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Performing the Holocaust on social networks : digitality, transcultural memory and new forms of narrating

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Introduction[1]

In the 21st century the nationally and internationally conciliatory tenor of the institutionalized practices of memory is not beyond dispute and it is being undermined by diverging narratives. Uneasiness with the institutionalized culture of remembrance also has to be identified as a phenomenon of transcultural commemoration where the developments subsumed under the concept of "globalization" are up for discussion. The Internet and more particularly social networks shape the discourse crucially: The presentation, representation and the discourse about the history and the memory of the Holocaust on Internet-websites is a paramount example for transcultural mediation processes between history and memory, between commemoration, technology and culture, between institutionalized and public history.

This paper will analyze these phenomena using examples from German and English content on the Internet. These examples address the apparent transcultural frictions and indicate that the Internet has an influence on the discourse not only as a medium of acceleration but also as a central medium of public history and politicization. As such, it will mediate, shape, "like", share, and carry the memory of the Holocaust forward in the future. Still, these performances follow unwritten laws of aesthetics and authorship that have so far characterized the discourses of memory – even if they stretch the limits of what has been seen as appropriate by institutionalized memory. In this sense the mediation of the Holocaust on social media is extremely valuable for educational purposes.

The essay begins with an overview of the theories and technologies of memory in the 21st century to look closer at the change that has taken place due to developments in the field of information and communication technologies especially since the boom of social networks. As will be shown, terms like "digital memory", "network memory" or "culture of connectivity" widely discussed in media studies can be applied to the Holocaust discourse on the Internet. They characterize the remarkable variety of online-activities that increasingly leave institutionalized pathways and blur the boundaries to the private. These practices overcome time and place restrictions, stability is replaced by fluidity. The prevailing narrative structures are not characterized by linear multimediality but rather by quick selfies, clicked "likes" and oftentimes non-reflective comments and hashtags.

In this sense, these "connective histories" constitute what Marianne Hirsch (2012: 242) called post memory's archival turn:

"With the move to Web 2.0, moreover, interactivity increases, and users are able to transform the sites to which they can contribute without curatorial control. Creators and collectors relinquish more and more agency. I would say that this constitutes a move beyond the album to other media of social networking and different technologies of collection, arrangement, and display. On the one hand, this increased participation, […] draws visitors into the site in a form of communal engagement that does more than merely to contribute content. It

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1   This is a shortened and altered version of: „Selfies, Likes & Co: Multimediale Inszenierungen des Holocaust in deutsch- und englischsprachigen sozialen Netzwerken." *zeitgeschichte*, vol. 4, 2016, 213 – 232.

fosters a sense of community and a stake in history
through a material embodied participation in the form
of clicking, scanning, uploading, and typing, through the
acts of research, identification, and storytelling and the
forms of sociality and responsibility these foster."

Influencers on the World Wide Web

The relevance of museums and memorials in the formation of the memory of
the Holocaust and other genocides is unquestioned in many countries (Reading,
2003: 70–71). Especially the four "shrines" of memory, as Amos Goldberg called
them in 2012 (Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Israel, the US-Holocaust Memorial
Museum in Washington DC, USA, the Memorial and Museum Auschwitz-
Birkenau in Oświęcim, Poland, and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of
Europe in Berlin, Germany) as well as the many memorials in Europe aim at
providing guided and adequate information of Holocaust history to a wider
public. Simultaneously they serve as institutions of ritualized remembrance
of the genocide. On the other hand, several studies show that knowledge
about the Holocaust consists of a conglomeration of interpersonal sources
and messages increasingly collected from online mass-media. Individual
online-search is only one means to gather information about the murder of
the European Jewry, but it is one used more often and more extensively. The
numbers of results when searching for the term "holocaust" are indeed almost
impossible to grasp: In 2003 Anna Reading already achieved one million
hits when entering the term "holocaust" into the then popular search engine
"Alta Vista" (70–71). In February 2017 we are talking about 48 million hits
on "google.com" and still 5.5 million hits on the independent search engine
startpage/ixquick that eliminates duplicates.

A closer look at the search results clearly reveals which websites and
information portals count as influencers in the memorial landscape online:
Although the Wikipedia-entry (Pfanzelter 2015: 1–22) for "holocaust" is the
all-time unchallenged forerunner. Since 2011, the websites of memorials and
museums are among the top pages in the rankings and can therefore be seen as
central reference points (Annual Report 2012–2013), so called influencers. The
most clicked at websites are those of the Memorial and Museum Auschwitz-
Birkenau with 25 million clicks (Report 2015), Yad Vashem with 14 million
yearly visitors (Annual Report 2008) and the US-Holocaust Memorial-Museum
with an online audience of over 13 million per year (Annual Report 2012–2013).
These numbers reflect the still increasing importance and relevance of the
online representations for institutions of memory.

Besides this concentration on institutional websites, the high amount of
multimedia material stands out in the analysis. A google-search in February
2017 results in 40 million images and over 3 million videos. In 2013 Alejandro
Baer and Bernt Schnettler (643–644) noted that these "visual motives of
a globally mediatized Holocaust-culture" play a key role in the development
of transnational networks of knowledge. In this sense, the trend to the
iconization of the Holocaust continues on the net: detached from their local
meanings already well-known icons now belong to a "globalized stock of
images" of a highly symbolic nature.

Regardless of this focus on multimediality since the turn of the century, significant changes took place in the context of the history and the memory of the Holocaust in the online-world that cannot solely be reduced to digitality and to technologized western societies. They can, however, be explained alongside the development from the so called Web 1.0, the Internet of presentation, to the Web 2.0, the Internet of participation, to the now advancing Internet of Things.

Transcutural, mobile and dynamic memory

Studies on collective memory of the Holocaust in recent years underline tendencies to a de-territorialization and de-nationalization of memorial culture. On the Internet forms of Holocaust, memory emerges without necessarily specific local or national cultural elements. For decades national conservative memory served as the defining element of collective memory. It was stable, linear as well as stationary. In opposition to this there are several terms describing memory on the net: concepts like "transnational memory" (De Cesari and Rigney 2014), "cosmopolitan memory" (Levy and Sznaider 2002: 88), "multidirectional memory" (Rothberg 2009: 3–5) but also "digital memory" (Garde-Hansen and Hoskins and Reading 2009, 7–8), "new memory" or "digital network memory" (Hoskins 2009: 92) and "globital memory" (Reading 2011: 241–243) try to describe these developments.

Recent research focuses on "transcultural memory", a concept trying to explain the mediation of memory under the influence of "colonialism and decolonization, migration, cultural globalization and cosmopolitanism." (Erll 2011: 2–4) These studies and concepts of "crossroads of memory" (Amine and Beschea Fach 2012: 100), cast a differentiated view at diverging social frameworks and analyze encounters between different kinds of memory: national and ethnic, private and public etc. In these encounters, media play the role of mediators since they enable performances and representations of memory, both the official, staged memory as well as the private, individual memory. There have, however, occurred fundamental changes in the hierarchy of media and its actors: by now, the so called mainstream media are no longer the undisputed institutions of reference. These changes in recent decades were pushed by digital media and especially by social media. They enable individuals to turn from passive consumers to active producers of information (prosumers) not only because of their continuous adding, changing, deleting and reconstructing of private and public content but also by their voicing of opinion with "likes", shares, emoticons, deletes, tweets and such: memes is the catchword for the moral messages thus shared online.

Also in the context of Holocaust memory online, the most profound changes went hand in hand with the unpredictable use of social networks by the public. The now prevailing communication practices on the Internet lead to the emergence of a mostly multi-media "canon" of the Holocaust online. Sites like Flickr, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and Facebook contribute to an immediate and "intense visual and auditory", yet always current past (Hoskins 2009: 92–93). The continuous technological advance changes patterns of time, place and mobility. Memory in the age of social media therefore is not only "transcultural" but also mobile, non-linear, shifting, and heterogeneous.

Characteristics of this memory are no longer clearly attributable existing labels such as stability, institutionalized authoritative memory or hierarchically safeguarded meaning and content. On the contrary, memory is now branded by multifaceted hybridity and complexity, it is "dynamic, contagious and highly unstable" (Amine and Beschea-Fache 2012: 75–78).

Memorial institutions and other (former) agents of memory struggle when trying to keep up with the fast pace of these developments.

Social network walls as information portals

Most recent studies on commemoration have the centrality of the Holocaust in common: In form, aesthetics, statement, staging and performance the Holocaust has become a template for individuals, families and groups on how to teach "pluralism, tolerance, coexistence, respect for human dignity, and even legal and medical ethics." The Holocaust thus serves as a moral yardstick, a political instrument and a didactic guide (Baer and Sznaider 2015: 4–6). It is designed to teach a supranational "Never-again".

Especially the "global players" of the memorial landscape, but also other museums and memorials, have become anchors of ethically defined lieux de mémoire (to take up Pierre Nora's much cited concept) that constitute western identity. As such they become powerful and influential global cultural institutions (Goldberg 2012: 189–192). It is, however, especially these institutions that call for authoritarian, intentionalist and sometimes reductionist narratives that are subject to rigorous control and a predefined master narrative. Auschwitz-survivor and writer Ruth Klüger described Holocaust museums as follows: "They don't take you in, they spit you out. Moreover, they tell you what you ought to think ... They impede the critical faculty" (Ruth Klüger as cited by Goldberg 2012: 190–192). "[O]fficial stor[ies]" of the Holocaust (Hirsch and Spitzer 2009: 10) can be found also on the websites of museums and memorials. In this context much has been said on ethical issues and the appropriateness of the messages spread via online media. Already at the turn of the century Alejandro Baer and Anna Reading assumed that the Internet blurs the clear demarcations between recognized historical narratives, historically proved documentation, educationally valuable information, entertainment, fiction and artistic construction (Baer 2001: 496–498). The authoritative character of the messages spread by the institutions of memory continue to reassure the public in respect to Holocaust denial and racism. However, also these discourses have now shifted towards more fragmented, multimedia productions and the boundaries of so far accepted forms of representation were stretched and will be stretched by information and communication technologies to limits yet unknown.

In the intervening time, the leading institutions have recognized the importance and the potential risks of the online mediation of the Holocaust especially in social network sites and they have started to use them for their needs. Museums and memorials are now engaged in the multilingual "feeding" of different social networking platforms by presenting their vast archival material and collections and by promoting their activities and publications online. Here a potentially global public is invited to share, to "like", to comment, to post, and to link and thus come to new interpretations.

With its relaunch of the website Yad Vashem for example has introduced a so-called "Social Network Wall" (2016). Through this "Wall" the institution's messages climb the ladder in the algorithms of search engines. On Facebook the museum reconstructs its own history: the first entries were dated back to August 1953 when the Knesset agreed on the establishment of the memorial as a government agency. The Facebook-profile itself was created in October 2009. In April 2015, in commemoration of Israel's Holocaust Remembrance day, Yad Vashem started the Facebook-initiative "I Remember" (2016). For this project users of the Facebook-page were randomly linked with profiles of Holocaust-victims from the institution's victim database. In entries on the Museums-website, employees and invited experts wrote blog-entries about current or historical events. On Pinterest, an image platform, 61 Pinwalls offer over 2,400 images of related subjects or topics of day-to-day interest (although users cannot like these images). On YouTube channels video-materials from the institution's vast film-database are being recycled for a potentially international audience in seven different languages. Employees and staff tweet about events of seventy years past. The newest acquisition is an Instagram-project, where the team of the museum in April 2015 began to create a collection of images for a reuse on different platforms – on the newest relaunch of the website this collection has moved to the front-page of the institution.

Since April 2009, the USHMM is organizing an ongoing stream of many, centrally moderated social network initiatives. Material from the museum's own archives is shown on the Facebook and Google+ profiles. Current events in the museum are the content of Twitter feeds and the institutions own YouTube channels disseminate videos, and link-lists on Delicious offer orientation in the data jungle. 9 pin-walls tell stories of the Holocaust and 21 "stories" are being told on Storify.com. USHMM's own Instagram-Wall was installed in July 2014 and on iTunes-U a series of films, audios and podcasts are being offered for educational purposes. An App for smartphones is designed to give museum visitors a mobile multi-media introduction in order to prepare for their visit and to guide them during their stay at the museum (Connect with the Museum 2017).

Although Memorial and Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau, like other former death-camps, were confronted with questions of appropriateness and sensitivity, it still rated among the early adopters of social media. Created in October 2009, in 2010 it had already reached almost 50,000 visitors through its Facebook-profile and an equal number through its YouTube videos. Despite this success, the efforts of the museum soon concentrated on the educational sector. In 2012 it was one of the first institutions to launch a publicly available e-learning project: "Auschwitz – concentration and extermination camp", which was created to prepare visitors, especially educators for a visit to the memorial has proved most successful and has been translated into English, Arabic, Persian, Portuguese, Spanish, and German. Ever since this first lesson, the focus on education has been one of the memorial's central efforts to spread the knowledge about Auschwitz to a widest possible audience online. 11 other e-learning-units, several of them with translations, give witness to the popularity of the lessons worldwide (E-learning 2017).

German institution's entry into the world of connectivity, on the other hand, was rather hesitant. The Jewish Museum Berlin for example primarily focused on online exhibitions, computer games and comics, an area where the museum has gained internationally recognized expertise over the years and that is still one of its the central objectives. Exhibition-concepts and

game-based-learning-theories like the online game "plunder and restitution" was installed on computers in the museum in 2009 and is available online. The game was meant to let users "participate" in decisions about the restitutions of cultural artifacts (Entscheidungsspiel 2017). For the special exhibition "Helden, Freaks and Superrabbis, the Jewish Colour of the Comic" (2107) the institution tried to weave the museum's varied themes into a Webcomic.

Only after an extensive visitor-evaluation suggested that the social media world is the up-to-date tool to attract new user-groups for the museum's agendas, the institution created a Facebook-profile in July 2010. In 2012 the museum started streaming its in-house events and lectures and offering them on a YouTube-channel for an international audience. Today this channel is more widely used for the presentation of artistic approaches and interpretations of the museum's themes (jmberlin Tube 2017).

These and various other examples show, that when trying to mediate traumatic pasts online, renowned institutions have overstepped many barriers that at the turn of the century were still considered taboos. The engagement of museums and memorials in providing in-depth and appropriate information is enormous and their technology departments eat up a large segment of their budgets. Insofar it can also be assumed that the offensive usage of social networks is not only driven by curators and educational interests but especially also by commercial motives.

Institutionalized memory and private memory

Networking through digital media overcomes geographic and time limitations. It reshapes the way in which individuals and groups interact and exchange memories. This is a new type of memory designed to link the individual with the collective, the private with the public and the past with the present in a permanent now. Jose van Dijck (2011: 402) speaks of a "culture of connectivity", which manifests itself especially through social media platforms. Social media thus undermines traditional "top-down"-models of information creation, adoption and dissemination of collective memory. This "convergence culture" of digital media is especially suited for memory as a flexible and participatory form of expression. Here "convergence is a paradigmatic shift across multiple media channels, toward the increased interdependence of communications systems, toward multiple ways of accessing media content, and toward more complex relationships between top-down corporate media and bottom-up participatory culture" (Jenkins 2006: 243).

Thus far, moderated knowledge is complemented by and expanded by subjectively appropriated or constructed knowledge. Formerly separate spheres of collective memory – the private and the public – exist side by side and increasingly together, blurring amateurism and professionalism (Hoskins 2009: 92–97). So digital and social media allow new hybrid forms of memory that are both public and private (Ferron and Massa 2014). Public iconic images become part of individual memory, personal memories are being incorporated into blogs, movies, bulletin boards and official documents as part of collective memory. Such concepts lead to a "democratization of memory" and, consequently, to a "history from below" (Garde Hansen and Hoskins and Reading 2009: 7–9). Not unexpectedly, these practices challenge the functions and

goals of institutionalized memory, public exhibitions and museums – or they reinvent themselves with them (Schwarz 2014: 9).

A now classic example for such a challenge to institutionalized memory is the "I will survive"-YouTube video of Auschwitz-survivor Adolek Kohn, who emigrated to Australia after the war. 65 years after his liberation from the concentration camp, he returned with his daughter and grandchildren to Europe to tour the camps. Daughter and performance artist Jane Korman filmed the family dancing Gloria Gaynor's "I will survive" at the gates of various concentration camps and published the compilation on YouTube. Within days, the video was clicked half a million times. The reactions in the summer of 2010 were overwhelming and controversial and ranged from "tasteless" (Birkenstock 2010) to "taboo breaking" or "refreshingly provocative". Especially in the press Kohn was traded as an aged star and the video seen as an "intelligent response" to the question of what can sensibly still be done given the exuberant culture of remembrance of the Holocaust (Broder 2010).

The sequel of this success-story, however, also fits into the commercialized world of Holocaust-memory: the tremendously fast circulation of the video led to copyright infringement charges by Universal Music Publishing, Gaynor's record company. As a result Jane Korman (2010) removed the music from the video and loaded it again onto YouTube without audio but not without comments. So far the new video was viewed 42,000 times. User "recon1s14", now "The Secluded BLADE" (2010), made an illegal upload of the original video on YouTube. This original version has been viewed 382,460 times so far. On the comment-pages of the video the discussion continues – sometimes heatedly centring on Holocaust denial and antisemitism, going on until today (so far 663 comments, 2.443 thumbs-up and 359 thumbs-down).

Adolek Kohn's example, as before him Quentin Tarantino's "Inglourious Basterds" and similar productions, testifies to a playful dealing of pop culture with the codes of memory (Ernst 2010: 108). It also indicates performances of memory of the next generations as described by Marianne Hirsch's concept of post-memory. In the beginning, especially in official circles, regarded with an incomprehensible shake of the head, the video is now slowly becoming the icon of a new way of dealing with the memory of the Holocaust itself: the International Tracing Service in Bad Arolsen found documents of Kohn's persecution and uploaded Kohns DP-card linking it to the video (DP-Ausweis 2016). In 2014 Norbert Kron and Amichai Shalev (2015) used the video as a name-giver for a collection of essays by German and Israeli authors. They named the book "We do not forget, we go dancing." Until August 2016, the video was also part of the exhibition "Subversive Hopping" (Linden 2015) at the German Dance Archive in Cologne.

Dissolving time-barriers, synchronicity and simultaneity

In numerous studies on memory, time plays a key role: terms such as dissolution of time, acceleration, synchronicity or a-synchronicity, time independence, simultaneity and speed dominate the discourse. The Internet has produced new time-dynamics – qualitatively and quantitatively – which are characterized not only by acceleration but also by real-time behaviour: the pervasive computing practice in which images and texts are created and

archived at the same time, lead to an understanding of a permanent presence and ultimately, by interweaving the past with the present to interpret history as an illusion.

Holocaust institutions also engage in this form of mobile, dynamic switching and thus create conditions for countless reinterpretations of history and memory. The Anne Frank House in Amsterdam for example, features several multilingual Apps for smartphones. On the storytelling-platform izi.TRAVEL it offers two free audio guides with approximately eighty different stories about Anne Frank enriched with photos, audios and video clips. They can be downloaded, commented upon and shared. Using the App "Anne's Amsterdam," users explore thirty places in the city that played an important role for Anne Frank during World War II. Here the connection between past and present is made visible. The simplicity of using the App and the speed that allows users to make their own interpretation is explicitly underlined. A brief look at Instagram reveals the success of the format: people take pictures of themselves with the promotional folder for the App or the smartphone in their hands as they visit the places of Anne's Amsterdam, pose in the same spots and send their pictures to the world followed by the hashtag #recreate (on Instagram the hashtag #annesamsterdam collects the photos taken using the App.

Next to Twitter Instagram and other social media were seen as vehicles of social change during the "Arab Spring" and the "Occupy Wall Street"-movement (LePage 2013). The image-platform Instagram, especially offers fast and simple ways to publish smartphone-pictures in a deliberately unprofessional way or hooded with the "shindler's list"-filter adding hashtags. The epitome of the individuality and authenticity staged in such platforms are snapshots of oneself (selfies) or of oneself with duckfaces. Notwithstanding this and notwithstanding obviously successful marketing strategies these self-presentations are problematic when it comes to selfies in "serious places" (Feifer 2013). Hashtags used for the Holocaust theme for example are #holocaust, #annefrank, #auschwitz, as well as #instacaust and #instanazi [sic!]. With them, users share, "like" and comment on their visits to museums and memorials. In November 2013, Hektor Brehl drew attention to selfies and duckfaces of (mostly) young people at Holocaust memorials and museums in the magazine "Vice Germany". There are young people who jump from Stele to Stele in the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin. They were photographed between the concrete blocks giving viewers the finger or pose with "thumbs up" gestures and a broad grin in front of the Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial. Brehl particularily fell for the hashtags used by young people. As such, his essay, "Hashtags you should not use for your memorial-selfie" can be read as an educational measure. Keywords like "#chilli #willy #auschwitz #birkenau" or "#hipster #abgehen #kz #buchenwald" as well as "#zyklonb #feelgood" and "#fun #interrail #goodtimes #happy #holocaust" win jaded remarks from the author.

Online-Storytelling:
I choose, what I like

In our traditional understanding, static archives and libraries store relevant information permanently. This concept is now replaced by a permanently necessary fluid data transfer. Temporality, fluidity, the volume and the constant

availability of digital data also affect the negotiation of memory in the present. Static models are replaced by dynamic ones which are constantly being rede-signed (Hoskins 2009: 95–107). Technologically enhanced practices (time and place independence, speed, continuous reinvention, little authoritative control, etc…) associated with massive amounts of data aggregated from amateur and professional sources, consisting of text, photo, audio and video, lead to new narrative practices: the emerging stories can be arbitrary, constantly changing, constructed and reconstructed. Memory is rewritten and re-ordered with each new narration (Nungesser 2009: 39–44).

However, multimedia approaches and multimodal hyper-narratives about different players, media formats, time and location contribute to a further iconization of the existing canon of Holocaust narratives because social media algorithms support the trends to share, like and comment on the same images, videos and stories over and over again. Sensationalist stories are advancing both on personal and institutional levels. At the same time these practices allow a level of detail that comes at the expense of clarity and quality. Paul Arthur (2009: 69) describes this type of online storytelling as follows:

"The online environment allows unprecedented scope for a diversity of stories to be told about the same events, regardless of how dispersed, geographi-cally, the contributors might be. The stories can be contradictory, conflicting, confronting, and emotionally charged and, in some kinds of sites, the cyber group can share experiences and gain support from each other at their own pace and in their own way."

These trends towards diversity, fluidity and constant re-construction lead influential institutions towards a more modern use of their extensive in-house archives, where remains of a linear narrative tradition still exist. However, social media for a long time have not succeeded in generating a positive col-lective experience from these fragments. Timothy Recuber (2012: 545–549) has found out that in the cacophony of voices, deeper understandings or particularly important contributions often simply get lost. On the contrary, the confusion of comments, postings and likes also invited users to hate- and revenge-posts without having to fear consequences.

Under the title "History meets Innovation" Yad Vashem, for example, hosted a Yad Vashem-HP Big Data Hackathon in October 2015. The aim of the event was to find "ways to keep the Shoah relevant for millennia" by means of technology. It focused on innovative and up-to-date solutions to use of the testimonies collected in the archives of the institution in social media (the digital data available in the archives of Yad Vashem – there are 4.5 million names from the names-database, 450.000 photos, 125.000 written as well as audio and video interviews – certainly is both too vast and too complex for single users). The results are now being merged into the museum's website and can be seen at the front page of the institution.

The same type of archival material is also at the center of projects like "iWitness" (2017). The USC Shoah Foundation at the University of Southern California tries to engage students and teachers in numerous activities using the approximately 52,000 Holocaust testimonies, which are stored on its servers. Instructions are given on how to create personal "video essays", word clouds, or visualizations from the collection of the USC and other primary material. In the "iWitness Video Challenge" yearly winners of short films created from the institutions' collections as well as winners of the "Viewer's Choice" are being selected. In co-operation with other Holocaust institutions, users are also invited to comment and re-visualize the existing archival material.

These comments and stories are then reintroduced into online exhibitions. An example of this is the show "Some Were Neighbors" (2017), which was accompanied by the USHMM.

Digital Storytelling here becomes a mix of private and public acts of remembrance, solidarity and empathy and also serves in forming ethic communities where the focus is less on coherent sequential stories but on remembering collectively (Arthur 2009: 71–73). This is a new way of remembering and storytelling especially because these fragments are selected randomly and there is no relationship between them; they remain autonomous, subjective, personal and independent, they resemble database structures and not sequential narratives (Ferron and Massa 2014: 29–33).

To counter this, some institutions have started to engage in bringing people together for a common experience. For example, the Holocaust and United Nations Outreach Program, together with the Anne Frank Center, USA, invited people worldwide to send tweets to Anne Frank on April 11, 2010, the Holocaust memorial day in the Jewish calendar, Yom Ha Shoa. Under the term @UNandHolocaust, users were to tweet messages about what people had learned from the girl's life and experiences. Until 2013 the keyword was used as a shibboleth for the UN-Outreach-program. In commemoration of Anne Frank's death seventy years later, the Anne Frank Trust UK launched the "#NotSilent memorial campaign" (2015). Under that hashtag, users were invited to record one-minute readings from Anne Frank's diary and share those via Twitter and Facebook. On YouTube, for example, there are 440 entries, which can be assigned to the hashtag in connection with the term "Anne Frank". The trust itself received hundreds of recordings from around the world, from different cultural backgrounds and in different languages.

Conclusion: Staging the Online-Self

The culture to comment, like, share, "hashtag" and thumbs-up has already made inroads into the negotiation of the Holocaust today. It is a decisive aspect of the current culture of remembrance. At the same time these forms of judging cannot be regarded as entirely arbitrary and judgmental, because there are limits: social networks allow individuals the construction of public or semi-public profiles only within their limited systems. Also, anyone who approaches the Holocaust submits to an only seemingly unregulated discourse. Although "postulates such as authenticity, truthfulness, moral integrity and authentication by authorship" (Martínez 2004: 11) are particularly difficult to ensure "factual accuracy, careful staging and stories on an equal footing" (Fogu 2009: 76) are the goal of mutual observation practices. The Holocaust discourse on the Internet therefore is not new, on the contrary it follows well known pathways in terms of aesthetics and historical narrative traditions.

Additionally, private representations of the Holocaust on the net are largely conscious collections and productions, even if established institutions write these generated memory practices off as distasteful and morally reprehensible. Nevertheless, just as often such practices gain entry into the mnemonic concepts of memorial institutions. The USHMM for example changed its photo-regulations in January 2015 and allowed a selected audience to take photos within the museum with their mobile phones in a controlled

experiment. The invited visitors took part in an Instameet on February 1, 2015. Under the hashtag #WitnessUSHMM the museum then collected the taken photos and offered them to the world in a Storify-narrative. The experiment opened unexpected, new, exciting perspectives for the museum operators.

The modified handling of authenticity and adequacy also show generational fractures that are extremely valuable for educational purposes, as Allen Weiner 2014 explained:

"For the purpose of educating future generations, I believe it's important to put rhetoric aside and look instead at the value such acts have on keeping the discussion related to genocide and acts of injustice relevant. Each generation has its own way to capture a zeitgeist, and millennials use smartphone images as a means to create memories and share what's important to them. No textbook or testimonial will have the power and relevance for future examination more than living scrapbooks taken on site at many of the world's iconic places. A selfie with an appropriate, respectful caption could be a powerful tribute and a valuable educational asset."

The scientific director of the memorial Bunker Valentin, Marcus Meyer, argued somewhat similarly. Once again he used Adolek Kohn's YouTube video in a lecture in 2014 emphasizing: each generation has "the right but also the duty", to find its own access to the events and to develop its own attitude, because this is the only way for a generationally adequate "formation of a critical historical consciousness" (Heinrich 2014).

To this I would like to agree. The actions of young people equipped with state-of-the-art technology – the sharing and "liking" of Adolek Kohn's YouTube video, of Anne Frank's Facebook page, selfies in front of memorials, online comics, attempts at geographic visualization of memory, geocaches inducing people to "hunt" for treasures in former death-camps – reflect the reciprocal shaping of memory and media and oftentimes commemoration happens in unexpected yet respectful ways (Pfanzelter 2014; Lohmeier and Penztold 2014: 780). Modern day technology offers new ways to access and mediate past events, however, it is the user who in the creative handling of these media decides how and what can be remembered responsibly and in acceptable ways. The transfer of new forms of commemoration into the memory practices of memorial institutions takes time and to a large extent depends on the appropriateness of the messages and contents (as defined by the institutions). The limits of what is acceptable and appropriate have expanded noticeably over the past years and they continue to expand. Let us hope that in the future the taken paths are not driven solely by commercial interests.

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