, why hadn't the other bystanders?

Not only are statements by different witnesses used to correct other statements and to forward certain messages, but the curators also arrange statements by the same witness in such a way as to correct apologetic ones with others in which the witnesses reveal their involvement. Thus, a second statement by Marianne Z., who in the beginning claimed that 'You didn't dare to ask', has been placed straight after Ilse L.'s statement. In this second statement, Marianne Z. observes: 'All the prisoners arrived at the ramp by train. At the ramp, they were unloaded and were then marched to the camp. A lot of them were very weak, and so, every now and then, you'd find a dead body here or there' (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 266). The second extract from the testimony of Marianne Z. suggests that she actually knew much more than she was at first willing to reveal. Even if she 'didn't dare to ask', she knew that people were unloaded at the ramp and every now and then saw a corpse on the street.

The video testimony closes with two general statements on the war years that could not be more contradictory. The first extract, by Marianne Z. (Lower Saxony Memorial Foundation 2010: 267), is conciliatory: ‘Yes, that’s the way it is. We were very, very scared, too, as I keep saying. I don’t even really know what we were so scared of, but we were frightened.’ The second extract, by Günter P. (Lower Saxony Memorial Foundation 2010: 267), corrects this extract by pointing out the moral duties that humans supposedly have towards other humans:

I actually find it unbelievable that people can behave in such a way, that something like that can go on. And not just the one side, all sides. Just looking on can also be a crime, or rather morally reprehensible, let’s put it that way. You don’t even have to commit these acts yourself. It’s bad enough if you just look away.

This final statement leaves the visitors with the ultimate moral lesson. It presents them with the idea that, as Harald Welzer (2011) has observed, ‘under certain circumstances not only the bad people decide to adopt inhuman behaviour, but also the good ones’. Moving from denial and apology to accusation, the video testimony with the bystanders of the Bergen-Belsen Memorial runs through the German postwar discourse on guilt and responsibility. With the video testimony, the curators forward their interpretation on this discourse: residents to the camps knew at least something and should consequently feel guilty for not having intervened. Ultimately, visitors are induced to reflect on their own actions; they are invited to become active citizens. However, unlike in the case of the victim testimonies, visitors are not directly induced to feel empathy. Instead, they are asked to judge their deeds – but not necessarily those of the people who appear in the video testimonies. They are induced to judge the grown-ups who made them believe that all prisoners were ‘criminals who nailed the tongues of German children on the table’ or that who was in a concentration camp belonged there, as two of the witnesses to history in the video testimony in the Bergen-Belsen Memorial remember (Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation 2010: 266).

### *The Aesthetical Representation of Bystanders*

That the museums rule out full identification with the bystanders is underlined through their aesthetical representation, which differs from that of victims. Neither the Neuengamme Memorial nor the Bergen-Belsen Memorial represent the video testimonies with residents using biographical video points, for example. While individual biographies and individuality have at least some importance in the case of victim testimonies, bystander testimonies tend to be mere tools for moral and historical educa-

tion. In the Bergen-Belsen Memorial, where the biographical video points are introduced with biographical details and where visitors are invited to read biographical cards about the victims, no such cards are presented for the testimonies of residents. The latter are also not named with their full name; only the initial letter is used for their surname. Both practices can be explained by the need to protect the residents. They do, however, also suggest that bystander testimonies should be received differently from victim testimonies – with more emotional distance.

In the Neuengamme Memorial, many of the interviews with residents – in contrast to those of the victims – have not been filmed with witnesses sitting down in a room and with a camera angle showing only the face or upper part of their body. Some of them have been carried out outside, at the locations that feature in the bystanders' testimony. Video recordings of the surroundings accompany the interviews. Unlike in the victim testimonies, the interviewer can occasionally be heard and sometimes the microphone held up to the witnesses appears in the camera frame. The aesthetics of the video testimonies with residents in the Neuengamme Memorial resemble those of investigative journalism. Instead of being emphatic listeners or mock therapists, the interviewers here take on the juridical role of interrogating bystanders or that of a merciless journalist on a quest to find out the truth.

Although they do not present video testimonies with perpetrators, to a certain extent, curators do therefore address the complex question of delinquency with the help of video testimonies with bystanders. With the video testimonies with bystanders, a certain form of tertiary witnessing – or maybe heteropathic identification – is encouraged. This form of tertiary witnessing is different from the tertiary witnessing that is encouraged in the case of victim testimonies. Rather than being about trauma, it is about guilt. With the bystander video testimonies, museums present to visitors courses of action chosen by 'ordinary' people under criminal circumstances. Unlike the case of the victims, visitors are not invited to take on the memory of the bystanders; instead, they are invited to confront themselves and thereby question their own actions. Such a confrontation is facilitated through the relative youth of most of the witnesses to history during the war, and therefore their innocence. Because of their age, none of them can be held accountable for doing something deeply morally questionable. None of them remembers having done something wrong themselves. Museums therefore do not present visitors with actual negative figures to relate to. Questioning the delinquency of the population happens by proxy – through the memory of innocent children.

### *The Local Population at War*

Not being a Holocaust Museum, the Museo Diffuso has as its main subject matter the experiences of the local population during the war. This population cannot as clearly be divided into victims, perpetrators and bystanders, as can the witnesses of the Holocaust. Having been a victim of bombing is not the same as having been a victim of genocide, and having supported the fascist government is not the same as having taken an active part in mass murder. Nevertheless, the didactic function that I have analysed for the video testimonies in Holocaust museums can also be observed in the Museo Diffuso, including: the transmission of historical and moral lessons; an unwillingness to present witnesses to history who might seem foreign or ethically challenging to visitors; and a reluctance to present perpetrator testimonies.

First, in its selection of witnesses to history for the exhibition, the Museo Diffuso tries to represent the diversity of the citizens of Turin during the war years. Most of the video testimonies are therefore arranged according to pairs that contrast because of the gender of the witnesses to history, and because of their wartime experiences and their sociocultural background. Thus, a factory worker has been put next to a soldier who fought at the Eastern Front; a female partisan fighting in the mountains has been put next to a male partisan fighting in the resistance in city factories; and a fascist enthusiast has been put next to the socialist teacher who fled to Bolivia with her German-Jewish husband. However, all of the witnesses are Italian and all of them are citizens of Turin. Both the enemy and the liberator remain invisible.

Second, a majority of the witnesses to history at the Museo Diffuso were active in the partisan movement and are to some extent local celebrities in postwar Turin. Bianca Guidetti Serra, for example, is a well-known left-wing lawyer, a local politician and a former member of the Italian Parliament, who took part in several important postwar trials. Maria Gaudenzi in Angelino has been active in the trade union movement, and Adriano Vitelli, who was a political prisoner during the war, was a member of the 'Giunta Popolare di Torino', the first postwar government in Turin. Their role as local citizens actively fighting for the right cause during and after the war places the witnesses to history in a morally superior position to the ordinary visitor – they are role models.

A considerable amount of time in many of the video testimonies is in fact set aside for reflections on the past and on the present. Bianca Giudetti Serra, who gives testimony on how she felt when she, as a woman, was

allowed to vote for the first time in the Italian constitutional referendum in 1946, spends around half of her testimony talking about democracy in general, the low turnout at elections and referenda today, and the need to inform people about society's grievances. Around two of the four-and-a-half minutes of Maria Gaudenzi in Angelino's testimony are dedicated to a comparison of the rights and working conditions of workers today, during the war and in the immediate postwar period. Her testimony finishes with her relating how she had to return to work in a sweets factory only a few days after she had given birth to her son and then how she had to take him to work with her. She concludes this story – and the whole testimony – with the sentence: 'That's why everything is so fantastic now'.<sup>8</sup> By comparing the past to the present, Bianca Giudetti Serra and Maria Gaudenzi in Angelino teach the visitors to be grateful for what they have and to become active citizens.

Other witnesses to history reflect on the wrongs of the past, thus providing guidance for the future. Marisa Scala, a partisan fighter who had been imprisoned in the Bolzano Concentration Camp, is critical of the fact that there were not a thousand ambulances ready to pick up the camp survivors and that many of them were left to die in provisory hospitals. Reflecting on the prisoners who died in the camps, she observes: 'I said to myself, their death was meaningless. It did not change anything in this country. It did not arouse solidarity or spirit of freedom. I felt like a prisoner again. This country needs centuries to change, years are not enough. We did not succeed in changing it, because it needs something greater.' The testimony finishes with Scala recalling how the politician and former partisan fighter Ugo La Malfa told her: 'Do not hope too much, be content with what you see.'<sup>9</sup>

In her analysis of the video testimonies at the Museo Diffuso, Birga U. Meyer (2014: 307), while acknowledging a tendency of the museum to use the witnesses to history as educators, observes that all the video testimonies in the Museo Diffuso are treated equally and that they therefore are not imbued with a moral authority: 'Everyone is able to speak. The expository agent presents a participant and then offers that participant's narrative to the ideal visitor, but does not imbue it with moral authority. Thus, the visitor is not expected to identify with the testimony, but can form her own opinion about it.' I would argue on the contrary that in the Museo Diffuso, visitors are instructed by people who have learned from life and who, according to the museum's narrative, have mostly taken the right decisions during their lifetime. The visitors are invited to 'morphé' with the witnesses to history and thereby identify with them, but nevertheless remain inferior to them. In fact, in the mirror of the steles with the

video testimonies, the head of the witness to history is bigger than the head of the visitor.

This moral superiority of the witnesses to history at the Museo Diffuso is, third, underlined by a certain innocence and moral flawlessness that they have in common. None of the witnesses to history remembers having taken an active part in violence. In the video testimonies, the war appears to be an enormous tragedy for which nobody seems to be directly responsible. It consists of bombs launched for reasons no one dwells on, along with nights in air-raid shelters, factory strikes, evacuations, emigration and of course partisans fighting against a poorly defined enemy that is sometimes German and sometimes Italian fascist. Even when violence is directly addressed, it is put into perspective and distanced from the individual witnesses to history who talk about it. Cesare Alvazzi Del Frate, a partisan fighter, remembers the purges that took place in the immediate aftermath of the War. He observes, however, that these purges did not start with the partisans and certainly not those in his regiment. Moreover, he argues that contemporary historical research on the partisan movement is misleading:

I understand that after all we went through, people had selfish impulses like sex and arrogance, but I don't understand why they went so far. I am embarrassed when I remember those moments ... When we arrived in Turin we saw many horrible things. There were many bodies floating on the river Po. One should know the reasons and grievances, which lay behind each episode of violence. The current attempt to put all the blame on the partisans is totally misleading and wrong. Nobody knows the circumstances which prompted this aggressiveness. We must treat differently those who fought for freedom on the liberators' side and those who fought to defend and spread Nazism with all its horrors.<sup>10</sup>

Enzo Petti and Matilde Di Pietrantonio, two partisan fighters, stress that they always treated their prisoners very well. Enzo Petti remembers taking good care of a German prisoner of war. He concludes that maybe they – the partisans – were not as cruel to their prisoners as vice versa. Matilde Di Pietrantonio's speciality was to take hostages. She stresses that apart from the moment in which the prisoners were arrested, there was no use of violence; she also stresses that for her, it is a relief to know that she did not kill anybody.

It is especially revealing to consider here the testimony of Mario Giacometti, the only witness to history in the Museo Diffuso with a positive memory of the time of fascism. The video testimony with Giacometti starts with the information that he was born in 1927 and was thus only thirteen years old when the war started; all through the video testimony,

his youth is underlined. In his nostalgic memories, the fascist years appear like one long chain of community events and feasts in which the party and the fascist ideology played only a marginal role:

My memories from childhood weren't at all unpleasant. We went to play in the parish youth club. On Sundays, if you went to Mass, you got a ticket to go to the movies in the afternoon. In September there was the Grapes Festival. For the so-called Fascist Epiphany we received presents. We were satisfied and happy ... Life was very simple, but we were happier than now that we have got everything. There was no party. There was nothing of that kind.<sup>11</sup>

His time with the Balilla, the Italian fascist youth organization, seems to have been the best time of his life:

I was Balilla ... There were simple Balillas, but I was in the Alpine troops. I had the hat, the boots and the woollen socks. I felt like a real soldier. It was all so well organized. We went on mountain trips. For every trip we went on, we got marks. When we reached a certain mark, we got an eagle. The first one was red, the second silver, the third golden. They were kind to us. I could not wait to go on a trip. They gave us an education and brought us to church. I was in the alpine troops, but there were sailors too. They had built a ship on the river Po where they could exercise, like real cadets do. Some Balillas drove gliders. There also were mounted Balillas. This made many boys very proud.

In Mario Giacometti's testimony, fascism brought exciting times rather than a dangerous ideology. The testimony then abruptly moves from the recollection of these times to the beginning of the war and the bombing of Turin:

I remember when the war began. A few days before, some women were saying: 'We'll never enter the war.' We heard about the famous speech Mussolini delivered on June 10. I went to Corso Verona where there was a radio in a bar and I listened to the famous speech. I was 13 years old. This happened on the 10th. On the 11th Turin was bombed. Some said it was the French. Then the war began and things went as you already know. We had continuous air raids. The most violent was on July 13, 1943. While before September 8 the air raids occurred at night, after they took place in the daytime. On that day we saw the planes that had bombed. They aimed at Cavoretto by mistake. They wanted to bomb Fiat Lingotto but missed the target. The workers left Lingotto seeking refuge on the hill and were killed.

Both parts of the testimony – the part on Turin during fascism and the part on the bombing – seem disconnected. No link is made between the Balilla that Mario Giacometti has such good memories of and the bombs that destroyed Turin. While in the first part of his testimony, Giacometti

appears as a slightly naïve and, because of his age, innocent boy, in the second part, he becomes a victim suffering from the Allied bombing like everybody else. The first part of his testimony concentrates on his personal experience; it is mostly narrated in the first-person singular. Fascism is represented as having brought him personal gratification. The last part of his testimony is narrated in the plural: war becomes here a communal tragedy of which the death of the workers of Fiat Lingotto in the last sentence is symptomatic.

Enzo Petti, the partisan fighter, was born in 1926. He is thus only a year older than Mario Giacometti. Yet, his young age is not commented on in his testimony. Hence, the tendency to fall prey to indoctrination is represented as dependent on age, but being part of the resistance is not. It appears normal for Mario Giacometti to enjoy his time with the Balilla without questioning it, but it does not appear extraordinary that Enzo Petti joined the partisans at the age of only fifteen. Thus, Giacometti, the only witness to history in the Museo Diffuso who is not presented as a role model, is not equally presented negatively either. Not unlike in the case of the bystander testimonies in the Bergen-Belsen and the Neuengamme Memorials, in the only video testimony in which the Museo Diffuso depicts a form of consent with fascism, this consent is presented as bewitchment by fascist propaganda and not as a matter of personal choice.

Unlike Holocaust museums, which present their visitors either with victims whose memory they are invited to pass on or with bystanders who serve as negative examples of the past, the Museo Diffuso presents a majority of positive examples to follow. Even concentration-camp survivors such as Marisa Scala are not primarily shown as victims, but rather as partisans and active citizens. The Museo Diffuso clearly wishes for its visitors to feel an idiopathic identification. The visitors are invited to see themselves reflected in the witnesses to history, morphe with them and in this way to become better, more responsible citizens. As in Holocaust museums, negative examples are largely left out of the exhibition narrative. None of the witnesses to history remembers having taken an active part in violence. In the stories that most of the witnesses to history tell, the Germans are the ones that they – the partisans – were fighting against; the Allies were the ones who launched the bombs and destroyed the city. The historical narrative of the museum is ultimately one in which the partisans, with their campaigns of organizing strikes in the factories, taking hostages and printing clandestine flyers, liberate both Italy and the city. War is denounced in the Museo Diffuso, but not explained.



## Digital Outreach: Communicating Outside of the Museums' Walls

The communication between museums and their visitors does not stop at the walls of the museums. All of the museums that I have analysed here offer educational outreach programmes and use websites, social media and other online platforms to disseminate their messages. Video testimonies are often a part of those programmes. If in the previous section of this chapter I have given precedence to the message(s) over the medium, it is in this section that I will return to the medium and, more specifically, to remediation and the intermedial relations of video testimonies once they are put online.

Reaching out to those people who are incapable or unlikely to come to the museum has been an important part of museums' activities for a long time. As Haidee Wasson has shown, already in the 1910s and 1920s, museums were criticized for not adapting to the new media landscape and for not reaching all strata of society. Amongst those visitors who actually came to the museums, a so-called 'museum fatigue' was diagnosed (Wasson 2015: 607, 616). The museums' reaction – Wasson concentrates here mainly on the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City – was to collaborate with radio stations, newspapers and TV stations, and to produce educational films. In this way, their collection could be presented in schools and to people who might otherwise not have had access to them or wished to see them in the first place.

The criticism that museums are somewhat dusty, old fashioned and reluctant to adapt to new media is one that has accompanied all of museums' developments and subsequent changes. The integration of video testimonies into memorial museums should also be seen as a reaction to these criticisms – a reaction that was taken to the extreme by the Museo Diffuso with its near-complete relinquishment of material remains. Now, as then, museums extend their physical space by using media that allow them to transmit their educational messages across time and space (cf. Henning 2015: xxxvi). Reaching an ever-larger segment of the (global) population is of course particularly relevant for memorial museums, which see it as their duty to guarantee that the past will not be forgotten and that have incorporated human rights education into their agenda. The Museo Diffuso, by adding the adjective 'diffuso' (widespread), even highlights this agenda in its name. The most 'widespread' medium today is of course the internet.

As observed in Chapter 3, most projects have by now digitized their collections of video testimonies. Digitization appears as a potential solution to the inevitable decay of film rolls, videocassettes and audiotapes. It is an

attempt to make the video testimonies last for the longest possible time – at best forever. The Shoah Foundation, for example, claims that in order ‘to ensure that the world’s largest database of genocide testimony lives in perpetuity, the Institute has created a digital collections management technology that is so cutting edge USC now uses it to accommodate a wide array of clients eager to preserve their aging media’.<sup>12</sup> While the digitization was going on, a bar on the Foundation’s website showed the percentage of videos that had been digitized up to that point. Perpetuity is a very long time of course and it is likely that the collaborators of the Shoah Foundation are also aware that their endeavour is more wishful thinking than a feasible aim – no matter how cutting-edge their technology might be. After all, digitization might even accelerate the decay of video testimonies. Software changes rapidly and has to be updated continually. Nobody can guarantee that future generations will be as interested in (or obsessed with) the memories of witnesses to history as this one and that they will continue putting money and manpower into their preservation. Already today, accessing the content of old computers is a challenge – nobody can guarantee that the knowledge to access the digitized video testimonies will forever be transmitted from one generation to another (cf. Huyssen 2000: 35).

Digitization potentially facilitates the integration of video testimonies into the World Wide Web. Scholars of the digitization of memory generally observe that while cultural memory has always been undergoing processes of mediation, remediation and premediation, in the internet age, these processes are accelerating. Memory, they point out, is ever more caught up in networks that blur the characteristics ‘between the totalizing and the contextual, the permanent and the ephemeral, the archive and narrative’ (Hoskins 2009: 93). In order to grasp this phenomenon, Andrew Hoskins (2003: 7; 2009: 95; 2011: 269) has coined a whole array of concepts: ‘new memory’, ‘connective memory’, ‘digital network memory’, ‘on-the-fly memory’ and ‘metamemory’. This ‘new memory’, he argues, puts into question the traditional idea of the archive as a permanent storage space. Rather than being characterized by a distinction between active and passive memory, the archive and the canon, in the sense of Aleida Assmann, present-day cultural memory is subjected to ‘the continuous networked present of the Web and other digital media through which memory and technology co-evolve’ (Hoskins 2009: 101). A similar idea is expressed by Anna Reading (2011: 242), who uses the concept of ‘global memory’, a combination of the words ‘global’, ‘digital’ and ‘bit’. ‘Global memory’, she argues, ‘refers in terms of memory to the synergetic combination of the social and political dynamic of globalization with digitization’. In the present networked, digital age, these scholars point out, memory will always be

caught up in a web of similar and competing memory sites. Not only does the World Wide Web make it possible to reach an ever-greater proportion of the global population, it also allows those people to actively engage with its contents – a phenomenon that is generally caught by the concept of ‘prosumer’. However, what these studies tend to play down is that having access to a technology does not necessarily mean using it – both on the side of the institutions that digitize and on that of the potential ‘prosumers’.

Of the five museums analysed here, Yad Vashem is the only one that uses the internet to make video testimonies available on a grand scale. It publishes them on its website, on its YouTube channel, on Facebook, on Twitter and on Pinterest. However, even Yad Vashem is far from making its whole collection or entire video testimonies available. This counts for the online presentation of the video testimonies of all of the museums: if they make video testimonies available, they merely present extracts – often much fewer than are shown in the exhibitions themselves. Even the USC Shoah Foundation, certainly the most digitally oriented of the video-testimony archives, only offers 58 full-length testimonies online. Apart from Yad Vashem, the Museo Diffuso and the Neuengamme Memorial have made their video testimonies available online. Out of these, the Museo Diffuso is the only one that uses social media for the dissemination of video testimonies. On its website, the museum presents video testimonies under the heading of ‘Luoghi della Memoria’ (‘Sites of Memory’). These video testimonies can also be found on the museum’s YouTube channel. However, the reception is marginal. Posted on 1 October 2013, none of them has been watched more than 209 times as of May 2017 and none of them has been commented on. The museum further collaborates with the ‘Memoro’ project, a website founded in Turin that allows registered users to post video testimonies on an online platform.<sup>13</sup> Here the museum has made available the excerpts of the video testimonies that it shows in its exhibition as well as newer video testimonies that the museum has registered since. The Neuengamme Memorial, on its website launched in 2015, has made its whole exhibition available online. On the museum’s webpage, the main exhibition text, followed by a picture of the exhibition unit, is presented. With a click on an icon, a pop-up window with a digitized picture of a museum object, an arrangement of digitized photographs or a video testimony will appear. The online visitor can in this way digitally ‘walk’ through the actual exhibition. The Imperial War Museum has made available some of its audio testimonies but none of its video testimonies with Holocaust survivors in its online collection. On its YouTube channel, it has published only a few – and newer – video testimonies with witnesses to history of the Second World War, for example, with war veterans who

survived the evacuation of Dunkirk. On the website of the Holocaust Exhibition, the visitor can listen to audio testimonies with Holocaust survivors and, since January 2017, can watch one video testimony published on Holocaust Memorial Day. The Bergen-Belsen Memorial has – so far – not made any of its video testimonies available online.

Thus, although there are by now probably more extracts of video testimonies online than anybody might wish to watch during their lifetime, the percentage is still small compared to the actual sizes of the collections. In order to watch the full video testimonies, visitors still need to get in contact with the institutions and in general they still actually have to go there in person. To most museums, the opportunities that the internet offers seem to appear as a threat rather than as an opportunity. The integration into the World Wide Web means, on the one hand, making the testimonies available to an ever-larger audience, which for many projects is exactly the original aim of their production. Stephen Smith (2016: 215), director of the USC Shoah Foundation, even argues that ‘it is commonly understood that the subjects, in giving their life history, expected that it would be preserved in perpetuity; therefore, it is entirely ethical to digitize and provide digital preservation since it is the expectation of the subjects. It is also commonly understood that survivors wanted people of all walks of life to watch their histories’. On the other hand, an integration of the video testimonies into the World Wide Web intensifies the process of detaching the individual witnesses to history from their testimonies. This raises the question of the ‘ethics of access’ (Smith 2016: 215). If the witnesses to history, to a certain extent, relinquish control over what happens to their testimonies once they are recorded, the curator gives up control once the video testimonies are put online. Suddenly, everybody with access to the internet is potentially able to tinker with them. Even Steven Smith (2016: 215) therefore pleads for only giving access to ‘responsible and clearly defined user groups’; however, without specifying who should belong to these groups.

What then are the actual consequences of putting the video testimonies online? Alina Bothe (2012: 9), analysing the impact of digitization on video testimonies, argues that watching them becomes an activity that takes place in the ‘inter of the virtual archive’. This ‘inter’ refers to space, interpersonal contact and time. For one thing, the viewer watches the video testimonies in a virtual space that cannot be explored sensually, but that is still real. Second, the meeting of the viewer and the witness in this space is based on a virtual meeting, which nevertheless has a direct emotional impact on the viewer. Finally, the video testimonies, produced in the past, are instantaneously available, but can be interrupted and repeated. I

do not agree with Bothe that this 'inter' is necessarily a phenomenon of digitization – after all, interpersonal relationships or temporality are no more clearly definable if the video testimonies are watched in an archive or in a museum. However, Bothe is right in pointing out that the reception of video testimonies changes in that the spaces in which they are consumed change. This has less to do with the fact that the viewers do not have to enter an actual archive – here they would watch the video testimonies on a screen – but with the ever-faster and pluralized process of remediation that the video testimonies undergo. Published online, the video testimonies can now be watched on numerous platforms and on numerous devices from the laptop to the tablet to the mobile phone. They can further be streamed from one device to another. Each one of these devices shows the videos in a different format. The prosumers can often even choose between different formats on the same device and thus whether they want to watch a video as a thumbnail, integrated into the layout of YouTube or Facebook or on a full screen, for example. As the example of Yad Vashem shows, institutions can post the same video on numerous platforms.

The integration of the video testimonies into the internet also renders them physically portable. Everybody can carry the videos around with them and watch them in any possible space – from the living room to the train to the public bathroom. This mass exposure of video testimonies brings with it several anxieties, as Amit Pinchevski (2011: 261) points out. The fear is that, on the one hand, the video testimonies might lose their effect. On the other hand, that they might lead to an 'over-identification with the victim' (Pinchevski 2011: 261). Identification does in fact occur rather frequently, as an analysis of the comments of the most popular video testimonies for each year on Yad Vashem's YouTube channel shows.<sup>14</sup> Many of the comments that are posted here are emphatic or praise the survivors. For example, many commentators point out that although they 'cannot know' or 'cannot imagine' what the witness to history went through, they feel with them. Many of them point out that they were crying while watching the video testimony. Some of them try to find a connection to the survivors – such as a birthday shared with an important day in the survivor's life, the same surname or a connection between their own family's history and that of the witness to history. However, a tendency towards over-identification with the victims can especially be found in comments that are geared towards the perpetrators. The latter are equated with 'Hitler' and 'Mengele' and are stylized as pure evil. Many commentators express that they 'hate' the Nazis. Thus, while they empathize with the victims, they fiercely reject any connection to the perpetrators.

The integration of video testimonies into the World Wide Web also leads to what Pinchevski has called their ‘transduplication’: ‘Digital copies are equally manipulatable and utterly interchangeable (file, image, audio, video)’ (Pinchevski 2011: 254). This entails the danger of sending the video testimonies right into the arms of revisionists and Holocaust deniers. Digitized video testimonies with their many historical errors and the distortions that human memory imposes on reality can seem like a god-send to those looking for easily refutable statements to ‘prove’ that the Holocaust never happened. The World Wide Web is in fact one of the favourite media of revisionists who endorse freedom of speech as the internet’s ideology (Nachreiner 2013: 11). It is here that they feel they find a platform to communicate with each other and with an interested public that is otherwise denied to them. Indeed, even a quick search on YouTube shows that manipulated video testimonies are used for the dissemination of so-called ‘hate speech’. However, such videos are neither frequent, nor are they necessarily a consequence of making the video testimonies freely available online. In the video ‘The Last Days of the Big Lie’, which was posted in 2011, for example, Steven Spielberg’s documentary *The Last Days* from 1999 is ‘deconstructed’ by a Holocaust denier who has obviously taken the DVD of the documentary as his basis.

One of the most easily available – and therefore also most-feared – functions of websites like YouTube that are available to Holocaust deniers and revisionists is the comment function. The Fortunoff Archive has therefore suppressed this function on its channel. Yad Vashem allows it. Anti-semitic comments or so-called hate speech does occur. However, such comments are rather the exception than the rule and they are mostly taken up by other commentators who either try to set the records straight or, more frequently, start insulting the commentator in question.

What is more striking than the few hate comments is the absolute lack of comments and responses to commentators’ queries from Yad Vashem itself. Many of the commentators express their incomprehension that something like the Holocaust could have happened or post rather risqué explanations for the rise of National Socialism and genocide. In fact, the comments posted underneath the video testimonies online can be read as what Roger Simon and Claudia Eppert (2005: 58ff) have called ‘shadow texts’. In ‘shadow texts’, the witnesses to the survivor’s testimonies express their questions towards the testimonies that they have seen, examples of which are as follows:

How could anyone do this to other human beings? How could such horror really happen? Why the Jews? Didn’t the Jews realize what was going on? Why didn’t more Jewish people take action to protect themselves? Why did people in the rest

of the world let these events happen? Could it happen again, could it happen to me? What would have happened to me? Would I have survived? Collaborated? Resisted? (Simon 2005: 59)

It is exactly these questions, with the exception of the second to last, or attempts at answers to those questions that appear most frequently in the comments underneath the video testimonies. Working through such shadow texts is, according to Simon and Eppert (2005: 53, 61), an important means for creating a 'community of memory' able to meet the 'ethical and epistemological responsibilities' of witnessing trauma. They use the classroom as an example for such a community. However, the classroom is never a fully democratic space. At the very least, the teacher here takes on the role of moderating the discussion. It is exactly this role of a moderator that is missing in the case of the video testimonies posted by Yad Vashem. Rather than taking the opportunity and responding to hate comments or setting historical facts straight, the institution lets the dialogue between the commentators go on without intervening. The communication between Yad Vashem and other YouTube users is limited to the institution posting further videos. In those videos, Yad Vashem instructs educators to use video testimonies in their classrooms,<sup>15</sup> for example, or informs them about historical events. Yad Vashem's YouTube channel therefore appears as a mere transposition of exhibition didactics. Like in the exhibition, where the dialogue with most visitors stops with the exhibition design and the exhibition texts, the dialogue with the online visitors stops with making the video testimonies available online. As I have shown elsewhere (de Jong 2015), this is also the case for the Facebook posts of Yad Vashem and other museums. If the institutions answer users' comments, they do so in order to give practical information on opening hours or the date of a particular event in their institution – never to get into a dialogue with their online visitors.

It needs to be pointed out here that, while the most watched video testimony by Yad Vashem, which was posted in 2009, had reached 599,354 views by November 2015, many of the video testimonies hardly reach a couple of hundred views and the number of comments hardly ever reaches a hundred. Considering that Yad Vashem had 900,000 visits in 2014 alone, the numbers seem marginal (Yad Vashem 2014: 6). The extension of the space of the museums is therefore nothing more than that – an extension of this space, alas in a reduced form. It is not properly used neither by the online visitors nor by the institutions. Rather than using the potentialities of online platforms and communicating with their online visitors, museums merely use them as a one-way means to provide information. Most of them only post limited information online. So far, memorial museums

seem to have more confidence in the genuine goodwill and willingness to learn of their exhibition visitors than in that of their online visitors.

## Conclusion

Video testimonies are thus used for transmitting the three main didactic goals of memorial museums: to ensure that the past will be remembered; to forward historical knowledge; and to forward the values and norms of democratic Western societies. In order to reach these goals visitors are induced to adopt different forms of tertiary witnessing in relation to different witness groups. Thus, visitors are invited to be empathetic with the victims. They are encouraged to take on the memory of their suffering and to pass it on to future generations. In order to facilitate empathy, the exhibition makers choose the most graphic parts of the stories and witnesses to history that the visitors can easily relate to. Perpetrator testimonies are ruled out, whereas bystander testimonies are presented in such a way that the visitors, rather than being invited to feel with them, evaluate their statements at a distance.

Through the arrangement of the different extracts, the museums create their own narratives about the past and instruct the visitors on how to interpret this knowledge. The ultimate goal is that visitors will evaluate the past and become active citizens in the present. In the Museo Diffuso, the witnesses to history, who were mostly partisan fighters, serve as role models for the visitors who are supposed to leave the museum convinced by the values of freedom and human rights. In the Bergen-Belsen Memorial, the Neuengamme Memorial, the Imperial War Museum and Yad Vashem, the video testimonies are used to forward lessons that can be drawn from the Holocaust. These lessons can be summarized by the slogan 'never again'. They range from a renunciation of xenophobia, taking responsibility for the genocides happening today and abdication of war to becoming interested students of the past. As opposed to the other museums studied here, in Yad Vashem, the lesson of 'never again' is primarily a lesson of 'never again us'. Unlike in most other Holocaust museums, violence is not ruled out as a matter of principle, but is rather accepted as a means of defence. The witnesses to history are here also presented as less morally flawless than in other museums. Interestingly, although the internet would allow the museums to disseminate these messages to an even larger audience, they still only marginally use its potentials. Only a few video testimonies are posted online, and if they are posted, the peculiarities and opportunities of the platforms are hardly ever taken into consideration.



Let us come back to the concept of representation here. The witnesses to history that are chosen for the exhibitions are chosen so as to be representative ('Vertretung') of all of the victims. The extracts for the different video testimonies are arranged in such a way as to make present a particular interpretation of the past ('Darstellung'). Through this arrangement, the visitors are invited to create a particular mental image of the past ('Vorstellung'). However, while they are used as educational tools in museums, the museums do not educate the visitors on how to read and receive the medium of video testimony. As observed in the Introduction and in Chapter 3, the workings of memory, and the influence of interviewing techniques on the testimonies of witnesses to history, are eagerly discussed in academic circles but, so far, these discussions are not reflected in the representation of video testimonies in museums. No museum, for example, instructs its visitors on the workings of individual and communicative memory. No museum reflects on the interview situation and the influence that the dialogic form of the interview has on the testimony of the witnesses to history. On the contrary, the interviewer generally remains inaudible, and the abstracts from the different testimonies are often arranged in such a way that they seem to respond to each other. Instead of representing the dialogue between the interviewer and witness to history, a new dialogue between the different witnesses to history is constructed. Similarly, the post-production process, with its highly edited selection of extracts taken from entire video testimonies, is rarely made apparent. The Bergen-Belsen Memorial has marked cuts with the help of black screens, but it remains questionable whether most visitors will realize this after watching the videos for the first time. In the Museo Diffuso, it is only after having watched videos several times that video cuts (sometimes within the same sentence) are apparent. What museums try to induce in their visitors is 'immediate tertiary witnessing' – they are to forget the medium and feel as if they were directly talking to the witnesses to history, as if they were secondary witnesses. I have argued in Chapter 3 that video testimonies are recorded as cultural memory in the form of condensed communicative memory in the guise of individual memory. In the exhibitions as well as online, the medium of the video testimony is never put into question. The witnesses' testimony is presented as being without outside influence.

## Notes

1. 'Secondary witnessing' has become one of those concepts that are used so frequently that its origins are difficult to make out. Baer (2000) refers *inter alia*

- to the writings of Hartman (1996), who does not use it, at least in the text referred to by Baer and Langer (1991), who has used the concept of ‘witnesses to memory’. Hartman (2000) himself, in a later article than the one referred to by Baer sees its origins in Langer (1991) and des Pres (1976). Stier (2003) finds the origins in LaCapra (2001) who again makes reference to Langer (1991). Arnold-de Simine, who has written a whole chapter on the topic uses the concept without defining its origin – although in a later chapter she refers to LaCapra (2001). Also Wake (2003), who finds the origins of the concept in the writings of Felman and Laub (1992), does not provide a genealogy.
2. The literature of secondary witnessing is constantly expanding. For example, similar reflections have been forwarded by: Langer 1991; Caruth 1995; Hartman 1996; Weigel 1999; Stier 2003; Simon 2005; Hirsch 2012.
  3. Roman Frister has also published his autobiography under the title *The Cap: The Price of a Life*. On YouTube, a short film based on the story can be found here: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Um\\_sqtPMCM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Um_sqtPMCM).
  4. The full video testimony can be found at: <http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/remembrance/multimedia.asp#!prettyPhoto/104>.
  5. The full video testimony can be found at: <http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/remembrance/multimedia.asp#!prettyPhoto/132>.
  6. The video testimony can be found at: <http://neuengamme-ausstellungen.info/media/ngmedia/browse/4/15#videostation>.
  7. The video testimony can be found at: <http://neuengamme-ausstellungen.info/media/ngmedia/browse/4/14#videostation>.
  8. The Museo Diffuso has subtitled its video testimonies. Although the subtitles often shorten the testimonies and, in my opinion, do not always translate the original very accurately, I will use these subtitles here when quoting from video testimonies. The video testimony with Maria Gaudenzi in Angelino’s testimony can be found at: [http://museodiffusodellaresistenza.memoro.org/it/In-citt%C3%A0\\_5735.html](http://museodiffusodellaresistenza.memoro.org/it/In-citt%C3%A0_5735.html).
  9. The video testimony with Marisa Scala can be found at: [http://museodiffusodellaresistenza.memoro.org/it/Tornare-dai-lager\\_5737.html](http://museodiffusodellaresistenza.memoro.org/it/Tornare-dai-lager_5737.html).
  10. The video testimony with Cesare Alvazzi Del Frate can be found at: [http://museodiffusodellaresistenza.memoro.org/it/Epurazioni\\_5741.html](http://museodiffusodellaresistenza.memoro.org/it/Epurazioni_5741.html).
  11. The video testimony with Mario Giacometti can be found at: [http://museodiffusodellaresistenza.memoro.org/it/Il-consenso\\_5739.html](http://museodiffusodellaresistenza.memoro.org/it/Il-consenso_5739.html).
  12. The website can be found at: <https://sfi.usc.edu/about>.
  13. The website can be found at: <http://museodiffusotorino.memoro.org/it/cercatore.php?ID=4196>.
  14. I carried out this survey on 12 November 2015 and again on 13 May 2017. The categories that I made out are: comments expressing empathy, comments pointing out how bad the Nazis were, comments trying to explain National Socialism or the Holocaust, comments expressing their incomprehension at what happened, comments pointing out the importance of having testimonies and of remembering, comments with a religious content, comments pointing out that nothing has changed, comments in which the

commentators attack or criticize other commentators, comments praising the survivor, comments trying to explain the deeds of the survivor, comments pointing out that the victims did not die in vain, commentators thanking the institution or the witness, comments in which the commentators point out that they met the survivor in the video testimony or another survivor or that they visited a memorial institution, comments pointing out that the survivor has passed away, comments in which the commentators refer to their own family's history, philosemantic comments, anti-semitic or anti-zionist comments, and comments in which the commentators advertise their own websites or clips. I analysed the comments underneath the following video testimonies: 'Surviving the Holocaust – Yaakov Hollanders Story', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1PHPd67kYp0>; 'Twin Holocaust Survivors Describe Arriving in Auschwitz', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWJy jAYyF8E>; 'Holocaust Survivor Testimonies: Selection in Auschwitz', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fNpl83-rXKM>; 'Saved by Oscar Schindler: Testimony of Holocaust Survivor Sol Urbach', [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFpLP9\\_sXdo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFpLP9_sXdo); 'Fanny Rozelaar and Betty Mayer – The Nazi Rise and its Effect on the Lives of Jews in Germany', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kbu8cqBdNtg>; 'The Vel D'Hiv Roundup', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRN15hAspJE&t=87s>; 'Holocaust Survivor Testimony: Rita Kraus', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPs2NaCtVEU>; 'Holocaust Survivor Testimony: Shela Altaraz', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcRq7ZMHvsU&t=1s>; 'Holocaust Survivor Testimony: Lonia Rozenhoch', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3RoSx8WNldE>; 'Babi Yar Massacre', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hyfx9jL1ymI>. Categorizing prosumer comments can of course be a highly arbitrary business. However, I came to a similar conclusion here as when analysing the comments underneath the most popular Facebook posts of Yad Vashem, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum in June 2015 (de Jong 2015). I also came to a similar conclusion as Alina Bothe (2012b) in her analysis of the comments posted under the video testimonies on the Shoah Foundation's YouTube channel.

15. The video can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLj1tRCohZq828tEiZo2fAdbBylR0UtDOM&v=vGx-8oMuOsk>.