



Universitetet
i Stavanger

FAKULTET FOR UTDANNINGSVITENSKAP OG HUMANIORA

MASTEROPPGAVE

Studieprogram: Historiedidaktikk	10. semesteret, 2019 Åpen/ konfidensiell
Forfatter: Andre Dahl (signatur forfatter)
Veileder: David Wagner & Linn M. Nordmand	
Tittel på masteroppgaven: "The potential and restriction of understanding the Perpetrators of Holocaust in "Holocaust and Human Behaviour" by FHAO".	
Emneord: Holocaust Education, Perpetrators, Genocide, Historical Empathy, Textbook study.	Antall ord: 3400 + vedlegg/annet: egenerklæring Stavanger, 19. Mai, 2019 dato/år

The potential and restriction of understanding the Perpetrators of Holocaust in “*Holocaust and Human Behaviour*” by FHAO.

Abstract

This thesis is a descriptive study on educational resources produced and presented by the NGO, Facing History and Ourselves in the collection/book *Holocaust and Human Behaviour* [2016]. Using semiotic analytical tools, the paper describes the meeting between the [implied] reader and the perpetrators, the horror and the evil of the Holocaust. The study argues for the historical pedagogical potential of using perpetrators of the Holocaust as history resources to develop knowledge and understanding of *perpetrating* in order to answer the call of *never again*. The thesis is that identifying factors that contribute as enemies of democracy is important not only for understanding Holocaust but also developing democratic citizenship. The goal is not only to confirm the thesis, but also identify the restrictions in perpetrator-learning.

[1.0 Introduction](#)

[1.1 Background](#)

[1.2 Earlier literature](#)

[1.3 Research Design](#)

[2.0 Theory](#)

[2.1 Implied reader as Semiotic analytical tool](#)

[2.2 Historical Empathy](#)

[3.0 Empirical Data](#)

[3.1 About the FHAO](#)

[3.2 *The Holocaust and Human Behaviour*](#)

[3.3 Curriculum Design](#)

[4.0 Method](#)

[4.1 Selection of readings and perpetrator only vs. victim-definition of perpetrators](#)

[4.2 Narrative analysis to distinguish the character-portrait and perpetrators types](#)

[4.3 Research Design](#)

5.0 Findings

5.1 Types of perpetrators

5.2 Origin of Massacre

5.3 Evolution of Massacre

5.4 A New Massacre – and New Perpetrators

5.3 Conclusion

6.0 Themes and attention

6.1.1 The incomprehensible event

6.1.2 A Matter of Obedience

6.1.3 Working for a Greater Evil

6.1.4 Technological Significance

6.1.5 Conclusion

6.2 Acquiring Knowledge - Learning why the Holocaust

6.2.1 The Holocaust as Incomprehensible

6.2.2 Learning why – distance makes obedience

6.2.3 The Aspect of Technology

6.2.4 The bureaucratic support

6.3 Understanding perpetrator behaviour through empathy

6.3.1 Walter Stier – the desktop bureaucrat

6.3.2 Franz Stahl – the Commandant and the Cargo

7.1 Why should we learn about the perpetrators?

7.2 *Banality of Evil* and Useless Suffering

7.3 *Becoming a upstander – by understanding the perpetrator*

7.4 *A Larger ‘we’*

Introduction

“The premier demand upon all education is that Auschwitz not happen again. Its priority before any other requirement is such that I believe I need not and should not justify it. I cannot understand why it has been given so little concern until now. To justify it would be monstrous in the face of the monstrosity that took place” – T. W. Adorno, *Education after Auschwitz*.

Holocaust in education is still as relevant as Adorno proclaimed in his essay *Education after Auschwitz*. The Holocaust did not only cause destruction but also a new hope; a world without genocide and barbarity.

Since then NGOs like *Yad Vashem*, *US Memorial Museum*, IHRA and the FHAO, our own HL, have produce guidelines, educational material, collected testimonies, delivered seminars for teachers. The survivors have contributed by sharing their experience in classrooms, and students travel to Auschwitz II to experience the past. Behind all this lays the motivation of *preventing* a new racial genocide to happen on our continent.

Yet, the rise in antisemitism rose drastically in European countries, as well as the USA the last decade.

“Jews in many countries around the world feel an “increasing sense of emergency”, said Moshe Kantor, the president of the European Jewish Congress, launching the 2018 Kantor Center report on global antisemitism on Wednesday.

The analysis by the organisation, which represents Jewish communities in Europe, found an increase in 2018 in almost all forms of antisemitism, with the number of major violent incidents rising by 13%, from 342 to 387. The highest number of such cases were in the US (100), the UK (68), and France and Germany (35 each).

A separate report [published by the US Jewish activist group the Anti-Defamation League](#) on Tuesday, three days after a [shooting at a synagogue near San Diego](#), found that violent attacks against the Jewish community in the US doubled last year,” (The Guardian, 1. May, Antisemitism 'calling into question future of Jewish life in Europe', author; Harriet Sherwood).

Immigration-policy have been harder and harder lately. Also, the Norwegian government have been pursued this line of policy. Never really discussing the moral philosophical questions that these choices asks of us.

It seems evident that exposing students to the Holocaust would foster some resistance against prejudice and racial hatred. But there is no guarantee for this development. Some stats show that once again negative attitudes against others are increasing, while the radical right is gaining more attention. Old ideas like protectionism and national self-interest has managed to get a foothold in the USA, the previous leading nation for global cooperation.

My point is not to paint world of doom but draw attention that the apparent optimism after the Iron Curtain fell, at the end of WWII, is now challenged.

To counteract such ideas, politics and challenges should be manageable in the arena of education. This is the experience in which future-citizens learn to cooperate with others, individuals that differ from themselves. A liable democracy for the future is a democracy that accepts others and learns to cooperate with them, not denying them existence or voices.

History education might serve this purpose, but must be conducted thoroughly, not only on the ideas that it will serve a better future. Students must learn to understand why history is important for the future, and not only lessons that say that it is.

This study wants to contribute in discussing *ways* to develop this understanding, under the banner of *never again*. Rather than focusing on the study of the *victims*, this study wants to research the potential of perpetrators in history education.

It doesn't suggest that we should only focus on *perpetrator action and behaviour* when studying the Holocaust. But as argued in chapter 1, there seems to be a neglect of the *pedagogical study* on what the perpetrators can bring to the table to deter a future Holocaust, but also challenges in exposing students to such ideas and actions.

1.1 Research Question – Why we should learn of the Holocaust-perpetrators?

Using the selected text resources from the collection *Holocaust and Human Behaviour*, this research focuses on the content and pedagogical implications that is produced by the FHAO – with the curriculum goal to divert any possibility of Holocaust or related events to occur in the future.

The main question is *why should we learn about the Holocaust perpetrators?* What purpose do they serve for us to learn from the past to solve issues of racial hatred and prejudice in the present/future?

The first section of the research describes the quality of pedagogical and content implication for the implied reader by analysing the representation of the perpetrators in Chapter 9, *The Holocaust*, in *Holocaust and Human behaviour*.

Later, the understanding of the perpetrator that the implied reader is assumed to extract from the resources will be discussed - answering *why should we learn of the perpetrators of the Holocaust*.

Some questions are raised to support both potentials as well as challenges, and of course to discuss the plausibility deterioration.

What ends can this constructing of perpetrator knowledge and understanding serve? How does it correlate with the victim? Can it be said to serve the goal of *detering a future genocide* or other racial motivated events? If so, how does the FHAO argue that it can be done?

1.2 Relevance of the study

The pedagogical implication in understanding the perpetrators of the Holocaust, is a neglected area for Holocaust education. Educators seldom prioritize empathy understanding with perpetrators as an important aspect of learning history. One could say that we are more interested in promoting sympathy for the victims in the past, be it either African Slavery, Women or others commonly neglected cultural groups.

Joanna Pettitt suggest that there might be a taboo that hinders us from confronting perpetrators as human beings;

“Indeed, critical discourses surrounding fictional representations of the Holocaust perpetrator have long since recognised a certain taboo relating to fictional depictions of these historical figures”, (Pettitt, 2017, p. 2).

or as Raul Hilberg suggests – that *we* don’t want to know how ordinary the perpetrators of the most horrific event of the 20th century really is.

«Ville det ikke vært mer tilfredsstillende hvis jeg hadde kunnet påvise at alle gjerningsmennene var sinnssyke?», (Citation extracted from Bauman, 2005, p. 127).

This research will not address this question of why or if there is an extended taboo in education and human science when related to perpetrators. Though that would also be an interesting research.

Searching *google scholar*, with keywords as *perpetrator, Holocaust, Education, Teaching, Learning, History*, relates no article to discussing why one should educate students about perpetrator behaviour in Holocaust education.

Stephen Marks’ study on how teachers teach about the NS in German classrooms, argue that there is little enthusiasm in Holocaust education about analysing perpetrator views and motives, and a dominant concern on the suffering of the victims;

“As I will outline in the first section, entitled “The Crisis in Holocaust Education,” students are confronted with the facts and data, as well as the suffering of the victims, while the motives of the Nazi perpetrators and onlookers are, in general, left out. I will argue that Holocaust education needs to deal with this issue too, otherwise a dangerous vacuum is being created. In other words, the motives of the perpetrators and bystanders also need exploring,” (Marks, 2007, p. 263)

Wolfgang Kaiser argues that understanding perpetrator behaviour is important in addressing a larger understanding of *why the Holocaust happened*;

“Dealing with the perpetrators provides access to crucial questions of Holocaust history. The Holocaust was the climax of more and more radical politics of the Nazis against the Jews. In order to analyse and understand this process we need to study the files documenting the activities of the perpetrators who initiated and controlled it. We must analyse their motivations and their way of thinking and behaviour, if we want to understand why this happened and why it was done in this manner. The victims had very little influence on the way things developed. Of course the letters and diaries written by Jews who were exposed to the escalating cruelty of the Nazis are very valuable sources for reconstructing their experiences, but in order to understand the driving forces behind the radicalisation of anti-Jewish actions we must deal with the perpetrators,” (Kaiser, 2010, pp. 35-36)

Similar argument is presented by Berenbaum and Twiss, who found it troubling that the Survivors of Shoah Visual History Foundation did not present testimonies from perpetrators;

In 1999, referring to the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, Michael Berenbaum wrote: “There is still a major weakness in this massive collection. The voice of the perpetrator is absent. To truly understand the Holocaust, we must understand the perpetrators as well as their victims.... In our quest for understanding we must rely upon the testimonies that have been offered”. I agree, though I would broaden the point to claim that in order to truly understand and interpret human rights atrocities generally, we need to study perpetrators’ testimonies for what they reveal about their motives, ideological thinking, strategies of denial and self-deception, and other forms of moral pathology”, (Twiss, 2010)

To summarize, this paper’s relevance is that the field of history/Holocaust education has neglected to discuss perpetrator behaviour and choices as an important inquiry to help in deterring any future genocide. It wants to discuss

This does not mean that it have been neglected other places, both philosophy (Arendt, 2006) and history (Goldenhagen), (Browning, 2017), and historiography (Lawson, 2010) have studied perpetrators, but in education, both textbooks and public sphere – there seems to be a lack. This paper wants to open a discussion on what perpetrator-understanding can contribute, and its restrictions. Both to Holocaust-education and democratic citizenship.

1.3 Earlier Literature

Perpetrators in Textbooks

Hellstrand studies a large quantity of textbooks between 1997 and 2007 in Norway, focusing on the narrative on Nazism and comparing them.

«Denne oppgaven går ut på å undersøke hvilke historier om Holocaust som blir framstilt i norske lærebøker. Materialet for min undersøkelse består av lærebøker i historie for niende trinn i grunnskolen. Jeg har valgt tre bøker tilhørende hver av de to nyeste læreplanene her til lands, til sammen seks bøker. Undersøkelsen vil kun romme de kapitlene i lærebøkene som kan knyttes til Holocaust. Framveksten av nazismen og jødernes historie er også aktuell her. For å finne fram til hvilke historier som blir fortalt, kan det også være aktuelt å se på hvordan historiene blir framstilt. Dette vil ikke utgjøre noe hovedfokus i oppgaven, men faller naturlig inn i enkelte deler av undersøkelsen», (Hellestrand, 2009, p. 5).

Her main findings about the perpetrators represented in her data is that they do not follow the theories of Holocaust-scholars such as Goldenhagen, Bauman or Arendt when discussing the perpetrators.

There are no suggestions that tries to problematize just *who* might perpetrator be, and *why did the Holocaust happen*, Hellstrand concludes.

«Ingen av lærebøkene kommer med konkrete framstillinger for å belyse hvordan Holocaust kunne finne sted. En kan finne sitater som til en viss grad støtter opp om enkelte sider av de ulike teorier som er presentert tidligere i oppgaven. Likevel er det flere aspekter som skiller seg fra den samme teorien. Eksempelvis er det flere av lærebøkene formidler et syn som gir ansvaret til nazistene. Det er derimot få av dem som presiserer hvem nazistene var. Enkelte gir inntrykket av at overgriperne i historien om Holocaust, var en liten gruppe mennesker som utagerte sitt hat mot jødene. Her er i likhet med Goldhagen, antisemittismen brukt som motiv, men til forskjell blir ikke Holocaust framstilt som en hendelse utført av tyskere flest», (Hellestrand, 2009, p. 111)

This conclusion is also identical to a research by HL, Harald Syse;

«Som formidler ved Holocaustsenteret møter jeg ofte elever som lurer på hvorfor nazistene ville utrydde jødene, eller som har lært at tyskerne var sinte og misunnelige på de rike jødene. Det er kanskje ikke så rart. *Læreverkene i norsk skole formidler ikke nazistenes antisemittiske verdensanskuelse, samtidig som de i liten grad er fundert på nyere forskning.* Derfor er norske skoleelever dårlig rustet til å forstå nazismen», (Syse, 2016).

Syse argues that Norwegian textbooks doesn't draw on new research and neither do they communicate the importance of *antisemitism* but rather conceals it as *another form of racism* – meaning that they hide the prejudice against Jews.

Syse uses textbooks from where Hellstrands study stopped – in reference to publishing years; he goes from 2007 till 2014, and still concludes the same as Hellstrand.

Rather than focusing on narratives of representation of Holocaust, he uses a discourse analysis to study the pedagogical implication of understanding Nazism in the textbooks discourse.

«I denne artikkelen foretar jeg en komparativ diskursanalyse av seks læreverker i historie for videregående trinn – *Alle tiders historie* 2014, *Historie Vg3* 2008, *Mennesker i tid 2* 2008, *Perspektiver* 2013, *Portal* 2008 og *Tidslinjer* 2008 – og to læreverker for ungdomstrinnet – *Kosmos 9* 2007 og *Matriks 9* 2007. Jeg ser på hvordan og i hvilken grad læreverkene forklarer nazistenes beveggrunner for å ønske å utrydde de europeiske jødene», (Syse).

But he also he concludes with a less complex view and communication about the Nazis and the Holocaust. In other words, one can argue that the textbooks haven't managed to match the study on Nazism and perpetrators that history and Holocaust-studies have contributed with the last decade (Szejnmann, 2014).

In England Stuart Foster and Eleni Kariyanni studied a considerable amount of textbooks on national socialism representations and cross-referring the knowledge with the guidelines produced by the IHRA.

The third aim of the study was to critically evaluate the content of the 21 textbooks against recognized international criteria and scholarship focused on teaching and learning about the Holocaust. Indeed, by identifying key problems, commonplace challenges, and core issues in

textbook content, it was anticipated that important recommendations improving textbook portrayals of the Holocaust would emerge, (Karayanni, 2017, p. 316).

They present four conclusions; lack of historical context, simplistic answers to complex questions, faceless mass of victims and problematic chronological and geographical order.

Again, there is a great emphasize on Hitler as the main factor for the Holocaust;

For the most part, textbooks offered simplistic explanations that centered on Hitler as the main causal factor. Of the 21 books analyzed, 17 books explicitly emphasized his pivotal role in the genocide and typically assigned primary responsibility to him, *ibid.*, p. 324.

There is also no explanation of the organization of the Nazi state, explanations of *key agencies, power structures, and the responsibilities of leading individuals*. Often, they only referred to Himmler as the leader other than Hitler. *Other influential Nazis were rarely mentioned, and their role in carrying out the genocide was not explained.*

Complexity and the *new research studies* referred to in the Norwegian studies refer to the same knowledge needed to *understand the Holocaust* – it wouldn't have happened were it not for *ordinary* men contributing in the genocide.

It is important to note, however, that despite the brief exploration of these important themes, the textbooks typically devoted only a few brief paragraphs to them. Indeed, in contrast to the master narrative that clearly focus on the actions of Hitler and the Nazis, attention to the broader complicity of ordinary people appeared extremely limited", p. 326.

Perpetrator and Holocaust Education

In the large-scale study *what do students know about the Holocaust*, as the title suggests, it measures the accuracy of the knowledge and tries to draft the source of knowledge from British schools.

The accuracy of knowledge of perpetrators is concluded to be low, (Stuart Foster & Adrian Burgess, 2016). Similar findings are done in Germany, were studies on perpetrator motivation and NS has normally been considered as higher than other, because of its shameful past. Mark argues that this is not the case, and the knowledge has been more modest than assumed;

However, different studies have shown that the pedagogical success of Holocaust education in Germany is rather modest, both in terms of learning *about* as well as *from* history (Borries, 1995; Wagensommer, 2001, 2003), (Marks, 2007, p. 264).

In the UCL study, a large amount of the asked participants, the students, assumed that *ordinary Germans* would be *terrified* if they knew about Hitler's main objective. Also suspecting that Germans were ignorant of what Hitler were doing in the East, (Stuart Foster & Adrian Burgess, 2016, pp. 165-167).

These findings are important to the study, because it argues that there might be a link between the textbook content, lack of teacher's interest in perpetrators and the historical knowledge in Europe. That students today know very little about the perpetrators of the Holocaust, and this might be because either the teachers are reluctant in addressing it, or the textbooks doesn't communicate newer knowledge.

Textbooks has shown themselves to be very important for teachers that communicate the Holocaust. The UCL had a study on teachers approach to the Holocaust in education, the main finding in 2009 was that very many teachers were "self-taught" in regards to the Holocaust, and evaluated that teaching-resources were important to their practices in the classroom, Foster & Kariyanni argues;

"The UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's 2009 national study of teachers' practices revealed that many teachers found the Holocaust a very complex and challenging subject to teach.³ Furthermore, 82.5% of teachers surveyed declared that they had received no formal professional development in teaching the Holocaust and were primarily "selftaught." Given the challenges of teaching this difficult and emotive subject, teachers commonly revealed that they used textbooks to support learning. Indeed, the same study showed that 67% of teachers were "likely" to use textbooks and further suggested during interviews that textbooks were considered a valuable educational resource," (Karayanni, 2017, p. 314).

This paper wants to focus on a textbook that gives much attention to producing knowledge about perpetrators but also what suggestions these resources might have for a *learning from*, how this knowledge and understanding might support a democratic citizenship that ultimately should deter any similar events like the Holocaust.

2.0 Theory

The perpetrator-definition that this study uses is taken from the UCL, it gives special attention to any agency that supported the Final Solution, referring to the murder of Jews and other non-German groups.

“... individuals and agents – their attitudes, actions and role in the initiation, decision-making and enactment of persecutory and exterminatory policies. These persons are loosely collected under the banner of ‘perpetrators’,” (Stuart Foster & Adrian Burgess, 2016, p. 139)

This choice of definition was taken after interpreting what type of perpetrator the FHAO represented. The FHAO suggests that all participants that helped the system of murder operative should be considered responsible based on their active role in the NS’ policy of exterminating non-German groups, especially the Jews. This differ from the concept of bystander which highlights the passivity, even though they may be responsible morally, it is rather in the act of *not doing*, being passive, and not their choices/actions.

Secondly this study focuses on the perpetrators *of the Holocaust*. Also, this term is connected to the content by the FHAO. In their textbook *Holocaust and human behaviour*, the story in the chapter “Holocaust”, begins on the notion of mass murder. This is the red thread when presenting the linear story of the Holocaust, how it first was mass shootings, before the conference. How it ended in a system of deportation, selection, gassing and crematoriums. In this story the reader meets the victims, the bystanders, the resisters and the perpetrators.

It is the murderers and collaborators that we focus on. The perpetrators of the Holocaust cannot only be murderers, since the new way of mass murder make individuals guilty of a crime newer before imaginable. Actions like writing lists, keeping account on numbers, writing reports, in sum ended in the mass murder of millions.

So, even if the Holocaust can be argued to account for the *Kristallnacht*, the ghettos, the racial propaganda, in this study I have focused only on the resources that are part of chapter 9 and 10, those that refer the Holocaust to the notion of mass-murder, and perpetrators as someone who’s actions aided the mass-murder.

2.1 The Implied reader as semiotic analytical concept

The term *implied reader* is used as the main device for analysing the data about perpetrators of the Holocaust. It suggests how the author intends specific meaning to the content through the image of the ideal recipient for the text.

It is used in the field of *semiotics* and can be defined as a function in the text, the intention of the author. For this study, it will be synonymous to the potential learning process that the reader will engage in when meeting text resources of the perpetrators. Schmid defines the terms as;

The implied reader is a function of the work, even though it is not represented in the work. An “intended reader” designates the image of the recipient that the author had while writing or, more accurately, the author’s image of the recipient that is fixed and objectified in the text by specific indexical signs. (Hühn, Meister, Pier, & Schmid, 2014, p. 376)

In practice it will be used to analyse the signs and context produced by the author and the primary sources selected, how they interrelate to construct *themes* or *attention* for the implied reader. Making the reader *see* or imagine the past and possibly produce some form of knowledge and understanding of the people of the past, the perpetrators.

Though one analysis the textual signs and the meaning in relation to the context produced, the theory helps in drawing the authors intention – the reader’s attention. Finally, one can argue for a history pedagogical implication that these texts might hold, identifying both potential, but also challenges.

This theory helps in arguing for potential through the researchers study and interpretation of signs and their meaning. It doesn’t mean that this is the knowledge that will be produced in a actual learning environment. It is only the *potential* knowledge that is argued in this study. Depending on the teacher’s guidance, the students socio-cultural background and learning environment. There is never a straight-forward learning-process, especially in subjects that are as complex as the Holocaust.

By arguing for potential knowledge and understanding, the hope of this paper is to address other ways we might frame Holocaust education, not arguing for what is true or not for Holocaust education.

2.2 Empathy; Between the reader and the perpetrator–perspective-taking of those that participate in mass murder.

In history education the relation with *empathy* and *perpetrators* are seldom tied together as learning concepts. This makes it an interesting subject to research.

Selecting texts that use primary sources from the perpetrators will be investigated with components of empathy. The idea is that these texts has lesser interference by the author. The attention is only on the signs and meaning from the perpetrators, making it possible for the implied reader to investigate the mind and attitude of the perpetrator. Essential in doing so is to engage the perpetrator as humane, not alienated.

Barton and Levstik's use three components for empathy, in total five – but two of these functions only in studying living subjects.

The components chosen are; *sensing otherness*, *shared normalcy*, *historical understanding* – these are the most common used *components* for historical empathy writes Barton and Levstik.

They refer to empathy as *perspective taking* and *empathy as caring*, and argue that caring, the dimension of feeling, is important if one wants students to learn from history to participate in what they refer to as a participatory democracy.

In this sense, the subject of perpetrators meets a challenge when facing empathy. Just like the empathy concept of Endacott & Brooks, to be engaged in feeling, as in wanting to act, becomes important if one want students to engage in a never again. But there is an ethical question when discussing caring for the perpetrators, feeling sympathy for them. Scholars argue that having sympathal links can reduce their responsibility. Some even go as far to say that perpetrators should not have a voice because of the grave crime they have committed. Ethically this might be a fair argument, but neglecting them means that we have no chance of learning from past mistakes.

This study will not concern itself in the emotional bonding that might occur between the reader and the perpetrator. The study will only use the components for perspective taking and not affective bonding. Not only because of the ethical problems this might raise, but also because there is no obvious evidence that proclaim that such bonding is developed by the authors selection of testimonies.

As for the two other components, they are restricted by this studies format, i.e. they are too troublesome to identify in a text-related study. There is lesser chance that one can find any textual evidence to support a claim for *contextualizing the present*, in which the agent will connect understanding of empathy to one's own time and space, and exhibit understanding that ones *own perspective is influenced by social and cultural factors in their time*.

Under I will present shortly each component that will be used to identify the empathy relation between the implied reader and the perpetrator. They will be used to identify how the implied reader can understand the belief and attitude of the perpetrator presented, based on the signs, information and context presented in the primary sources.

Sensing the otherness

The first component for *historical empathy* is the ability to sense otherness, this is the easiest part; recognizing the fundamental otherness of people outside oneself, (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 210).

The challenge in the case of *perpetrators of the Holocaust* is not to *recognize* the difference, but make sure that the implied reader doesn't combine *recognition* with *condemning*. If the textual resource constructs an individual by demonizing him/her, there will be no opportunity for the second component – identifying shared normalcy. The process will be dead in its birth. Understanding the effect – the perpetrators did evil, is not the same as understanding the perpetrators.

Textual it means to investigate what the actions and attitudes of the individual are different from contemporary ones. Obviously, it is the partaking in genocidal events that is the main otherness. But how this is represented, the quality of the collaboration and participation is the focus question for this component. How did the individual participate or collaborate, and what are their attitudes for the victims?

Shared Normalcy

“To take part in democratic deliberations, it is not enough to know that other people have different perspectives; we must be willing to entertain the possibility that those perspectives make sense and that they are not the result of ignorance, stupidity, or delusion”, (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 211).

This is a challenge for perpetrator-perspective, again, since it entertains the idea that if one acknowledges that their perspective and choice to be logic for their context and situation, it can be evaluated as accepting the effect as logical. But it does not mean that individual behaviour, the quality of it, were *inhumane* though the result were. One must not make the effect of the action equal to the action itself. There will always be a *shared normalcy* in individual perpetrator-cases, finding the logic thread that drove them to action, action that made an event seem “evil” for posterity. And it is just this achievement that history

argues it can achieve, the only problem is that the idea that making sense of something that we *don't* want to, as it is argued to be un-ethical to do so.

“This requires that we recognize that others value their ideas just as we do ours, as imminently reasonable outlooks on the world. People who differ from us are not simply a reflection of ourselves who are waiting to be enlightened... History provides fertile ground for developing this kind of recognition, because we have to come to grips with why people in the past did things that no longer make sense to us”, *ibid*, p. 212.

Analysing this component is done by finding arguments and context in the information from the past that still serve meaning today. That the meaning of for example working towards a national goal, or the not having the courage to disobey orders are something that the reader can relate to.

Historical Contextualization

When explaining past actions, one must connect the event together with the beliefs, values and attitudes of the past – the *historical context*. It means answering/inquiring into *why* the action were taken by reconstructing the event, the surroundings of the individual – his/her values, attitudes and believes that were perceived and interpreted for his/her correct action. *Why* the individuals choose to support and participate in mass-murder?

The testimonies only give a share of the situation by the individuals, and since the perpetrators deliver their own account on the situation, one must always be careful in evaluating what to be true or not. Their experience at the time might not be true, it can be perverted by many factors. Essentially their experience becomes the framework for their choices, none were born perpetrators, but shockingly as the Holocaust is, too many individuals collaborated in mass murder. Suggesting that the situation, the framing of perpetration, was essential for participation. The historical contextualization is important for understanding the perpetrators, but unlike political history, it is only in relevance with individual choices and experiences.

These components of historical empathy will help in suggesting questions for analysing interaction between primary sources of perpetrators and the implied reader in the selected readings by the FHAO that presents interviews and context with the perpetrator.

3.0 Empirical Data

In this chapter the organization, FHAO will be addressed. First what *it is*, how does the FHAO define themselves and what are their goals? Secondly, because the FHAO focuses on the educational practice, the *pedagogical design* that they argue that they utilize, both in textual resources but also communicating in classroom practices for teachers (Barr, 2006). Thirdly, the design and idea of the whole book called *Holocaust and human behaviour*, in which interpretation and analysis of selected readings that relate to Holocaust and perpetrators. Finally, I will address the selection of readings, the choices made when selecting the resources that will be analysed in chapter 6 related to chapter 2.0, the concept of perpetrator and Holocaust.

Thus, this chapter seeks to address the “author” and the context of the author, i.e. educational practice towards a pluralistic democracy. In doing so the reader can acquire knowledge about who they are and what they seek to acquire in their book, especially to get a better understanding of *why* they represent the perpetrators of the Holocaust and the modus of this representation.

3.1 What is the FHAO?

There is no *single author* in the book; *Holocaust and Human Behaviour*, it is presented as a collaborative work, by employees of the FHAO as well as support from other Holocaust scholars, and other interdisciplinary scholars.

Thus, the book is understood as a *product of the FHAO*, i.e. *the organization – Facing History and Ourselves*. It is made in the image of the FHAOs ideology, world-view, i.e. what is important to fight against in order to achieve/protect and develop a democracy in the 21. Century.

Since this research focuses on content and pedagogical implications in the selected textbook-resources, the national-cultural implication, i.e. the American content in which the FHAO bases itself on, will not be important in this study, i.e. the theme by Peter Novick argues in *The Holocaust in American Life* (Novick, 2000) or the textbook studies by Bromley and Russel (Russel, 2010) and many others (Karayianni, 2018).

The FHAO started in Boston, Massachusetts in the late 1970s and have evolved to become an organization that work across the globe in Northern Ireland, China and South Africa – they use the study of past genocides to help students, and instructing teachers, to make essential connection between history and moral choices which they meet in their own present life. Connecting the radical with the ordinary (Sara A. Levy, 2018, p. 376).

They also have placed *staff members* in various locations across North America; nine locations, from Chicago, Cleveland, and Memphis, to London, Los Angeles, New England, New York, Toronto, and the San Francisco Bay Area.¹

They define themselves as an *nonprofit international educational and professional development organization*, *ibid.* And get free funding from *The Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation* – a family foundation that has funded organization of different purposes and goals since the 1970's in Boston;

The Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation is committed to effecting permanent positive change in the lives of the residents of Greater Boston, particularly individuals and families in economically disadvantaged communities. Today, three generations of the Smith family oversee the Foundation, stewarding approximately \$14 million annually in grants aimed at promoting greater health, educational attainment, and economic mobility.

Based on the *dedication* in the printed/pdf version of the book *Holocaust and Human Behavior, 2017* – the foundation has been with the FHAO around its origin in Boston:

“Richard and Susan have been staunch supporters and friends of Facing History for almost 40 years. Their foresight in funding the revision means that we will embrace twenty-first-century, cutting-edge educational technology and the newest teaching strategies that better engage students. This project increases our effectiveness and expands our virtual reach to educators in almost every country of the globe.”

– Roger Brooks, President and Chief Executive Officer, (FHAO, 2017, p. 3).

The FHAO doesn't only advice in teaching-materials or organize resources and literature. They also advice teachers in different communities, giving *programmes* in which the device details of the curriculum together with the teachers. But the usual material in which they students and teachers use – is the selected and produced material from the FHAO;

The detailed curriculum of each FHAO course is fashioned by individual teachers and FHAO staff, but includes class discussions about readings from the *Facing History and Ourselves Resource Book: Holocaust and human behavior*² with FHAO study guides, guest speakers - e.g. Nazi

¹ Facing History and Ourselves.org – About us.

² They refer to the second edition of 1994

Holocaust, Cambodian and Armenian survivors, literature and journal writing about issues of power, morality, justice and caring for others, (Schultz, Barr, & Selman, 2001, p. 5).

FHAO is not exactly like the USHM or the IHRA and Yad Vashem, who's main function is to make the remembrance of Holocaust public. Implying that in remembering the suffering of the victims, the event will not *repeat itself* (Sara A. Levy, 2018). But they want to develop the educational curriculum in communities, so that the community can strive and develop and store its democratic potential. In doing so, they use the Holocaust, and other genocides, as "historical examples", case-studies in which the teacher and students use to develop the set of skills, drawing parallels from bullying to mass-murder.

Though some critics might argue that relating the Holocaust experience with *student-experience*, or everyday moral problems and choices might be controversial, the goal of education of students are prioritized before *remembering* those that suffered. This gives the FHAO a more *pragmatic* approach to the Holocaust, using it to serve as a *case*.

*By studying the historical development of the Holocaust and other examples of genocide, students make the essential connection between history and the moral choices they confront in their own lives.*³

But what do the FHAO want to *fight* against, if their main goal is to develop the individual knowledge and democratic skills, so that the individuals – which are essential in defending and developing the democracy, who or what is the *enemy* of democracy?

In their close to four-minute long video-introduction⁴, they argue that all individuals have the possibility to be either *perpetrators*, *bystanders* or *upstanders*, all decided by *the choices* they make. FHAO refers thus, to *learning to make complex choices*.

By learning about the *history of complex choices* in genocidal events, civil uprisings – the FHAO seeks to *fight oppression*. In this slide they show six terms that can be referred to as *oppression; fascism, hate, racism, prejudice, sexism and antisemitism*.

To fight against these oppressions – which they argue can be witnessed in the world as it has become more *polarized* and *intolerant* - they seek to learn *civics*, which they argue is very rarely learned in schools. They use terms as

³ About us – Facinghistoryandourselves.org

⁴ <https://www.facinghistory.org/why-facing-history>

community, understanding, compassion, humanity and participate which in sum up will result in the central term – positioned on a globe in the middle of the screen – *a united world*.

In other words, the FHAO are not only defined as global educational organization because they have “stations” around the world, but they also envision their goal globally, by developing civics and learning/understanding about human choices they effect will be locally. When this has been reached long and far, the effect will soon be a more “united world”, echoing the global warming resistance slogan of *working local to effect global*.

The main regard is not democracy *per se* but a *pluralistic democracy*, the main enemy detected by the FHAO is oppression by minority groups, either based on sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion or ideology.

Their connotations to democracy and the use of history for this purpose, resonates the democracy that Barton and Levstik argues for in *Teaching history for the common good* (Barton & Levstik, 2004).

“From our perspective, history’s place in the curriculum must be justified in terms of its contribution to democratic citizenship— citizenship that is participatory, pluralist, and deliberative— and its practices must be structured to achieve that end”, (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 40).

Pluralistic because FHAO defines the oppressor in terms that reduced the pluralistic ideas, ethnicities and nationalities in a multi-cultural democracy. Participatory because they emphasize the learning of complex *choices*, and *choosing* to be either a *bystander, perpetrator or upstander* in their *community* – be it either school, local community or family community.

In the next section the *pedagogical idea and structure* in the textbook will be presented.

3.2 Textual resource collection; Holocaust and Human Behaviour

The book is structured around chapters and readings – one can follow what they call *the scope and sequence* model for reading – in bigger themes known as *Individual and Society, We and they, The Holocaust/history, judgement, legacy and memory, and Choosing to participate*;

The journey begins by examining common human behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes students can readily observe in their own lives. Students then

explore a historical case study, such as the Holocaust, and analyze how those patterns of human behavior may have influenced the choices individuals made in the past—to participate, stand by, or stand up—in the face of injustice and, eventually, mass murder⁵

Using the term *human behaviour* they refer to an universal causality for the unique event. Arguing that all good and evil acts are in practice human behaviour, that nothing unique behaviour caused the event – nothing non-human.

Categorizing individuals in groups like *bystander, upstander and perpetrator*, they refer to the actions taken in the past; to participate, stand by, or stand up. Either participating in oppression and murder of others, standing up to others or watching/standing by while others were murderer or harassed.

The FHAO promotes educational skills that are discussed by history didactics, arguing that these will be developed through the reading of their book in the process of *scope and sequence*.

Our scope and sequence promotes students' *historical understanding, critical thinking, empathy, and social-emotional learning – FHAO, our method*.

Though they promote both social-emotional learning, as well as critical thinking, this paper is only restricted to empathy and historical understanding. Barr (Barr, 2006) compares social emotional learning in FHAO classrooms with non-FHAO classrooms in America if the reader is interested in this skill. Critical thinking is assumed to be to periphery to this paper's original assignment, and thus is neglected.

3.3 Selection of readings

All the readings are chosen on the web-version of the book *Holocaust and Human Behaviour*⁶. There is no study-significance in relation to its *web-function and structure*, it was mainly chosen based on *manoeuvrability*.

The concepts of Holocaust and perpetrators are the principle for selected readings. The series of events presented in the book are many, most are only referred to as examples for larger themes in each chapters, for example in chapter 2; “we and they”, they refer to readings such as “Anti-Judaism before

⁵ Scope and Sequence - webpage

⁶ <https://www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-and-human-behavior>

the enlightenment”, “Expansion was everything” and “From religious prejudice to Anti-Semitism”.

Though they highlight important aspects that can be connected to the Holocaust, I found no related link between the ideas of antisemitism and perpetration in chapter 9. They seldom address the problem of antisemitism. In the examples above the perpetrators are not “humane” but “ideas” or “attitudes” – antisemitism is an abstract term that refers to the idea that Jews are lesser than humans and one can thus threaten them as one sees fit. Chapter 9 addressed the human aspect of perpetration, not ideas of the time. Arguably if this paper were to address the perspective of the victims and how they became victimized, the concept of antisemitism had to be addressed. And sadly, it is still an idea/attitude that still exists – as shown in the introduction. But for the perpetrators no one testifies a deep hatred against the Jews, as we commonly describe Hitler and his Jewish policy.

It is the human behaviour that becomes the main focus in chapter 9, the Holocaust. The reader is supposed to draw attention to common human behaviour that arguably made individuals choose to perpetrate. Anti-Semitism is no common human behaviour, but an idea that has evolved throughout history. It is historical, not universal.

“The accounts in this chapter force us to consider the full range of human behavior, the worst and the best that we are capable of as human beings. And the choices described in these accounts force us to think deeply about what leads one person and not another to do the right thing, regardless of the consequences. The accounts in this chapter also show the importance of honoring human dignity by showing us what can happen when it is taken away and what can be prevented when it is preserved,” FHAO – Introduction to Chapter 9.

In chapter 9, nine readings were chosen based on the presence of perpetrators. First defined in mass murderers, then in collaborators. Common between them is the action of perpetrating, doing something harmful against the victims, be it by gun or by pen.

The first readings focus on direct murder by shooting. The mass shootings of the Einsatzgruppen [Mobile killing units], and by the Reserve Police Battalion [Reserve Police Battalion]. The final of shootings, or direct murder is by a housewife [Proving oneself in the East].

Related to these is the reading [A Matter of Obedience] that inquires into the aspect of distance between perpetrator and victim through the experiment by Stanley Milgram.

The second part focuses on establishing the death camps and deportations. The [Wansee Conference] shows the meeting before the Final Solution. The reading [Establishing the killing centres] present the first death camp and the development of others. While [Auschwitz] presents the largest and most famous camp, and how the internals worked.

Two readings present long interviews by individual perpetrators/collaborators; [Special Train] and [A Commandants View] – both testify about their assignments and experience of collaborating with the NS.

While chapter 3-8 do present events before the mass shootings, it becomes increasingly difficult to investigate perpetrators. First, they take forms of rather abstract entities, like propaganda, antisemitism, Nazism or masses.

Secondly, I perceive them more like the *prelude* to the Holocaust. The events of the National Social Germany, the rise of it, were by no doubt important to what happened later. But to call the rise of Hitler as the beginning of the Holocaust is to give Hitler too much attention, falling into the critique that textbooks scholars and other Holocaust scholars argue, that Hitler were not the sole individual causality for the Holocaust. Arguably, by presenting these events as before the chapter called “The Holocaust”, the FHAO also shares this argument. Trying to connect the vast of causalities for perpetration in one single paper become too difficult at this point. Thus, this paper has taken a choice to only focus on events of human nature, were individuals can be related to and understanding through empathy can appear. One cannot empathize with Anti-Semitism, propaganda nor Nazism, because they are not human – only ideas.

In chapter 10 *Judgement and Justice* the readings were based on how they seek to explain perpetrator behaviour, i.e. understand perpetration. Example titles such as *obeying orders*, *technology of mass murder* and *dogma makes obedient ghosts*. Chapter 10 ends the story of Holocaust on the note of the Nuremburg Trial, while the rest seeks to explain how men moved on and the struggles in doing so, but also explaining why it could happen. Much of the story takes the perspective of those that judge, as the title suggests. Less readings can therefore be related to the perpetrators.

The selected readings here are [Technology of Mass Murder] which puts the engineers, scientists and doctors in the position of collaborators/perpetrators. Two engineers are presented through a short interview. Connecting the

crematoriums with the gas chamber. Here the aspect of technology becomes an important factor for establishing the effectiveness of the Final Solution.

In [Dogma Makes obedient ghosts] the author J. Bronowski is presented with his argument that arrogance and ignorance, i.e. dogma, made the Holocaust happened, as well as the Atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

These are presented because they present special arguments about why the perpetrating appeared, trying to explain why Holocaust could happened. In otherwords they construct an understanding of the Holocaust and perpetrating.

Chapter 11 and 12; Legacy and memory & Choosing to participate, the first relate to the memory of the event and how societies have acted to remember the event. Of course, the perpetrators of the Holocaust disappear here. Perpetration is not done for, but only in related events like the Armenian Genocide or Anti-Semitism in Poland. These become less relevant for understanding the perpetrators, their main focus I argue is to increase the sympathy with the victims, posing rhetorical questions as; “What are some of the consequences of the denial of the Armenian Genocide?” or “Why the authors of the petition believe that there is a moral necessity of remembering. Do you agree?” [Chapter 11, reading 14].

3.4 Conclusion

The FHAO, as argued, seeks to use history of Holocaust to develop a pluralistic democratic participatory, defending a multi-cultural world. It argues that human behaviour are the main causality for the Holocaust, but also address the concept of Anti-Semitism in many chapters. Though the Anti-Semitism are mostly referred to in relation to the Jewish Victims and their “memory”, the notion is almost non-existence as an explanatory factor in the close-inspections in chapter 9. Mainly because there is no testimonies that signals Jewish hatred, but common behaviour like cowardice or obedience.

The readings analysed in this paper are related to the concepts of perpetrators and Holocaust, one could add – historical understanding and empathy. The readings that promotes understanding and empathy are of primary importance in this study, not only if they do, but also how they do.

The Holocaust selects readings that refer to events of mass murder, while perpetrators are those that participate in this, on all levels. While many events and readings suggest perpetration, not all seeks to understand it – for example using it to increase sympathy. While other readings are not related to Holocaust at all.

4.0 Method

Here the method of selection of readings, and analytical tools will be presented. Using a qualitative approach to the resources, there has been a selection of readings that are assumed to have potential of developing a historical understanding of perpetrators, which will be discussed towards how this understanding might possible develop a resistance towards racial hatred, prejudice – or as Barton and Levstik argues, a participatory democracy.

4.1 Selection of readings and perpetrator only vs. victim-definition of perpetrators

The first phase was to find relevant readings/texts in the book *Holocaust and Human Behaviour*. There were no specific theories in this selection, only the concepts *perpetrator* and *Holocaust*. For perpetrator it had to be the act of participating in a way that supported the system of mass murder, not only direct murder.

To help in evaluating if the individuals were perpetrators, I used the same concepts that the FHAO asks the reader; “What role and responsibility” did [he] have?” By evaluating the role in the system of mass murder, and responsibility of murder as positive, they would be judged as *guilty*, if not by law, at least morally.

As argued in chapter 3, perpetrators are a vast category in the book, from policymakers, colonialism, propaganda and others become perpetrators. Therefore, the definition of Holocaust was as important as that of perpetrators. The definition of the Holocaust is mainly a systematic mass murder of six million European Jews, and other targeted groups⁷. *Those that act to support this system of murders are the perpetrators that are selected for analysis.*

4.2 Narrative analysis to distinguish the character-portrait and perpetrators types

Before analysing the pedagogical implications in the selected texts, one had to understand the content. It was essential to find patterns in the perpetrators type, again the concepts of *role and responsibility* became helpful. To find patterns of roles and responsibility.

⁷ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/holocaust>

Based on Lawson work on Holocaust historiography, it was assumed that there were more than one perpetrator type;

“Modern Holocaust historiography still wrestles with the perpetrators of the ‘Final Solution’ then. And although many historians still claim to have found the single key to the puzzle, it seems clear that there is no one ‘perpetrator type’ and thus no workable *single* explanation for their violence and their motivation. It is equally clear that it is not adequate simply to state that there are a number of easily separable perpetrator types. ‘Desk murderers’ could also be itinerant face-to-face killers just the same,” (Lawson, 2010, p. 225).

This plurality of roles, responsibility and explanations have to be charted before digging deeper into the textual quality and pedagogical implications.

A narrative analysis was helpful to distinguish the different characters and their roles. Chapter 9 has its own story about the Holocaust, for example the notion of antisemitism is almost not prevalent in this story, but it is in other chapters. While pre-chapters focus on the Nazis way to power in Germany and the racial-prejudice, hatred, use of propaganda, the background of the WWI, it is a different story than that of the Holocaust, which opens with a poem by Sonia Weitz rather than an historical prelude.

Thus, I found it functional to perceive the Holocaust and the perpetrators as its own story with its own characters. Narrative analysis is defined and used by reference to Wertsch in Morgan and Henning;

“Narrative form is taken to be a cultural tool for grasping together a set of events, settings, actors, motivation, etc. into a coherent whole in a particular way” ... all aspects of stories and conduct a basic narrative analysis... in order to understand story structures as the fundamental values and norms which underlie a story,” (Henning, 2013)

By analysing the narrative of chapter 9, this study could get an overview of the different characters, the events that make up for the Holocaust, the possible different motivations for perpetration and the different characters. This became the foundation which the study into the pedagogical implications of Holocaust perpetrators would rest upon.

4.3 Using the implied reader to establish – themes, knowledge and understanding

The goal of this paper is not to distinguish the factual knowledge presented by the author, if the information about the perpetrators are accurate or not. In the end, it wants to argue for why we should try to understand perpetrators as a supplement to deterring a Holocaust.

To discuss this potential learning, evidence must be presented, therefore the descriptive study. The implied reader will for three purposes; to establish themes in the contents, to identify knowledge about the perpetrator behaviour and understanding of the perpetrators.

Themes describe the contents attention constructed by the author, i.e. were the attention of the implied reader should be focused when reading.

“From a social semiotics perspective, signs are always "motivated by the sign-maker's interests". By way of this dimension the analyst tries to get to the bottom, or the subtext, of "the sign maker's interest," as identified by some of the clues in the text. For example, if a certain word is used in an overly repetitive manner, or if stories are broken up and separated into units to fit certain themes and arguments, or if images are extracted from their original context to illustrate a definable point of view, then such discourse markers can inform the analyst of the positioning of the authors to the subject matter and in turn to their readers,”(Henning, 2013).

The authors attention becomes threads for the implied reader to follow. First the story of perpetrators and Holocaust will be deconstructed to units of *themes and arguments* about perpetration and the Holocaust. While the first methods only referred to the construction of a singular story, in this section the study focuses on identifying and describing the units of the authors attention, if there are any similarities between them. The reason for doing this is to get an understanding of the authors understanding and prioritization of the Holocaust and the perpetrators. This is also part of the descriptive study of the textbook, important of later studying the potential learning that it inhabits.

All readings are accompanied by connection questions, referred to CQs henceforth. The interaction between content and CQs are referred to a knowledge. This interaction signifies the knowledge acquirement by the implied reader. The specific signs used for the implied reader to inquire into the content makes up for a reading experience that potentially constructs knowledge referred to Holocaust and perpetration.

Thus, not all CQs are of interest, some might focus on bystander aspects, some on critical thinking like the aspect of testimonies and the ethos in it. These

examples are of little concern in this paper, as it is the understanding of perpetration that it focuses on.

Mainly, what type of knowledge the implied reader is supposed to produce on why the Holocaust happened, i.e. why the perpetrators choose to act in support/collaboration to the system of mass murder, is of interest here.

By understanding, this study refers to the understanding of the individuals of the past attitudes, beliefs and actions – and understanding their actions, even when different than *ours*. In other words, it relates to the concept of empathy – *perspective taking*.

Though using the components of empathy presented by Barton and Levstik, the implied reader must also be part of this method. It is the implied readers understanding that will be discussed. By combining components of empathy and implied reader, it is suggested that not only do one present if empathy occurs, but also how it is constructed between the character and the reader.

Similar method have been used in perpetrator-literature, Pettitt argues that the *role of the reader* is to experience an empathic-relation with the perpetrator narratee (Pettitt, 2017);

“However, this initial instinctive response is problematised by the very nature of the narrative form, whose success relies on the realisation of meaningful, if not necessarily long-lasting, character/reader relationships. The imagination plays an essential role in these processes. Although I am reluctant to attribute to these processes easily identifiable real-world value, I would like to suggest that similar techniques are essential to our understanding of others, especially relating to the construction of empathy. That is because empathy, both in literature and in the real world, relies on the imagination: it is, in effect, a role-playing exercise in which we place ourselves in the role of the other,” (Pettitt, 2017, p. 134)

Unlike Pettitt’s study on Perpetrator literature, i.e. perpetrators writing literature or narratees that can be considered as perpetrators. The readings that are selected specifically for the purpose of empathic relation between implied reader and perpetrator, are of the format of interviews. They are historical primary sources, testimonies by perpetrators.

4.4 Design

The research design is three-phased, the first uses a narrative analysis to analysis what type of plot structure and underlying narrative template. The

purpose is to identify categories of perpetrators and their functions. The second is analysis of themes, the attention constructed by the author. The purpose is to gain insight of what the author prescribed significance about perpetrators and the Holocaust. The third is knowledge-analysis and focuses on the explanations of why the perpetrators participated. Finally, is the empathetic understanding, which analysis the “meeting” between the implied reader and the perpetrator through testimony-analysis and the components of empathy. Its purpose is to analysis the quality of the understanding that the implied reader can produce in perpetrator-testimonial engagement.

The last chapter discusses the restrictions and potentials of using perpetrators as subjects in Holocaust education. What can they contribute to, and what are their restrictions if the goal is to develop a democratic citizenship?

5.0 Findings

This section presents findings of types of perpetrators by conducting a narrative analysis of the selected readings in the book.

Using the concept of role and responsibility to examine the perpetrators, patterns are presented in *categories*. These have different purposes and are related to different explanations, producing a variation of knowledge.

First the two main functionalities are presented, then a narrative analysis is conducted to abstract the variations of perpetrator characters in the narrative. Such the reader can get an overview of what type of perpetrators the book represent before inquiring further.

5.1 The functional types of perpetrators

Two functional types can be abstracted, one functions only to describe the terror and cruelty of the event, used to exemplify the cruel and incomprehensible act of the past. They follow a discourse of *the abyssal event*. Incomprehensible for survivors, historians and others. It doesn't argue that the men were evil above men, but that the effect of the series of actions made a tremor in history.

The second functional category follows a discourse of human commonality. There was nothing dreadful or otherworldly about the perpetrators. They were ordinary and rather banal in the face of the evil described in the discourse of the abyss.

Underneath an overview of all the selected readings are presented in categories, the largest are the humanized category, while the second are examples of cruelty.

Humanized – The ordinary Soldiers

- “Reserve Police Battalion 101” *Reading 3 – Chapter 9*
- “A Matter of Obedience” *Reading 4 - Chapter 9*
- “Obeying Orders” *Reading 6 – Chapter 10*

- ***Humanized – the bureaucrats and contractors***
- “The Wannsee Conference” *Reading 6 – Chapter 9*
- “Establishing the Killing Centres” *Reading 6 – Chapter 9*
- “the “Special Train” *Reading 8 – Chapter 9*
- “A Commandants View” *Reading 11 – Chapter 9*
- “Technology of Murder” *Reading 7 Chapter 10*
- “Dogma Makes Obedient Slaves” *Reading 8 Chapter 10*

- ***The Perpetrators as examples of Cruelty***
- “Mobile killing units” *reading 2 – Chapter 9*
- “Proving oneself in the East” *Reading 5 – Chapter 9*
- “Auschwitz” *Reading 9 – Chapter 9*

The main question we ask in this analysis-section is *what does the narrative suggest* about perpetrators and the Holocaust? It brings both the underlying narrative template; *to understand the story structure as the fundamental values and norms which underlie a story* [Henning and Morgan], as well as categorization of characters. Identifying the underlying story, helps in establishing patterns in perpetrator types, the characters.

The main finding of narrative analysis is that the book tells the story of mass murder and how it evolves. It is a history of evolution of mass murder by modernity. Holocaust can have many forms, for example it can tell the evolution of antisemitism – from Roma to Holocaust. It can tell the story of the suffering Jews, of human decadence and self-destruction etc. Though one can find aspects of these stories in the book, in chapter 9, they focus on telling the story of mass murdering, from the hunting and mass shootings to the new gas chambers in death camps.

These new methods of murder made new perpetrators. Having different roles and responsibilities than those that participated in mass shootings. It is in this context that the perpetrator individuals are categorized.

“The readings in this chapter [9] show the evolution of Nazi methods of mass murder, and they rely on the troubling and provocative testimony of many who witnessed or were targeted by those methods. These stories reveal a range of human behavior in response to the Holocaust. The Nazis persuaded or forced thousands to participate in the mass murder of millions of people. Many others participated willingly; they did not need to be persuaded. This chapter includes the testimonies of people who murdered as members of mobile killing units, coordinated trains to transport victims to their deaths in death camps, and, as Jewish prisoners in the camps, were forced to help operate the gas chambers,”
Introduction, Chapter 9.

5.2.1 The origin of the massacres

In *Mobile Killing units*, the author proceeds from the *intense war for “race and space” in 1941*, explaining the invasion of the Soviet Union. This is not the beginning of a story about the military actions in occupation of the Soviet Union, but the beginning of the what later would evolve into systematic elimination of primarily the Jewish population of Europe. What scholars much later would call *The Holocaust*.

The Einsatzgruppen’s objective is presented as; to *execute Communist officials, Jews employed by the Soviet government, and “other radical elements*, is transformed to *massacring*, i.e. war criminal acts. The author quickly presents the truth of the endeavour;

Historian Richard Evans notes that despite these official instructions, “German forces treated all Jewish men as Communists, partisans, saboteurs, looters, dangerous members of the intelligentsia, or merely ‘suspicious elements’, and acted accordingly.”

By late July, mass murders by Einsatzgruppen had expanded to include thousands of Jewish women and children.

The rest of the account is used to describe just *how* the Einsatzgruppen massacres the Jews of Poland and Lithuania.

This type of murder continues in the next reading, *Reserve Police Battalion 101*, referring to Browning’s work. The setting is not different, we are still in the *mass shootings* in Eastern Europe, more precisely the date is July 13, 1942, a year after the Einsatzgruppen were deployed in the East.

The setting and objective are the same, murder as many Jews as possible, only the characters are different, they are not the SS, the special Nazi-elite troop, but the reserve police battalion, ordinary police officers who were deployed in the east not to protect but to massacre. This account is also about mass shootings but focuses on how the men experienced it. Opening with the special case of Mayor Trapp, ending with testimonies by some of the men and Browning's own argument for why participation occurred.

Drawing on this incident the author presents the Milgram experiment [A Matter of Obedience] to try to understand *why do people follow orders* when it is their mission to inflict pain and hurt on others? By using the Milgram-experiment they conclude that psychical and emotional distance makes it easier to obey orders – when the orders harm victims. But ends in conclusion that not all aspects of perpetrator-behaviour can be explained by this theory. The implied reader is confronted with other questions and introduction to other perpetrators;

Milgram's experiments provide insights that help us understand the choices and motivations of many who participated in the Nazi programs of persecution and mass murder. But many historians and social scientists who have studied the Holocaust say that Milgram's work does not fully explain the behavior of perpetrators in the Holocaust. While many acted in response to orders from authority figures, some perpetrators chose to go beyond the orders they were given. Others chose to act out of their own hatred or for their own material gain without being asked to do so. Even within the German government and military, leaders and bureaucrats took initiative and devised creative methods to achieve larger goals, not in response to orders but [to] "work toward the Führer", A Matter of Obedience.

By building the story towards *beyond order*, they present the singular event in "Proving oneself in the East", were Erna Petri, the SS housewife decides to murder six children. When confronted she explains she wanted to liberate herself from her "weaker" position of her sex. This thought resulted in murder of children.

Here case lacks the order context that the previous readings presented. Only free will and choice can be advocated. She did it because she saw it righteous to do so, i.e. she did not perceive it as wrong. And in the end, it would help her reach equality between the men in the community. She would gain respect.

This is the last reading that present event in which mass shootings or shooting in general took place. Were we meet the individuals *behind the gun*. All murders

henceforth are not *traditional*, if one can use such as word, but becomes more *sophisticated*. People could be responsible for mass murder without ever placing a foot at the killing sites. Through a simple contract one could condemn thousand of innocent children, women and men to their death. A new system of mass murder takes form. It starts in Wannsee.

5.2.2 The Evolution of Massacres

From the conference-room in Wannsee, the beginning of the Final Solution is organized. Importantly to notice is that the author stresses that the main decision makers, those that decided to murder the Jews, were not attendant at the conference. Neither are they throughout this chapter. Historical figures like Hitler, Himmler, Göring only occur sporadically. This is not the story about the higher-ups, but those that made their decisions into reality.

In January 1942, German officials, including representatives from the SS [the Nazis' elite guard], the Einsatzgruppen, the Justice Ministry, the Office of the Governor General of Poland, and the Foreign Office, met in a lakeside neighbourhood of Berlin called Wannsee. They had come to discuss the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question." The highest-ranking German leaders—Hitler, Heinrich Himmler, Hermann Göring, and Joseph Goebbels—did not attend. Himmler's deputy, Reinhard Heydrich, led the meeting.

Though the decision to murder the Jews are debated on, the author writes, the coordination began here, it is in this room the details of the *mass elimination* were sketched. The author present argues that these men never had any doubt about what took place. Everyone knew what they were planning and who it would affect. No moral discussion took place, no objection. The author also presents information that Eichmann had to re-write the stenography, because of the *blunt words* exchanged.

No one at the conference objected to the policy and practice of annihilation, although it was presented openly, starting with the announcement that Estonia was now "free of Jews." Instead participants spent their time on practical matters, above all on who would be included in the category of Jews to be "evacuated to the East" for killing... *This was the bureaucratic face of genocide, people's lives and deaths reduced to categories and lists.*

The result of the talks was devastating;

“As these fifteen men gathered at Wannsee, four of five Jews who were to be murdered in the Holocaust were still alive; fifteen months later in the spring of 1943, four of five were already dead.”

These men were practical men that found “logical and creative means” that “went beyond orders”, solely doing so to *please the führer*. The reading presents a new way of effective murder. *This was the bureaucratic face of genocide.*

In *Establishing the Killing Centres* the *rationality* behind the system is revealed. Though it isn't apparent in the reading on the Einsatzgruppen [Mobile Killing Units], the author chooses to present the guilt of participating in mass-shootings here;

After watching the murders of 100 Jews by his unit in fall 1941, an Einsatzgruppen commander said to Heinrich Himmler, the head of the SS, “Look at the eyes of the men in this *Kommando*, how deeply shaken they are! These men are finished for the rest of their lives. What kind of followers are we training here? Either neurotics or savages!”

The mass murder of Jews by shooting had begun to have a strong psychological effect on many of the men who did the shooting. Some of these men called that effect *Seelenbelastung*, a “burdening of the soul.” It threatened the soldiers' morale and undermined their effectiveness.

In the words of Himmler neither soul nor morale is dedicated to the science of ethics and morality. It is a question of morale and effectiveness, burdens to the effectiveness of programme of killing Jews and others. This problem for Himmler, was not the problem that they became neurotics, but that they would not be able to reach the threshold that Hitler wanted to reach. Zero Jews in Europe.

Notice that by presenting information of the *burden of the soul* by the soldiers here, in the context of making new methods of murder. The author solves the problem of sympathizing the perpetrators. If the suffering of victims were combined with the sympathy of perpetrators, there would be a conflict for the reader. Showing the burden here is only to deliver the problem of not having the effective methods and tools to reach the goal of the Final Solution.

The solution was mending technology to distance the soul from the being burden by perpetration. By using the poisonous gas experiments and the gas vans, they *create physical distance between the perpetrators and the victims.*

The vans are replaced by camps, first concentration camp and gas chambers, Chelmno in Poland is established in December 7, 1941. From here, since 1942 – after the conference – a network of camps sprout a part of the

operation called “Reinhard”. From 1942 to 1943 we see the emergence a new type of camp, the death camps, these had only one objective, to kill as many non-Germans and Jews as possible.

Only a few people are known to have survived Belzec and Chelmno. Fewer than 70 lived through Treblinka, and about the same number survived Sobibór before the four camps were closed in 1943. By then the vast majority of the Jews of Poland were dead.

The citation presents just how effective the mass murdering were when the burden of the soul were solved. While the red dots on the map illustrate the vastness of death camps east of German.

Before engaging in the iconic Auschwitz camp, we meet the bureaucrat, Walter Stier in *Special Trains*⁸. From the summer of 1942, the author writes, the identification and deportation became intensified. To be deport the hundred thousand of Jews meant that transportation and transport costs had to be orgainzed. This is where Stier had his role. To draft an agreement of transportation and costs across Europe to Sobibor, Treblinka and Auschwitz. As the man himself testifies, he was no murderer, he never visited the camps. He was *strictly a bureaucrat*.

5.2.3 The Terror of the New massacre

The final face of this development is focused in the reading called *Auschwitz*. The iconic camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau II, the largest death camp constructed by the Nazis.

Here we are presented to the *industrial killing methods of the Nazis*, different from the *mass shootings* by the Einsatzgruppen and the Reserve Police Battalion 101. Though some of the external processes of mass murder has been described, as well as parts of the early phases. It is here the author describes in detail the internal workings of the camp, from train-arrival to the crematoriums.

The process of selection of death and survival are highlighted, women with children not fit for labour were immediately gassed, while some were randomly selected to serve as *Sonderkommando*, only to be murdered at later point. The flow of the murder was in phases, collected the clothing, send them into the gas chamber, kill through poison and transport the corpses to the crematorium and through-out the ashes. The process highlighted as *industrial killing methods*.

⁸ The interview is a shorter version in text from Lanzmanns Shoah (1998).

The author doesn't present neither individual victims nor perpetrators. It is the system itself that becomes the perpetrator. By reading the details of the internal process, the men working at the camp are only presented when doing specific tasks. Herding, collecting, opening, throwing gas, shouting. It is their actions that are imagined, what they feel or think about the action, the reader can only imagine himself.

But in the next reading we meet one of the commandants, Franz Stahl in "*A Commandant's View*". This man is close to being sympathetic as he chokes on his words in the moment of remembering. The original text is from an interview done by Gitta Sereny in 1971, before his death-sentence was initiated.

The interview-section selected by the author introduces Franz when he tells Gitta asks him; if he got used to the liquidations, if there were moments of guilt, and if it were true that he stopped seeing them as human beings. Franz confirms them all. He got used to it, he did sometimes fail to keep the affection suppressed – resulting in drinking habits. And in the end, he started seeing them as cargo.

He concludes that there was nothing for him to do. He couldn't neglect his responsibility no matter what. The system worked, as he says, and because it worked there were no going back.

5.2.4 Conclusion

"schematic narrative template" to show that there are also categories of stories with socially constructed frames. Such templates involve "generalized plot structures that underlie a range of specific stories," Henning & Morgan 2013.

The plot focuses on evolution of mass murder, from mass shootings to gas chambers. Underlying is stories of different individuals and situations that present the aspect of increased distance for increased effect. The system of mass shootings wouldn't be sustainable if the goal were to murder six million Jews. Himmler says, referring to the participants in mass-shootings, "these men are ruined for life", what the author names *the burden of the soul*. What we call the Holocaust, the systematic murder of six million Jews and other groups, was accomplished because of the increased distance, using bureaucracy and technology, between perpetrators and victims.

In effect, it made new type of perpetrators, desktop-killers like Stahl and Stier. The accomplishment of the Final Solution began at a conference. Between few men that worked towards a practical, and inhumane goal, elimination of

European Jews. It was a task for bureaucrats, though their attitudes reveal a cynical perception on their victims.

Analysing the narrative and the characters in the plot structure, categories of perpetrator-types appear, the humanized and the demonized. A more in-depth analysis, presentation of examples can be found in chapter 6.1.

The two types of humanized perpetrators are placed in different settings. The bureaucrat and the technicians work for the government, they make initiative to “work for the Führer”. Though they argue at times that they would be liquidated themselves, the author presents it as a factual knowledge that no historians have ever found any evidence of this being true [Obeying Orders, chapter 10]⁹. They are not motivated by order or fear of disobedience, but responsibility.. They had important positions in making the Final Solution possible and argue that this made it imperative that they did their job. Even if it meant that they participated in genocide.

The soldiers in “the Reserve Police Battalion 101”, were not physically distanced from their victims nor hardcore Nazis, but regular police officers. Their role and situation in the mass murder are quite different from the bureaucrats. Their role is to obey orders, as soldiers do. While the bureaucrats must be self-efficient in managing their tasks; tactful, efficient, “creative”, organized and structured.

The demonized types functions to describe the terror of the massacre. These texts, the exception being Erna Petri, do not present perpetrator-testimony. The reading cannot seek to understand the perpetrators actions, situation, thoughts or feelings at the time. Only the actions itself speaks for the individuals; the murdering described them as murderers. The inhumane methods of murder make them *inhumane*.

The texts describe the act of murder, the two differences being the Mobile killing Units and the Auschwitz reading. Both describe in detail the murder of victims using an “objective-lens”, i.e. neither perpetrator nor victim testimony, the Sonderkommando and a witness/collector of clothes. The gruesomeness is the same but the quality of it are different.

⁹ Here the FHAO cites from Doris Bergens work on testimonies and historical sources. Of course, many used this argument in the Nuremburg Law, but they never managed to dig up any evidence for this argument. This is also a shared fact by Holocaust-scholars, for example the Holocaust education department at the UCL. Who states this understanding by students – the they would be either murdered or sent to labour camps, as a misunderstood fact, or myth.

They occur as incomprehensible, which is their purpose, to exemplify the challenge of the Holocaust that even historians and other scholars¹⁰ struggle with.

6.1 Attention constructed by the author – the themes of different types of perpetrators and the Holocaust.

This section will analyse themes in the selected perpetrators-texts, when discussing *themes* or the *attention given by author to the implied reader*.

By way of this dimension the analyst tries to get to the bottom, or the subtext, of the sign makers interest, as identified by some of the clues in the text, (Henning, 2013)

In this chapter, four themes will be presented, each related to each type of perpetrator, these will later be investigated in relation to knowledge development for the implied reader.

Here there will be an analysis of the clues in the texts in relation to the theory of implied reader, i.e. the authors intent with these textual “meaning-makers”, signs and language. The four types of perpetrators are 1) the cruelty, 2) A Matter of Obedience, 3) Working for a greater Evil and 4) Technology Matters.

6.1.1 The Perpetrators as examples of cruelty

In chapter 5 I already touched upon the functionality of some of the readings, including *Mobile Killing Units*, *Proving oneself in the East* and *Auschwitz*.

If one reads chapter 9, the first reading is called *take this giant leap*, promoting the poem by Sonia Weitz. Cruelty and lack of understanding is an important theme for Weitz and similarly, these readings follow the same focus.

Come, take this giant leap with me
into the other world . . . the other place
and trace the eclipse of humanity . . .
where children burned while mankind stood by
and the universe has yet to learn why
. . . has yet to learn why”, *Take This Giant Leap, reading 1, chapter 9*.

¹⁰ In Auschwitz they write; As historians and survivors have struggled to describe and understand the nature of death camps like Auschwitz, they have also emphasized the near impossibility of conveying what it was like to people who were not there.

In some way, reading 2 “Mobile Killing Units”, exemplifies the argument that Weitz puts forth in her poem. Inviting the reader into an other place, where humanity is hard to find and people just watched as children were burned.

In this section I will argue that the author uses these events to focus attention on the cruelty and *incomprehensibility* of the Holocaust. Producing an implied reader that questions why people manage to participate in what can be perceived as *evil acts*. As they question the reader in *Proving oneself in the East, Auschwitz and Mobile killings units*.

- Accounts like those excerpted here are disturbing and painful to read. They prompt us to ask many questions, some of which may be unanswerable. What questions do these accounts raise for you about history and human behavior?

These are questions that philosophers, historians and religious leaders struggled with after the war. The similar curiosity or insight wants to be projected to the implied reader.

The *Mobile Killing Units* and *Auschwitz* use similar language when describing murder. It is the *process* of murder that are described, using *witness-testimony* together with the author’s narratee as a *commentator*. Both of these readings use the symbol of innocence of war; women and children to refer to murder in war: “... include thousands of Jewish women and children”.

The reading *Auschwitz* exemplifies the suffering victims by image;



The cruelty lies not only in the murder of these subjects, but also that they had no idea of what they were standing in line for. As the picture shows, these women and children are not despairing, crying or begging. Because they didn't know that they were going to be murdered.

“... selection,” in which a Nazi doctor or other official would quickly decide which prisoners could serve as slave laborers and which would be killed right away. Small children and women with children were not considered for labor and automatically selected to be killed. Those not selected for labor were told that they would first undress and go into a special room for a shower and disinfection, after which they would be given food and new clothing. In reality, the shower rooms were gas chambers,” *Auschwitz*.

In this section, the language of the author isn't emotional it explains plainly what the procedure when arriving. Nothing seems out of the ordinary, they are selected for labour, giving new clothing, shower and disinfection. But this is only what the victims were told, as the author reveals in the end; in reality, they walked into an execution ground. The same method is used in “Mobile Killing Units”;

“Nobody suspected the bitter fate that awaited them. They thought that they were being moved to other apartments,” *Mobile Killing Units*.

The unknowingness brings an extra layer on the cruelty. At the same time the implied reader will be expecting some form of violence, harm in what follows.

But the description doesn't stop here, though the much of the arrival process has already been covered. It is by testimony of the Sonderkommandos in Auschwitz, and by Doctor Kutorgene and a transporter in Mobile Killing Units, that the implied reader can experience the camp as a witness.

“[There] was a rumor that at the Ninth Fort . . . prisoners had been digging deep ditches, and when the people were taken there, it was already clear to everybody that this was death. They broke out crying, wailed, screamed. Some tried to escape on the way there but they were shot dead... At the Fort the condemned were stripped of their clothes, and in groups of 300 they were forced into the ditches. First, they threw in the children. The women were shot at the edge of the ditch, after that it was the turn of the men... All the men doing the shooting were drunk. I was told all this by an acquaintance who heard it from a German soldier, an eyewitness, who wrote to his Catholic wife: “Yesterday I became convinced that there is no God. If there were, He would not allow such things to happen...”

“They made each victim lie down on the corpses, so that the machine gunner could shoot while he walked by. When victims descended into the ravine and saw this terrible scene at the last moment, they let out a cry of terror. But they were grabbed by the waiting [police] right away and hurled down onto the others”, *Mobile Killing Units*.

“Those who hadn't gone in yet began to shout. The Germans responded with murderous beatings. The people were already naked and defenceless, so they were pushed in by force.... The moment the gas chamber filled up the SS man closed the door. Right after that, SS men drove over in a car that carried the emblem of the Red Cross. The cans of gas were taken out of the car, opened, and their contents were thrown into the gas chambers through the opening of the wall... Some time later, the SS doctor determined the death of the people in the chamber by saying “It's all over.” Then he drove away in the “Red Cross” car,” *Auschwitz*.

What is to be expected when unknowingly walking into a death site is first the outburst of fear. The defencelessness is symbolized in their nakedness. Both events present victims naked, like a baby is born naked he needs parents to defend him. The same can be said about the cry, a cry of terror the witness says in *Mobile Killing Units*. Much of the cruelty lies in the terror and fear that the

victims had to feel, partly because they knew in the moment that they were defenceless against the perpetrators.

By imagining the fear and terror of the victim the implied reader will glimpse into the cruelty of the Holocaust. This makes up for describing the *murder*. The author doesn't leave out the *masses*. In both cases, and what is shocking about the Holocaust, is the degree they repeated these murders.

“Some have said that the system of killing there resembled an industrial production line, but at Auschwitz, the goal of the process was not the production of goods but the deaths of millions of people,” *Auschwitz*.

“The German executioners reported to officials in Berlin that they had “liquidated”—murdered—33,771 children, women, and men at Babi Yar in two days - September 29 and 30, 1941. In the months that followed, the Germans killed thousands more there, including not only Jews but also Roma, Communists, and Soviet prisoners of war. The total number buried there will never be known, but estimates range as high as 100,000,” *Mobile killing Units*.

It is not possible for the implied reader to imagine these scenes a million times, and maybe it is this mental restriction that makes the Holocaust seem incomprehensible.

As suggested in findings these two events present two different forms of mass murder. The signs relate to murder are different, though they use some of the common methods to install terror on the implied reader, the rinse and repeat and the defencelessness.

In the events of the *Mobile killing Units*, the victims aren't just shot, they are first forced into so called *ditches* or *pits*, were they are *thrown* into, alive, onto corpses of fellow local neighbours, family members, husbands, wives. The idea of being crushed by the dead, buried alive, or seeing your loved once dead before dying should be a terrific image for most readers.

In the reading individual victims are not presented through testimony, by describing it “objective”, and adding the numbers of dead, it presents itself as “ordinary”. It wasn't one Jew that experienced this cruelty, it was many.

This is presented by using the image of the Last Jew in Kursovno, the site of the first testimony. Suggesting that the man is the last of all in the area. That the scenes unfolded have been repeated many times before this picture were taken. This man is not named, neither is his story told. Crouching defenceless before

the pit of the many victims before him, he is the last of the Jews. The perpetrators standing ready to fire his last shot. While the others pose and watch, ghostly in the background.



The image of the pit with the dead is a, I would argue, traditional image. It's an old practice in war, after a battle one collects the corpses in pits and burn them. The process in this case is reverse because unlike in war the enemies in the mass-shootings were not armed and couldn't defend themselves. Instead of collecting corpses, the SS men made the corpses walk to their own graves.

The process of Auschwitz was different than the old reversed practice of the mass-shootings. Herding took place, defencelessness is still a theme, but the process draws on the tropes of industrial production. A step by step, controlled environment of producing corpses and easily getting rid of them.

This factory of death is like any factory as the Sonderkommando witness comments on;

Next to the corner of the undressing hall and the gas chamber, there were two floors—the furnaces downstairs and the living quarters [for the Sonderkommando] upstairs. A tall chimney, at least twenty meters high, rose from the roof of the building. The smoke billowed through it. . . .

[The building] looked like an ordinary factory. There was nothing unusual about it. A simple building.

The use of signs and the quickness of the narrative constructs an uneasiness based on the easiness of the murder-process;

The people walked into the room and once they were all inside they began to undress. . . . From the undressing room the people went down a narrow corridor to the gas chamber. At the entrance, there was a sign: "To the Disinfection Room." . . . [T]he men waited naked until the women were in the gas chamber, and then they went in. . . . When a large transport with lots of people came, the people were beaten to force them to enter the room. . . . Only when they were already in the gas chamber did they sense that something was out of whack. When the gas chamber filled up, the Germans stood at the door with dogs and continued to pack the people in so that more than were already inside could be gassed. Those who hadn't gone in yet began to shout. The Germans responded with murderous beatings. The people were already naked and defenseless, so they were pushed in by force. . . . The moment the gas chamber filled up the SS man closed the door. Right after that, SS men drove over in a car that carried the emblem of the Red Cross. The cans of gas were taken out of the car, opened, and their contents were thrown into the gas chambers through the opening of the wall. . . . Some time later, the SS doctor determined the death of the people in the chamber by saying "It's all over." Then he drove away in the "Red Cross" car.

At this point in the text the implied reader will know of what took place in "the Disinfection room". But the victims are ignorant to this fact and walks straight towards it. The commonly used phrase used in expressing these events is "Sheeps to the Slaughter", as they had no idea of what they walk into. The implied reader will desire at this point for some form of interruption, but the narratee just keeps going.

The actual murder goes by in a glimpse. The car arrives with gas, and after throwing it in, the SS doctor almost comments the reading; "it's all over". With no expression described, no comment from the narratee, the perpetrators, it simply is all over. Such a cruel act is finalized without any form of commentary. Because of the simple methods and attitude of the horror, it comes forth as incomprehensible.

This reading forces the implied reader into a state of paralysis, the immense and quick-presented information triggers the imagination, but the answer to why something horrendous is unanswered, uncommented.

The neutrality in the language is important because of the difference in who uses it. The narratee in this description is not the FHAO-author, nor an historian, but an actual witness. It supplements the effect of paralysation because the reader will expect some sort of commentary on the horror that the witness experienced. For some reason this expectation is not met. The title of the collection of testimony is accurately called *we wept without tears*, which can explain just why this language is adopted.

Proving oneself in the East, though it's textual and narrative quality is quite different, it arguably focuses attention on the same aspect – *The Holocaust* as *incomprehensible* and *horrific*. It constructs an analogy with the frontier myth – the wild west.

“In the Nazi imagination,” writes historian Wendy Lower, “the eastern *Lebensraum*, an Aryan living space abroad, was a frontier where anything was possible—a place where mass-murder factories could be constructed alongside utopian German-only colonies.” It was a place, she continues, where “ethnic Germans appeared in Nazi photographs in wagon trains while . . . SS policemen crossed the plains straddling motorcycles like cowboys astride horses.”

Those images had a profound influence on Germans who settled in the “Wild East.” Among them was Erna Petri, who came east, like many other women, with her husband and their two young children. On a summer day in 1943, she noticed six Jewish children crouched along the side of a road. She realized that they had probably jumped out of one of the many boxcars transporting Jews to “the East.”

The author suggests that like the Frontier, the Wild East, were a place where *anything were possible*. Referring to how in the wild west people could pursue equality, justice, land and freedom. But the author doesn't suggest these aspects in the Wild East – they refer to *anything possible* in relation to *mass murder* – factories along utopian colonies. In this setting the implied reader is introduced to *Erna Petri – who came east, like many other women, with her husband and their two young children*. She is presented as a traditional German Housewife.

The narrative is slower than the previous ones, and the murder is barely mentioned;

The children were terrified and hungry. Petri . . . calmed them and gained their trust by bringing them food from her kitchen. All Jews who were roaming the countryside were supposed to be captured and shot; she understood that. Horst [her husband] was not at home at the time. She waited, but Horst did not return, so she decided to shoot

the six children herself. She led them to the same pit in the woods where other Jews had been shot and buried. She brought a pistol with her, one that her father had kept from World War I and given to her as a parting gift as she left for the “wild east” of Ukraine.

Petri killed the six children. Lower continues,

Erna was alone when she committed this crime, but she was far from alone at the estate. Besides her husband, her two small children lived at Grzenda... Her mother-in-law and an uncle were visiting . . . and in addition she was surrounded by peasants working the fields. The best view of the area was from the hilltop villa’s second-floor balcony, where Erna . . . served [coffee and cake] to Horst’s colleagues in the military and the SS and police. While pouring coffee Erna had overheard the men speaking about the mass shootings of Jews. She had learned that the most effective way to kill was a single shot to the back of the neck. When she led those children to the mass grave on the estate, she knew exactly what to do.

The turn of events is the spontaneous choice to murder the children. So far, the implied reader will be shocked by this turn of events, because the context and situation presented is quite different from the earlier killing-site. There are no specific signs to signals the sudden decision to murder the Jewish children.

But this singular event is not left unexplained like the others, the narratee explains not only how she learned to shoot the children, but also her reason for deciding.

Erna waits for her husband, and the narrate suggest that since *he didn’t return*, Erna decided to shoot the children herself, i.e. instead of waiting for her husband to do it. Not only does she shoot them, but she also uses her father gun, from WWI – a memento from her father, and the previous war.

The narratee ignore the fact that she murders the children. Instead she starts presenting signs for a bourgeois environment; the villa, the best view, pouring coffee, the estate and the peasants working the field. Though this setting could be taken from a Jane Austin novel, in the wild east nothing is as it seems. There is a strangeness present in the text. The implied reader is supposed to be insecure, the analogy between the frontier and Nazis foreshadow the unexpected, kind of like the factory look of Auschwitz.

So far, there is no information of *why*, a *normal* German housewife with two children, suddenly decides to murder six Jewish children. The explanation presented is challenging for the implied reader to fathom.

Petri later tried to explain her behaviour:

In those times, as I carried out the shootings, I was barely 23 years old, still young and inexperienced. I lived among men who were in the SS [the Nazi elite guard] and carried out shootings of Jewish persons. I seldom came into contact with other women, so that in the course of this time I became more hardened, desensitized. I did not want to stand behind the SS men. I wanted to show them that I, as a woman, could conduct myself like a man. So, I shot 4 Jews and 6 Jewish children. I wanted to prove myself to the men. Besides, in those days in this region, everywhere one heard that Jewish persons and children were being shot, which also caused me to kill them,” *Proving oneself in the East, chapter 9.*

The author words it as *she tried to explain*, meaning that either she herself wasn't quite sure why she did it – later not able to understand why, or the author posit it as if the readers is not expected to truly understand her behaviour. We can only try, but not be sure about her experience. This is also emphasized in CQ 2;

How does Erna Petri try to explain her behaviour? How do you think it can be explained?

The murder is, from her explanation, motivated by equality. Her community is male-dominant. She wanted to prove herself to the men, she says, not wanting to stand behind them. She wanted to be hard and desensitized like them, to be *masculine* not *feminine*. To show this it had to be by murder, she implicitly concludes.

Analysing her use of wording suggests that even though she might not *have* the answer to her behaviour, she is perceptive of her past, the settings and her position in the community. Petri is not neurotic, nor does she present any signs of being disturbed, but at the same time she shows no significant signs that reveal any form of remorse.

Later she expands her explanation;

“I am unable to grasp at this time how in those days that I was in such a state as to conduct myself so brutally and reprehensibly—shooting Jewish children. However earlier [before arriving in Ukraine] I had been so conditioned to . . . the racial laws, which established a view toward the Jewish people. As was told to me, I had to destroy the Jews. It was from this mindset that I came to commit such a brutal act,” *ibid.*

Her environment at the time, with racial laws, which can be read about in chapter 7-8 in the book, have assumedly made it reasonable for her to truly believe that it was justifiable to murder Jews. She calls it a brutal act; some sort

of remorse might be found here. At the same time, she says she was told *she had to destroy the Jews*. This is a singular event, the soldiers and the officers, the SS men had missions to eliminate Jews – they had to, because it was their role. Petri didn't have to. She had no role in the elimination. When finding the children, she had more than one choice, she could leave them, she could hide them, but she chose to kill them. As the story tells, she found them alone on the road.

While *Mobile Killing Units* and *Auschwitz* doesn't present explanations by the individuals, "*Proving oneself in the East*" does, but only to show how it makes no sense for the implied reader even though it is presented. The explanation itself doesn't make sense.

As Holocaust scholars and studies have a common understanding of the event, is that it is a paradox that even though the information is increasing about the Holocaust, it does not mean that our understanding of it do. As Stone writes, there has been a

“It has for some time been a common trope of Holocaust studies to suggest that, despite the continual increase in factual knowledge, there has not been a corresponding increase in understanding”, (Stone, 2003, p. 183).

The FHAO wants to exemplify this, suggesting that even with explanations like Erna Petri's, there is not guarantee of *total understanding*. Sometimes questions arise more often than the answers.

Conclusion

This section has argued for the theme of *Holocaust as terrifying and incomprehensible*. Serving as examples for Sonia Weitz poem *Take a giant leap*, they show *not why the Holocaust happened*, but *why it still so important to question*. It is still an historical event that hasn't been fully understood – the mass-burial-shooting, the industrial-gas-murder or murder-for-equality.

The focus attention to explain what makes the Holocaust *unique*, how human behaviour as they call it, could manage to produce so much death and suffering. The liquidation of innocent women, children and men.

The author adopts an objective language, not using satanic connotations avoiding representing the perpetrators or the Holocaust as *demonic*, but the actions still manages to produce a feeling of dread and horror without the help of connotations.

Expanding on the theme of the Holocaust as incomprehensible, lies the notion of *take the leap*. The author relates the “invitation” in Weitz’ poem, with the “otherworld”. Suggesting that the reader should have “courage” to leap into a world of the unknown, where there are more questions than answers, and try to find meaning. By relating these two, the leap and the incomprehensibility, the implied reader is supposed to be motivated to find meaning, instead of falling into despair or nihilism. The CQ 4 in *Take this Giant Leap*, asks the reader;

Do you think that Weitz believes it is possible to understand the horrors of the Holocaust? What can we gain by studying the brutality of the Holocaust?

The author also presents the same argument in the introduction to the chapter;

“This chapter delves even further into the *shocking violence and mass murder of the Holocaust*, as well as the choices made by perpetrators, bystanders, resisters, and rescuers as the Nazis carried out their “Final Solution to the Jewish Question.”

Although the Nazis’ program of mass murder was horrifying and the small number of people who tried to resist it or rescue those who were targeted is disturbing, *this is a history that needs to be confronted*. The accounts in this chapter force us to consider the full range of human behavior, the worst and the best that we are capable of as human beings. And the choices described in these accounts force us to think deeply about what leads one person and not another to do the right thing, regardless of the consequences,” *Introduction, chapter 9*.

Not explaining directly *why* we need to learn but arguing implicit that *we need* to first confront it, and then manage to construct some knowledge from it – what kind of knowledge is produced from engage in this terrifying events will be presented in section 6.3 and 6.4 – argued to be components of a wider understanding of the Holocaust and perpetrator behaviour.

6.1.2 A Matter of Obedience

Another theme, that connect with the perpetrators as *ordinary people* can be analysed in the readings “Reserve Police Battalion 101” and “A Matter of Obedience”. It focuses on the act of *obedience* when it involves inflicting pain or death on others.

Obedience is positioned as being central in understanding why the regular police officers, commanded by Mayor Trapp, decided *not* to “step out” of their first mass-shooting. Participating when it involved shooting innocent Jews.

The concept of obedience is also represented in “A Matter of Obedience”, the following reading. Here the author presents famous Milgram Experiment from the 1960’s, conducted to study the issues of obeying orders when it involves inflicting pain on another. Both readings are related by the problem of obedience and harm on the other.

“*The Reserve Police Battalion 101*”

The author presents the first inquiry into the perpetrators by presenting the question;

What kind of person kills civilians, including old people and even babies, all day long?

First the author emphasizes that it was *ordinary men* that participated in the mass-shooting that they present. They present examination theories and a variation of examples to explain why these men decided to murder *old people, civilians and babies all day long*. In the previous theme, the murder-events were mostly *unexplainable* or *incomprehensible*. Instead the author wants to establish an examination of ordinary men’s participating in genocide.

There are two groups of characters in the story original from Christopher Browning; the Mayor, Wilhelm Trapp – and his subordinates, which makes up for the “Reserve Police Battalion 101”. While the men are *ordinary*, their situation is emphasized as *special*; openly allowed to *not follow participate* without precautions.

Most of the men in Battalion 101 came from working- and lower-middle-class neighborhoods in Hamburg, Germany. Major Wilhelm Trapp, a 53-year-old career police officer who had come up through the ranks, headed the battalion. He had joined the Nazi Party in 1932 but was not a member of the SS, the Nazi elite guard assigned to solve the so-called “Jewish Problem.” The battalion’s first killing mission took place on July 13, 1942.

These men are different, the author suggests, from the Nazi Elite Guard assigned to solve *the Jewish Problem*, for example the Einsatzgruppen. He [Wilhelm Trapp] is also not *elite* but of the *working, lower-middle* class. Neither is he described as an *up and coming Nazi*, but a 53-year-old *career police officer*.

The first attention is on Trapp’s *experience* of the order; to collect and shoot the Jews at the settlement. His feelings are exemplified in the performance at the time; “With choking voice and tears in his eyes”. This man had emotional

struggles with his assignment, but in the end he talks himself into following the order;

“These orders were not to his liking either, *but they came from above*”.

Trapp is first portrayed as *sympathetic*, but end in being *pathetic*. The first part informs of his conflict with the order and having some sympathy for the burden this assignment will carry for his men, he gives them the opportunity to not participate. Thus, as a superior officer, this makes the implied reader attentive to his empathic characteristics;

“Trapp then made an extraordinary offer to his battalion: if any of the older men among them did not feel up to the task that lay before him, he could step out. Trapp paused, and after some moments, one man stepped forward. The captain of 3rd company . . . began to berate the man. The major told the captain to hold his tongue. Then ten or twelve other men stepped forward as well. They turned in their rifles and were told to await a further assignment from the major,” *Reserve Police Battalion 101*.

Trapp understands that some of his men might feel bad about this assignment and allows them to step out. Even when berated by the other captain, he stand-tall and keeps the opportunity open. But this characteristic is changed as the narratee follows Trapp’s endeavour later that evening.

“Having given the company commanders their respective assignments, Trapp spent the rest of the day in town, mostly in a schoolroom converted into his headquarters but also at the homes of the Polish mayor and the local priest. Witnesses who saw him at various times during the day described him as bitterly complaining about the orders he had been given and “weeping like a child.” He nevertheless affirmed that “orders were orders” and had to be carried out. Not a single witness recalled seeing him at the shooting site, a fact that was not lost on the men, who felt some anger about it. Trapp’s driver remembers him saying later, “If this Jewish business is ever avenged on earth, then have mercy on us Germans.”, *ibid.*

Trapp takes on a Janus-like appearance for the implied reader. He doesn’t become the hero, the villain but the grieving bystander. He orders the murder, give the opportunity to step out and grieves for the victims. But he never argues for resistance against the Jewish slaughter. Described, by witnesses, as bitterly complaining, weeping like a child, but still arguing that there was nothing to do about the matter.

But the major theme is not found in the character of Trapp, it is not what the author wants to highlight. The main attention is presented by Browning when he comments on just what this case signifies for the implied reader;

“Was the incident at Jozefow typical? Certainly not. I know of no other case in which a commander so openly invited and sanctioned the nonparticipation of his men in a killing action. But in the end the most important fact is not that the experience of Reserve Police Battalion 101 was untypical, but rather that Trapp’s extraordinary offer did not matter. Like any other unit, Reserve Police Battalion 101 killed the Jews they had been told to kill,” *ibid.*

The incident is untypical because Trapp openly invited non-participation, and that in the end *it did not* matter. Suggesting that one would assume that if openly invited to not murder innocent children and women, one would take it. This thesis is denied in this special case. The argument that *We only followed orders* is nullified.

This case, the ordinary perpetrators, and the extra-ordinary case of Reserve Police Battalion 101, contributes to a complex task of understanding why the collective group, the *men*, decided to participate when knowing that they neither were hard-core Nazis, at least in their homeland, nor that they would be punished by disobeying.

The witness-testimonies presented by Browning and selected by the FHAO, argues for “conformity”;

“Most simply denied that they had any choice. Faced with the testimony of others, they did not contest that Trapp had made the offer but repeatedly claimed that they had not heard that part of his speech or could not remember it. A few who admitted that they had been given the choice and yet failed to opt out were quite blunt. One said that he had not wanted to be considered a coward by his comrades. Another—more aware of what truly required courage—said quite simply: “I was cowardly.” A few others also made the attempt to confront the question of choice but failed to find the words. It was a different time and place, as if they had been on another political planet, and the political vocabulary and values of the 1960s were helpless to explain the situation in which they found themselves in 1942. As one man admitted, it was not until years later that he began to consider that what he had done had not been right. He had not given it a thought at the time,” *ibid.*

Three arguments are presented by the testimonies, if one excludes those that deny hearing that part of the speech; cowardly by comrades, lack of courage and fail to find words.

The first two are closely related to the theory of conformity. This is also highlighted in the CQs;

What role did “following orders” play in the choices made by Trapp’s men? To what degree might conformity - *the desire to fit in with a group’s attitudes, beliefs, or behaviour* - have played a role? What other factors may have influenced their participation?

Obedience was not oriented toward Trapp as a commandant, but to the group that participated. The group would believe that the individual was cowardice, like they hint to in the comment on Trapp; that it didn’t go unnoticed by his men. Not participating, i.e. taking Trapp’s offer, shows lack of “courage”. Similarly, having true courage, is to resist following the group-behaviour – knowing that it is morally wrong to do so.

This theory presents a normalcy for the implied reader, it relates to an ordinary experience of human beings. All individuals will at some time sense conformity in social situations. Do I participate to gain access to a group, or do I deny this behaviour? To deny, even more for resistance, is difficult because how it can affect one’s place in the social hierarchy.

The implied reader will have the tools and experience to imagine the stress that the perpetrators might have felt in the event of being asked to step out. But there is an ethical implication here, the simple answer conflicts with the complex conclusion of the event. Perpetrators participated in mass-murdering the victims because of group-affirmation. As result, they mass-murdered innocent people. Implicitly it means that ordinary people have no conflicts about mass-murder if the rules are that such behaviour is confirmed by the group.

But this answer is not the only answer, both Browning and the author tries to complexify the event. First by referring to the difference of time and language, similarly to what Petri suggested when arguing that because of the racial laws at the time, it seemed totally justifiable at the time to murder Jews;

“Browning also points out:

[It is] doubtful that they were immune to “the influence of the times,” . . . to the incessant proclamation of German superiority and incitement of contempt and hatred for the Jewish enemy. Nothing helped the Nazis to

wage a race war so much as the war itself. In wartime, when it was all too usual to exclude the enemy from the community of human obligation, it was also all too easy to subsume the Jews into the “image of the enemy.”, *ibid.*

Again, the problem for the implied reader lies just how easy the transmission from ordinary citizen to mass murderer. Here they argue that the context of war made it *all too easy* to subsume the Jews as enemies. This is also pointed out early in the text, when Trapp opens his speech with;

“It might perhaps make their task easier, he told the men, if they remembered that in Germany bombs were falling on the women and children,” *ibid.*

The police officers were not simple murderers either, it was more complex than that the author argues. Some shielded the infants, and were not punished for doing so, though they write that they were warned; “though subsequently one officer warned his men that in the future they would have to be more energetic”.

This mass-shooting was not the last for many of the men, and that affected them. The author finished the reading by pointing this out;

“As the killing continued, some officers reassigned anyone who asked, while others pressed their men to continue despite reservations. By midday, the men were being offered bottles of vodka to “refresh” them. Nevertheless, a number of soldiers broke down. Yet the majority continued to the end. After the massacre ended, the battalion was transferred to the northern part of the district and platoons were divided up, each stationed in a different town. All of the platoons took part in at least one more shooting action. Most found that these subsequent murders were easier to perform,” *ibid.*

The signs reveal a continuation to the murdering, it didn't stop here. In the future they must be more energetic, the vodka served as *refreshments*, to make them continue. The result of this process is that the platoons got experience, they became desensitized; “Most found that these subsequent murders were easier to perform”.

This reading brings a horror for the implied reader, but not the same as the other theme. The horror lies in the *simple* transformation from ordinary to singular. The author highlights the commonality of the murderers, but the story shows how easy they transform to murderers. Yes, some had a difficult start, but in the end, they only needed to do it one more time. The author uses the numbers to

argue for how “normal” the perpetration using signs as; most of, all or majority. By doing so, the implied reader is forced to recognize the normal behaviour that took place at the time. Implicit, that there is no extraordinary, latent evil in the behaviour of perpetrators. Giving the correct circumstances it is easy to become a killer. No hero stood forward to fight against this immorality, only bystanders and perpetrators.

A Matter of Obedience?

In the reading “A Matter of Obedience?” the author asks if the case presented by Christopher Browning, presented in *Reserve Police Battalion 101*, might be explained in Stanley Milgram’s popular experiment in the 1960’s;

“Three decades before Christopher Browning completed his study of Police Battalion 101 - see reading, [Reserve Police Battalion 101](#) - a psychologist at Yale University named Stanley Milgram also tried to better understand why so many individuals participated in the brutality and mass murder of the Holocaust.

In the 1960s, Milgram conducted an experiment designed “to see how far a person will proceed in a concrete and measurable situation in which he is ordered to inflict increasing pain on a protesting victim”, *A Matter of Obedience?* Chapter 9.

The analogy is clear, it uses the historical context of perpetrators as framework for their research. The authors present *interpretations* based on the Milgram conclusion, both Russel and Gregory and Zygmunt Bauman. They present the most repeated and important concept in their perpetrator-literature here; the concept of distance.

Most of the content is devoted to explaining the Milgram experiment. Revolving around the *learner and teacher*; were the teacher must apply shock for each failed answer by the protesting learner. Similar as the Reserve Police Battalion 101, the subjects, the teachers were middle-aged white males.

The teachers are unaware that the learner is acting, thus their experience of the experiment is real.

For each shock “given” the teacher is ordered to increase it, while hearing the learner shout and begging to stop, at the highest level, the learner will cease to communicate, and while the scientist orders the teacher to keep increasing as a silence is interpreted as “fail”.

“Once the experiment has started, the participant [the “teacher”] is soon required to deliver shocks of increasing intensity. In fact, no shocks at all are being administered, though the participant does not know this. As the “shocks” increase in intensity, the ostensible pain being experienced by the learner also becomes increasingly apparent by way of shouts and protests, emanating from behind a partition that visually separates the teacher from the learner. For example, at 120 volts the learner is heard to say “Ugh! Hey, this really hurts!” Typically, the participants express their concern over the learner’s well-being. Yet the experimenter continues to insist “The experiment requires that you continue,” “You have no other choice, you must go on.” Such commands were designed to generate feelings of tension—what Milgram called strain—within the participant. If the participant continued to obey these strain-producing commands to the 270-volt level, the learner, in obvious agony, was heard to scream, “Let me out of here. Let me out of here. Let me out of here. Let me out. Do you hear? Let me out of here!” At the 300-volt level, the learner refuses to answer and instead responds with agonized screams. The experimenter commands the participant to treat further unanswered questions as incorrect and accordingly to inflict the next level of shock. After a 330-volt shock has been administered, the learner suddenly falls silent. The participant is again ordered to treat any further unanswered questions as incorrect and to continue administering shocks of increasing voltage. Once the participant has administered three successive shocks of 450 volts, the experimenter stops the process”, *ibid.*

Based on the result, the author argues that the main reason why *ordinary people* hurt others, can be found in Milgram’s conclusion;

“Milgram tested other variations in which the distance between the experimenter and the teacher changed. He found that the farther the distance between experimenter and teacher, the less likely the teacher was to obey. Milgram concluded that the experiment forced the teacher to decide between two stressful situations: inflicting pain on another person and disobeying authority. The closeness of the learner and the experimenter to the teacher affected the teacher’s choice: “In obeying, the participants were mainly concerned about alleviating their own, rather than the learner’s, stressful situation”, *ibid.*, Milgram citation.

The distance/closeness between the perpetrator and the victim is the explanatory factor for the chances of disobedience/obedience. Milgram interpret that

subjects choose between two stressful situations; either alleviating their own, obeying or alleviating the victims.

So far, Milgram's conclusion produces meaning for that act of perpetrating. It suggests that there *is* a choice when faced with the act of perpetration, but based on the distance between the subjects, the chances of alleviating own's stress become significantly reduced.

But the author also suggests two other variations for obedience, referring to Russel and Gregory, and Zygmunt Bauman;

“It is difficult to harm a person we touch. It is somewhat easier to afflict pain upon a person we only see at a distance. It is still easier in the case of a person we only hear. It is quite easy to be cruel towards a person we neither see nor hear,” *Citation Bauman, ibid.*

“Although the . . . learner was deliberately chosen as a likable, middle-aged man, and although many participants expressed strong concern about his apparent plight—and were relieved to be reconciled with him at the end of the experiment—he was a stranger to them. Milgram speculated that obedience rates may have been even higher had the learner been presented as “a brutal criminal or a pervert”; but obedience rates may also have been much lower overall had the learner been a loved member of the participant's family, a friend, or even an acquaintance. So Milgram confirmed what most people instinctively know—that it is far easier to maltreat others if they are personal strangers, even easier to do so if they are cultural strangers, and especially if we engage in rationalization processes of self-deception that serve to dehumanize them,” *citation Russel and Gregory, ibid.*

Russel and Gregory extend physical distance to emotional distance and supplement it with that of *cultural strangers* and *rationalization of self-deception*. They present a process of perpetration, which suggests that when the perpetrator finally engage in self-deception, to dehumanize the victims, easily done if they are cultural strangers, the act of perpetration becomes very easy.

There is no specific attention to one factor for perpetration, there are many. Many arguments are closer to speculations than evidence based. For example, when they present the argument of harm-method.

“Russell and Gregory also believe that the way the harm is inflicted would affect the willingness of individuals to do it. In their analysis of the Milgram experiments, they point out that the shock generator was a technological and indirect way for the teacher to inflict pain; in most

variations, teachers flicked a switch rather than using “direct physical force.” Russell and Gregory ask: “How far would Milgram’s participants have gone if they had been required personally to beat, bludgeon, or whip the learner, ultimately to the point of unconsciousness or beyond?”, *ibid.*

This produces more questions and confusion for the implied reader than it delivers answers. What if they needed to beat their victims to death, what if they were not cultural strangers, what if they were closely related etc. Would the perpetrators become something else? Would they behave in a different manner if they knew the victims? Did they perceive their victims as cruel criminals? None of these questions can be answered based on the experiment that the FHAO presents. It is too restricted for inquiring into so many problems.

Conclusion

The author suggests; if individuals are subject to some sort of distance to the victim, the chances of them transforming into perpetrators are significantly higher. They construct the same theme as “Reserve Police Battalion 101”, external factors make it easy for normal individuals to transform themselves to perpetrators. There is no latent evil in them, only social and cultural factors that *pushes* them. It is as shocking for the implied reader as it were for the researchers at the time;

“At the time, when Milgram described this experiment to a group of 39 psychiatrists, the psychiatrists predicted that one participant in 1,000 would continue until he or she delivered the most severe shock, 450 volts. In reality, 62.5% of participants did”, *A Matter of Obedience.*

The Milgram experiment is not the final answer to the final solution, it only relates directly to those that served to follow orders by authorities. The author confirm that Milgram has restriction, it provides no insight into other types of perpetrators, defined as those that *worked for the führer*. Where responsibility was the main factor, not obedience. Were perpetrators did not respond to order but acted on own motivation.

“*Milgram’s experiments provide insights that help us understand the choices and motivations of many who participated in the Nazi programs of persecution and mass murder. But many historians and social scientists who have studied the Holocaust say that Milgram’s work does not fully explain the behavior of perpetrators in the Holocaust. While many acted in response to orders from authority figures, some perpetrators chose to go beyond the orders they were given*”, *A Matter of Obedience?*

In the end of the text, the author suggests that there are other motivations for mass murder, that goes beyond orders. Which of course means that a new theme will be presented.

6.1.3 Working for a Greater Evil

Not everyone followed orders some took own initiative to *work for the Führer*, as they call it. All representatives in the texts knew what they participated in.

Drawing on Doris Bergen, that the FHAO cites in *The Wannsee Conference*, this was the *bureaucratic face of the genocide*. And referring to Zygmunt Bauman's thesis on *why the Holocaust happened*, they show that perpetrating the Holocaust was only possible by the support/collaboration of bureaucracy:

“No one at the conference objected to the policy and practice of annihilation, although it was presented openly, starting with the announcement that Estonia was now "free of Jews." Instead participants spent their time on practical matters, above all on who would be included in the category of Jews to be “evacuated to the East” for killing... This was the bureaucratic face of genocide, people's lives and deaths reduced to categories and lists”, cit., Doris Bergen, *The Wannsee Conference*, chapter 9.

“According to sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, mass murder on the enormous scale of the Holocaust depended on a bureaucracy. In other words, it required a large number of people to perform specific, individual jobs that, when everyone's work was effectively organized and coordinated, together could achieve a larger goal. Bauman writes that the Nazis' plans for mass murder relied on “those skills and habits, in short, which best grow and thrive in an atmosphere of the office”, *Special Trains*, chapter 9, CQ 4.

After the Wannsee Conference, the murdering took another form. In the narrative analysis the Wannsee conference presents the problem of the traditional murder, the burden of the soul. At the same time it presents the solution to this problem, related to the concept of distance, the dehumanization of victims helps in making up new ways to solve the problem.

“The mass murder of Jews by shooting had begun to have a strong psychological effect on many of the men who did the shooting. Some of these men called that effect *Seelenbelastung*, a “burdening of the soul.”

It threatened the soldiers' morale and undermined their effectiveness. By the end of 1941, Nazi leaders were planning to annihilate all Jews in Europe, but they realized that they would need to use different methods that would increase the distance between the perpetrators and their victims," *Establishing the Killing Centres*, chapter 9.

The author uses signs like threatened, soldiers moral and undermined effectiveness. In the context of mass murder it suggest that the effect of "feeling guilt" became problematic for the annihilation of Jews. The human aspect of perpetrators needed to be exterminated. The way of doing so was by *increasing* the distance between perpetrators and victims, referring to the concept presented in "A Matter of Obedience". Already in the Wannsee Conference, this distance is practiced, by dehumanizing victims to categories and numbers.

It appears that the men at the conference already are distanced to the victims, the question lies in making this distance into a system, to transfer down the ranks to the soldiers, the camp-officers and others.

An underlying theme, which is common to the other readings, is the "commonality" of the characters at the Wannsee Conference. They are not represented as "extreme Nazis", but government officials, representatives and bureaucrats. Signifying that the distance to the *other*, are not characteristic to the Anti-Semitic Nazi Wing.

"In January 1942, German officials, including representatives from the SS [the Nazis' elite guard], the Einsatzgruppen, the Justice Ministry, the Office of the Governor General of Poland, and the Foreign Office, met in a lakeside neighborhood of Berlin called Wannsee. They had come to discuss the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question." The highest-ranking German leaders—Hitler, Heinrich Himmler, Hermann Göring, and Joseph Goebbels—did not attend. Himmler's deputy, Reinhard Heydrich, led the meeting, *The Wannsee Conference*.

The important attention in this section is the information that the main figures of the Nazi-party, of Nazi history, were not attending at this crucial moment. Only those that work for the leaders were attending. They were not motivated by being ordered, but the decision of annihilating the Jews. Based on this goal, they worked efficiently to coordinate the details to make it happen:

"The Nazis did not record the exact date of their decision to annihilate all of the Jews in Europe, but historians believe this decision had been made by Hitler and the highest-ranking Nazi leaders by the end of 1941. Once the goal had been established and approved by Hitler, it was up to other

German leaders to coordinate the details necessary to make it happen”,
ibid.

One of the two representatives for this bureaucratic face of genocide, is Walter Stier, who worked for a train-company, and made contracts for “special trains”. What is important is that Stier is represented solely in an *interview form*, applying rather an *empathical* interpretation, with minimal communication from the author. Another “worker bee” is Franz Stahl, also in an interview format, who worked as a *commandant* for the death camps.

Common between these men is that they were not murderers *per se*, they didn’t kill anyone. But their worked to help the Final Solution reach a conclusion, the annihilation/deportation of European Jews, what Arendt has called *The Banality of Evil*, which will be presented and discussed in the discussion-section.

I will not draw conclusive remarks on the analysis of these interview in this section, it will be done in chapter 6.4 that conducts an analysis on the pedagogical implications in these interviews.

But suggesting that both men are represented as case studies, together with the men at the Wannsee Conference, and both occupy a position as *working for greater evil*. The author is more interested in representing and inquiring into the *bureaucratic* face of the Holocaust rather than the decision makers or the singular cases of murderers like Erna Petri.

6.1.4 Technological significance in the Holocaust

Related to both *obedience/distance* and *bureaucracy and contractors* is aspect of *technology*. By fusing mass-murder with *industrial techniques and science*, the author presents the *death camps* and methods as a *new way of mass murder*. Arguing it were never before seen, and had an extremely high efficiency, not only in murdering a tremendously high number of Jews, but also in distancing the perpetrators from the murder act. Solving the problem of the ‘burden of the soul’.

By exemplifying both the industrial process in *Auschwitz [reading]* and the first experiments of these new camps in *Establishing the Killing Centres*, they show the implied reader that *sublimity* of terror that technology helped evolve, the *uniqueness of the Holocaust*.

“The people walked into the room and once they were all inside they began to undress. . . . From the undressing room the people went down a

narrow corridor to the gas chamber. At the entrance, there was a sign: “To the Disinfection Room.” . . . [T]he men waited naked until the women were in the gas chamber, and then they went in. . . . When a large transport with lots of people came, the people were beaten to force them to enter the room. . . . Only when they were already in the gas chamber did they sense that something was out of whack. When the gas chamber filled up, the Germans stood at the door with dogs and continued to pack the people in so that more than were already inside could be gassed. Those who hadn’t gone in yet began to shout. The Germans responded with murderous beatings. The people were already naked and defenseless, so they were pushed in by force. . . . The moment the gas chamber filled up the SS man closed the door. Right after that, SS men drove over in a car that carried the emblem of the Red Cross. The cans of gas were taken out of the car, opened, and their contents were thrown into the gas chambers through the opening of the wall. . . . Some time later, the SS doctor determined the death of the people in the chamber by saying “It’s all over.” Then he drove away in the “Red Cross” car”, *Auschwitz*.

Here they give attention to the *system*, describing it as an *industrial production line*, where as the face of individual perpetrators disappear in the awe of the systematic terror of mass murder. This is read in the aftermath of the bureaucracy, after establishing the bureaucratic face in the previous readings. The technology and bureaucracy had a prevalent human impact, which is highlighter in the last section presented by the author in “Auschwitz”;

“Many former prisoners explained in their testimonies that everyday life in the Nazi camps was based on a total reversal of all moral standards. Power was associated solely with the license to oppress and torture. Values such as mercy and compassion were regarded as extreme, negative and perverse. . . . It gave rise to an upside-down world or, as the writer and Auschwitz survivor K. Tzetnik put it, “another planet,” a place that functioned on different, unknown principles. . . . Auschwitz constituted a reality that had never before existed and had never been known, let alone experienced”, *ibid*.

The use of industrial like system of murder, it gave rise to another world. The author doesn’t even seek to inquire into just what the root of this upside-down world is. Defined as “another planet”, in which human perspective and understanding have no reasonable way of penetrating into.

The achievement here is not inquire into the quality of this other place but signify the importance that technology and bureaucracy managed to create

through distance. That they had important impact on creating this horror-house. This importance is highlighted in all readings were the new murder-methods, camps and gassing are present;

- Why did the Nazis turn to more industrial methods of murder? What advantages did they perceive in replacing mass shootings with gas chambers? [*Establishing the Killing Centres*].
- Killing at the camps was different from the mass shootings perpetrated by the Einsatzgruppen. How did the new use of gas chambers change the distance between perpetrator and victim? What effect might this distance have had on the perpetrators? [Auschwitz]
- What roles did science, medicine, and engineering play in the mass murder perpetrated by the Nazis? [Technology of Mass Murder]
- In *The Ascent of Man*, Bronowski says: “We have to close the distance between the push-button order and the human act.” What does he mean? How do you think the history of the Holocaust and World War II led him to this perspective? How do we “close the distance”? [Dogma Makes Obedient Ghosts] – Chapter 10.

A precise answer is not found in the text, the implied reader must, from the ideas from the reading “A Matter of Obedience”, imagine how physical distance is created by technology like gas vans or gas chambers. How “easy” it becomes to murder someone, in contrast to shooting them.

Also, technology has own historical representatives; the engineers of the crematoriums in “Technology of Mass Murder”, chapter 10. They testify about the relation between the gas chambers and the crematoriums and argues that their work in repairing and designing them, were of great important to the “national government”.

So, technology is given a specific attention by the authors, but a bit more “sporadic” than obedience. It is not the main factor for Auschwitz, but mainly because Auschwitz is so hard to explain. As scholars suggest, in our time we have not the language capable of understanding what took place in Auschwitz. The author seems to not want to confront this problem. As they write, even those that survived struggled to explain the everyday life of the camps. Even though technology was important in creating distance, just like the other concepts, they provide no definite answer to the reason behind the perpetrations in Auschwitz and the other death-camps.

6.1.5 Conclusion

The themes analysed in this chapter have been the horror of the perpetration, the importance of obedience, the difference of *working for the Führer* and how technology was significant for the Holocaust. Both in increasing the number of victims, but also distancing the perpetrators from the victims so that they wouldn't feel burdened by their participation.

A common underlying theme is the continues emphasize on portraying the perpetrators as “ordinary men”, example of the Reserve Police Battalion, the “perpetrators” in the Milgram experiment, the men at the Wannsee Conference and those that testify.

As an extension on this portrait, it is what makes the transformation that is important for the author. Underlying this transformation, is the idea that all men are capable of hurting others as long the “distance”, the context or the social coding of the group is fixed towards it. Distance as for example through technological means did not murder the Jews, it was the human behaviour latent in every individual that were pressed forth by aspects such as technology.

It confronts the implied reader with the reality that also he can transform into a perpetrator. That perpetration is no radical form, but the Holocaust pushed this form to its limit, the limit of our understanding. As the title of the book suggest, this is about the extreme event of the “Holocaust”, pushed forth by the common “human behaviour”.

It is important to take notice that this is not the “main conclusion” by the FHAO. That humans have a deterministic nature to become perpetrators, it only seems so in this study because this is the subject of the paper. The FHAO presents both stories of upstanders/resistors and victims. I do not claim that *this* is the main theme of the *whole book*. It is only the conclusion based on the analysis of the sum of perpetrator-related texts. What meaning the upstander-related texts is not taken into account in this study.

6.3 Constructing personal knowledge about the perpetrators – learning why the Holocaust

Till now the analysis has mainly focused on the content and the meaning of the content, both narrative and specific themes positioned in the perpetrator-related texts.

In this chapter, the focus will be on the pedagogical implications in the textbook. First the acquired knowledge by the implied reader, and finally the understanding constructed from the perpetrators – through historical empathy.

The main objective is to figure out what quality of knowledge is produced in the book about *why* the perpetrators participated. Arguing that knowledge of *why* depends on explaining the behaviour on three concepts; *conformity, distance and dogma*, closely tied to historical examples; *technology, science and ethical principles*.

I will analyse these concepts from the content and Connection Questions, analysing their cross-reference; for example; conformity together with the content of Reserve Police Battalion 101, to reconstruct the knowledge about how conformity can answer why individuals decides to obey order to murder.

So far, I have only looked at the underlying meaning of narrative and attention, here we engage in the didactics of the textual resources, and thus, also question the engagement in the tasks/CQs of the content.

Some of the “knowledge” analysed have similarities to the themes analysed in the previous chapter because of the textbook format. The author who engages in producing education related textbooks must draw attention to the aspects that will function as “knowledge”. To construct knowledge on content that is not drawn into attention would be considered a failure for a textbook.

6.3.1 Conformity – why do people obey

In the reading “Reserve Police Battalion 101” two knowledge formats are presented; *conformity* and the *antisemitism*. They seek to explain *why* the individuals in *Reserve Police Battalion 101* didn’t take the extraordinary offer from Mayor Trapp.

Conformity is presented in CQ 2, it argues that individuals feels the need to fit in with a group’s attitudes and beliefs, and will regulate their actions. Make choices to *mirror* the groups attitudes and beliefs;

What role did “following orders” play in the choices made by Trapp’s men? To what degree might conformity - *the desire to fit in with a group’s attitudes, beliefs, or behaviour* - have played a role? What other factors may have influenced their participation?

The second thesis is from Daniel Goldhagen, who use the same material that Christopher Browning. He concludes in a different manner; that *hatred towards the victims is an imperative*:

“Scholar Daniel Goldhagen examined this same story and reached a conclusion different from Browning’s. Goldhagen believes that antisemitism, rather than conformity, is a more convincing explanation for why so many men participated in the massacre at Jozefow. He argues that the men decided to kill when they could have opted out because they truly believed that killing Jews was the right thing to do; to Goldhagen, any explanation other than what he calls “eliminationist antisemitism” is inadequate. Do you agree? Is the desire to conform enough to explain why people would participate in such violence? Or must they also feel hatred for their victims?”

The problem here is the lack of evidence, i.e. testimony-studies that confirm an antisemitic attitude in this case. Antisemitism is without a doubt an important part of Nazi-history, but for perpetrator-testimonies, there is little evidence to suggest that the individuals had hateful emotions towards the Jews.

Nevertheless, the author does comment on this lack of evidence;

“What remained virtually unexamined by the interrogators and unmentioned by the policemen was the role of antisemitism. Did they not speak of it because antisemitism had not been a motivating factor? Or were they unwilling and unable to confront this issue even after twenty-five years, because it had been all too important, all too pervasive? One is tempted to wonder if the silence speaks louder than the words, but in the end—the silence is still silence, and the question remains unanswered.”, *citing from Browning, FHAO.*

Even if this makes sense, there is not a good enough foundation in the content, the empirical material, to suggest that this is the truth. Just as Browning, the implied reader along with the author is tempted to assume that this silence, should be considered as evidence for antisemitism. But if the reader was to defend this claim by referring to evidence, he will fall short. Which makes the theory of conformity, which at least have testimonies to back it up, the dominant theory of explanation.

The question if antisemitism is the motivation behind the dehumanization of the victims, is not something we assume for the moment.

6.3.2 Learning why – distance makes obedience

The experiment-example in *A Matter of Obedience* is addressed in relation to the concept of *distance* in many CQs. It argues that normal men, when exposed to certain social and psychological aspects, they will obediently inflict pain on others.

[CQ 5] Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman writes: “The most frightening news brought about by the Holocaust and by what we learned of its perpetrators was not the likelihood that ‘this’ could be done to us, but the idea that we could do it.”

Do you agree that everyone has the potential to become a perpetrator? What do the Milgram experiments suggest about the aspects of human behavior that could make it possible for us to willingly inflict pain on others? *A Matter of Obedience, FHAO*

A significant meaning in the knowledge of ‘distance makes obedience’ is that it evaluates *all men* to be potential perpetrators, i.e. no one is *unique*, either as perpetrators or free from becoming perpetrators.

Distance is presented dualistic; physical and emotional. Both impact the perpetrators in some way, for emotional distance it associates to the state of “apathy” – being insensitive to the suffering of the other. While physical distance is to be “insensitive” in the way of not sensing the suffering of the others. Both are pointed to as crucial factors for perpetration;

[CQ 3] What is the difference between physical distance and “emotional” distance? According to Russell and Gregory, what difference might the emotional distance between “teacher” and “learner” make in the willingness of the “teacher” to harm the “learner”? What might have created emotional distance between perpetrators and victims during the Holocaust?

Added on this, they also refer to “cultural distance”, the cultural strange is easier to dehumanize and treat as an enemy.

So Milgram confirmed what most people instinctively know—that it is far easier to maltreat others if they are personal strangers, even easier to do so if they are cultural strangers, and especially if we engage in rationalization processes of self-deception that serve to dehumanize them.

The concept of “stranger” also associates in a way to distance. When two subjects are strangers, they have not bonded, they are distant from each other – not understanding each other. If they are “cultural strangers”, they perceive their cultural patterns to be alien to the other. There is a cultural distance between one group and the other group.

Russel and Gregory give a more interesting perspective on the *agency* of the perpetrators, first they refer to how the individual will instinctively rationalize, secondly that this is *self-deception*, in other words the fabricate *reality*, it is not true that Jews are *non-humans*.

This rationalization can be understood as an “relief of stress” as Milgram puts it. The perpetrator chooses to rationalize that his victims are not human, and he is not guilty of doing a criminal act. By relieving himself of moral guilt, he also relieves himself of personal stress. It makes the act of murder ‘easy’ for the subject.

It is precisely this act of dehumanization one can find clues about in testimonial representation given in this book, specifically the case of *Franz Stahl* in *A Commandants View*. By using the language and making the Jews into “cargo”, he dehumanizes them so that he will not feel burdened. To supplement it, he rationalizes that he had an important role and responsibility in managing the camps. He did something important as a commandant and a German citizen. Clearly struggling at some point with the guilt, in the end it became easier for him to perform his tasks.

Milgram concluded that the experiment forced the teacher to decide between two stressful situations: inflicting pain on another person and disobeying authority. The closeness of the learner and the experimenter to the teacher affected the teacher’s choice: “In obeying, the participants were mainly concerned about alleviating their own, rather than the learner’s, stressful situation.

The Gas Van exemplifies how they experimented in constructing physical distance between the perpetrators and victims;

Under the wooden grating were two tubes about fifteen centimeters thick which came out of the cab. The tubes had small openings from which gas poured out. The gas generator was in the cab, where the same driver sat all the time. He wore a uniform of the SS death’s head units and was about forty years old. There were two such vans.

By isolating the victims in vans, the use of gas trough tubes, makes the act of murder not “seem” as murder in the traditional sense. Pushing a button or

pulling a lever is enough. No one needs to witness the death of the victims, and neither do they need to *transport the corpses* as they have the *Sonderkommando* assigned for this task.

In *Obedying Orders*, chapter 10, the Milgram is again used as tool for inquiry;

[CQ 3] Why might it be difficult to disobey the order of a superior or authority figure? What insights do the Milgram experiments provide about the way individuals acting on the orders of others perceive their responsibility for their actions?

What the FHAO seems to refer to is the comment by Rudolf Höss;

“Don’t you see, we SS men were not supposed to think about these things; it never even occurred to us ... We were all so trained to obey orders without even thinking that the thought of disobeying an order would simply never have occurred to anybody, and somebody else would have done just as well if I hadn’t ... I really never gave much thought to whether it was wrong. It just seemed a necessity, »

The responsibility of murder becomes harder for the perpetrators to recognize when the action is only the push of a button.

At least for the perpetrators arguing they followed orders and did not really think about the responsibility of murder. It’s easier if they are only to sign a paper of deportation or push someone into a cart. Because some other subordinate will do the next step, open the lid and throw the can. While the third group will collect the clothing, and some one else the corpses. And the last one manages the crematorium.

Distance makes obedience also implies that closeness makes resisters. If far distance is the main factor for easily transformation to mass murderers, then the answer of resisting such “temptation” is to seek “closeness” to the other. Especially those that we find “strange”, i.e. “cultural strangers”. Meaning that if one recognizes that some groups are interpreted as strangers because of their customs, it would be wise to seek knowledge and understanding of these customs. By bonding between different cultures and learning different perspectives, the chance of developing a perpetrating community is lessened.

The knowledge from Milgram gives us different tools to inspect different types of situations. The implied reader can acquire the knowledge not only *why* some people decided to hurt others, but also what makes it *easier* for them to do so. It also provides an interesting theory for resistance. In stead of focusing on moral lessons of suffering, it provides insight into what makes perpetration, and can

easily be turned on it's head to provide answers to what can be done to resist instances that lead to perpetration.

6.3.3 The aspect of Technology

The Holocaust is must know for the symbioses of barbarity of murder and the use technology and a bureaucratic organizational principle. The Holocaust is unique from for example the Rwanda genocide, not in it's degree of *barbarity*, but it's *means for murder*. While the barbarity of Rwanda is known for the "traditional" *machete murders*, the Holocaust is known for the "the modern system" death camps and *gas-chambers*. As Bauman puts it, the Holocaust was undeniable a product of modernity.

History of modernity is never unattached to the aspect technology. Progressivism and technological innovation are two sides of one coin in modern historiography. And technology and progress has usually resulted in some form of oppression. Historians argue for or against the argument that slavery was imperative for the success of the industrial revolution. While Egyptian in ancient times managed to event new ways of architecture, it also meant oppression and slavery. Even Rome used slaves in order to succeed their expansion.

But Holocaust is different. The technology that was invented had no other purpose but the elimination of the oppressed. The oppressed didn't serve the progressivism of the nation. They only fed the machinery itself. The purpose was destruction of the Jews. Unlike the atomic bomb, the gas chambers had no war-purpose. Only annihilation of ethnical groups unrelated to the war act.

Both distance and the uniqueness of the Holocaust can be found in the aspect of technology. Drawing on the associations of "industrial", a known sign for anyone studying history, they draw attention to how the murdering were organized.

[CQ 2] Scholars often refer to the Nazi killing centers as places of "industrialized murder." What does that mean? How was the method of murder in killing centers like Auschwitz "industrial"? *Auschwitz, chapter 9*.

This question assumes that the implied reader has some knowledge about the concept of *industrial* typically in the curriculum of *industrial revolution* and the *industrial production line* that the text *Auschwitz* refer to.

Some have said that the system of killing there resembled an industrial production line, but at Auschwitz, the goal of the process was not the production of goods but the deaths of millions of people, *Auschwitz, chapter 9*.

Referring to the *industrial methods*, of murder, and the paradox of *producing death*, gives the implied reader attention to the uniqueness of the Auschwitz genocide.

Later they connect the concept of distance with the aspect of technology. Technology doesn't only provide a "quality" for the genocide, but also a functionality.

[CQ 4] Killing at the camps was different from the mass shootings perpetrated by the Einsatzgruppen. *How did the new use of gas chambers change the distance between perpetrator and victim? What effect might this distance have had on the perpetrators?*

This is also touched upon in the text *Establishing the Killing Centres*;

[CQ 2] Why did the Nazis turn to more industrial methods of murder? What advantages did they perceive in replacing mass shootings with gas chambers?

[CQ 3] How do the results of the Milgram experiments help to explain why gas chambers, rather than mass shootings, may have made it easier for Germans to participate in mass murder?

In the CQs they give special attention to *distance* between perpetrators and victims – advantageous for the perpetrators. Referring to Milgram's conception of *distance*, the implied reader identify functionality in the historical examples from concentration camps, gas chambers, and other experiments. As any theory, it helps the subject perceive something "new" from reality. Not seen before. The implied is supposed to see how material innovation produced perpetrator behaviour, not as the "core" but as supplement.

What effect, what advantages, and why gas chambers ... made it easier to participate all refer to the same notion. All affect the visual and possibly auditory sense of the subject. And the "industrial like" process provides relief of stress for each individual through "division of labour". The second most gruesome work, transporting the corpses of children and women, is only carried out by the Sonderkommando, other Jews.

It is what Bronowski calls “push the button mentality”, the perpetrator is distanced from the actual act of killing. He seldom witnesses the death of millions.

All technology has human functionality, but for this event it meant annihilation. Technology were not “evil”, but it supplemented the perpetrator behaviour and worked so well, that we often lack other words to describe what took place. To identify this supplemental function is the main goal of this knowledge – the aspect of technology.

6.3.4 Knowledge about obedience and dogma

As the title for *reading 8*, in chapter 10 suggests; *Dogma makes obedient ghosts*, drawing on the book by Jacob Bronowski *The Ascent of Man*. The argument posit is that science and technology can harvest ignorance, arrogance and dogma when they go “unchecked”.

“In absence of complete certainty, according to this theory, humans must make judgments about how the world works, judgements that might change in light of new evidence”, *Dogma makes obedient ghosts, chapter 10*.

The association is clear, the final solution meant that individuals judged Jews as enemies of the state. The Nazi state decided that Jews were not human beings and could be wiped out. This truth-claim were not significantly confronted by the German society.

“After 1933, German scientists, like most Germans, served the aims of National Socialism, and dogma became a substitute for truth. Dogma is a belief or set of beliefs that the leaders of a community or nation declare to be absolute truth. Dogma is not open to question, and it denies the existence of uncertainty”.

Unlike the other “knowledges”, this one refers to the “lack” of something; “the existence of uncertainty”. A positive value that we often identify in the concepts of “reflection” or “critical reflection”, that most educators seek to harvest in their students. So far, the knowledges have referred to the aspect of some sort that contributes to perpetrator behaviour.

Dogma provides a normative knowledge, without critical reflection, individuals can construct beliefs systems that has no opening for the “human error”. Individuals of a community must foster critical reflection to ensure that

important rights are defended. Not allow dogma to infiltrate the discourse like it did for Nazi-Germany in 1933.

Examples of this dogmatic behaviour can be found sporadic in many readings;

“It was a different time and place, as if they had been on another political planet, and the political vocabulary and values of the 1960s were helpless to explain the situation in which they found themselves in 1942. As one man admitted, it was not until years later that he began to consider that what he had done had not been right. He had not given it a thought at the time,” *Reserve Police Battalion 101*.

“I am unable to grasp at this time how in those days that I was in such a state as to conduct myself so brutally and reprehensibly—shooting Jewish children. However earlier [before arriving in Ukraine] I had been so conditioned to . . . the racial laws, which established a view toward the Jewish people. As was told to me, I had to destroy the Jews. It was from this mindset that I came to commit such a brutal act,” *Proving oneself in the East*.

“No, no, no. This was the system... It worked. And because it worked, it was irreversible,” *A Commandants view*.

“Don’t you see, we SS men were not supposed to think about these things; it never even occurred to us. . . . We were all so trained to obey orders without even thinking that the thought of disobeying an order would simply never have occurred to anybody, and somebody else would have done just as well if I hadn’t. . . . I really never gave much thought to whether it was wrong. It just seemed a necessity,” *Obeying Orders*.

These testimonies all fall prey to *dogmatic thinking*. Bronowski would argue that these men and women, no matter the horror they inflicted, were not “evil”, i.e. born as sadists. But maybe worse, they were ignorant. They never bothered to reflect on their own time and responsibility.

The reading on dogma is quite different than any of the other that seeks to explain the Holocaust and perpetrators. Instead of focusing on singular cases or events, it adopts the language of philosophy. Arguing that it was the high of “human arrogance” that “flushed the ashes of some four million people”. Ignorance, arrogance and dogma are the vices of Holocaust-perpetrators.

“This is the concentration camp and crematorium at Auschwitz. This is where people were turned into numbers. Into this pond were flushed the

ashes of some four million people. And that was not done by gas. It was done by arrogance. It was done by dogma. It was done by ignorance. When people believe that they have absolute knowledge, with no test in reality, this is how they behave. This is what men do when they aspire to the knowledge of gods”, citing Bronowski, *Ascent of Man*, *dogma makes obedient ghosts*.

Bronowski claims that man seeks the knowledge of gods, ignorant of the “human error”. This philosophical discourse is very different than the other texts. But it brings another way of “perceiving” the different events that the FFAO have presented so far. It connects them into one single fact – when man understand truth as dogma, with no error involved in the equation – the limits of destruction is unimaginable.

In retrospect the implied reader must consider his different experiences with the perpetrators. Looking at in from “above”, and connect the concepts of arrogance, dogma, ignorance and absolute knowledge – how does these concepts help explain what took place?

[CQ 2] According to Bronowski, what role did arrogance, dogma, and ignorance play in the deaths of millions at Auschwitz?

[CQ 3] What is absolute knowledge? Does Bronowski believe it is possible to achieve, through science or any other means? What does he believe are the dangers of trying?

Finally, the author suggests an “antidote” to the Holocaust. To really prevent any new Holocaust, the distance between “push the button order” and the “human act” must be closed.

[CQ 4] In *The Ascent of Man*, Bronowski says: “We have to close the distance between the push-button order and the human act.” What does he mean? How do you think the history of the Holocaust and World War II led him to this perspective? How do we “close the distance”?

I argue that the “reading-experience” from chapter 9, is supposed to lead up to this “moment” in the book. So far, the different readings about distance-making aspects, should provide enough examples to construct associations to “push-the button order”. How the process of murder managed to prevent the perpetrator to relate to the victim. Different techniques that helped dehumanizing the victims, rationalizing perpetration and hindering the sensation of wrong doing.

The human act refers not only to the aspect of “human error”, which is little prevalent in the readings, but the ethical implication that follows roles and

responsibility. When confronted with why bureaucrats participated, they answer they had a responsibility. Their concept of responsibility is not from the ethics of human rights, but how the government defined it.

Stier's responsibility was to deliver special trains for the government, even though he knew what purpose they had. It wasn't a problem of ethics, he never set a foot in the camps. He never identified his human responsibility in his role as contractor/bureaucrat.

There is no final answer to "how to close the distance", the implied reader must construct own problem-solutions. The implied reader will have a better understanding of what makes perpetrators, and from this foundation he should be able to provide some reflection on ways to close the distance. But the perpetrator-texts provides no answer to this question.

6.3.5 Conclusion

This section has analysed the production of knowledge in the readings regarding perpetrator behaviour and the Holocaust. Analysing the what type of knowledge that seeks to address *why perpetrators participated* and *why Holocaust happened*. Four knowledge-themes has been addressed by analysing the interaction between content and CQs, the authors intent of knowledge production for the implied reader and the theme in the readings.

All readings focus on emphasizing the perpetrators as "human beings". What is depicted is the "transformation" from ordinary men to perpetrators. The author doesn't try to condemn them explicitly but focuses on how the Holocaust is still problematic for scholars. The themes of knowledge provide different concepts to help the implied reader analysis the transformation.

The knowledge of conformity, antisemitism, distance – both emotional, cultural and physical, and dogma, are provides as tools to inquire into the content of perpetration.

Conformity only provide explanation for the case of Reserve Police Battalion 101, in which "obedience" is related to "following group attitudes".

The core concept is that of "distance", it is adopted into many different contexts and at its essence it suggests that when the perpetrator and victim have no relation, the chances for perpetration increases. The book provides many situations in which distance-making occurred in the "new murder-methods". Technology and bureaucracy are the final result of this development, solving the problem of "burden of the soul".

Finally, the implied reader is presented with the concept of “dogma”. Arguing that it was not the gas that murdered the four million Jews, but the human arrogance and ignorance. Here they argue that all truth must be tested, no matter who proclaims them. Using such universal claim, the implied reader is forced to retrospect the readings. In which cases does can arrogance and ignorance play a role for perpetration? How does absolute knowledge provide answer to why the Holocaust happened?

The implied reader adopts the tools to identify possible distance-makers. Acknowledging that perpetration is not something deterministic, but socially constructed. Aware of the problem of dogma, the implied reader must learn to be critical to all claims of truth, and not let scientific progression proceed unhindered. Find creative solutions for closing the distance between uncritical scientific truth/push the button order and the “human act”.

6.4 Learning empathy for the Perpetrators

This chapter present three accounts, analysing the quality of empathy-learning from *perpetrator-testimonies* in chapter 9 and 10. Barton and Levstik argues, the concept of empathy is closely related/associated with the concept of understanding, referring to empathy as *perspective-recognition*;

“This recognition has little to do with sympathy, though, and might even be considered its opposite; indeed, given the common conflation of empathy with sympathy, some scholars have abandoned the term altogether, often substituting perspective-taking , rational understanding , or simply understanding people in the past in its stead,” (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 207).

The same stance is taken when addressing “perpetrator-understanding”, i.e. recognizing the perspective of the perpetrator, understanding his attitudes, beliefs and actions.

6.4.1 Walter Stier – perspective of the Bureaucrat ignoring murder-sites

Stier is different from ‘us’ because of his role and responsibility in collaborating in the mass murder of the Jews. He claims no ethical responsibility, only his responsibility in power of his occupation;

But you knew that the trains to Treblinka or Auschwitz were—
Of course we knew. I was the last district; without me these trains
couldn't reach their destination... So, I had to...

His main difference is his lack of sympathy for the victims and not recognizing the radicalness of his role. This is exemplified when he addresses the fee for the children;

Jews were going to be shipped to Treblinka, were going to be shipped to Auschwitz, Sobibor or any other destination so long as the railroads were paid by the track kilometer, so many pfennigs per mile. The rate was the same throughout the war. With children under ten going at half-fare and children under four going free. Payment had to be made for only one way. The guards, of course, had to have return fare paid for them because they were going back to their place of origin.

Excuse me, the children under four who were shipped to the extermination camps, the children under four . . .

. . . went free.

They had the privilege to be gassed freely?

Like Lanzmann, who interviews Walter Stier in the film *Shoah*, a contemporary reader will be react on the lack of complexities in giving the children *free passage to Treblinka*. Walter Stier shows no *awkwardness* in this problematic case in his language, he answers;

Yes, transport was free. In addition to that, because the person who had to pay, the agency that had to pay, was the agency that ordered the train—and that happened to have been the Gestapo, Eichmann's office ...

He present himself as a professional, not lacking in knowledge about the background and the manner of payment. But he shows no understanding for the horror that his company participated in;

It was the same bureau that was dealing with any kind of normal passenger?

Absolutely. Just the official travel bureau. Mittel Europäisch Reisebüro would ship people to the gas chambers or they will ship vacationers to their favorite resort, and that was basically the same office and the same operation, the same procedure, the same billing.

No difference?

No difference whatsoever. As a matter of course, everybody would do that job as if it were the most normal thing to do . . . This was a self-financing principle. The SS or the military would confiscate Jewish property and with the proceeds, especially from bank deposits, would pay for transports.

Walter Stiers attitude for his participation and the context characterises his “otherness”. What constitutes this *otherness*? How is it possible for him to not see the difference between *special trains* and *ordinary trains*?

The main clues lie in how Walter Stier identifies himself when pushed to the limit of *feeling guilt*;

But you knew that the trains to Treblinka or Auschwitz were—

Of course we knew. I was the last district; without me these trains couldn't reach their destination. . . . So I had to . . .

Did you know that Treblinka meant extermination?

Of course not!

You didn't know?

Good God, no! How could we know? I never went to Treblinka. I stayed in Krakow, in Warsaw, glued to my desk.

You were a . . .

I was strictly a bureaucrat!

Here Lanzmann pushes Stier to acknowledge that he *knew* that the Jews were being killed, though Stier abruptly denies knowing this. His language changes, he is not the steel-firmed bureaucrat and it reveals a sense of *fear*, possibly a fear of being guilty/responsible. Reminding of the “rationalization process” that Russel and Gregory refer to in “A Matter of Obedience”.

He firmly identifies himself with *a bureaucrat* using it as a defence against *responsibility* for the six million murdered Jews. As he argues, he never went to Treblinka, so *how could he know*.

This becomes the main context for Walter Stier, he most likely had knowledge about what happened in Treblinka and Auschwitz, and it was the Gestapo office that financed for the deal with Stier as he himself says, knowing that the Jews would be part of the *cargo*.

He did not visit Treblinka and as he says, he was *glued to his desk*. This suggests that he likely didn't walk around inspecting the trains with the Jews when they were deported. He didn't help the Nazis force the Jews into the trains. What he did was to write the *contract* that produced trains and organized the routes and finance that the Gestapo would have to pay for this *service*. And this work is not different than that of organizing *charter vacations*.

[CQ 5] In some fields, like medicine and law, professionals take oaths to follow certain ethical principles. Do you think workers in all kinds of jobs have an obligation to consider the ethical consequences of their work and its impact on others? What factors make it possible for people to consider the ethical implications of their jobs? What factors might make it difficult to do so? Special Trains.

His perception of the other are only through the lists and numbers that piles on his desk, he never hear the cries, see the tears of mothers and children, the slowly decay in the men's eyes. His role as an bureaucrat distances him from the human act of murdering. His nonchalant attitude when presenting the reason behind the damage of equipment exemplify his perception of the victims, they were nearly numbers:

Now of course if there were exceptional filth in the cars, which might be the case, if there was damage to the equipment, which might be the case because the transports took so long and because five to ten percent of the prisoners died en route.

He defines the Jews as *criminals or similar* showing no confliction with this notion. Without complexity, the victims aren't anything else but numbers. Numbers, damage costs, financial input, transport costs, payment fare – all refer to the cold, dead calculation that murder formed around in the Final Solution.

The challenge lies not imagine that the “self” would take another action, and make this image *overwrite* the actual event. Which would mean that one compares ones own morale and never acknowledges the “rationality” of actual event. Though one can judge Stier for not acting morally, one cannot assume that *everyone else* would not do as Stier. There is nothing in the text that assumes that Walter Stier did anything *other* than what most people did at the time. As Baumans citation in CQ 4 says;

it required a large number of people to perform specific, individual jobs that, when everyone's work was effectively organized and coordinated, together could achieve a larger goal.

Many people decided to do as Walter Stier, and this is important to emphasize, Stier isn't accountable for being *more evil* than anyone else. The problem lies in the lack of *perceiving the other*, to see the victims behind the numbers. To questions one's role and responsibility towards the *larger goal* and ask if this goal is ethical right to perform.

Stier perspective shows that he perceived the Jews as nothing more than criminals. Making them not only cultural strangers but also emotionally distanced from them. His context of desk-working, never sensing what his trains led to, helped in him rationalizing his participation. He was nothing more than a bureaucrat, thus, in his mind, he was not accountable for the murder of millions.

Because of the nature of his work, working with lists, categories and numbers. The victims were never presented as human beings; families, loved ones, the oblivious children walking into gas chambers. When they reached his desk, they were already dehumanized. Into numbers, fares, empty names put into categories – later shipped to destinations that he never visited.

6.4.2 Rationalizing the task of murder – the process of dehumanizing the victims.

In *A Commandants View*, it is the commandant Franz Stahl who present his perspective as commandant of the death camps, Treblinka and later Sobibor. Here the implied reader is positioned in the process of rationalizing responsibility and dehumanizing the victims. While Stiers case only focuses on the “end result” of this process, Stahl gives us insight into the process itself, by remembering his own experience.

The interview opens with;

“*Would it be true to say that you were used to the liquidations?*”

He thought for a moment. “To tell the truth,” he then said, slowly and thoughtfully, “one did become used to it.”

Stahl very clearly confirms that *he got used to the liquidations*. It is hard to imagine being *used* to liquidations. Stahl's otherness is thus early introduced. His language is as Stier, quite normal and firm – *slowly and thoughtfully*.

“Months. It was months before I could look one of them in the eye. I repressed it all by trying to create a special place: gardens, new barracks, new kitchens, new everything: barbers, tailors, shoemakers, carpenters. There were hundreds of ways to take one's mind off it; I used them all.”

Unlike Walter Stier, Franz Stahl were present in the camps that Stier's special trains deported the victims to. His examples suggest that he at some point felt some sympathy for the victims. The first memory-scene he presents for the implied reader to is his analogy-trip in Brazil. Where the train passed an actual slaughterhouse, a used symbol for the death camps;

When I was on a trip once, years later in Brazil," he said, his face deeply concentrated and obviously reliving the experience, "my train stopped next to a slaughterhouse. The cattle in the pens, hearing the noise of the train, trotted up to the fence and stared at the train. They were very close to my window, one crowding the other, looking at me through that fence. I thought then, 'Look at this; this reminds me of Poland; that's just how the people looked, trustingly, just before they went into the tins . . .'"

"You said tins," I interrupted. "What do you mean?" But he went on without hearing, or answering me.

". . . I couldn't eat tinned meat after that. Those big eyes . . . which looked at me . . . not knowing that in no time at all they'd all be dead." He paused. His face was drawn. At this moment he looked old and worn and sad.

This scene is important in two ways. First it manages to draw out some sort of "traumatic response" to his past deeds. Showing that it affected him in some way. Secondly, it presents the question of "how did resist sympathy" if he felt this strongly about his occupation? His emotional response provides a form of shared normalcy, which conflict with his otherness – his confirmation that he got used to liquidations. His strongest "moment" is when he no longer can uphold his "character", his language is no longer restricted, even the interview comments that it allowed for a moment of sympathy;

"Cargo," he said tonelessly. "They were cargo." He raised and dropped his hand in a gesture of despair. Both our voices had dropped. It was one of the few times in those weeks of talks that he made no effort to cloak his despair, and his hopeless grief allowed a moment of sympathy.

The answer to his otherness can be found, as usual, in the context. Which brings the implied reader into the second "memory" that Stahl present in his testimony.

"I think it started the day I first saw the Totenlager [death camp] in Treblinka. I remember [Christian Wirth, the man who set up the death camps] standing there next to the pits full of blue-black corpses. It had nothing to do with humanity—it couldn't have; it was a mass—a mass of

rotting flesh. Wirth said, ‘What shall we do with this garbage?’ I think unconsciously that started me thinking of them as cargo.”

They were as described *pits full of blue-black corpses*. Signifying a form of mass of rot. And he interpreted it as *this has nothing to do with humanity* – it was just *rotten flesh*.

He later refers to the same synonym when asked what he felt as a father when seeing the Jewish children.

“I rarely saw them as individuals. It was always a huge mass. I sometimes stood on the wall and saw them in the tube. But—how can I explain it—they were naked, packed together, running, being driven with whips like” The sentence trailed off.

What is alike with Stier is that neither of them perceives the Jews as humans. For Stier they were merely *prisoners* or *numbers*, input and output of finance. For Stahl they were either *cargo*, *mass* or *rotten flesh* – Stahl previous commandant at the time saw them as *garbage*. Something “dead” and meaningless.

Stahl choice of words becomes significant; “It had nothing to do with humanity – It couldn’t have”, the is no explanation *why* it couldn’t have anything with humanity, and one can only speculate. But it signifies that Stahl didn’t *want* it to have anything with humanity, for some reason. Stahl seems to struggle with something, some form of guilt maybe, but through this struggle comes the dehumanisation of the others. He doesn’t want them to be human.

This struggle of guilt is the shared *normalcy* between Stahl and the implied reader. This man shows that he didn’t dehumanize his victims because he hated them or believed them to be of lesser value. Rather it shows Stahl struggling with a guilt, and to *win* over this guilt, he uses language to *dehumanize them*, making sure that the rot and death in his “work place” will not be confirmed with any “human act”. Redefining them as cargo and cattle, not innocent humans. Distancing himself from the act of perpetration.

This normalcy does not mean that we affirm that it was correct for him to do so, but it allows the implied reader to identify that Stahl’s dehumanization can also occur with *us* – a response to stress for their actions as Stanley Milgram argued in *A Matter of Obedience*.

At the end he confirms the system of murder as successful. Not specifying why, but assuring that he had no way of becoming a upstander;

Could you not have changed that?” I asked. “In your position, could you not have stopped the nakedness, the whips, the horror of the cattle pens?”
“No, no, no. This was the system... It worked. And because it worked, it was irreversible.”

This becomes the *Historical Context*, the system referring to the mass-murder camp system, making the perpetrators distanced from their victims. It worked he argues, and history agrees. It did work indeed, since so few perpetrators decided to reject the Nazi-pogrom.

Stahl, based on this citation, would never consider stopping the horror; no, no, no, he answers right away. Arguing that there was *no way around*, that the distance and efficiency in the Nazis Final Solution were so successful that one had no chance of reversing it. Doris Bergen argues for this as well, proclaiming that even if people like Stahl decided to take reservations, the Nazis would always find many more willing people to do the job. It didn't matter, if it not *all* decided to make reservations;

“Germans were not forced to be killers. Those who refused to participate were given other assignments or transferred. To this day no one has found an example of a German who was executed for refusing to take part in the killing of Jews or other civilians. Defense attorneys of people accused of war crimes have looked hard for such a case because it would support the claim that their clients had no choice. The Nazi system, however, did not work that way. There were enough willing perpetrators so that coercive force could be reserved for those deemed enemies,” *Obeying Orders, chapter 10, Doris Bergen cit.*

It would not be enough for one to stop. All had to simultaneously. Franz ‘conflict, between weakened by guilt, but still proclaiming that the *system* was too great to resist, shows just how ordinary he is. He is not Captain Ahab that with great vigour or hatred pushes himself through the *impossible* to hunt his whale. Franz quells as he sees the seven seas, and decides it is meaningless to pursue. Even if we all want to be heroes, the reality seldom confirms this.

The reason for his *otherness*, of dehumanizing and *getting used to liquidations*, is mainly because he never became a *hero* in this story, he never tried to resist it. All heroes resist the system at some aspect, either against Godlike beings, against *Time itself*, or some other *abstraction* like Franz' *system*. His weakness only forces him to redefine what makes him suffer. By denying its existence, he ignores his pain but also the sympathy for his victims. This choice made it possible for Franz to keep going in the death camps.

6.4.3 Conclusion

This section has done an analysis of the empathy that the text can potentially produce by the implied reader. By looking into primary sources of the perpetrators; Franz Stahl and Walter Stier. Insight into how the perpetrator perceived their victims, increasing their distance between themselves and their victims. It shows the importance of historical context, their situation at the time.

The implied reader is allowed entrance into both their otherness and their normalcy, by analysing the language signs that the perpetrators articulate.

They all have a form of shared normalcy, Walter Stier is the bureaucratic worker, doing nothing irregular, but his context – role in the Holocaust, and his attitudes, evident in his language differ from “us”. Unlike Stahl, he is more “passive” in his dehumanization, his working situation provides “ignorance” into the terrible matters of the Holocaust. Not denying that he apparently had some information of what these camps meant. But he shows no interest in pursuing it. Rather he sits comfortably behind his desk, plotting the names, fees and ages of the victims on paper.

Franz Stahl, struggles with guilt in his, his memories provide us insight into the process of reconceptualizing his victims. Dehumanizing them to cattle/masses/cargo. His moment of weakness does not change the fact that in the end – “he got used to the liquidations”. His exemplifies the rather ordinary, pathetic characteristics that has been interpreted in Mayor Trapp. Too weak to resist, but still feeling guilt. Always arguing that it was nothing to be done. Neither a villain nor a hero.

Though they normally wouldn't be regarded as *otherness*, i.e. their normalcy is presented in their position – working and contributing to society. The society new codes of conducting, which conflicts with what we today call the universal human rights. Rather than denying the existence of this new “truth”, they deny and redefine the existence of the other, the Jews.

Chapter 7 – Why should we learn about perpetrator behaviour?

FHAO has chosen a pluralistic representation of the Holocaust perpetrators. Using recent and canonical studies like Browning and Bauman to present the *human face* of the perpetrators. While diminishing Hitler's role in the Auschwitz development.

Hitler and his Nazi society play's a greater role in chapter 7-8, about the National Socialism from 1933, but loses his dominant position in the narrative when the Holocaust is introduced. For FHAO, Hitler plays the *role of decision-maker*, the agitator, but not the *technician, coordinator nor the executioner*. He was many things, but he couldn't possibly do all. In the end, he needed the bureaucracy, non-governmental organizations like the "special trains" and other worker-bees to succeed in his plan in exterminating the European Jewry.

In this chapter, discussion on why we should learn from this type of perpetrators, and their contribution to a greater understanding of the Holocaust that can possibly prevent any similar future event.

First, I will the discuss the prevalent notion of "banality of evil" that can be argued for in the FHAOs representation of perpetrators. And how it can be transferred to educational purposes.

Secondly, the final goal of becoming a *upstander* – the FHAOs term for democratic citizenship. The real fear, I argue, is not that students will become "perpetrators", but "bystanders". How does perpetrator-understanding contribute to develop upstanders? To resist becoming bystanders.

Finally, the concept of FHAOs upstanders and the possibility of resisting antisemitic hatred, racial prejudice through history, will be discussed. Investigating the construction of global community. Is it possible to expand communal identity through history, further than the nation-state?

Banality of Evil – Useless suffering

The research has analysed many different perpetrator accounts, and though it has no focus on the victim-experience, does not mean that they are excluded. The victim is always there, perpetrator and victim are interrelated because one cannot exist without the other.

For an educator it can be difficult to choose "one for the other". Most will naturally want to come out showing respect for the memories of the victims, if it means neglecting the perpetrators.

From an ethical perspective, the argument that perpetrators do not deserve to be inquired upon, can be fair. But from the point of research and future resistance, a great opportunity will ignored;

"One rationale behind refusing to study the perpetrators of the Nazi horrors is the belief that they do not deserve the dignity even of being made objects of study. Behind the work of those who study the

perpetrators is the idea that unless we understand how it was that humans came to do such evil, we will not be in a position to prevent it from happening again,” (Geddes, 2003, p. 104).

For this study, it is the first argument that must be considered. As Geddes points out, though the perpetrators are indeed *humane*, the effect of their actions has constructed we have yet not been able to fully address. The suffering of the victims is so significant, that evil seems to be the only able term available for description.

Geddes argues that we don't need to choose between *mythologizing evil*, thus, paying respect to the suffering victims. Nor do we need to *clean up suffering*, making the perpetrators *less responsible of doing evil*;

These two temptations-to mythologize evil and to “clean up” suffering arise out of the understandable desire to avoid the outrage of evil and the suffering it inflicts, but as scholars of evil, we need to recognize these temptations and resist them,” *ibid.* 106.

Something we *want to believe* rather than it being the truth. She argues that Arendt and Delbos notions on suffering and evil might be able to develop a resistance to this form of temptation. Establishing knowledge about the nature of suffering and evil, while bridging the gap between the suffering victims and the perpetrators, so that one doesn't do harm the other.

Arendt's concept of banality of evil, correspond with FHAO's depiction of perpetrators. Stier and Stahl, and the implicit attention to “those that worked for the Führer”. They all sought purpose in their duty for the nation/government without any moral consideration. Arendt puts it in simple terms; “Eichmann was no Iago”, he was no evil manifestation. Seeking destruction for the sake of destruction.

Geddes argues that this made it possible for Arendt to conceive a dynamic notion of evil;

“Implicit in this idea is the suggestion that evil has many forms, that these forms may change over time, and that historical/sociological contexts may produce new forms of evil and evildoers. In other words, Arendt's thesis points to an understanding of evil as particular, evolving, and nonessentialist. In fact, that she arrived at her thesis about evil by attending an historical event and focusing on a particular perpetrator suggests that Arendt herself resisted essentialist understandings of evil,” *ibid.* 109.

A similar implication can be found in the narrative of the Holocaust, the evolution of mass murder. From the terrible mass shootings to the mass-gassing. Presenting evil in more than one form.

To understand particular evil means to be sensitive and attentive to the mechanics and factors that it draws on. In the “postmodern condition”, there is no rule to foresee new evils. We cannot predict what new forms of evil might arise the next month. Where it will take form etc. Thus, to prevent it, the particular must be investigated. Identifying what makes the clock tick. Only focusing on the “abstract” evil, we will be blind to any *new* forms of evil arising in our time:

“By thinking that evil has an unchanging, abstract essence, we may fail to recognize the particular, unfamiliar form that evil has taken right in front of us. In other words, Eichmann *in* Jerusalem, rightly understood, moves us in the direction not of essentializing evil or reducing all of evil (including the suffering of evil to banality, but rather towards specifying what we are talking about each time we use the multivalent term “evil,” *ibid.* p. 110.

Delbo draws the line between knowing of evil – without suffering, and knowing of evil *through* suffering. She argues that knowing about suffering through experiencing suffering, is “useless” knowledge. The victim cannot use this knowledge for life, it gives the sufferer no meaning;

“For Delbo, the knowledge acquired through suffering is costly but not useful, a liability not an asset, and it is “far better to know nothing” of this kind of knowledge,” *ibid.* 112.

From the perspective of the sufferer, suffering cannot be translated or transacted into any meaning/value for him/her continues life. For the outsider, it might develop resistance. Just like medicine-science, the living can research the dead to find useful knowledge to prevent the disease in spreading among the living, but this knowledge is not useless for those already dead or heavily infected.

In this concept, Delbo comes with an important argument about knowing about suffering. Because regarding suffering, i.e. the victims suffering-experience, we cannot know about it, we can only know *its effect*;

“If there is anything “useful” to come out of Delbo’s experience in Auschwitz, it is not from the knowledge acquired through suffering, for that knowledge is part of the infliction and ongoing effects of suffering.

The knowledge, like the memories, is part of the haunting past that the survivor lives with in the present. The knowledge gained from suffering is part of the suffering itself, not a good that can be extracted from it. To know one has seen one's mother dead and not shed a tear is to know the extent of one's own degradation, to know how unlike one's self one can be made to become, and that knowledge is part of the devastating destructiveness of evil," *ibid.* p. 112.

The importance lies in *unlearning* as learning. Unlearning what evil truly is. She uses details and her language to make the reader aware of his misunderstanding. True suffering cannot be *sentimentalized*, it is a disgusting truth we find in Delbo. She shows the gap between those that experienced and those that can only imagine. Between truth and imagination;

"She reveals our temptation to sentimentalize suffering: "So you believed that only solemn words rise to the lips of the dying. . . . Naked on the charnel house's pallets, almost all our comrades said, 'I'm going to kick the bucket.' They were naked on a naked board. They were dirty and the boards were soiled with pus and diarrhea" . . . Our knowledge will always be partial and inadequate, and we should allow our "knowledge" of suffering to be thoroughly interrogated by those who have another kind of knowledge of suffering, a "useless knowledge" that haunts them," *ibid.* p. 113.

Geddes relate these two author so that the temptation of sentimentalizing, and mythologizing, is avoided. Underneath there lies the lesson that one must be careful in claiming any truth about both suffering of the victims and the quality of perpetrators. The best example by FHAO is the explanation by Erna Petri, the housewife killer. Even though the setting and context, the details of the account and explanation is possible, those that did not experience the times of the 1930-1940 society, will not truly understand the shaping of the mentality that shaped her choice.

What Geddes suggests with these two scholars, is a dialogue between them that is useful in attempting to *learn from the Holocaust*. She suggest that unlearning and learning about particularities is central to engage with "evil". That evil is dynamic and unknown, that only through these "micro-studies" of different particular evils, can one develop awareness of it.

The Holocaust showed how human minds could create something otherworldly. Using tools that had existed for a period, to develop something incomprehensible. To resist a new event of equal force, we must use creative ways to hinder such development. Studying the particular can reveal the

mechanics behind it, but not give an antidote. Since evil takes many forms, is always dynamic, so must resistance be.

To do so, we must learn to pause Geddes argues;;

“Because evil can take on new forms with the emergence of new historical and social contexts, we will never have solved the problem of evil once and for all. Our knowledge of evil is always partial, always in process, always in need of interrogation. We need to pay ongoing attention to the particular forms evil takes and to move away from the thoughtlessness that is sometimes linked to the infliction of harm. That evil can be banal, that knowledge can be useless, should give us pause-pause enough to look around to see what unfamiliar shapes evil might be taking in our present world and pause enough to listen to the testimonies of those who have suffered evil,” *ibid.* p. 114.

But this can only be done by understanding what *makes evil possible* and thus, take the view of the perpetrators, not to let the effect hinder us from allowing students to not only see, but also talk about what created the particular events.

All historical events are unique, they never take the same form. Nothing repeats itself identically. But human aspects are always present. Though evil take new forms, some commonality between the human notion might be identified. That though the event of Holocaust were something disastrous, especially for the victims, and it though it *should* never have happened, there is something in human behaviour that allows it. And by studying these particularities, something common can be identified.

Thus, everyone must be sensitive to the notion of human behaviour and particular evil. Knowledge gained from this should be active all time, at work, through public discussions, while reading the newspapers. Evil slumbers and can only be awakened by humanity, no abstract force, deity or ideology. But since its core is human, only humans can resist it. Which brings us into what makes it possible for us to resist it.

Becoming an upstander – by understanding the perpetrator

The main purpose of analysing these resources on perpetrators is to see if they, by their textual construction of meaning and knowledge production, can suggest of a development of resistance against perpetrating. Beyond that point lies the

development of *upstanders* as the FHAO calls it. But is the knowledge of what makes perpetrators enough to consider the reader an *upstander*?

In social psychology three steps are presented to *get out of the bystander position* when facing wrong doings. Which is essentially the situation that the Holocaust argues for – that by learning about the Holocaust, learners will *act against it*, i.e. be active against oppression, racism etc.

The three steps are;

1. Notice what is happening, and interpret it as an emergency
2. Assume a personal responsibility in the situation
3. Develop a constructive course of action, (Porpora, 1990, p. 25).

Though knowledge can be gained to identify emergency situations – for example if the nation were devising actions to *obscure* the truth, using the sciences presented as objective but without the aspect of human error/human aspect, i.e. the dogmatic truth. Or if process of human treatment did not regard the aspect of *the human*, i.e., bureaucracy without ethical reflections.

The individual still needs to feel *personal responsibility* in this situation and develop a constructive course of action – meaning that he/she must construct a *presumably new* way of action that does not disregard/disrupt the democratic values in the society.

Porpora argue that individuals interpret their social settings before deciding to *act*. Our social codes always ask us to determine the social context and behaviour before *sticking our heads out*;

“The presence of other bystanders to an emergency also affects the second evaluation we must make in order to come to the victim's aid. This occurs through a process called the diffusion of responsibility. When one person witnesses an emergency, the whole responsibility for action may devolve upon him or her, but when many people simultaneously witness an emergency, responsibility is diffused among all. Thus, whereas it may be necessary for only one of the bystanders to intervene in the situation, each bystander assumes that someone else will do so. The end result is that nobody takes action”, *ibid.* p. 26.

This idea made the “system successful” as Franz Stahl puts it. It would never be enough for one perpetrator to deny the dogma of the government. The problem with the “bystanders”/perpetrators of the Holocaust was that there was a pool of

participants waiting. If one denies his role, another will take over. The impact of denying would not have much effect on the system.

In order to resist any new Holocaust, it is not enough with one man standing up, a greater number would be needed. To do so, a group with felt personal responsibility must be constructed.

There is no argument that perspective recognition by students can provide this personal responsibility.

This is the *constraints of historical empathy*, as perspective recognition. Even though it can provide insight into the individual perpetrator's situation and experience. It does not mean imply a development of *responsibility*. This view is shared by Barton and Levstik, which is why they introduce an empathy as "caring", apart from empathy as perspective recognition.

I identify one way of developing upstanders based on perpetrator-knowledge. The FHAO try to solve this problem of personal responsibility by constructing a common history – they try to develop a *cosmopolitan identity*, a *grand we* through the Holocaust. Just as for Germany, the *shame of the Holocaust*, contributed in a *cleansing* through active international work based on democratic values in the EU after the war. The FHAO seems to try to contribute the same *grand we* for the perpetrators. Not referring to the *shame of the German nation*, but *the shame of humanity*.

What if this shame or guilt could be adopted by all individuals as a burden we carry together? If perpetrator of the Holocaust became our perpetrating history, a part of human history – it could be recognized as a reason to act against all racial hatred. Something similar to a personal responsibility.

Similar discourse is used to address the issue of global warming. The shame of leaving future generation with the memory that "we", the humans of our era, contributed in destroying earth's eco-system. This discourse present contemporary humans, not politicians isolated, as possible perpetrators – for the future generations.

Of course, there is no guarantee that this is possible. But in the next section I want to address some aspects of it. Because it is an interesting idea that the FHAO touches upon. To develop a human history and hence a human identity. If the shame of the past can motivate all to take personal responsibility while awareness of "evil" is heightened, resistance will increase.

A Larger 'we'

What the FHAO seek to do is challenge the traditional notion of *group*, i.e. the national community based on ethical relationship or nationality. Both chapter 1 and 2 relates to the community and the problematic of we and other. In the chapter on empiri, I argued that the FHAO seeks develop a pluralistic democracy. A democracy that is rooted on cultural exchange and acceptance.

This idea is present in *Universe of obligation*, chapter 2:

“In other words, a society’s universe of obligation includes those people who that society believes deserve respect and whose rights it believes are worthy of protection ...

Of course, we have to respond to our immediate family, but, once they're O.K., we need to expand the circle. A larger sense of family is a radical idea, but we get into trouble as a society when we don’t see that we’re in the same boat,” *Universe of obligation*, chapter 2.

In chapter 2 they refer to colonial America, Imperialism, National Germany in the 19th century, Antisemitism in USA and France in the time of Washington and Napoleon, Imperialism, and Darwinism, all to exemplify the dangerous use of national identity that seeks to hurt the others. Those that the national community have no moral obligations towards.

The FHAO develops a discourse of *global communitarianism*.

Communitarianism is the idea that citizens have moral obligations to protect and not do harm against members of their own community;

“Communitarianism is about the reciprocal obligations embedded in tradition and history which are owed to members of one’s own community in a way they are not to fellow human beings anywhere,” (*Questioning Cosmopolitanism*, 2010, p. 9).

If the community is expanded, so is the obligation. If the community is expanded globally, so is the obligation, no matter the cultural difference. By using history – *human history* – they present a common past of different *human behaviour*, at the same time promoting a global community.

For example, the reading *Understanding Strangers* in chapter 2, promotes this by referring to a common “cultural history”, using metaphors for *separation* and *meetings*.

“But it might also be the case that, instead of attacking and fighting, this family-tribe that we are watching decides to fence itself off from others,

to isolate and separate itself. This attitude leads, over time, to objects like the Great Wall of China, the towers and gates of Babylon, the Roman limes [border fortifications] and the stone walls of the Inca.

Fortunately, there is evidence of a different human experience scattered abundantly across our planet. These are the proofs of cooperation—the remains of marketplaces, of ports, of places where there were agoras and sanctuaries, of where the seats of old universities and academies are still visible, and of where there remain vestiges of such trade routes as the Silk Road, the Amber Route and the Trans-Saharan caravan route,” citing Ryszard Kapuscinski, in *Understanding Strangers*, chapter 2.

Some critics might argue that creating a global community would erase the local community particularities, erasing a local identity and obligation. But it doesn't seem like this is the case. We all have a form of social reality that is embedded in the global community, through popular fiction, social media, international law, yet we all seem to identify with both nationality, regional and family.

There was a sense of sorrow when Notre dame went into flames, even though most people never visited the cathedral, some probably haven't been to France. Yet there was a sensation of loss that day. So there seems to be potential for a larger community in our age. Constructing more of a global history, or rather *human history*, might help in developing these relations.

Arguably this would be a needed competence when facing so many global issues today, not only genocides but also climate change and global terrorism. Which could be pacified by some degree by acknowledging cultural differences as well as allowing others to be part of the same community.

In a world where many *new* thoughts are thought, new everyday choices differ the “ordinary”. Either it being sexual orientations, vaccinations, choice of food, spare time, etc. It is essential to make students remember that there are commonalities between us, for good or worse. When someone different is harmed, harassed or unrighteous treated, one always has a role and responsibility when witnessing such actions.

Schools are the best community for meeting different cultural expressions. Neglecting pluralism only to develop a national identity, would not serve a global community. Making it harder to solve global issues of importance that will have profound impact on us.

It is easy to assume that the evil of the past is in the past, especially when it is discussed as *evil* in the satanic discourse. But it becomes important to be

attentive to the knowledge that evil can come in many forms and is always potential in every community. A global community, who seeks to understand and relate to others, who feels an obligation to a human morality, reduces the chances of evil to prosper. Managing to develop a positive national identity as well as a global one should not be impossible.

Referanser

- Arendt, H. (2006). *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*: Penguin.
- Barr, D. J. (2006). Early adolescents' reflections on social justice: Facing History and Ourselves in practice and assessment. *Intercultural Education*, 16(2), 146-160.
- Barton, K. C., & Levstik, L. S. (2004). *Teaching History for the Common Good*. Mahwah, UNITED STATES: Routledge.
- Bauman, Z. (2005). *Modeniteten og Holocaust* (M. Nygård, Trans. 2. ed.). Oslo: Vidarforlaget.
- Browning, C. R. (2017). *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101* HarperCollins Inc. .
- FHAO. (2017). Holocaust and Human Behavior. Revisted.
- Geddes, J. L. (2003). Banal Evil and Useless Knowledge: Hannah Arendt and Charlotte Delbo on Evil after the Holocaust. *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, 18(1), 104-115. doi:10.2979/HYP.2003.18.1.104
- Goldenhagen, D. J. (1997). *Hitler's Willing Executioners; Ordinary Germans and The Holocaust*: Penguin.
- Hellestrand, S. (2009). *En undersøkelse av hvilke historier om Holocaust som framstilles i utvalgte norske lærebøker fra perioden 1998-2007*. (Master), University of Stavanger, Stavanger.
- Henning, K. M. E. (2013). Designing a Tool for History Textbook Analysis. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 14(1), 21.
- Hühn, P., Meister, J. C., Pier, J., & Schmid, W. (2014). *Handbook of Narratology* (2 ed. ed.): Walter De Gruyter.
- Kaiser, W. (2010). Nazi perpetrators in Holocaust education. *Teaching History*(141), 6.
- Karayanni, S. F. E. (2017). Portrayals of the Holocaust in English history textbooks, 1991–2016: continuities, challenges and concerns. *Holocaust Studies*, 23(3), 314-344.
- Karayanni, S. F. E. (2018). Research into Textbook Portrayals of National Socialism and The Holocaust. In E. F. A. Boch (Ed.), *Palgrave Handbook of Textbook Research*. Germany: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Lawson, T. (2010). *Debates on the Holocaust : Debates on the Holocaust*. Manchester, UNITED STATES: Manchester University Press.
- Marks, S. (2007). Teaching About National Socialism and the Holocaust: Narrative Approaches to Holocaust Education. *Interchange*, 38(3), 263-284. doi:10.1007/s10780-007-9029-9
- Novick, P. (2000). *The Holocaust in American Life*. Boston, USA: Marine Books.
- Pettitt, J. (2017). *Perpetrators in Holocaust Narratives; Encountering the Nazi Beast*: Springer Nature.
- Porpora, D. V. (1990). *How Holocausts Happen : The United States in Central America*. Philadelphia, UNITED STATES: Temple University Press.
- Questioning Cosmopolitanism*. (2010). (Vol. 6). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, Dordrecht.
- Russel, P. B. S. G. (2010). The Holocaust as history and human rights: A cross-national analysis of Holocaust education in social science textbooks, 1970–2008. *Prospects: An Annual Journal of American Cultural Studies*, 40, 153-173.
- Sara A. Levy, M. S. (2018). "Difficult Knowledge" and the Holocaust in History Education. In *The Wiley International Handbook of History Teaching and Learning* (1 ed., pp. 365-387): John Wiles & Sons, inc.
- Schultz, L. H., Barr, D. J., & Selman, R. L. (2001). The Value of a Developmental Approach to Evaluating Character Development Programmes: An Outcome Study of "Facing History and Ourselves.". *Journal of Moral Education*, 30(1), 3-27. doi:10.1080/03057240120033785
- Stone, D. (2003). *Constructing The Holocaust: A Study in Historiography* (Paperback ed.). Great Britain: Vallentine Mitchell London.
- Stuart Foster, A. P., Andy Pearce, Rebecca Hale, & Adrian Burgess, P. S., Ruth-Anne Lenga. (2016). *What do students know and understand about the Holocaust? Evidence from English secondary schools*. Retrieved from Great Britain, London:
- Syse, H. (2016). Nazisme uten antisemittisme ; om fremstillingen av nazismen i norske skolebøker. *Nytt Norsk Tidsskrift*, 33(1-2), 111-122.
- Szejnmann, O. J. C.-C. W. (Ed.) (2014). *Ordinary People as Mass Murderers: Perpetrators in Comparative Perspectives* (Paperback ed.). UK: Palgrave Macmillan
- Twiss, S. B. (2010). CAN A PERPETRATOR WRITE A TESTIMONIO? Moral Lessons from the Dark Side. *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 38(1), 5-42. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9795.2009.00413.x