Katrin Antweiler

Memorialising the Holocaust in Human Rights Museums

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Endorsement

Katrin Antweiler's book offers its readers a new set of concepts and empirical studies that deepen and challenge the established understandings about politics of Holocaust remembrance. Braiding together questions of public narrativization and historical emplotment of the Holocaust, the international human rights project and the imperative of contemporary museums to educate and raise awareness, *Memorialising the Holocaust in Human Rights Museums* shows with admirable deftness that museums, no less than prisons, clinics, or laboratories, are sites of discursive operations of power, discipline, and docile embodiment. While Antweiler skilfully navigates the empirical field of debates, exhibitions, installations, artefacts, and ideas found in three museums of Holocaust remembrance in Germany, Canada, and South Africa, she also needs to be credited with paying careful attention to *what is not seen*—to discursive inconsistencies and omissions she encountered during her fieldwork, to mnemonic myopias and exclusions, to tacit interests and agendas, as well as to power relations and structures of domination that remain hidden from view. In effect, the book masterfully critiques the presumed reparative effects of contemporary curatorial practices and acts of 'putting memory on display'—acts that Antweiler aptly dubs 'exhibitionary atonement'—and thus stipulates an important reflection about the political frameworks of visibility in relation to the broader narratives of redress for historical wrongdoing.

By meticulously demonstrating its central premise—that the way we remember the painful and difficult past is inseparable from the emergence of truth regimes, dominant norms, and citizen-subjects—the book casts into stark relief the key problem of global governmentality and global citizenship: that the notion of shared humanity and of the human as a universal rights holder is a politically contested and ethically suspect category. Drawing expertly on a wide spectrum of scholarly texts from memory and museum studies, governmentality theory, human rights museology, post-colonial debates, and critiques of neo-liberalism, *Memorialising the Holocaust in Human Rights Museums* presents the political and ethical implications of the imbrication of human rights with mnemonic discourses, museum displays, and educational programs with clarity, eloquence, and sophistication.

If indeed the provocative thesis at the heart of the book is correct—that museums' capacity to disseminate knowledge and to produce memory is inseparable from the social processes of subjectification—how do we respond to these interpellations into position of moral innocence, dutiful and compassionate citizenship, and 'norm entrepreneurship'? Equally critical of narratives of prog-

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ress and tolerance, *Memorialising the Holocaust in Human Rights Museums* offers no easy answers; it does, however, outline for the reader a hypothetical project of a museum that is to come, and which the author intriguingly references as 'the Museum of Doubt'. She thus explores the potential of memory to fuel resistance, counter-action, and civic disobedience, and the museum as a space where one can, potentially, become receptive to what is confronting, uncomfortable, perhaps even unbearable, in history.

This book is a *tour de force* critique of the ways in which in today's world memory has been institutionalized, instrumentalized, and optimized to neo-liberal effects. Antweiler clearly demonstrates that memory has emerged as a key technique of power and governance. Anyone in doubt about how our dominant cultural patterns of remembrance and commemoration produce political rationalities, shape norms of conduct, and influence cultural policy, should reach for this brilliant and masterful text.

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Contents

1 Of Memorialisation and Citizenship Ideals: Introduction to a Constellation of Contemporary Memory

Even as the events of the Holocaust recede into the past, new monuments to its memory are still being debated, commissioned and eventually inaugurated in various places in and outside of Europe. While a Holocaust memorial and learning centre is expected to open its doors in the British capital of London in 2025, the Dutch city of Amsterdam erected a new national Holocaust monument in September 2021. In the same month, the city of Frankfurt in Germany saw the dedication of a new memorial to the *Kindertransport*.[1] Another monument in memory of the victims of the 1941 Babyn Jar massacre was also erected in the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv in 2021, including a larger memorial centre yet to be opened at the site of the massacre itself (the realisation of which is uncertain at the time of writing due to the war that Russia launched against Ukraine in February 2022). More recent Holocaust memorials can be found across the Western Balkans, most of which were only commissioned in the past five to ten years, mainly in relation to EU membership prospects (Miloševic and Trošt 2021). Another area that has seen a recent upsurge in memorial sites is Canada, which inaugurated its first official National Holocaust Monument in September 2017 and, in 2021, announced the opening of a new Holocaust museum in Toronto. Not all of these sites and centres are state-sponsored. Many were initiated by local and global NGOs, sometimes in partnership with, sometimes in opposition to, government politics.

However, these concrete manifestations of Holocaust memory and their spread are only one indication of a trend that began at the dawn of the new millennium and which Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider (2006) have described as the globalisation of Holocaust memory. Furthermore, it is related to the increased "standardisation of memory" (David 2017), evinced not only by a large number of similar-looking monuments – many of them even designed by the same artists – but also in the statements made on the occasion of their inauguration or on memorial days more generally. The speeches given by state representatives around such days frequently sound alike, even when the respective speakers are political

1 The term *Kindertransport* refers to the relocation of approximately ten thousand Jewish child refugees who fled from the Nazis. Between November 1938 and September 1939, these children were rescued from the German Reich and neighbouring countries threatened by Nazi occupation and brought to safer places, mostly to Great Britain.

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opponents and have no other common ground but their repudiation of the horrendous crimes of the Holocaust. Forms of Holocaust memorialisation are thus gradually becoming a moral obligation for policies promoting human rights and peace across the globe. States, international organisations and NGOs are being urged to design and organise commemorative events as well as educational initiatives to be incorporated into national curricula, memorial museums and monuments. Global Holocaust education is seen as an important pedagogical tool for shaping future generations into "global citizens"[2] interested and invested in human rights issues and ready to support both developmental and humanitarian causes. (The extent to which such activism is welcome is, however, another issue) In a similar vein, a new category of museums is spreading across the globe: human rights museums (Carter and Orange 2012). These museums are often a combination of memorial museums and "idea museums" that focus on past wrongdoings – particularly often the Holocaust – and simultaneously on disseminating societal ideals such as tolerance and equality (Brown 2006; Carter 2017). In this specific constellation, according to one of the core claims that I will investigate in this book, the memory of the Holocaust serves as a template for how *not* to behave and thus goes beyond commemorating or acknowledging certain events, crimes or individuals.

For this reason, at the heart of my case-study-based research is a comparative analysis of representations of the Holocaust in human rights museums. My analyses seek to understand how, in this specific setting, looking at the past simultaneously gestures towards the future by positing historical literacy as something for every citizen-subject to aspire to attain and, furthermore, as the means necessary to create a more just world. It is due to the ability of Holocaust memory in its conflation with human rights discourse to delineate an ideal of citizenship that I suggest that certain forms of memory have become a means of government (in the Foucauldian sense).[3] That is to say: in certain constellations, public memory (indirectly) shapes citizens' conduct and thereby influences the ways in which they engage in society. The key aim of this book is to investigate this particular function of Holocaust memory while taking an innovative approach to memory studies that adds to a broader understanding of our times and political conditions.

In this context, my starting premise is that exhibitions and educational programmes about the Holocaust are increasingly being designed to foster the core

2 A detailed account of the concept and its relation to Holocaust memory will be provided in chapter 4 as well as chapter 8 of this book.

3 I use the term "government" in the Foucauldian sense. I will elaborate on the underlying analytical concept of governmentality in the first section of chapter 2.

values of liberal democracy and aim to create a sense of widely shared responsibility for society and for humanity at large. I will argue that the "lessons for humanity" to be drawn from the Holocaust are integral to the United Nations' endeavours to further global citizenship education. This is because, in contemporary democratic discourse, human beings are not only conceived of as the capital required to organise lives according to market rationale but also as active citizens who are empowered to claim their democratic rights just as much as they are expected to behave responsibly and in line with the laws and values of their societies (Cruikshank 1999; Brown 2015). In the broadest sense, this means that each and every one of us is in charge of harnessing and protecting liberal democracy's core values and achievements, which are generally associated with peace, tolerance and, above all, human rights. By turning to the Holocaust, every citizen-subject is at once reminded of the dangers of undemocratic behaviour and consequently called upon to stay alert and to protect, if necessary, the democratic order. At the crossroads of human rights education and representations of Holocaust history, we therefore find a synergetic interplay between the two fields that is producing not only a new corpus of knowledge about the past and its impact on the present and future but also ideals for democratic conduct. This is striking and invites further analysis when scrutinised from a perspective that is critical of today's neoliberal forms of government and its subjects. If we understand neoliberalism as a modality of governing concerned with shaping subjects to be individualised enterprises with an immense responsibility for the well-being of society, we need to pay further attention to the normative concept of citizenship mentioned above and how it is underscored by Holocaust memory. Thus, the main goal of the project outlined here is to shed light on the ability of Holocaust memory to shape, guide and thus govern modern subjects – an ability that, as I hope to demonstrate, has taken on global dimensions.

Even though the trend described has been growing since the beginning of the 2000s, efforts to re-establish peace across Europe gave way to a notion of "sharing history" as a means of harmonising the war-torn continent as early as in the immediate aftermath of the end of the Second World War (Judt 2006).[4] Attempts to generate shared memory subsequently shaped the idea that memories of the past, even – or especially – very painful ones like those of the Holocaust, have a bridging ability if they are understood as "shared" (Bevernage 2018, 73). This assumption eventually gave rise to the imperative of global memory, which operates on the level of recommendations rather than laws and which requires nation states and individuals alike to acknowledge the importance of sincerely facing

4 A more nuanced account of the evolution mentioned here can be found in chapter 3.

difficult pasts in order to "heal" (David 2020). Moreover, the "globalisation" and thus transformation of Holocaust memory into a universal warning sign has simultaneously fused with "the contemporary salience of human rights" (Moyn 2014, 87). The entanglement between Holocaust memory and the global human rights project[5] has resulted in the ongoing interdependence of these two discourses, meaning that the universalised memory of the Holocaust gives legitimacy to human rights politics, while the human rights issues of today are assigning immense, direct importance to Holocaust memory because of the lessons to be learned from it. Therefore, global, public Holocaust memory has come to rely on human rights discourse just as the human rights discourse in turn needs popular Holocaust memory in order to flourish. In its interconnectedness, this fused discourse aims to prevent future atrocities and bring closure to the past in order to achieve social harmony via shared narratives of the past that will eventually stimulate greater respect for human rights (Miloševic and Trošt 2021). In the following, I will refer to the fusion of these two discourses as the "Holocaust-human rights nexus".[6] As a result of this nexus, the Holocaust is frequently consulted as a case study of evil that vividly demonstrates the dangers of exclusivist thinking, the loss of citizenship and, ultimately, the expulsion of humans from the human collective – what is supposed to be humanity. What the Nazis and their collaborators did to the people whom they considered to be less than human is well known and has become a point of reference for the worst kinds of human rights abuses.

However, the risk and reality of not being respected as a human being and thus of being targeted by various forms of discrimination and physical violence are not something exclusively historical at which we look back in horror. It is the truth and lived experience for many people even today, because we live in a world that promises equal rights to all, although it is simultaneously being shaped by a political rationale that is based on inequality and violence (Mbembe 2017a). In this sense, the central paradox up for discussion here is that the seemingly aspirational version of democracy, for which many examples of global Hol-

5 By "the human rights project" I mean the conglomerate of various policies, programmes, institutions and actors fostering universal human rights, whether in parliament, within the United Nations or as an NGO. Moreover, I view all sorts of educational efforts cherishing the values of liberal democracy, from programmes in local schools to UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education, as part of this global project to which I will turn in more detail in chapters 4–8. My presuppositions about the political nature of human rights will be spelled out even earlier, in the second part of chapter 3.

6 This core presupposition will be played out in chapter 3.

ocaust memory education advocate,[7] is rooted in non-emancipatory practices, even though it formulates freedom and equality as its central tenets. What is more, references to or actively produced memories of the past help to set, and at the same time limit, political imagination and concepts of society. Therefore, my research is concerned not only with the lessons that Holocaust memory teaches at a superficial level – such as its inherent warnings about the dangers of hatred – but also with the less tangible impact of global memory politics on imaginaries of the present and the future. In this regard, I seek to inquire into whether and how, in correlation with human rights discourse, Holocaust memory might have become productive of the paradox described above. I suspect it has, because it promises to caution against the deadly consequences of hatred and prejudice while at the same time helping to maintain a world order that is premised on hierarchy and injustice, as it continuously suggests that liberal democracy is the best we can and should hope for.

Yet, it is not only the history and memory of the Holocaust that is woven into the fabric of the human rights project. More generally, as Joan W. Scott argues, we can see how "[a]lmost every day someone invokes the idea that history is the final arbiter of right and wrong, that if we can line up on 'the right side of history', our actions will achieve their ultimate legitimacy and a better future will be secured for all" (2020, 1). It is, of course, far from easy to agree on where the "right side of history" might be located and how we might position ourselves on it, let alone what a "better future" might look like on the societal level. This "right side of history" is often the subject of heated disputes, as vividly demonstrated by current anti-colonial movements and their demands for the decolonisation of cities and their infrastructure, as well as, for example, curricula and museums. But in the realm of the human rights project and its practices of memorialisation, there seems to be a consensus that condemning the Holocaust and relating this condemnation to human rights activism does indeed position us on the desired "right side of history".[8] This frequent linkage of the wish to be on the

7 I came up with the term "memory education" in an attempt to grasp the interdependence of public memory and education. More on this can be found in chapter 4.

8 I am, of course, aware of contestations of this consensus voiced foremost by members of the many old and new right-wing movements that are on the rise around the world. Nevertheless, even members of the German AfD party visit Holocaust memorial sites and demand to be allowed to lay flowers at memorial ceremonies – for whatever dubious reasons (Antweiler 2018). That is to say, despite ongoing disputes surrounding the consensus, there is a widely agreed upon and institutionalised public opinion in favour of Holocaust memory, as memory laws such as the prohibition of Holocaust denial, for example, show (Belavusau and Gliszczyńska-Grabias 2017).

"right side" with the turn to Holocaust memory is plain to see in the ever-increasing numbers of monuments and exhibitions dedicated to the history of the Holocaust noted above as well as the growth in visitor numbers at Holocaust-related memorial sites (in pre-pandemic times). Interestingly enough, it is tourists in particular who come to visit these memorial sites, often as a part of a new "dark tourism" trend (Bajohr et al. 2020; Martini and Buda 2020). In the early 1990s, Holocaust survivor and literary scholar Ruth Klüger made a related observation, which she polemically described as follows:

> If you are in the least interested in German literature, you'll want to travel to Weimar, Goethe's town, and once you are there, you feel obliged to trudge up the steep hill of nearby Buchenwald in a show of an awe and consternation. The camps are part of a worldwide museum culture of the Shoah, nowhere more evident than in Germany, where every sensitive citizen, not to mention every politician who wants to display his ethical credentials, feels the need to [...] have his picture taken. (Klüger 2001, 61)

Whereas the "worldwide museum culture" of the 1990s usually involved taking pictures in front of memorials to prove one's "ethical credentials", today's historical conscience is morally charged with an even greater duty than individual sensitivity: the responsibility to line up on "the right side of history" in the name of human rights. So, the trend observed by Klüger has intensified, and her comment about the "sensitive citizen" offers a premonition of the new ideal global citizen, whom I propose calling *the historically aware human rights activist*. In this vein, citizenship, or "the citizen" in its current formation, can be understood as follows:

> The citizen is an effect and an instrument of political power rather than simply a participant in politics. [...] [D]emocratic citizenship is less a solution to political problems than a strategy of government. [...] This is a manner of governing that relies not on institutions, organized violence or state power but on securing the voluntary compliance of citizens. (Cruikshank 1999, 5)

In accordance with this definition, I am postulating one aspect of citizenship that will be crucial throughout the analysis pursued in this book: that the formulation of citizenship and hence the construction of the citizen-subject is a highly political endeavour. Scrutinising normative concepts of citizenship can therefore provide important insights into current political rationale as well as its techniques of government – and I consider memory to be one of these techniques.

* * *

There is a rich body of literature concerned with the trend towards the universalisation of Holocaust memory as well as with the proliferation of the use of his-

torical narratives within the human rights paradigm.[9] Many recent studies have focused on the problem of globalised Holocaust memory, drawing on concepts of collective and cultural memory.[10] From this starting point, investigations into recent trends in Holocaust memory culture and politics soon identified a correlation between the globalisation of the Holocaust and human rights, and, since the early 2000s, scholars from disciplines as diverse as cultural studies, history, sociology, literary studies and political science have sought to make sense of this increasing interlinkage of Holocaust memory and human rights. Approaches include a focus on how the memory of the Holocaust is being "Europeanised", which usually means attempts to find a unified European narrative of the Shoah, including clear-cut lessons to be learned from this history across the member states (e.g., Assmann and Novik 2007; Schmid 2008; Assmann 2012). Others go even further and look at how Holocaust memory is being "universalised" into a "prototype of evil" and thus transformed into a negative reference point across the world (e.g., Levy and Sznaider 2006, 2010; Sznaider 2008).

More generally speaking, most scholarly accounts focused on Holocaust memory since the transnational turn have concluded that there was a paradigm shift at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Aleida Assmann, for example, asserts that, "The year 2000 marks the starting point of a new era. In retrospect we may say today that with the beginning of the new millennium the Holocaust went global" (2010, 98). Assmann's chronicle of the development of Holocaust memory from something national to something transnational, or, more precisely, from something national to European to global, is in line with the findings made by other influential historians and memory scholars in the field, such as Tony Judt (2006), and Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, whose 2006 study on the globalisation of Holocaust memory and the emergence of "cosmopolitan memory cultures" is still instructive today. Theirs was one of the first efforts to think about Holocaust remembrance beyond Europe in a transnational context. In this as well as in their 2010 study, which they carry out against the backdrop of Ulrich Beck's theory of cosmopolitanism, Levy and Sznaider examine the ex-

9 The reason for keeping the literature review short at this stage is twofold: firstly, this book has been informed by different scholarly fields and debates which need to be spelled out in more detail than is possible in a literature review. Secondly, the entire third chapter of this book is consequently dedicated to the Holocaust-human rights nexus and therefore not only functions as a clarification of the most important presuppositions on which this project is based but also expands upon the literature review provided here.

10 The second chapter's sub-section "Memory and museum studies" is dedicated to the key concepts from the field of memory studies and will explain the different approaches in more depth.

tent to which collective Holocaust memory is being increasingly globalised, with a "cosmopolitan memory" emerging as a result. The development they attempt to grasp is mainly related to their observation that "memories of the Holocaust [...] have the potential to become the cultural foundation for global human rights politics" (Levy and Sznaider 2006, 4). They expand upon the theorisation of this trend in ten essays in their later book, *Human Rights and Memory* (2010), in which they use memory to open up broader perspectives on this entanglement by approaching constellations of human rights, looking at specific themes such as reconciliation and the function of human rights after 9/11.

While the importance of Holocaust memory for the rise of the international human rights project is increasingly being emphasised (Moyn 2014; Huyssen 2015), in the US, debates about the "Americanisation" of the Holocaust have been analogous to the ones on Europeanisation, attesting to an increase in attempts to develop shared narratives of the past and make it relatable for a US public. In 2011, Alvin Rosenfeld saw "the end of the Holocaust" in such developments, by which he meant that the universalisation of the Holocaust in memory culture and politics would eventually lead to a "diminution" (9) of its meaning. In the years that followed, more work was published on this supposed threat to the significance of Holocaust memory and often centred on issues of particular as opposed to universal perspectives on the Holocaust's complex history (Sznaider 2008; Uhl 2009; Schoder 2012). Since these seminal publications, a multitude of journal articles and book chapters have been devoted to the relationship between Holocaust memory and human rights, but few researchers have taken the genealogy of this interplay into consideration, and even fewer have attended to its wider political implications. One notable study is, for example, Bünyamin Werker's 2016 monograph, *Gedenkstättenpädagogik im Zeitalter der Globalisierung*, which sets human rights education and policy in relation to pedagogical work at Holocaust memorial sites. However, because it was produced in the field of education sciences, this volume primarily examines ongoing pedagogical programmes. Similarly, the work of sociologist Lea David (2017; 2018; 2020) also researches the relationship between memory and human rights regimes. David focuses in particular on memory politics in the former Yugoslavia and Israel, arguing against the idea that standardised forms of engaging with the past can mend divided societies or groups. A publication by Chiara De Cesari and Ann Rigney (2014) aims to create a synthesis of the two topics as well but is also largely limited to individual examples, instead of providing more thorough analysis.

One other strand of research into Holocaust memory and both the reasons for and effects of its universalisation is concentrated around issues of "competitive memory" as opposed to "multidirectional memory" (Rothberg 2009). Here,

the question is whether different memories of different genocides or mass atrocities are in conflict because they repress each other or if, as Michael Rothberg posits, they eventually produce *more* memory. In emphasising the dialogical development of public memory, Rothberg, looking at the US context, argues against the widespread assumption that, if it becomes very prominent in a society, Holocaust memory might take space away from or even block the memories of other experiences of mass violence, first and foremost systemic racism and slavery. Throughout his book, he foregrounds incidents of "cross-referencing" and tries to "re-narrate the history of Holocaust memory in relationship to discourses on colonialism, slavery and decolonisation" (Rothberg 2021, personal communication). Genocide scholar A. Dirk Moses (2021a) has put forward similar considerations and criticised the strong emphasis on the Holocaust's uniqueness within memory culture in general and German memory culture in particular. His article on the "German catechism" provoked a number of responses from primarily Anglophone genocide scholars as well as in the *feuilleton* sections of leading German newspapers such as *Die Zeit*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Berliner Zeitung*.[11] By arguing in favour of relational instead of unidirectional memory, Rothberg's and Moses' assessments differ from those of Levy and Sznaider (2006), who primarily link the globalisation of Holocaust memory to developments within Western memory culture, which has ultimately been adopted as a global standard. We may therefore contend that there are two strands within the work on globalised Holocaust memory, one that is mostly concerned with analysing the ways in which the Shoah is deprived of content and meaning, while the other looks at the imperialist or "anti-liberal" (Moses 2021b) implications such universalised memory might have due to the fact that it only allows for one "right" interpretation of the Holocaust and its legacy (Goldberg 2015, Phillips Casteel 2019).

While the academic engagement with Holocaust memory outlined above is (with some exceptions of course) a phenomenon of the 1990s and even more so of the new millennium, universal human rights have been the subject of scholarly research since their institutionalisation in 1945 at the latest. However, it is only since the 2000s that they have increasingly come into focus.[12] Since then, there have been many studies of the history of human rights and their in-

11 This complex debate also moved onto social media, and many different scholars and practitioners have participated in it under the hashtag #CatechismDebate, and some seminal articles have been collected on the blog *New Fascism Syllabus*, while the heated German-speaking debate continues and has extended across various publications such as the aforementioned newspapers.

12 I will provide my attempt to grasp the increased interest in and relevance of human rights in chapter 3.

fluence on the development of international law in particular, with varying research focuses. The well-known essay "The Aporias of Human Rights" by Hannah Arendt (1955) presented an early critique of human rights and the politics involved, which was taken up and developed further by Giorgio Agamben (1995), among others. Both Arendt and later Agamben point to a paradox intrinsic to the political project of universal human rights, which relates to the political reality of those humans who are only seen as "bare life" and not as human beings who already enjoy the right to have rights (DeGooyer et al. 2017). In Arendt's text, written in the wake of the Second World War and the Holocaust, this primarily refers to stateless people, but it can easily be applied to twenty-first-century political realities, for example, those of refugees.[13]

In her attempt to grasp human rights in their historical evolution, Lynn Hunt (2007) presented a publication on the emergence of human rights in light of the French Revolution, which was widely read. In his study, *The Ambivalence of the Good*, historian Jan Eckel (2014) addresses human rights as a policy issue in international relations since the 1940s. Other contributions to the genesis of human rights and international law have been made by José Brunner and Daniel Stahl (2016) as well as by Ruti G. Teitel (2010, 2016). Teitel's work in particular has been significant in my research for the present volume as it shows how human rights and transitional justice have together transformed into a universal morality, which she analyses against the backdrop of a globalised world, starting from the premise that transitional justice is both a legal and political concept that is being increasingly depoliticised in that it is often treated as a moral value. Following on from this, mention should be made of the research on humanitarian interventions presented by Costas Douzinas (2000, 2013) Douzinas and Gearty (2014), Stephan Hopgood (2013), and Nicola Perugini and Neve Gordon (2015), who all critique human rights policies as a novel governmental technique of the global North that claims the ability to mitigate political issues of inequality and violence (such as the situation of refugees dying in the Mediterranean Sea while attempting to reach safety in Europe) by solely addressing them as a matter of the law, before which all humans are regarded as equal despite their obvious inequalities. Didier Fassin (2012) has added to this critical scholarship with his acclaimed book *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present*, in which he explores the meaning and political function of humanitarianism as a particular form of governmentality, one that relies on the employment of "moral sentiments in contemporary politics" (2012, 1).

13 I will discuss this issue in more detail in the second section of chapter 3, as it is key to my overall analysis.

Historian and lawyer Samuel Moyn, who specialises in the recent history of human rights (2010; 2014; 2018), has expanded on this work by adding his own interest in memory politics. He has shown how social human rights in particular have led to the depoliticisation of decolonial struggles for more human rights, thereby pointing to the overall contrived nature of shared narratives about universal human rights. Unlike other historiographies, Moyn and, like him, linguist Andreas Huyssen (2003; 2010; 2011) situate the breakthrough of human rights and their moral imperatives in the late 1970s, and Huyssen draws a direct parallel to the rise of memory in this context. Following on from their findings, both Moyn and Huyssen raise the question of what rights have to do with cultural memory and why the current narrative about the history of human rights has taken the Holocaust as its point of departure, even though it played no relevant role whatsoever in the 1940s, for example, in the context of the newly founded United Nations. Moyn in particular argues that history has been instrumentalised in this context, which distinguishes his work from that of political scientist Wendy Brown (2001; 2006), who takes up a governmentality approach. Brown (2001) studies "politics out of history" and identifies a development that she calls the moralisation of politics. This refers to a tendency that seeks to explain and resolve political issues, such as conflicts between nation states, in terms of moral parameters, rather than recognising them as outcomes of power mechanisms and (nation state) interests. Following on from these analyses, Brown has also examined tolerance as a particular dimension of contemporary governmentality (a dimension Foucault could not have foreseen when he developed the concept). Both works raise the question of the discursive entanglements between tolerance, human rights and historical politics, and are therefore highly relevant to this project.

Even though I have referred above to a number of publications that consider Holocaust memory and human rights in their interconnectedness, there has still only been limited systematic or detailed exploration of the wider political implications of this nexus to date. Samuel Moyn (2014), Andreas Huyssen (2011), and Levy and Sznaider (2006; 2010) have offered explanations, but none of them thoroughly capture how these discourses came to be fused nor the extent to which this interlinkage has been accepted. However, the impact of the Holocaust-human rights nexus on global politics needs more in-depth analysis, especially with regard to decolonial critique, and the research that I have conducted for this book is only one step in this direction. One of the key aims of this book is thus to trace and subsequently give an account of more of the components in the Holocaust-human rights nexus, with a particular focus on the conditions which brought it into being.

As outlined above, since the dawn of the new millennium, a remarkable amount of work has been produced that addresses the universalisation of Holocaust memory. Many studies have been intended as a critique of these developments and have linked them to other notable changes of the time, such as the end of the Cold War, as it is commonly called (Shubin 2015), or the rise of human rights as a global ideology.[14] However, none of these efforts seem to have grasped the full extent, be it geographical or political, of this continuing globalisation of Holocaust memory. This study intends not to close a gap or fill a void but to genuinely add to the already rich but nonetheless incomplete scholarly debate by considering the very political character of public memory that is potentiated even more by its entwinement with the human rights project.

In an interview about the remits of memory studies, Andreas Huyssen (2018) explains that the study of memory "emerged as of the 1980s/90s in reaction to the loss of twentieth-century futuristic utopias". As a result, he identifies a "privileging of the past over the future", which might lead to a fixation on past events instead of "thinking about the future today" (2018). However, during my research for this volume, I have come to the conclusion that, in certain constellations, memory might actually be more about the future than it is about the past. The main aim of this book is therefore to unravel references to the history of the Holocaust which, in their intersection with human rights, have come to function as a future politics that shapes aspirations (for ourselves as much as for others) and marks the limits of our horizons of hope. Furthermore, what distinguishes my work from the research that has already been conducted around the Holocaust-human rights nexus is my focus on how the Holocaust has been memorialised in regard to the norms of citizenship that it produces: I surmise that memorialising the Holocaust in order to safeguard a better future has become a core obligation for the democratic citizen of the twenty-first century. I am therefore asking about the ways in which this new citizenship ideal can be regarded as a means of government. Ultimately, considering the important role played by the memory of the Holocaust as a moral discourse in the context of global governmentality[15] can improve upon the widespread assessment of memory as something either "good', "used appropriately" or "morally credible", or, the opposite of that, as something that is "manipulated", "highjacked" or "utilised" in the wrong way and for the wrong reasons. That is to say: the theoretical perspective of my research project – a perspective which relates it to decolonial thinking

14 I will introduce both trends in more detail in chapter 3.

15 I will explain the particularities of global governmentality in the last section of the subchapter entitled "Studies of governmentality".

as much as to Foucault's work on governmental techniques – allows us to think of memory not as something that is primarily instrumentalised by, say, the state or lobbyists, but that is instead conditioned by certain regimes of truth and that has, as I will demonstrate, its own function in the production of political rationale. In order to be able to approach the research topic outlined here holistically, the following questions will guide me through my analysis:

1. How is the Holocaust-human rights nexus narrated by institutions of memory?
2. In what sense does this nexus impact formulations of global citizenship?
3. How can the values of citizenship that are derived from the Holocaust-human rights nexus be understood in the light of global governmentality?
4. Can Holocaust memory preserve its notion of disobedience despite its universalisation in the human rights project?

Thus, my book answers interrelated questions that look at how the Holocaust-human rights nexus materialises within museums as well as the ways in which it impacts and is impacted by the ideal of global citizenship. I will then seek to answer the question of how this nexus can be regarded as a technique of global governmentality.

The perspective that my work puts forward is one that not only challenges conventional affirmative positions about human rights as our "last utopia" (Moyn 2010) but also contests the conviction that memorialising the Holocaust and learning lessons from it will automatically elevate us to become better (because we are less prejudiced) human beings. Shirli Gilbert has recently stated that "the assumption that Holocaust education can help eradicate racism and promote tolerance is a naive one" (2019, 372). In agreement with this claim, I propose a critical reading of the Holocaust-human rights nexus that goes beyond Gilbert's analysis: that is, we do not automatically stand on "the right side of history", nor do we assume some other superior position simply because we acknowledge the horrors of the Holocaust. Instead, we risk slipping into new modes of hierarchical and exclusionist thinking if we assume that such a morally "loftier" stance makes it possible to claim that the current (neo)liberal democratic political order is the most we can (and should) hope for. This volume therefore examines the global mnemonic strategy by which the Holocaust memory and Holocaust education have been judged to be especially valuable because of the "lessons for humanity" they provide. These clear-cut lessons have little in common with the once proclaimed ability of Holocaust memory to deeply unsettle and thus transform key assumptions about our world order. Moreover, it is in this vein that my project scrutinises the global trend towards turning to the history of the Holocaust for reassurance that we are standing on the right side of

history instead of reintroducing doubt into the practices of memorialisation. But the notion of doubt, of the unknown, will not just be referenced due to its scarcity but, as my last research question suggests, will also be scrutinised in terms of its continuing potential to resist some of the trends that I will identify as hegemonial.

* * *

As the title of this book suggests, I have chosen museums and, more precisely, human rights museums as sites for my investigation. In looking at these museums, I would like to probe contemporary global Holocaust memory politics by specifically focussing on the narrative that each museum conveys about the history of the Holocaust in relation to universal human rights. My research fuses the features of a conceptual volume that predominantly operates within the realm of theory with those of an empirical study. In one sense, I have proceeded as Mieke Bal suggests in *The Practice of Cultural Analysis* and made my analysis a "cohabitation of theoretical reflection and reading in which the 'object' from subject matter becomes subject, participating in the construction of theoretical views" (1999, 13). Whereas I had first planned my study to be a historical, or rather, archaeological study of the Holocaust-human rights nexus, I soon became fascinated with the contemporaneity of narratives that are rooted in (or fixated on) the past, although they are equally oriented towards the future and hence inseparable from the "now". I felt compelled to dare to do what Bal, referencing Spivak, had identified as the starting point of cultural analysis: an analysis that "involves 'saying no to what you inhabit' [...], thus impelling the analyst to reflect both on the 'no' and on the habitat; the self and the present" (1999, 12).

This book opens with a rather extensive chapter on theoretical perspectives (chapter 2), which paves the way for the specific analysis pursued here. I will not only introduce the theoretical and methodological frameworks on which I rely but will also move beyond merely describing them towards developing my own research strategy and corresponding methodology: a decolonial study of public memory from the perspective of global governmentality (chapter 2, section 4). The first subchapter presents an account of Foucauldian studies of governmentality. It is followed by another theoretical subchapter dedicated to decolonial theory, which will "brush" hegemonic knowledge production "against the grain"[16] and furthermore provide important considerations about studies

16 I am borrowing the image of "brush[ing] history against the grain" from Walter Benjamin, who closed the seventh deliberation (*These*) in his famous essay *On the Concept of History* by referring to the need to "brush history against the grain" (2002).

of global governmentality, thereby dispelling a common misunderstanding that identifies the origins of anti-colonial thought in poststructuralism (Terri-Anne and Wynne-Hughes 2020). Then, operating on the micro level, I will map out the field of memory and museum studies in relation to the theoretical insights gained in the previous two chapters. The synthesis in the last section of chapter 2 deserves special mention because it not only introduces the analytical framework for my specific investigation but more generally puts forward a novel, innovative research strategy for the field of memory studies. This will provide us with an analytical tool that will enable us to more comprehensively grasp the relationship between memory politics and the politics of citizenship as well as their impact on coloniality[17] (and vice versa). While both governmentality and decolonial approaches to aspects of world order challenge the many binaries on which conventional analyses of global politics are premised, the decolonial lens invites us to envisage the world differently, in terms of an interconnected space discursively constituted by actors who exist contemporaneously with each other. And since the "contemporary political lexicon" of democracy, human rights and tolerance reflects the naturalisation of Eurocentric imaginaries (Sharma 2019, para 4), it is imperative to challenge the formation of these popular imaginaries and their associated normative connotations. As asserted above, imaginaries of the world(s)[18] we live in are closely related to Holocaust memory at the crossroads of the human rights projects. Thus, probing the political imaginaries of democracy and human rights is key to my analysis, not least because it is concerned with programmes for global citizenship as well as a standardised set of values and mnemonic frameworks.

After having prepared the ground for my research, the chapter on theory is followed by a shorter chapter which clarifies a few important presuppositions regarding the Holocaust-human rights nexus that undergirds the present volume (chapter 3). This chapter will, in a sense, expand upon the literature review provided above and seeks to untangle Holocaust memory and the human rights project for a moment in order to better understand the historical and political conditions that produced this nexus. The brief elaborations in chapter 3 are followed by five analytical chapters (chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8). Chapter 4, about

17 The term "coloniality" and its implications will be explained in detail in the sub-chapter "Colonial conditions and decolonial critique".

18 I prefer to use the plural of "world" primarily because I have learned from the decolonial critics whom I reference that one way in which coloniality constantly re-establishes itself is by using concepts such as "world", "modernity" and "history" in the singular. However, there are a multitude of worlds and histories on this planet that need to be acknowledged and recognised if we want to genuinely understand its workings and help to make it more equal and just.

global Holocaust education endeavours in relation to human rights museology, sets the stage for the three rather descriptive case study chapters. This section already scrutinises the role of this specific museum format and connects it to ideas of conflating Holocaust education with global citizenship education. The findings presented in chapter 4 have led me to introduce the term *memory education*, which seeks to grasp precisely this merging of (global) educational programmes with practices of memorialisation. This introduction of the players in the field of global Holocaust education as well as the assessment of the importance of their work for human rights museology and vice versa is then followed by the three case studies at the heart of this book: the Memorium Nuremberg Trials in Nuremberg, Germany, with its special emphasis on the rule of law (chapter 5); the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg, Canada, a museum with the goal of establishing a global human rights culture (chapter 6); and, finally, the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa (chapter 7), which aims to safeguard democracy. Since my overall analysis is supposed to be a comparative study, I have applied an identical research design in all three cases.[19] However, the three museums are not only interesting due to their similarities but also due to their differences; each case study chapter therefore focuses on both the unique features of the museums and on the aspects that they have in common. My special focus on museums stems from the premise that cultural institutions in general and museums in particular disseminate not only knowledge but also political rationalities. Museum spaces, as Tony Bennett rightly claims,[20] are not neutral but instead always suggest a certain moral obligation and a concept of citizenship that is conveyed within the museums themselves and also in additional educational material.

The insights from chapter 4 will enter into dialogue with the empirical findings collected at the three museums to inform the comprehensive interpretative chapter which follows the case studies (chapter 8). This chapter will not only bring together the different material from each museum but, more importantly, will also make tangible the claim that memory is a means of government. Therefore, the eighth chapter is the key analytical section of this book, which will testify to the utility of the governmentality approach to memory and, moreover, establish a totally new perspective on the Holocaust-human rights nexus, which is what makes this research bold and unique at the same time. My endeavour to probe current Holocaust memory politics in light of their tendency to become

19 I will provide a detailed account of my research design in chapter 2 as well as at the end of chapter 4.

20 I will expand upon my understanding of museums as sites of government in the third subsection of chapter 2.

politics of citizenship as well as to open up new possible perspectives on the world(s) eventually culminates in chapter 9. The final section of the book should be viewed as a thought experiment rather than a strictly analytical contribution to the overall project, as it seeks to bring into conversation with each other some of the previously marginalised narratives and perspectives which brushing hegemonic knowledge against the grain laid open – to emphasise their agency and utopian potential.