

Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society  
Volume 3, Issue 2, Spring 2011, pp. 58-73

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Ina Markova. "Balancing Victimhood and Complicity in Austrian History Textbooks: Visual and Verbal Strategies of Representing the Past in Post-Waldheim Austria." *Eckert.Jemms* 2011/2. <http://edumeres.net/urn/urn:nbn:de:0220-2014-00080>.

*Post peer preview precopy edit*

Final printversion accessible from publisher Berghahn Journals under [berghahn.publisher.ingentaconnect.com/content/berghahn/emms](http://berghahn.publisher.ingentaconnect.com/content/berghahn/emms).

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## **Balancing Victimhood and Complicity in Austrian History Textbooks. Visual and Verbal Strategies of Representing the Past in Post-Waldheim Austria**

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**Abstract** • This article focuses on the impact of images on reconstructions of the past. In order to analyze the function of images in history textbooks, image-discourse-analysis is applied to a case study of Austrian post-war memory. The analysis of recent Austrian history textbooks provides insight into strategies by which notions of Austria as both “victim” and “perpetrator” of the National Socialist regime are held in balance. The article also focuses on the intentional framing of iconic depictions of two central Austrian sites of memory, Heroes’ Square (*Heldenplatz*) and the State Treaty (*Staatsvertrag*).

**Key Words** • Austria, memory, National Socialism, politics with history (*Geschichtspolitik*), visual cultural studies

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The 2003 edition of the Austrian history textbook *Zeitbilder* depicts a photograph of the presentation of the Austrian State Treaty by Chancellor Leopold Figl to the jubilant mass in 1955. This striking picture is the key image on the opening page of the chapter “Austria – Second Republic.” On a textual level, this icon of positively endowed connotations of the Austrian past is accompanied by the following explanation: “From the end of the Second World War until today, Austrian history has been a story of success.”<sup>1</sup> However, the textbook’s narrative does not indicate that this story of success was inextricably linked with forgetting the Nazi past. While National Socialism and the Holocaust were discussed in previous chapters, the photo of the State Treaty, the country’s main “pathos formula,”<sup>2</sup> functions as a threshold image. It neatly separates the dark ages of Austrian history from the bright Second Republic. This particular visual icon helps to drive home the message that, after the withdrawal of the Allied occupation, an era of freedom began.

A picture says more than a thousand words. This aphorism does not tell us how and why it does this. This article will therefore focus on the strategies of the uses of images and information in visual form. It focuses on the ways in which Austria's National Socialist past has been represented in recent textbooks, considering both the verbal and the visual level of the textbooks' narratives.

This article is divided into four parts. Part I deals with the impact of the visual on reconstructions of the past and presents the theoretical background. Part II pays special attention to the types of image used in textbooks. The advantages of the application of a combined analysis of both visual and verbal "discourse" are discussed. Part III gives insight into the cornerstones of Austrian collective memory after 1945, highlighting the transformations and central caesurae. The description of the Austrian collective memory landscape will focus on the period after 1986, after the turmoil surrounding Kurt Waldheim and how his wartime biography was treated. Finally, Part IV shows how image-discourse-analysis can be applied.

### **Why Images Matter – Images and Collective Memory**

This article addresses the broad field of memory studies. Memory, in this case, should be understood as shared knowledge of the past which is transmitted within the framework of a given community,<sup>3</sup> within the "social frameworks" defined by the French sociologist of the inter-war period, Maurice Halbwachs. The past is therefore a reconstruction of the past, a reconstruction which is shaped by present considerations. According to Halbwachs, every act of remembrance should be thought of as a social process, framed by the peer group to which the individual belongs. This notion was later modified by the German Egyptologist Jan Assmann. Assmann argued that Halbwachs' theoretical model could not grasp mnemonic processes which aim to stabilize and transmit emanations of objectified culture. He therefore introduced the groundbreaking differentiation between cultural and communicative memory. In his understanding, once a society has agreed upon certain important events, historical myths or any identity-relevant modular components in general, mnemonic storing techniques are needed in order to guarantee the enduring transmission of those contents of the cultural memory deemed relevant for a society's cultural survival. Assmann's considerations have been the starting point for a flourishing theoretical debate among various scholars. However, even if other theorists like Harald Welzer, Peter Burke, John Gillis and many more have given other names to their theoretical approaches, or have stressed other aspects of social remembering, memory theories have at least one thing in common. They all focus on a very constructivist view of a collective's past. While the field of memory theories continues

to grow, most authors draw on the thoughts articulated by Assmann or Pierre Nora, who introduced the idea of “sites of memory” (*lieux de mémoire*). They do not pay much attention to how the content of collective memory comes into being, and therefore focus on the mechanisms of transmitting a solid cultural canon.<sup>4</sup> In this respect, theorists such as Jeffrey Olick, Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney stress the importance of concentrating on social or cultural memory as a dynamic field. Olick argues that it makes more sense to refer to “mnemonic practices” rather than to a “collective memory” and defines social remembering “as the ideological projects and practices of actors in settings.”<sup>5</sup> Erll and Rigney stick to the wording “cultural memory,” while underlining the necessity of analyzing this memory’s dynamics and underlying social and medial frameworks.<sup>6</sup> All three theorists stress the importance of sketching the field of memory as constantly changing.

In order to explain why certain things about the past are remembered and others are forgotten, I want to opt for a politically connotated memory theory as defined by the Austrian theorist Oliver Marchart,<sup>7</sup> as it perfectly fits the negotiated character of visions of the past present in history textbooks. According to Marchart, collective memory should be considered as the result of resources of power, embedded in distinct historical and societal circumstances. Any view upon the past is in that respect a product of processes of political negotiations; the so-called “agents of Memoria” (Günther Sandner)<sup>8</sup> endow the members of a community with a certain hegemonic sense one has to allocate to past events. Marchart’s theory offers the possibility to understand collective memory as a procedural, contested field. Nevertheless, it is necessary to broaden Marchart’s scope of definition. He considers the past to be the heterogenic, and at the same time a hegemonic totality of those discourses in which a collective recognizes its identity<sup>9</sup>. However, one should take into account the impact of “powerful images”<sup>10</sup> on the making of a collective’s reconstruction of the past.

Reconstructions of the past are not only transmitted on a verbal and textual level, but also by using images as carriers of meaning. Pictures optimize and guide memory. They unfold resources of knowledge and emotions which they have been endowed with. They allow a more direct appropriation of the past. Despite the prominence of visual studies, one is still far from having conceptualized any kind of standard methodological or theoretical way of procedure for the analysis of pictures. Nevertheless, a few core theoretical standpoints can be clarified. Just as language can be analyzed by applying critical discourse analysis, similar patterns of thought should guide the researcher’s approach to images. The reason why discourse regimes can be scrutinized is because one does not impute any kind of autonomous power to them. They are the result of human social practices, framed by specific limiting, historically and politically concrete

conditions. The same holds true for images; they too do not operate independently from human beings. Pictures carry certain meanings, but only because humans have endowed them with those resources, not because of any “ontological” power of the image itself. Images should be regarded as integral parts of knowledge regimes, as profoundly embedded in constellations of power, just as proposed by the image theorist William Mitchell or the proponents of visual cultural studies. Mitchell focuses on the practices of seeing within the field of power instead of formulating an autonomous authority of the image. He thus concentrates on the contested “resources of visibility.”<sup>11</sup> This approach enables the researcher to focus on the “politics of visibility” and a procedure that questions the alleged evidence and authenticity images and especially photographs appear to have.<sup>12</sup> Thus, images can be analyzed as culturally, historically and medially framed phenomena, “as products of a specific plaiting of power and knowledge.”<sup>13</sup> Even if the intentionality of images should be at stake, researchers should not go so far as to completely disregard the specific characteristics of images in general and of photography in particular. This specific characteristic mentioned is due to the photographs’ indexicality, making them the most real kinds of images and linking them to the real world.<sup>14</sup> One cannot deny that pictures cannot be traced back entirely to specific strategic uses. The theoretical approach has to incorporate processes which might slip from the hands of the “agents of Memoria” and raise questions society cannot answer at a given moment. Such a procedure enables the researcher to focus on distinct non-verbal characteristics of images, their “visual salience”<sup>15</sup> that allows a picture to stand out against others, defining it as an agent within the human process of conceiving the constitution and essence of a society. Images activate resources of knowledge, but solely because we have equipped them with these features. Only in that sense are they “image acts” (Horst Bredekamp),<sup>16</sup> acts which bring facts into being. Images play an important role in the process of construing the past; the ways of looking and the way in which we interpret our world, are strongly shaped by them. As Walter Benjamin pointed out, human beings remember their past in pictures because they structure and activate recollections of historic events. With the help of politically-oriented memory theory, one can stress that the collective memory of a society not only spans a certain field of what can be *said* about the past, but also a field of what can be *shown* about the past. The German political scientist Gerhard Paul has suggested, in his influential essay “The Century of Images” (*Das Jahrhundert der Bilder*), that dominant interpretations of the past channel the selection and distribution of visual material, and that these interpretations structure collective perceptions of the past while reinforcing these perceptions every time this visual material is used.<sup>17</sup>

Despite attempts to create internationally usable history textbooks, curricula still tend to provide a very national education, endowing future

citizens with the most important collective national myths and “invented traditions” (Hobsbawm and Ranger). Likewise, Austrian collective memory does not exist per se, but is indeed carefully constructed. It is a normative way of interpreting the past, as fashioned by the official use of history to political ends or “politics with history” (*Geschichtspolitik*), and is passed on to young Austrians via national educational institutions. In school, children encounter the community to which they belong for the first time in their lives. Therefore, textbook analysis can be useful; not because one assumes that pupils meticulously memorize all information contained in a textbook, but because the textbook is a mirror of what the state wants its future citizens to know. Textbooks offer a narrative about the past, which is both a factor and a product of societal negotiations, subject to ongoing changes. In this respect, textbook analysis offers the possibility of diachronically scrutinizing the transformations and central caesurae of a collective memory. History textbooks play an important role in the national socialization of children. Even more importantly, they provide “powerful images” which forge the interpretation of the past, giving future citizens the means to look at their past through the eyes of the nation. Hence it is necessary to focus on national visual icons, and to outline their social functions and uses within the construction of the Austrian past. In short, we will have to take a look at those “political images” that “shape perception, the self and project collective and national ideologies.”<sup>18</sup>

### **The Functions of Images in Textbooks – Image-Discourse-Analysis**

The use and forms of pictures incorporated into textbooks have been modified throughout the course of history of textbook production. For a long while, pictures were used primarily as illustrations; the importance of pictures for the psychology of learning was increasingly focused upon from the 1970s. The “textbook action” (*Schulbuchaktion*) of 1972 (which distributed free textbooks to pupils) transformed textbooks into a market product, which led to steady competition between publishing companies. Images were conceived of as tools to help boost sales. Simultaneously, technical development concerning print media in general reduced costs for colored print work. At the same time, content-related change modified the use of images, and more attention was paid to their contextualization. More thought was given to elements like captions, which were more adequately used to make the polysemic image an object of discussion and contextual framing. The image turned into a “place of dialogue,”<sup>19</sup> a dialogue between image and viewer, and between now and then. What pictures always had been capable of, was now reflected upon and used as a didactical instrument. Pictures in textbooks are more than a mere element of composition. They structure pages, and their colors, size and

arrangement are influential; they are not arbitrary but adhere to given narratives and procedural assumptions. Pictures frame content, visualize issues, exemplify abstract data, fulfill affective and emotional functions, and optimize the capacity to remember. For example, photos such as the aforementioned icon of the State Treaty function as “iconic master keys,”<sup>20</sup> as they literally open the meaning of a whole range of topics. They foster insights, encourage the process of learning and remembering, and are incorporated into the textbook narrative in order to implement and anchor how pupils should relate to their past. In the remainder of this article I will focus on the analysis of photographs. Due to their alleged material and physical connection to the objects they represent, photographs tend to be interpreted as evidence. One imputes a higher degree of authority to photos; they require special methodological and theoretical attention. Nevertheless, there is a large variety of different images or image-text-combinations used in textbooks, which would definitely all form an auspicious field of research. Alain Choppin distinguishes between photographs, drawings and schemata with a high degree of abstraction (diagrams and maps, for example),<sup>21</sup> a category which could, according to Sibylle Krämer, be spoken of as “operational visuality.”<sup>22</sup> “Operational visuality” is clearly marked by the close union between verbal and visual components. This interconnectedness of the visual and the verbal also applies to photography.

“Visual images do not exist in a vacuum, and looking at them for ‘what they are,’ neglects the ways in which they are produced and interpreted through particular social practices.”<sup>23</sup> Images and the meaning attributed to them are culturally bound. Every society knows dominant ways of “reading” pictures, in which distinct iconographic characteristics and motives imbue the polysemic image with a specific meaning. Even if the meaning of visual signifiers may be floating, there are ways of ensuring that pictures will be read in the manner in which the national textbook narrative needs them to be read; this is what Barthes calls “anchorage.” Strategically chosen images interact with the surrounding verbal elements and with other images so as to unfold the resources of associations and knowledge invested in them. Barthes and Stuart Hall explicitly stress the importance of the word for the fixation of the floating signification of the image. Culturally desirable versions of how to read a specific image are produced by binding the unstable meaning of the picture with a specific verbal “chain.”<sup>24</sup> Christoph Kühberger would definitely disagree with this argument. In his concept of “visual normativity”<sup>25</sup> it is precisely the image which anchors the desired version of how an image-text-relation should be read. Whether it is the image or the word which fixes meaning, textbooks are clearly “multimodal structures of meaning”<sup>26</sup> and should therefore be examined in their entirety. Image-discourse-analysis, the methodological

and theoretical approach proposed by Maasen, Mayerhauser and Renggli, is useful in this context. The authors aim to analyze the “complex, determining and interacting relations”<sup>27</sup> between texts and images. Images sustain a reciprocal relationship with language, and are integrated into a narrative in order to produce political relevancy, structuring what meaning should be accorded to what is denoted. In this way, just as discourse analysis asks what can, should or must not be said at a specific time, image-discourse-analysis addresses “what somebody is allowed to picture (or not) at which point in history.”<sup>28</sup> It addresses strategies and techniques of safe-guarding notions of normalcy, of the socially expectable not only via text, but also through the use or absence of pictures. In this respect, images should be regarded as conceivable “surfaces” of regimes of the seeable which contribute to the construction of their respective objects.<sup>29</sup> Just as Jürgen Link focuses on strategies of construing a certain notion of social normalcy (discursive and practical strategies that (re-)produce what is deemed normal within a given society), image-discourse-analysis focuses on the connectedness of text-image systems and their contribution to the “inner screen” of a member of a community of remembrance.<sup>30</sup>

### **Austrian Post-war Memory – Mind the Waldheim Gap!**

In order to understand the way in which Austria dealt with its post-war past as a part of the Third Reich, describing Austria’s main founding myth, the “victimization theory” (*Opferthese*) is inevitable. Victimization theory implies an image of Austria as a victim which was not part of the perpetrator society of the Third Reich. According to this thesis, after the military occupation by German troops in March 1938, Austria had ceased to exist and therefore no liability of any moral (or financial and political) kind for National Socialist crimes can be assumed. Victimization theory served as a strategy of foreign policy, as well as a tactic for inner-societal pacification. This view, supported by international law, led to the exterritorialization of the National Socialist past and a positively connoted post-war myth of reconstruction. It led to a perception of history which not only represented Austria as the victim of the Third Reich, but also as the victim of Allied occupation. The visual icon inextricably linked with this view is the imagery depicting the signing of the State Treaty in 1955. During the 1980s, this central icon was contested by its antipode, the critical icon of co-responsibility, that is to say, by the images of Hitler and his jubilant listeners on 15 March 1938 at the Heroes’ Square in Vienna. These two sites of memory and their representations are the two indispensable poles that now structure Austrian collective memory. From 1986, a partial erosion of the victimization thesis can be observed, leading to a somewhat abstract concept of Austria’s share in guilt, culminating in what Bertrand Perz has called a “culture of

concessions.”<sup>31</sup> Waldheim’s handling of this wartime biography, especially his thoughts about having only done “his duty” as a soldier, marked a central caesura in Austrian collective memory and culminated in Chancellor Vranitzky’s famous speech in front of the Austrian parliament in 1991. In this speech, he outlined the concept of co-responsibility (*Mitverantwortung*), subtly holding on to the concept of the innocence of Austria as a country, while highlighting individual Austrian perpetrators.

From around 1986 until today, Austrian collective memory can therefore be visualized as a coordinate system whose axes are “co-responsibility” and “victimization.” Notions of both victim and perpetrator determine how the Austrian National Socialist past has to be spoken of or visualized. Nowadays, the notion of co-responsibility is likely to be accepted by a majority of Austrians. In accordance with a general European trend as analyzed by authors like Tony Judt, Etienne François, Elazar Barkan or Volkhard Knigge and Norbert Frei, Austrian memory has shifted from a patriotic to a genocidal memory.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, the Austrian victimization thesis is far from having been abandoned. The idea that the Holocaust divides any European country’s past into a “before” and an “after” does not necessarily imply that Austrian memory cannot incorporate notions of victimhood encompassing Austrians as a single group. Just how exactly those two contradictory founding myths should be addressed, and in what relation they should be put, is part of an ongoing process of negotiations. No Austrian master narrative about the past has yet been found, no conception of how those two differing ideas may be linked has yet been agreed upon. In the following section, I will therefore try to explain the verbal and visual strategies chosen by different textbook authors in order to conceive of Austria as both “victim” and “perpetrator.”

### **Textbook Analysis**

My theoretical approach may be illustrated with reference to three related textbooks which are among the most widely used Austrian textbooks.<sup>33</sup> These are “Via the Past to the Present” (*Durch die Vergangenheit zur Gegenwart*) by Michael Lemberger, “Images of Time” (*Zeitbilder*) by Ulrike Ebenhoch and others, and “History Live” (*Geschichte live*) by Helmut Hammerschmid and others. I will also point to some examples taken from the 1989 edition of the most widely used Austrian history textbooks of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, “Times, Peoples and Cultures” (*Zeiten, Völker und Kulturen*).<sup>34</sup>

From 1985 and 1989 onwards, after the implementation of new curricula, all Austrian history textbooks broach the issue of the annihilation of European Jewry, and all deal with the topic of National Socialism far more thoroughly than in the immediate post-war editions. In this sense, the “bursting of the dam of memories”<sup>35</sup> also took place in Austrian society

and its history textbooks. I will therefore not talk about the representation of the Holocaust, which, in most cases, is dealt with more or less accurately, more or less empathically. Almost no-one now contests the fact that the Holocaust should be thought of as a “breach in civilization” (Dan Diner). However, what *is* contested is the way in which Austrian entanglement with Nazi crimes should be represented. Here, strategies of balancing notions of victimhood and complicity come into play. I will focus on two controversial aspects of the Austrian past. First, the absence or presence of pictures of the Austrian State Treaty and Heroes’ Square, combined with an analysis of how support for the *Anschluss* is explained in texts. Second, I analyze how the Allied occupation is depicted. Here, special attention is paid to what year is indicated as the starting point of Austrian freedom. Is the end of National Socialist rule represented as an important site of memory, or is 1955, the withdrawal of the Allied forces, implemented as the true birth year of freedom and liberty, thus prolonging the feeling of foreign occupation by first the Nazis and then the Allies?

It is by no means arbitrary that the 2002 edition of *Durch die Vergangenheit zur Gegenwart (DVG)*, which represents in detail the perpetrator perspective, includes only a very small reproduction of the iconic depiction of the presentation of the state treaty. It demythologizes the event in the caption by citing the most important steps leading to the signing. This is congruent with the overall idea of focusing on questions of the insufficient acknowledgement of the National Socialist past in Austria after the war. *DVG* not only gives a thorough account of topics such as slave labor, “arization” and restitutional demands of survivors in 2002, showing the relevance of dealing with the past even from a contemporary perspective, but also questions the notion of “Austria as a victim” with the following quote:

Over decades, Austria was presented as the “first victim of National Socialism” by Austrian politicians and media. [...] Yet the fact was concealed that a considerable part of the population did not disapprove of National Socialism. Also, a proportionally large number of Austrian citizens were involved in the crimes of the NS regime.<sup>36</sup>

More importantly, pictures of the genocidal warfare not only of SS companies, but also of the Wehrmacht, are shown in *DVG*. Thus, *DVG* visually anchors this far from uncontested element of the Austrian past; which is contested because it questions the wartime biographies of 1.2 million Austrians drafted by the Wehrmacht.

As pointed out above, unlike the subdued tone accompanying the placement of the iconic representation of the signing of the State Treaty in *DVG*, this picture is used as the key image in *Zeitbilder*, which takes up nearly one and a half pages. Its description of the *Anschluss*<sup>37</sup> is as follows: while 200,000 jubilant supporters of Hitler’s speech on the Viennese Heroes’

Square are mentioned, they are immediately verbally contrasted with the many political adversaries and arrestees “one does not see” – a statement which indirectly refers to and somewhat contradicts these infamous pictures. The supporters are also visually contrasted, where a colored picture of Hitler’s arrival in Vienna is shadowed by a bigger reprint of a Nazi propaganda poster. The “reading” of the juxtaposition of those pictures implies that the supporters were lured into this frenzy. On the one hand, pictures of the Heroes’ Square have to be included in a twenty-first century textbook. On the other hand, the power of those pictures to function as critical, negatively connoted icons of guilt has been recognized. They therefore have to be tamed and framed through strategic “material placement” in order to function not only as signifiers of Austrian crimes, but also as icons of crimes committed *against* Austrians (deception, conceit), as icons of one’s own suffering. No-one can accuse this textbook of not having given hints about Austrian co-responsibility. Materially, the picture which carries these notions is present. By counterbalancing it, it becomes possible to subtly visualize notions of “victim and perpetrator” while placing emphasis on the key word “victim.”

The same use of the Heroes’ Square photos can be observed in the 1989 edition of *Zeiten, Völker und Kulturen*, the first edition of that series to print this picture. Again, the picture does not stand on its own, but is juxtaposed with a Nazi propaganda poster. These two pictures are overlapped by the reprint of a ballot paper for the April “referendum” on Austrian independence. This strategic placement is framed by the following quote:

Today we often wonder why so many Austrians cheered Hitler in 1938. [...] Many were driven into Hitler’s arms by their hope for a better economic situation, but did not discover his true intentions. Many casted a yes vote because they were scared. Moreover, the annexation by Germany had already been postulated in 1918 and many Austrians doubted the viability of the Republic.<sup>38</sup>

While all the reasons cited might be true, the notion of “victim and perpetrator” is carefully balanced by leaving out reasons for cheering, which might have indicated a heartfelt support for the Third Reich for ideological reasons.

While the Heroes’ Square images are at the core of the debate about Austrian complicity, images of the State Treaty are far less contested. Congruent with the view of Austria as the victim of Nazi aggression, the period of Allied occupation used to be incorporated into a historical continuum of occupation by foreign forces. Even after 1986, notions of being victimized by the Allies can also be found in Austrian textbooks. While the iconic representation of the State Treaty marks the end of victimhood by opening a new chapter in Austrian history, it is the complementary, gen-

dered depiction of homecomers and women helpers or rubble women (*Heimkehrer* or *Trümmerfrauen*) that visualizes the notion of Austria as a victim because of their often de-contextualized use. These pictures make no allusion to why these men had to come back or why these women had to rebuild the country. War captivity is talked about without mentioning the character of Nazi warfare in Eastern Europe, making the Austrian soldiers not only victims of the Nazi drafting, but even dual victims because of the Allied war captivity. The use of rubble women<sup>39</sup> imagery highlights the decontextualized consequences of Allied warfare and nationalizes female suffering in order to ward off perpetrator memories.

Even *DVG*, which fosters the overall narrative of Austria as a co-perpetrator country, opts for a portrayal of the period of occupation as an epoch of national suffering.<sup>40</sup> While on a verbal level Allied bombings as well as food scarcity are mentioned, this chapter is visually structured by the use of the picture of a homecomer, a rubble woman and inter alia a picture of a Soviet soldier trying to steal a bicycle. The overall impression evokes notions of victimization, clearly expressed by the juxtaposition of the visual post-war archetypes of homecomer and rubble women. Furthermore, while *DVG* depicts crimes of the Wehrmacht verbally and visually, some kind of subtle, but not verbally expressed, distinction is made by the use of the picture of a smiling, happy homecomer. This friendly soldier cannot be one of those aforementioned soldiers who perpetrated unspeakable crimes which were so clearly depicted on previous pages of the textbook. *Geschichte live* cannot be accused of being inconsequent; as it empathically tells the story of homecomer Franz Maier,<sup>41</sup> crimes of the Wehrmacht had not been mentioned or visualized before. Notions of postwar suffering play an important role in *Zeitbilder*. Here, Austria's Second Republic is shown as a story of success. Apparently, this success is even more apparent when contrasted with the introductory description of the immediate post-war situation:

In Austria there was much rejoicing at the end of the war and the Nazi regime, but also grief and mourning for the many dead soldiers and civilians. In addition, people were scared and worried about the uncertain future. The country lay in ruins, the famine was burdensome, and foreign soldiers were in command now. Soldiers of the Wehrmacht and members of the SS feared capture, civilians were afraid of infringements such as plundering and violation, and deportation. There was chaos. [...] The many prisoners of war and forced laborers from all over Europe who were stationed in Austria were longing to finally return home.<sup>42</sup>

1945 is a cipher of desperation, fear and violence; it is only the beginning of foreign occupation (“foreign soldiers were in command now”). The fallen soldiers and civilians, members of the Wehrmacht and of the SS, are a collective of victims which is now helplessly exposed to foreign aggression. Allied

soldiers are not harbingers of liberation, but of the fact that social order is collapsing. No mention is made of what exactly the slave workers had been doing in Austria; apparently, they had been “stationed” in Austria like the prisoners of war mentioned. This overall impression is reinforced by images. A picture of rubble women not only strengthens the notion of victimization, but links those dreadful years of postwar foreign oppression to the iconic State Treaty and to the beginning of this story of success, which is a story of both suffering *and* redemption on the basis of hard work.

## Conclusion

Scientific examination of images can generate knowledge about how societies construct their past. In order to reach such conclusions, one needs to analyze pictures within their cultural and historical framework. Of course, not every picture and its specific usage and interpretation can be ascribed to strategic intention. First, one has to consider economic factors, for example questions of copyright, which determine which picture does or does not find its way into the image canon of a certain society. Second, there are pictures which represent history more fittingly than others; pictures whose “visual salience” is more likely to produce relevant meaning within a certain context than others. Nevertheless, a focus upon human processes of meaning production is indispensable in order to understand how certain perceptions of the past are consolidated while others fall into oblivion. That is why one can speak of the “politics of visibility,” reflecting upon the culturally specific and concrete contextual embedding of pictures. Pictures are strategically functionalized within discursive relations; they emotionalize and anchor perceptions of a collective past. Selective decisions about which picture should be used and which one should not be used, textual commentary and captions, and the placement of images within a text-image or image-image show how the polysemic meaning of an image is framed and channelled. Any image analysis which aims to highlight historical and culturally relevant processes should indeed focus on all these components.

As I pointed out before, the implementation of an Austrian complicity thesis after 1986, the notion that some Austrians indeed were National Socialist perpetrators can, but does not necessarily, lead to exhaustive reflection upon crimes committed by members of one’s own collective. No agreement has yet been made about how the relationship between victimization and complicity should be addressed, and about which ratio between verbal and visual signifiers of those two Austrian memorial cornerstones is required. Thus, there is a wide variety of perceptions about the past; much energy is put into carefully balancing notions of guilt and

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one's own suffering. The societal process of negotiating Austria's "master narrative" about National Socialism is still in progress.

- <sup>1</sup> Ulrike Ebenhoch et. al., *Zeitbilder 4. Vom Ende des Ersten Weltkriegs bis zur Gegenwart* (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag Schulbuch, 2001), 130. This and all following translations (except where indicated otherwise) are by the author.
- <sup>2</sup> Heidemarie Uhl, “‘Österreich ist frei!’. Die Re-Inszenierung der österreichischen Nachkriegsmythen im Jubiläumsjahr 2005,” in *Bedenkliches Gedenken. 1945–1955: Zwischen Mythos und Geschichte*, Josef Seiter et al., eds., vol. 120 of *Schulheft* (Innsbruck, Wien, Bozen: Jugend & Volk, 2005), 29–39, 25.
- <sup>3</sup> Cf. Heidemarie Uhl, “Gedächtnis – Konstruktion kollektiver Vergangenheit im sozialen Raum,” in *Kulturgeschichte. Fragestellungen, Konzepte, Annäherungen*, Christina Lutter, Margit Szöllösi-Janze and Heidemarie Uhl, eds. (Innsbruck, Wien, München, Bozen: Studienverlag, 2004), 144.
- <sup>4</sup> Cf. Heidemarie Uhl, “Kultur, Politik, Palimpsest. Thesen zu Gedächtnis und Gesellschaft,” in *Schauplatz Kultur – Zentraleuropa. Transdisziplinäre Annäherungen*, Johannes Feichtinger et al., eds., vol. 7 of *Gedächtnis – Erinnerung – Identität* (Innsbruck, Wien, Bozen: Studienverlag, 2006), 25–36.
- <sup>5</sup> Jeffrey Olick, “Introduction,” in *States of Memory. Continuity, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Retrospection*, Jeffrey K. Olick, ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 1–16, 6.
- <sup>6</sup> Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, “Introduction: Cultural Memory and its Dynamics,” in *Meditation, Remediation and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, eds., vol. 10 of *Media and Cultural Memory/Medien und kulturelle Erinnerung*, Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, ed. (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 1–14, 2.
- <sup>7</sup> Oliver Marchart, “Das historisch-politische Gedächtnis. Für eine politische Theorie kollektiver Erinnerung,” in *Transformationen gesellschaftlicher Erinnerung. Studien zur ‘Gedächtnisgeschichte’ der Zweiten Republik*, Christian Gerbel et al., eds., vol. 9 of *Reihe Kultur.Wissenschaften* (Vienna: Turia + Kant, 2005), 21–49.
- <sup>8</sup> Cf. Günther Sandner, “Hegemonie und Erinnerung: Zur Konzeption von Geschichts- und Vergangenheitspolitik,” *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft*, 1 (2001): 5–17.
- <sup>9</sup> Christian Gerbel et al., “Einleitung: Transformationen gesellschaftlicher Erinnerung. Zur ‘Gedächtnisgeschichte’ der Zweiten Republik,” in *Transformationen gesellschaftlicher Erinnerung. Studien zur ‘Gedächtnisgeschichte’ der Zweiten Republik*, Christian Gerbel et al., eds., vol. 9 of *Reihe Kultur.Wissenschaften* (Vienna: Turia + Kant, 2005), 7–20, 13.
- <sup>10</sup> Hannes Leidinger and Verena Moritz, *Die Republik Österreich 1918/2008. Überblick Zwischenbilanz Neubewertung* (Vienna: Deuticke, 2008), 9.

- <sup>11</sup> Susanne von Falkenhausen, "Verzwickte Verwandtschaftsverhältnisse. Kunstgeschichte, Visual Culture, Bildwissenschaft," in *Bild/Geschichte. Festschrift für Horst Bredekamp*, Philine Helas et al., eds. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2007), 3–14, 6.
- <sup>12</sup> Doris Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns. Neuorientierung in den Kulturwissenschaften*, (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohl Taschenbuch Verlag, 2006), 350
- <sup>13</sup> Tom Holert, "Bildfähigkeiten. Visuelle Kultur, Repräsentationskritik und Politik der Sichtbarkeit," in *Imagineering. Visuelle Kultur und Politik der Sichtbarkeit*, Tom Holert, ed., vol. 47 of *Jahresring* (Cologne: Oktagon, 2000), 21
- <sup>14</sup> Silke Horstkotte and Nancy Pedri, "Introduction: Photographic Interventions," in *Poetics Today* 29 (2008): 1–29.
- <sup>15</sup> Gerhard Paul, "Das Jahrhundert der Bilder. Die visuelle Geschichte und der Bilderkanon des kulturellen Gedächtnisses," in *Das Jahrhundert der Bilder. Band I: 1900 bis 1949*, Gerhard Paul, ed. (Göttingen: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2009), 14–39, 33.
- <sup>16</sup> Horst Bredekamp, "Bildakte als Zeugnisse und Urteil," in *Mythen der Nationen. 1945 – Arena der Erinnerungen. Band 1*, Monika Flacke, ed. (Berlin: Deutsches Historisches Museum, 2004), 29–66.
- <sup>17</sup> Paul, *Jahrhundert*, 31. Cf. also Jörn Rüsen, "Was ist Geschichtskultur? Überlegungen zu einer neuen Art, über Geschichte nachzudenken," in *Historische Faszination. Geschichtskultur heute*, Klaus Fießmann et al., eds. (Cologne: Böhlau, 1994), 3–26, 9.
- <sup>18</sup> Jim Elkins, "Introduction. The Concept of Visual Literacy, and Its Limitations," in *Visual Literacy*, Jim Elkins, ed. (New York, London: Routledge, 2008), 1–10, 7.
- <sup>19</sup> Peter Gautschi and Alexandra Binnenkade, "Die Funktionen von Bildern im Schulgeschichtebuch 'Viele Wege – eine Welt'," in *Mit Bildern arbeiten. Historische Kompetenzen erwerben*, Reinhard Krammer and Heinrich Ammerer, ed. (Neuried: Ars Una, 2006), 152–162, 153.
- <sup>20</sup> Christoph Haman, *Visual History und Geschichtsdidaktik. Bildkompetenz in der historisch-politischen Bildung*, vol. 53 of *Reihe Geschichtswissenschaften* (Herbolzheim: Centaurus-Verlag, 2007), 43.
- <sup>21</sup> Alain Choppin, "Aspekte der Illustration und Konzeption von Schulbüchern," in *Schulbücher auf dem Prüfstand. Perspektiven der Schulbuchforschung und Schulbuchbeurteilung in Europa*, Karl Peter Fritzsche, ed., vol. 75 of *Studien zur internationalen Schulbuchforschung* (Braunschweig: Westermann, 1992), 137–150.
- <sup>22</sup> Sibylle Krämer, "Operative Bildlichkeit. Von der 'Grammatologie' zur 'Diagrammatologie'? Reflexionen über

erkennendes 'Sehen',” in *Logik des Bildlichen. Kritik der ikonischen Vernunft*, Martina Heßler, ed., vol. 2 of *Metabasis* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2009), 94–122.

<sup>23</sup> Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies. An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials* (London: Sage, 2007), 29.

<sup>24</sup> Roland Barthes, “Rhetoric of the Image,” in *Visual Culture: The Reader*, Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall, eds., (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage, 1999), 33–40.

<sup>25</sup> Christoph Kühberger, “Multimodale Narration. Bild-Text-Graphik-Kommunikation in Schulgeschichtsbüchern,” in *Das Bild im Schulbuch*, Carsten Heinze and Eva Matthes, eds., (Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt, 2010), 43–56.

<sup>26</sup> Carsten Heinze, “Das Bild im Schulbuch. Zur Einführung,” in *Das Bild im Schulbuch*, Carsten Heinze and Eva Matthes, eds. (Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt, 2010), 9.

<sup>27</sup> Sabine Maasen, Thorsten Mayerhauser and Cornelia Renggli, “Bild-Diskurs-Analyse,” in *Bilder als Diskurse. Bilddiskurse*, Sabine Maasen et al., eds. (Göttingen: Vielbrück Wissenschaft, 2006), 8.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Thorsten Mayerhauser, “Diskursive Bilder? Überlegungen zur diskursiven Funktion von Bildern in polytechnologischen Diskursen,” in *Bilder als Diskurse. Bilddiskurse*, Sabine Maasen et al., eds. (Göttingen: Vielbrück Wissenschaft, 2006), 71–94, 83.

<sup>30</sup> Jürgen Link, “Zum Anteil der medialen Kollektivsymbolik an der Normalisierung der Einwanderung,” in *Bilder als Diskurse. Bilddiskurse*, Sabine Maasen et al., eds. (Göttingen: Vielbrück Wissenschaft, 2006), 53–70, 60.

<sup>31</sup> Bertrand Perz, “Österreich,” in *Verbrechen erinnern. Die Auseinandersetzung mit Holocaust und Völkermord*, Volkhard Knigge and Norbert Frei, eds. (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2005), 170–182, 180.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Etienne François, “Meistererzählungen und Dammbrüche. Die Erinnerung an den Zweiten Weltkrieg zwischen Nationalisierung und Universalisierung,” in *Mythen der Nationen. 1945 – Arena der Erinnerungen. Band 1*, Monika Flacke, ed. (Berlin: Deutsches Historisches Museum, 2004), 13–28.

<sup>33</sup> I was able to obtain concrete data about sales figures concerning Austrian history textbooks, but I'm not allowed to publish them.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Heinz P. Wassermann, *Verfälschte Geschichte im Unterricht. Nationalsozialismus und Österreich nach 1945* (Innsbruck, Vienna, Bozen: Studienverlag, 2004).

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<sup>35</sup> François, *Meistererzählungen*, 18.

<sup>36</sup> Michael Lemberger, *Durch die Vergangenheit zur Gegenwart 4* (Vienna: Veritas, 2002), 62. “Jahrzehntlang stellten österreichische Politiker und Medien das Land als „erstes Opfer des Nationalsozialismus“ dar. Ausschlaggebend dafür war unter anderem die “Moskauer Deklaration” (1943), in der die Alliierten Österreich als „erstes Opfer des Nationalsozialismus“ bezeichneten, das es zu “befreien” galt. Dass jedoch ein beträchtlicher Teil der Bevölkerung dem Nationalsozialismus nicht ablehnend gegenüberstand, wurde lange Zeit verschwiegen. Verhältnismäßig viele Österreicher waren auch an den Verbrechen des NS-Regimes beteiligt. Seit Beginn des Jahres 2001 werden nun “Entschädigungszahlungen für Zwangsarbeiter” gezahlt. Das zeigt, dass Österreich die Zeit der NS-Herrschaft noch längst nicht aufgearbeitet hat” (translation by Sara-Maria Schnedl).

<sup>37</sup> Ebenhoch et al., *Zeitbilder*, 38.

<sup>38</sup> Oskar Achs et al., *Zeiten Völker und Kulturen 3. Lehr- und Arbeitsbuch für Geschichte und Sozialkunde. 4. Klasse der Hauptschulen und der allgemeinbildenden höheren Schulen* (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1989), 77.

“Heute stellen wir uns oft die Frage, warum 1938 so viele Österreicher Hitler zujubelten. Die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten hatten ihr Ziel erreicht. Die Hoffnung auf eine bessere wirtschaftliche Lage trieb viele in die Arme Hitlers, dessen wirkliche Absichten sie nicht durchschauten. Viele stimmten mit Ja, weil sie Angst hatten. Dazu kam, dass der Anschluss an Deutschland schon 1918 gefordert worden war und viele Österreicher an der Lebensfähigkeit der Republik zweifelten” (translation by Sara-Maria Schnedl).

<sup>39</sup> Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann and Ela Hornung, “‘Trümmerfrauen’ – Deutungsmuster für eine Ikone der Nachkriegszeit,” in *rebranding images. Ein streitbares Lesebuch zur Geschichtspolitik und Erinnerungskultur in Österreich*, Martin Wassermair and Katharina Wegan, ed. (Innsbruck, Vienna, Bozen: Studienverlag, 2006), 79–92.

<sup>40</sup> Lemberger, *Vergangenheit*, 75.

<sup>41</sup> Helmut Hammerschmid et al., *Geschichte live 4. Geschichte und Sozialkunde, 8. Schulstufe* (Linz: Veritas, 2010), 122.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 132. “In Österreich herrschte Freude über das Ende des Krieges und der Nazi-Herrschaft. Aber auch Trauer um die vielen toten Soldaten und Zivilisten. Dazu kamen Sorge und Angst vor der ungewissen Zukunft. Das Land lag in Trümmern, drückend war die Hungersnot und fremde Soldaten hatten nun die Befehlsgewalt. Die Wehrmachtssoldaten und Angehörigen der SS fürchteten sich vor einer Gefangennahme, die Zivilbevölkerung vor Übergriffen

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(Plünderungen, Vergewaltigungen) und Verschleppung. Es herrschte Chaos. [...] Die vielen in Österreich stationierten Kriegsgefangenen und Zwangsarbeiter aus ganz Europa wollten endlich nach Hause” (translation by Sara-Maria Schnedl).