THE HOLOCAUST AND ITS CONTEXTS

Exhibiting the Nazi Past

Museum Objects Between the Material and the Immaterial

Chloe Paver

The Holocaust and its Contexts

More than sixty years on, the Holocaust remains a subject of intense debate with ever-widening ramifications. This series aims to demonstrate the continuing relevance of the Holocaust and related issues in contemporary society, politics and culture; studying the Holocaust and its history broadens our understanding not only of the events themselves but also of their present-day significance. The series acknowledges and responds to the continuing gaps in our knowledge about the events that constituted the Holocaust, the various forms in which the Holocaust has been remembered, interpreted and discussed, and the increasing importance of the Holocaust today to many individuals and communities.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Objects in Focus

In 2016, when the Jüdisches Museum Hohenems in Austria celebrated its 25th anniversary, it exhibited a miscellany of 25 objects, each accompanied by a curator's note.[1] The following year, the body in charge of museums at former concentration camps in the state of Brandenburg celebrated *its* 25th anniversary with a book subtitled '25 Jahre Stiftung Brandenburgische Gedenkstätten in 25 Objekten'. Each object was introduced by a different author in a short essay.[2] With their echo of Neil MacGregor's *A History of the World in 100 Objects*, such object miscellanies create a space for reflection on museum practices and on human relationships to objects.[3] This can also take more

[1] Hanno Loewy and Anika Reichwald (eds), *Übrig. Ein Blick in die Bestände – zum 25. Geburtstag des Jüdischen Museums Hohenems* (Hohenems, Vienna and Vaduz: Bucher, 2016).

[2] Ines Reich (ed.), *Vom Monument zur Erinnerung. 25 Jahre Stiftung Brandenburgische Gedenkstätten in 25 Objekten* (Berlin: Metropol, 2017).

[3] A series of exhibitions entitled 'Ein gewisses jüdisches Etwas' ('A Certain Jewish Something'), for which members of the public brought in a single object relating to Judaism and told its story, provides another example. The Frankfurt version was packaged as another anniversary publication: Jüdisches Museum Frankfurt am Main (ed.), *Geschenkte Geschichten. Zum 20-Jahres-Jubiläum des jüdischen Museums Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt am Main: Societätsverlag, 2009). I draw on this catalogue in Chapter 2. See also the catalogue for the exhibition 'Von da und dort', discussed further in Sect. 4.3, in which writers were asked to pick an object and respond to it imaginatively: Jutta Fleckenstein and Tamar Lewinsky (eds), *Juden 45/90. Von da und dort – Überlebende aus Osteuropa* (Berlin: Hentrich und Hentrich, 2011).

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lasting forms in the museum. When a newly built visitor's centre opened at the Gedenkstätte Mauthausen in 2003, its first permanent exhibition included a module titled 'Objekte erzählen Geschichte' ('Objects Narrate History'), which reflected in unusually abstract terms on the role of objects for museum work and for visitors. Two other major museums, the Jüdisches Museum München and the Gedenkstätte Buchenwald, both discussed in later chapters, have since chosen a similar self-reflective approach, devoting separate exhibition modules to the object as museum medium.

While it is thus now common practice for museum professionals to reflect critically on their curatorship of objects from the years 1933–45, a book about museum objects from the National Socialist era still needs to justify itself on three fronts. First, some might see *Dokumentationszentren* ('documentation centres'), which display documents and photographs rather than objects, as the key new development in Germany in recent decades. Secondly, the epochal shift towards digitization and virtuality might lead us to seek the cutting edge of museum practice in those areas, not in the analogue world of things.[4] Thirdly, given that the key outcomes of the National Socialist era were millions of deaths and untold human suffering, objects might seem an irrelevance. The reality of German and Austrian museum practice counters these objections in various ways.

There is no doubt that this field of German museum culture is somewhat polarized, with documentation centres largely deploying so-called *Flachware* ('flatware'), that is, documents and photographs, and museums or memorial sites working extensively with objects. Axel Drecoll, formerly head of the Dokumentation Obersalzberg and now Director of the Stiftung Brandenburgische Gedenkstätten, identifies two basic types of exhibition about the years 1933–45, characterized either by their 'Objektbezogenheit' (orientation towards objects) or their

[4] As long ago as 2004, Elaine Heumann Gurian suggested that objects are no longer the defining characteristic of museums. Elaine Heumann Gurian, 'What is the Object of this Exercise? A Meandering Exploration of the Many Meanings of Objects in Museums', in *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, ed. by Gail Anderson (Lanham, NY, Toronto, and Oxford: Altamira Press, 2004), pp. 269–83.

'Objektverzicht' (renunciation of objects).[5] In practice, these divergent public history formats are not in competition with each other and readily operate in tandem, but object-free documentation centres are in the minority of exhibition venues as a whole, and some documentation centres have moved into object collection. In the context of its expansion to meet tourist demand, the documentation centre at Obersalzberg, which has until now relied largely on display boards, launched a media campaign to solicit objects from local people and plans to display 350 in its new exhibition, set to open in 2020.[6]

Obersalzberg is not alone. Over the last twenty years, exhibition-makers have unearthed, preserved and displayed tens of thousands of objects that relate to the Third Reich and its aftermath. Germany's two national history museums, the Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland and the Deutsches Historisches Museum (DHM), boast of having 800,000 and 900,000 objects in their collections, respectively, most of them accessioned since the early 1990s. While only a proportion relate to National Socialism, these nevertheless number in the thousands.[7] If objects are at the conservative end of the spectrum of museum practice, then Germany has been involved in a monumental conservative undertaking of object collection, which needs to be studied on its own terms. Austria may lag behind in sheer numbers of objects, but practices are no different for individual museums and exhibitions there.

Digital technologies play a role in most of the museums and exhibitions in this study, notably in the display of witness testimony. However, even supposing that this were a study of the cutting edge of exhibition technologies, which it is not, *Zeitzeugen* testimony is hardly at that cutting edge. As Steffi de Jong has shown in the first major study of the use of *Zeitzeugen* testimony in museums, film-makers have established a stable genre aesthetic for witness testimony that precludes anything

[5] Axel Drecoll, 'NS-Volksgemeinschaft ausstellen. Zur Reinszenierung einer Schreckensvision mit Verheißungskraft', in *Die NS-Volksgemeinschaft. Zeitgenössische Verheißung, analytisches Konzept und ein Schlüssel zum historischen Lernen?* ed. by Uwe Danker and Astrid Schwabe (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2017), pp. 105–22 (p. 113).

[6] https://www.obersalzberg.de/neugestaltung/call-for-objects/; http://www.ifz-muenchen.de/aktuelles/artikel/datum/2018/05/25/idyll-und-verbrechen/ [accessed 29 May 2018].

[7] The DHM's as yet incomplete object database returns 21,259 hits for the search term 'Nationalsozialismus', though this includes both documents and objects.

other than the plainest recording of the speaking subject.[8] While de Jong demonstrates convincingly the need to analyse how testimony is remediated in a museum context, her title 'The Witness as Object' reflects her interest in how video testimonies 'are adapted to the rules of the institution museum'; her argument is not that they redefine the museum.[9]

Even leaving testimony aside, the graveness of the topic tends to militate against experimentation with virtuality and digital manipulation, with the notable exception of art installations. Silke Arnold-de Simine has rightly argued that, in the post-witness age into which we are stepping, museums will need to find emotional and sensory as well as factual ways of communicating the Holocaust to those who were born later, and she explores some uses of digital technologies to achieve understanding by experiential and empathetic means.[10] At the same time, the main response of German and Austrian museums to this imminent generational shift has been to collect objects from witnesses and their descendants and to record what they meant to them. This study's focus on the object should not, therefore, be attributed to a lack of interest in new communication methods in the post-witness era but rather to a belief that witnesses' experiences will be projected into the future not just hologrammatically but through detailed knowledge about, and discussion of, objects.[11]

The introduction that follows outlines the context in which history exhibitions about the years 1933–45 are produced, situates this study within its broader scholarly context and explains some choices of scope and terminology.

[8] Steffi de Jong, *The Witness as Object: Video Testimony in Memorial Museums* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2018). De Jong's account of the very controlled framing and positioning of the speaking body (pp. 101–04) bears interesting comparison with the conventions relating to busts that I discuss in Sects. 3.3 and 4.2. De Jong also discusses the semantics of the German term *Zeitzeuge*, or historical witness (she prefers 'witness to history', pp. 32–34).

[9] de Jong, p. 5.

[10] Silke Arnold-de Simine, *Mediating Memory in the Museum: Trauma, Empathy, Nostalgia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[11] The New Dimensions in Testimony project, on permanent display at the Illinois Holocaust Museum from 2017, is one of several projects aimed at creating holograms of survivors giving testimony. This represents the newest generation of testimonial technology. However, as a remediated version of the USC Shoah Foundation testimony that de Jong studies, it is directorially conservative, using a standardized question-and-answer format.

1.2 The Exhibitionary Routine

In scholarly study, German memory culture has often been structured as a series of shifts: after the end of the Cold War, once entrenched positions on the past were abandoned; victim groups that had been forgotten were publicly honoured; and previously private memories came out into the public sphere.[12] Such research has tracked developments in culture and politics and identified watershed moments. This book takes those chronologies as read and starts from the premise that practices of socially critical public history are now thoroughly routine and mainstream in Germany. It examines history exhibitions about the years 1933–45 and their aftermath as one element in that routine.

The study analyses exhibitions at museums, documentation centres and memorial sites (occasionally also other venues) whose subject is the National Socialist era, including the Second World War and Holocaust, and post-war memory of those events. In 2009, when I published an initial survey of temporary exhibitions, it seemed possible that this was a short-lived phenomenon and that I, too, would be writing about a phase in memory culture.[13] Instead, in the intervening years, public money has been committed long term to new institutions and exhibition spaces that will, barring the unlikely event of closures, produce new history exhibitions well into the future. At the same time, temporary exhibitions continue to be produced in significant numbers, reaching a kind of apotheosis in 2013, in Berlin's commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the Nazi accession to power and the 75th anniversary of *Kristallnacht*. A year earlier, the city had celebrated its own 775th anniversary under the banner of 'diversity'. Now, under the title 'Zerstörte Vielfalt' ('Diversity Destroyed'), it put on a year-long programme of events that included more than fifty history exhibitions with topics ranging from the fate of Jewish architects to the *Gleichschaltung* of local transport.

[12] Bill Niven's introduction to a volume of essays on the suffering of the non-persecuted majority of Germans can stand for many such arguments: 'The end of the Cold War […] made possible not just a more open and frank confrontation with the Holocaust, it also prepared the ground for a less politicised confrontation with the theme of Allied bombing'. Bill Niven, 'Introduction: German Victimhood at the Turn of the Millennium', in *Germans as Victims: Remembering the Past in Contemporary Germany*, ed. by Bill Niven (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 4.

[13] Chloe Paver, 'Exhibiting the National Socialist Past: An Overview of Recent German Exhibitions', *Journal of European Studies*, 39.2 (2009), 225–49.

The programme was so complex that it was itself drawn together in an exhibition, which centralized and miniaturized the component exhibitions, each presented through a single object.[14]

In an age when all the key historical facts can be found with a few clicks of a mouse, absorbed passively from history documentaries, or picked up at the railway station in the form of a popular history magazine, it is not a given that so much time, energy and creativity should be devoted to mounting history exhibitions in public space. Yet, compared with other cultural forms that engage with Germany's National Socialist past—notably memorials, literature, film and art—history exhibitions remain relatively under-researched. While this study is not primarily concerned to explain why Germany's and Austria's exhibition culture is thriving, a few reasons can be sketched out, to show that the often remarkable objects I discuss in the main chapters function within a nexus of increasingly routine and standardized practices.

The single most forceful 'multiplier' of history exhibitions is arguably National Socialism itself, since its crimes were so geographically widespread, the targets of its inhumanity so diverse and its culture so thoroughly pervasive, that every institution, every profession and every town in Germany can ask itself what its predecessors did in the Third Reich, while all areas of society have victims to mourn. Other factors include the shift from grass-roots memorial activity to institutionalized commemoration, Germany's anniversary culture and the political structure of Germany, with its three levels of *Bund*, *Länder* and *Kommunen* or central, regional and district government.

Taking these three in turn, memory of National Socialism has moved so often along a well-worn track from the fringes to the centre that it arguably no longer needs much of a push from the periphery. Germany's culture of *Bürgerinitiativen* or local activism has had considerable success in ensuring that forgotten sites and histories of discrimination and violence are given lasting memorial forms with public-sector support. While the motivation of activists may be local and individual, when viewed as a national pattern of activity this grass-roots pressure to remember is fairly routinized. With each new protest, protest arguably becomes less necessary, and, if successful, activists create the permanent conditions for future cycles of exhibition-making. When the area of land

[14] 'Zerstörte Vielfalt. Berlin 1933 – 1938' ('Diversity Destroyed: Berlin 1933–1938'), 2013 at the Deutsches Historisches Museum.

known as the 'Topographie des Terrors' was first opened to the public, with an open-air exhibition and tours, the event was intended to counter the positivity of the 750th anniversary of the foundation of Berlin. Today, one would expect the federal region of Berlin to initiate such a counter-memory, as it did with its anniversary project 'Zerstörte Vielfalt'. An exhibition shown at the site from 2005–2008 self-consciously evoked the counter-cultural origins of the 'Topographie' by mounting its boards on rusty sections of construction fencing.[15] Yet this *Bauzaunästhetik* was at odds with the professional production techniques of the exhibition itself, and since 2010 exhibitions have been housed in a conventional documentation centre, built to the highest design standards.

In Germany, anniversaries, often marked at five-year as well as ten-year intervals, have helped set the rhythm for the production of history exhibitions: in university towns on the anniversaries of the book burnings; in cities that were bombed on the anniversaries of the most devastating air-raid; in towns from which many Jews were deported, on the anniversaries of the main deportations; and so on. One aspect of this anniversary reflex is that positive anniversaries, especially those that celebrate the longevity of institutions, are, with increasing predictability, accompanied by exhibitions about the organization's role under National Socialism. Where once these might have been put together by outsiders angry at an institution's perceived refusal to remember, they are now generally supported, indeed often initiated, by the institutions in question. Evidently, institutions feel that social licence to celebrate their long existence is conditional on their also acknowledging institutional culpability for events in the Nazi era. The august Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Nuremberg celebrated its 350th anniversary, which fell in 2012, by mounting, among other events, the exhibition 'Geartete Kunst. Die Nürnberger Akademie im Nationalsozialismus' ('Acceptable Art: The Nuremberg Academy under National Socialism') at the Dokumentationszentrum Reichsparteitagsgelände. In 2013, the Munich suburb of Pasing celebrated the town's foundation a remarkable 1250 years earlier with an extensive programme that included the exhibition 'Pasing im 3. Reich'.

[15] 'Das "Hausgefängnis" der Gestapo-Zentrale in Berlin. Terror und Widerstand 1933-45' ('The "Private Prison" at the Gestapo Headquarters in Berlin: Terror and Resistance, 1933–45'), 2005 at the Topographie des Terrors.

In 2014, Salzburg's Haus der Natur celebrated its 90-year existence with an exhibition about its founding director's role in the Nazi era.[16]

Having previously been slow to acknowledge their predecessors' failings, the German and Austrian railway companies have embraced this practice, both funding exhibitions about National Socialism and the railways to mark the 175th anniversary of the founding of the railways, DB in 2010 and the ÖBB in 2012.[17] The Austrian exhibition was part of a programme that included parties at regional rail hubs, a competition to envisage the next 175 years of railway travel, and a new train, liveried in the colours of the Austrian flag. Yet, while the PR script interpreted 'Tradition' positively,[18] the exhibition about the Nazi era was held on company premises and opened by the Chair of the Board of Directors, with the leader of Vienna's Jewish community as a guest of honour.[19]

Another dynamic factor that keeps exhibition-making culture in motion is the possibility for exhibition topics to move up or down the scale between the local, regional and national. A proliferation of local and regional exhibitions can sometimes justify the consolidation of information in a national overview. As the team behind the first major national exhibition on forced labour put it:

[16] Norbert Winding, Robert Lindner, and Robert Hoffmann, 'Geschichtsaufarbeitung als Ausstellung. Das Haus der Natur 1924–1976 – die Ära Tratz', *Neues Museum*, 14.4 (October 2014), 62–67.

[17] 'Das Gleis. Die Logistik des Rassenwahns' ('The Rails: the Logistics of Racial Persecution'), 2010 at the Dokumentationszentrum Reichsparteitagsgelände, and 'Verdrängte Jahre. Bahn und Nationalsozialismus in Österreich 1938–1945' ('Years of Repression: The Railways and National Socialism in Austria, 1938–1945'), 2012 in the foyer of ÖBB Infrastruktur.

[18] 'Mit den Veranstaltungen [präsentieren sich] die Österreichischen Bundesbahnen […] als modernes Unternehmen mit Tradition und hohem Zukunftspotential' ('These events are intended to present ÖB as a modern company with a tradition and high potential for the future'), https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20120621_OTS0195/oebb-feiern-175-jahre-eisenbahn-mit-neun-bahnhofsfesten [accessed 29 May 2018].

[19] Robin Ostow writes that when Munich celebrated its 850th anniversary the city's institutions made 'mostly celebratory programs' and that only the Jüdisches Museum explored 'The Dark Side of Munich History' (as its exhibition was subtitled). If that was the case (and the report at https://www.muenchen-transparent.de/dokumente/1626915/datei [accessed 29 May 2018] seems to paint a more nuanced picture) then it was highly unusual. Robin Ostow, 'Creating a Bavarian Space for Rapprochement: The Jewish Museum Munich', in *Space and Spatiality in Modern German-Jewish History*, ed. by Simone Lässig and Miriam Rürup (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2017), pp. 280–97 (p. 289).

> Zuvor gezeigte Ausstellungen […] besaßen, so wichtig sie waren, überwiegend Ausschnittcharakter. […] Die Ausstellung "Zwangsarbeit. Die Deutschen, die Zwangsarbeiter und der Krieg" integriert hingegen solche Teilaspekte in eine Gesamtgeschichte der nationalsozialistischen Zwangsarbeit.
>
> (Exhibitions shown up to this point […], as important as they were, tended to paint a partial picture. […] By contrast, the exhibition "Forced Labour: The Germans, the Forced Labourers, and the War" integrates such partial aspects into a comprehensive story of National Socialist forced labour).[20]

Once this comprehensive overview had been shown in Berlin, the German state used the exhibition in the service of cultural diplomacy, sending it to Moscow under the patronage of heads of state Christian Wulff and Dmitry Medvedev, the very pinnacle of national acknowledgement.

Following a series of regional exhibitions about the police force under National Socialism,[21] which reflected the regional governance of policing in Germany, the Conference of Interior Ministers, a periodic ministerial summit, committed 1.3 million Euros to a project on the history of the police under National Socialism, the cost to be shared between the *Bund* and the *Länder*.[22] While the exact dynamics of the decision-making are unclear,[23] publicity material suggested that the exhibition aimed to get beyond the 'lokale and regionale Ansätze' ('local and regional approaches') in research on this topic, which had reached only a limited

[20] Volkhard Knigge, Rikola-Gunnar Lüttgenau, and Jens-Christian Wagner, 'Einleitung', in *Zwangsarbeit. Die Deutschen, die Zwangsarbeiter und der Krieg*, ed. by Volkhard Knigge, Rikola-Gunnar Lüttgenau, and Jens-Christian Wagner (Weimar: Stiftung Gedenkstätten Buchenwald und Mittelbau-Dora, 2010), pp. 6–11 (p. 6).

[21] These included police exhibitions in Hamburg (1998), Lübeck (2002), Cologne (2002), Mainz (2003), Hannover (2003), and Jena (2009).

[22] http://www.innenministerkonferenz.de/IMK/DE/termine/to-beschluesse/08-04-18/Beschl%C3%BCsse.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=2 [accessed 29 May 2018].

[23] Papers from the *Innenministerkonferenz* record only the decision, but one of the organizers has given an account: Detlev Graf von Schwerin, 'Die deutsche Polizei im 20. Jahrhundert – Dreimal Freund und Helfer?' in *Oranienburger Schriften. Beiträge aus der Fachhochschule der Polizei des Landes Brandenburg* 1 (May 2015), 7–11.

public.[24] The opening of 'Ordnung und Vernichtung. Die Polizei im NS-Staat' ('Order and Annihilation: The Police in the National Socialist State') at the DHM in 2011, with a speech from the Chair of the Conference of Interior Ministers, might have been considered the end of the topic's journey towards national status, were it not that the national project envisaged a re-dispersal to the regions. The project organizers produced a simplified version which could tour the regions and to which regional authorities would be invited to add local material, a typical format for touring exhibitions about National Socialism. Meanwhile, regional exhibitions about the police force under National Socialism continued to be produced independently of 'Ordnung und Vernichtung', suggesting that the mechanisms that favour nationalizing a topic may be weaker than regional cultural practices.[25]

In this way, the *Kommunen-Land-Bund* structure in Germany helps to ensure the production of ever more exhibitions, not simply because of the stratification of funding sources but because each level has perceived deficits: a local or regional exhibition may be considered to confer too low a status on a topic or reach too narrow an audience; but a national or regional exhibition is always in danger of letting local citizens off the hook by allowing them to consider the issues as distant and unrelated to their world, so that higher-level exhibitions are sometimes re-localized to repeat the admonitory mantra that 'it happened here, too'. Inka Bertz has noted a similar phenomenon in the case of Jewish museums, positing a 'dynamic relationship' between 'history from above' and 'history from below', where local action catalyses national action and vice versa.[26]

[24] http://www.dhpol.de/de/hochschule/Departments/fost_1_6/01_projekt.php [accessed 29 May 2018].

[25] Bremen showed 'Polizei. Gewalt. Bremens Polizei im Nationalsozialismus' at the same time as 'Ordnung und Vernichtung' in 2011; this was followed, in 2012, by a version expanded to include Bremerhaven. Police exhibitions also appeared in Munich and Hamburg in 2012.

[26] Inka Bertz, 'Jewish Museums in the Federal Republic of Germany', in *Visualizing and Exhibiting Jewish Space and History: Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, ed. by Richard I. Cohen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 80–112 (p. 105).

1.3 Scope of the Study

The study is based on first-hand knowledge of some 130 German and Austrian history exhibitions and a good second-hand knowledge of another 50 or so. In addition, I have collected basic data for some 500 temporary exhibitions since the year 2000. This year acts as a rough starting date for the generalizations made in the study, though the exhibitions I know at first-hand date from the beginning of my fieldwork in 2005. This limit to the retrospective reach of the analysis is largely pragmatic: records of past exhibitions, especially those from the pre-Internet era, are difficult to come by. Such records as exist rarely enable scholars to reconstruct the appearance and dynamics of the exhibition room. The chosen time frame is therefore not intended to obscure the decades of exhibition-making that went before, not least because I am interested in the fact that today's exhibition-makers sometimes turn this earlier phase of exhibition-making into an exhibit.[27] A small but interesting body of academic work makes some of these earlier exhibitions accessible.[28] The debates over the first of the so-called Wehrmacht Exhibitions in the 1990s act as an implicit prehistory to my study.[29]

[27] For instance, in the exhibition 'Forschung, Lehre, Unrecht. Die Universität Tübingen im Nationalsozialismus' ('Research, Teaching, Dictatorship: The University of Tübingen under National Socialism'), shown at the Museum der Universität Tübingen in 2015, exhibition-makers showed a blown-up image of the local SA brigade. The caption identified this as one of the boards from a 1983 exhibition by the University on the subject of its Nazi past. Together with more explicit statements elsewhere, this seemed designed to defend the university against any suggestion that it was only just waking up to its responsibilities in 2015.

[28] Notably Cornelia Brink, *'Auschwitz in der Paulskirche'. Erinnerungspolitik in Fotoausstellungen der sechziger Jahre* (Marburg: Jonas, 2000); Stephan A. Glienke, 'Die Darstellung der Shoah im öffentlichen Raum. Die Ausstellung "Die Vergangenheit mahnt" (1960-62)', in *Erfolgsgeschichte Bundesrepublik? Die Nachkriegsgesellschaft im langen Schatten des Nationalsozialismus*, ed. by Stephan Alexander Glienke, Volker Paulmann, and Joachim Perels (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008), pp. 147–84; and Stephan Alexander Glienke, *Die Ausstellung 'Ungesühnte Justiz' (1959–1962). Zur Geschichte der Aufarbeitung nationalsozialistischer Justizverbrechen* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2008).

[29] For my contribution, see: Chloe Paver, '"Ein Stück langweiliger als die Wehrmachtsausstellung, aber dafür repräsentativer": The Exhibition *Fotofeldpost* as Riposte to the "Wehrmacht Exhibition"', in *German Memory Contests: The Quest for Identity in Literature, Film, and Discourse Since 1990*, ed. by Anne Fuchs, Mary Cosgrove, and Georg Grote (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2006), pp. 107–25.

However much they vary in topic, scope and ambition, history exhibitions about National Socialism fall into one of two categories: permanent or temporary. *Dauerausstellungen* are the primary embodiment of a museum's mission and ethos, showcasing the most significant objects from its collection; *Sonderausstellungen* are much more diverse in format, produced by both professional and amateur exhibition-makers, often as short-lived responses to particular occasions. As historian Hans-Ulrich Thamer acknowledges, *Sonderausstellungen* are able to take more risks than permanent exhibitions: 'Sie können argumentativ zuspitzen und verdichten' ('They are able to make more pointed and concentrated arguments').[30] While it pays to observe the formal distinction between these exhibition types—since the resources devoted to them and the purposes they serve are different—in practice, exhibition-makers often work on both, applying a range of techniques across both. Besides, the visiting public is unlikely to make a clear distinction between long-term and short-term exhibitions given that they generally visit each once only. For the purposes of this study, the two types of exhibition are treated as equally valuable resources. At the same time, I recognize that while permanent exhibitions constitute relatively stable objects of study, enabling the reader to visit them and test out my arguments, temporary exhibitions, much like theatre performances, are accessible to the researcher only in mediated form once they have reached the end of their run: through the catalogue, if there is one, or through second-hand accounts. To make it easier to challenge my arguments about temporary exhibitions that can no longer be viewed, I give as much contextual information about the displays as is possible in the limited space available, so that in principle other inferences could be drawn. Where I know an exhibition only through its catalogue or through accounts from exhibition-makers, this is made clear.

I include Austria in my study with the ready concession that I have visited fewer museums and exhibitions there, but with the justification that to exclude Austria for fear of not doing it full justice would be to miss out on some of the most thoughtful, creative and provocative exhibitions on this topic. Austria has established memorials at former

[30] Hans-Ulrich Thamer, 'Die Inszenierung von Macht. Hitlers Herrschaft und ihre Präsentation im Museum', in *Hitler und die Deutschen. Volksgemeinschaft und Verbrechen*, ed. by Hans-Ulrich Thamer and Simone Erpel (Dresden: Sandstein, 2010), pp. 17–22 (p. 22). See also Korff und Roth, pp. 21–22.

concentration camps and at euthanasia centres; it has a number of Jewish museums and a central Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes. However, it has not built permanent spaces for exhibition on the same scale as Germany.[31] Beyond isolated examples such as the voestalpine Zeitgeschichte MUSEUM, it has not followed the German practice of opening documentation centres at sites of slave labour or the administration of persecution. Yet, while the differences between the German and the Austrian case must be acknowledged—particularly the much slower and more cautious acknowledgement of Austrian responsibility for Nazi crimes and persecution—exhibitions in both countries are engaged in reflecting on similar issues and employ similar techniques. Exhibition-makers such as Hanno Loewy and Bernhard Purin have moved between the two countries.

The decision to include Jewish museums in the study also calls for justification. Today, Jewish museums in Germany and Austria make it their mission to relate the history of local Jewish life and culture from its origins to the present day (even where little but the museum is left in the present day). Some museums state explicitly that they are working against the tendency to reduce Jewish life and culture to its decimation in the Holocaust. Yet the very existence of Jewish museums (and, in most cases, their non-existence for at least four decades after 1945) is inextricable from National Socialist persecution and genocide and from post-war responses to those events. Writing about European Jewish museums, Ruth Ellen Gruber puts it as follows:

> Centuries of Jewish history are involved – not just the Shoah. Still, […] in today's Europe all Jewish museums are – to one degree or another – Holocaust museums of a sort; what is presented is inevitably viewed through the backward lens of the Shoah.[32]

If we accept this understanding of Jewish museums as 'Holocaust museums of a sort', which Gruber shares with many scholars and museum

[31] For a list of Austrian museums and memorials see http://www.erinnern.at/bundeslaender/oesterreich/gedaechtnisorte-gedenkstaetten/katalog [accessed 29 May 2018].

[32] Ruth Ellen Gruber, *Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe* (Berkeley, CA, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 155–56.

professionals,[33] it would be perverse to exclude Jewish museums from this study on the grounds that they engage with a longer historical period or have a different cultural remit. Some of the most innovative thinking about the display of objects from the National Socialist era, or objects relating to its legacies, takes place in Jewish museums.

As this study is based in the arts rather than the social sciences, it does not draw on data acquired from interviews with museum staff or museum visitors. Nonetheless, it keeps in view the social context of exhibition-making, including the public calls for objects mentioned earlier in relation to Obersalzberg, exhibition proposals that are communicated to the public during the development phase of museums and the programme of events that accompanies exhibitions. While many such activities surround the exhibition proper, informal discussions with exhibition-makers have indicated that they still conceive of 'the exhibition' as a self-contained cultural product. Its clearly defined contours allow it to be presented in a catalogue, in flyers and in press releases and to be opened by a local politician. This boundedness (however artificially constructed) justifies the study, in this monograph, of the history exhibition as a genre, largely independent of the many contexts and processes that produce it, though not in ignorance of them and invoking them where relevant.

Other necessary, but not naïve, simplifications in my study are my reference throughout to 'museums', 'museum objects' and 'exhibition-makers'. Strictly speaking, 'museum' applies to institutions that collect, conserve, research and display three-dimensional objects. Memorial sites often fulfil these functions alongside their other roles, whereas documentation centres rarely start out with a mission to collect, even if local people bring along donations regardless.[34] While recognizing

[33]For similar statements see Julius H. Schoeps, 'Memories: Enlightenment and Commemoration', in *Jewish Museum Vienna*, ed. by Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek and Hannes Sulzenbacher (Vienna: Jüdisches Museum Wien, 1996), pp. 7–9 (pp. 8–9); Richard I. Cohen, 'The Visual Revolution in Jewish Life: An Overview', in *Visualizing and Exhibiting Jewish Space and History: Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, ed. by Richard I. Cohen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 3–24 (p. 17).

[34]Sharon Macdonald recalls a discussion with a curator at the Dokumentationszentrum Reichsparteitagsgelände who claimed that while they could not prevent the public from bringing them Nazi 'kitsch' they had no intention of showing it. As Sects. 3.3 and 5.1 show, the documentation centre has since integrated such items into their exhibitions—in their capacity as historical kitsch. Sharon Macdonald, *Difficult Heritage: Negotiating the Past in Nuremberg and Beyond* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 124.

these distinctions, I use 'museum' as a shorthand because my focus is on objects, the mainstay of museums. 'Museum objects' can then serve as a pragmatic shorthand for all objects relevant to the topic of National Socialist materiality, even if sometimes that includes objects that are not part of a museum collection.

Exhibition-making involves a division of labour not unlike film-making.[35] An exhibition may involve conservators, curators, historians, designers, PR and marketing professionals and translators. In its 'Impressum', the new (2016) permanent exhibition at the Gedenkstätte Buchenwald names some 130 individuals or firms who were involved in the exhibition's production and another twenty or so advisers. This means that any simple notion of intentionality, whereby 'exhibition-makers' purposefully create and intend all their effects, is a fiction. It is an occasionally useful fiction in a book that covers a lot of ground in a limited space, but in general where I use 'exhibition-makers' I take as read that the behind-the-scenes processes are more complex than the visitor can read from the finished product. To offset the intentional fallacy to a degree, I have chosen not to name individual curators and museum historians (except when quoting from their writings), since their exact role may be impossible to reconstruct. More detailed individual studies would be needed to give full credit to some of the very creative individuals in the industry.

1.4 Research Context

Chapter 2 builds a platform for my argument out of selected theories and concepts; here I briefly appraise the broader research field. In their introduction to a 2002 volume of essays, Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche argue that:

> The most common approach to the study of the work of memory in Germany has been to explore how the German past was represented in

[35] For the classic division of labour in the exhibition-making process, see Faye Sayer, *Public History: A Practical Guide* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), pp. 57–58. In small museums or amateur organisations, one or two people may fulfil these roles between them.

> distinct cultural artefacts such as museums, monuments, former concentration camps, films, novels, poems, and memoirs.[36]

Their own collection of essays seeks, they say, 'to take memory out of the museum and beyond the monument' in order to study 'what people actually "do" with their memories'.[37] While I share their feeling that scholarship on the memory of National Socialism is sometimes in danger of repeating itself—'as yet another (mostly Holocaust) memory is subjected to an analysis of its construction, representation, and contestation'—I challenge their assertion that the study of museums in German memory culture had exhausted its usefulness by 2002.[38] This is not simply because the majority of exhibitions analysed in this study have taken place since 2002, often in institutions that had yet to be founded in 2002. That might, after all, be read as confirmation of Confino's and Fritzsche's view that scholars are merely waiting for the next representation of the past to emerge so that they can perform the same tired old operations on it. Rather, I would argue that both museums and scholars are still developing models for understanding what role material culture has played in the German and Austrian experience of history and what role it plays in private and public engagement with the Nazi past.

Whereas scholarship on post-*Wende* museums of the communist GDR is dominated by discussions of their use of material culture, research on history exhibitions about the Third Reich and Holocaust is not centrally concerned with objects, their survival, collection or display. Objects have most readily been studied in the context of Jewish museums, which are defined by the absence of a broad object base and by responses to that absence. Matti Bunzl, for instance, begins his article on the Jüdisches Museum Wien with a brief analysis of its two famous 'anti-exhibits': its visible storeroom or 'Schaudepot' and its holograms. These, he notes, occupy two poles of materiality: an 'acutely unsettling' 'massed presence' of objects on the one hand and a virtual representation that 'resists

[36] Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche, 'Introduction: Noises of the Past', in *The Work of Memory: New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture*, ed. by Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), pp. 1–21 (p. 3).

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

object-bound museology' on the other.[39] Sabine Offe's work questions the motivation and meanings behind non-Jewish engagement with Jewish objects in the 1990s, while Bernhard Purin has reflected on how museums have responded to the market in Jewish antiques.[40]

By contrast, research on memorial sites is dominated by museum pedagogy and visitor research, with exhibited objects generally only a background concern.[41] This body of work does, however, demonstrate some of the advantages of treating exhibitions as public history. While much of the scholarly work on museums and exhibitions dealing with National Socialism comes from within memory studies, few if any of those who make exhibitions would call themselves 'memory workers'; they would call themselves historians or museum educators. Introducing a collection of essays on how the National Socialist era has been investigated outside university settings (including in museums), Frank Bösch and Constantin Goschler advocate the use of the English-language term 'public history' to categorize and conceptualize this work. First, however, they insist on freeing the term from two unfair judgements often expressed through it: that those working outside of academia are 'just' contributing to memory culture, not historiography; and that theirs is 'popular' history, hanging on to the coat tails of academic historiography but unable to make original discoveries.[42] For Bösch and Goschler, public history should be taken seriously on its own terms, both for its potential to catalyse academic historiography and for its power to shape views of the past. In my own argument, I am sometimes interested in instances in

[39] Matti Bunzl, 'Of Holograms and Storage Areas: Modernity and Postmodernity at Vienna's Jewish Museum', *Cultural Anthropology*, 18 (2003), 435–68 (pp. 436, 439).

[40] Sabine Offe, 'Sites of Remembrance? Jewish Museums in Contemporary Germany', *Jewish Social Studies*, 3 (1997), 77–89 and *Ausstellungen, Einstellungen, Entstellungen. Jüdische Museen in Deutschland und Österreich* (Berlin and Vienna: Philo, 2000). Bernhard Purin, 'Dinge ohne Erinnerung. Anmerkungen zum schwierigen Umgang mit jüdischen Kult- und Ritualobjekten zwischen Markt und Museum', *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, 47 (1993), 147–66. See also Gruber.

[41] Most recently, and with a good overview of previous work, Cornelia Geißler, *Individuum und Masse. Zur Vermittlung des Holocaust in deutschen Gedenkstättenausstellungen* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015).

[42] Frank Bösch and Constantin Goschler, 'Der Nationalsozialismus und die deutsche *Public History*', in *Public History. Öffentliche Darstellungen des Nationalsozialismus jenseits der Geschichtswissenschaft*, ed. by Frank Bösch and Constantin Goschler (Frankfurt am Main and New York: Campus, 2009), pp. 7–23.

which exhibition-makers simplify academic historiography for a broader audience, but I treat this phenomenon more neutrally than Bösch's and Goschler's imagined critics. For my purposes, looking at exhibitions as public history has the advantage of freeing them from the expectation of innovation, originality and creativity that often comes with approaches in the arts. This is not to say that the exhibitions in this study are not often creative, but few would meet the standards of originality applied to novels or films. As a form of mass communication, public history has good reason to be middlebrow: its yardstick is professionalism, not avant-garde aesthetics or intellectual provocation. Accordingly, art exhibitions are largely excluded from this study, though I cite some exhibitions where artists have been invited to work with museum objects and some art exhibition catalogues containing essays on objects.

In line with the 'transnational turn' in Holocaust studies, there is a rich vein of transnational comparative studies of post-Holocaust or post-trauma museums.[43] Some of these take an interest in 'what remains' in a material sense. In particular, Paul Williams's work examines the fragments that remain of past atrocities. Though not centrally concerned with Germany, Williams has set up an expectation that post-trauma museums struggle to populate their collections because victim groups are 'object-poor', something this study challenges.[44] In practice, Williams goes on to list a whole series of object categories that are typical for camp museums, so that his claim should not be taken out of its more differentiated context. In her wide-ranging study of the use of multiple media to create effects of empathy in the museum, Arnold-de

[43] Most recently: Hannah Holtschneider, *The Holocaust and Representations of Jews: History and Identity in the Museum* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2011), a comparative study of the Imperial War Museum and the Jüdisches Museum Berlin; Angelika Schoder, *Die Vermittlung des Unbegreiflichen. Darstellungen des Holocaust im Museum* (Frankfurt am Main and New York: Campus, 2014), a comparative study of the Imperial War Museum and the Deutsches Historisches Museum; Arnold-de Simine; and Jennifer Hansen-Glucklich, *Holocaust Memory Reframed: Museums and the Challenges of Representation* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press, 2014), which compares the Jüdisches Museum Berlin, USHMM, and Yad Vashem.

[44] 'Compared to conventional history museums […] there is a basic difficulty with the object base of memorial museums: orchestrated violence aims to destroy, and typically does so efficiently. The injured, dispossessed, and expelled are left object-poor'. Paul Williams, *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), p. 25.

Simine cites Williams' 'object-poor' claim and suggests that 'memory museums' are 'not so much driven by objects but by narratives and performances'.[45] She, too, however, analyses a number of museums with extensive object displays. This notion of 'sparseness' is explored further in Sect. 2.2.

These transnational studies tend to focus on a limited number of high-profile museums, such as the Imperial War Museum, the USHMM and the Jüdisches Museum Berlin. While the latter lends itself exceptionally well to international comparison, where it can be used to represent Germany's national self-understanding, it is hardly typical of broader trends in museum work in Germany. Or, rather, the ways in which it *is* typical of German history museums—for instance its relatively conventional use of objects—are not generally what interests the authors of international comparative studies.

Proceeding from a different corpus of museums, the present study argues that material culture remains at the heart of exhibition practice in German history museums, even those that represent victims in their most 'object-poor' state, and indeed that some of the most interesting thinking is happening in relation to objects. As such, this book aligns itself more closely with Sharon Macdonald's work on museums and memorials which defends nation-based studies as the necessary foundation for (and nuancing corrective to) transnational work.[46] Her 2009 monograph *Difficult Heritage* works with Daniel Levy's and Natan Sznaider's concept of 'cosmopolitan' or 'deterritorialized' memory,[47] while insisting that memory must of necessity be expressed in local settings. This justifies her own study, based on fieldwork in Nuremberg. 'Because of the inevitability of local specification – or territorialisation – and its working out in practice', Macdonald argues, 'we need local studies'.[48] Yet, with Levy and Sznaider in mind, she remains alert to the connection between local manifestations and wider frames of reference, because 'local actions are frequently negotiated through comparisons with other places,

[45] Arnold-de Simine, pp. 2, 10.

[46] This paragraph summarizes arguments that are explored in more detail in Chloe Paver, 'The Transmission of Household Objects from the National Socialist Era to the Present in Germany and Austria: A Local Conversation within a Globalized Discourse', *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 9 (2016), 229–52.

[47] Macdonald, *Difficult Heritage*, p. 131.

[48] Macdonald, p. 187.

through concepts and ideas produced elsewhere'.[49] In a later work, *Memorylands*, Macdonald reverses the polarity, basing her generalizations about Europe on local field studies.[50]

To focus on Germany and Austria, as this study does, is therefore a conscious choice. While acknowledging that memorial sites and Jewish museums face outwards to the diaspora of victims of descendants, this study takes a particular interest in the inward-looking discourses that exhibitions about National Socialism in Germany and Austria respond to and produce: the discussions among Germans or among Austrians about their own past and about their family heritage. I have proposed elsewhere that a single sentence in the redesigned Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr which addresses a young person with the words 'Das alles hat es auch in Deiner Stadt gegeben' ['All this happened in your home town, too'] typifies much museum discourse in Germany and Austria today.[51] For while some larger museums at tourist destinations supply an English translation of their main texts, most history exhibitions with a local or regional focus are mono-lingual, targeted at German or Austrian citizens and telling them 'This happened in *your* home town'. Aleida Assmann has termed this '[die] deutsche Selbstbezüglichkeit [der Erinnerungskultur]' ['the German self-referentiality of memory culture'] and in her own work deliberately steps beyond it into transnational and global contexts.[52] Coming as it does from outside Germany, the present study does not need to 'intervene' in German memory culture to shape its future (Assmann terms her study an 'intervention'), nor to worry about German parochialism, allowing it to analyse precisely that 'Selbstbezüglichkeit' that persists in German and Austrian exhibition-making today. Even as this study acknowledges the increasing globalization of memory forms and practices, it cautions

[49] Macdonald, p. 4. See also p. 187.

[50] Sharon Macdonald, *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2013). For a broader discussion see Jennifer M. Kapczynski and Erin McGlothlin, 'Introduction', in *Persistent Legacy: The Holocaust and German Studies*, ed. by Erin McGlothlin and Jennifer M. Kapczynski (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2016), pp. 1–16. They argue that scholars within German Studies have missed opportunities to engage with transnational research while, in turn, international Holocaust Studies has unfairly neglected the nation-based expertise of German Studies.

[51] Paver, 'The Transmission of Household Objects', p. 236.

[52] Aleida Assmann, *Das neue Unbehagen an der Erinnerungskultur. Eine Intervention* (Munich: Beck, 2013), p. 14.

against moving too quickly and smoothly to transnational research while the role of the local and familial in German and Austrian history exhibitions has yet to be fully understood.

1.5 Structure of the Analysis

As is evident from its chapter titles, the study takes a broadly chronological approach to objects from the years 1933 onwards. This heuristic device balances two considerations against each other. On the one hand, all exhibition displays are the product of memory work in the present, so that one could, in theory, lump everything together under the heading 'material memory in the early 21st century'. At the same time, exhibition-makers on this topic structure their exhibition narratives chronologically. Given the importance of cause and effect and before and after for the historiography of the Nazi era, the exhibition space is rarely organized thematically. A chronological structure acknowledges exhibition-makers' awareness of time and allows me to unpick its construction.

Typically, each history exhibition in this study contains a wealth of objects, arranged in complex configurations. The choice to discuss a small selection of objects from across a range of unrelated exhibitions is therefore open to challenge. In the chapters that follow, my aim is, on the one hand, to identify categories of object that are typical for this exhibition topic (all the while questioning why exhibition-makers have chosen to make them so) and, on the other hand, to consider how certain types of museum object relate to broader public and academic discourses about German and Austrian memory of National Socialism: discussions about what majority Germans knew of Nazi crimes, for instance, or about the right of majority Germans to remember their own suffering. The study will show that some categories that are central to academic German memory studies—generation, trauma, and postmemory—feature only marginally in object display. The sophisticated results of scholarly study of mentalities in the 1930s and 1940s prove difficult to replicate in object form, and exhibition-makers have to find ways around this problem. Finally, the disapproval of post-war failings in memory which is a regular feature of public discourse (not least in speeches given by local politicians at the opening ceremonies for exhibitions) is often taken as read by exhibition-makers and assumed not to need direct articulation when relevant objects are presented.

Dividing the chronological chapters into sub-chapters allows me to move between objects relating to the German and Austrian majority culture and objects relating to the primary victims of National Socialism. While it would be possible to write a study of just one of the two categories, that would run counter to exhibition practice as I have observed it. Any good-quality exhibition about the majority culture devotes space to the victims of majority actions, often showing personal items that have been acquired by reaching out to survivors or descendants. Equally, exhibitions at memorial sites all include information on the life and culture of the SS guards and may even show personal items where these have something to say about mentality or culpability. Increasingly, memorial sites also address the actions of the non-persecuted majority under headings such as 'Die Volksgemeinschaft' (the Nazi 'national community') or 'Das Lager und die Stadt' ('The Camp and the Town').

There is some crossover between the objects representing the two groups. One cannot tell just by looking at a battered suitcase whether it belonged to a Jewish emigrant or to an ethnic German fleeing the Soviet advance. Nor can one tell from looking at a brooch shaped like a fox terrier whether it belongs in an exhibition about German fashion in the 1930s or in an exhibition about concentration camp prisoners, as evidence that they made objects to maintain their will to survive.[53] This material crossover is, however, limited, and the categorical difference between being privileged by the Nazis and persecuted by them means that the life cycles of objects and their potential significations in the museum are quite different and need to be thought through separately. The challenge is to do that without unconsciously constructing a single victim experience or a single majority experience.

Chapter 2 builds a framework for the main analysis out of key concepts in museum studies and historiography: objects as fragments and signs; objects as conduits for emotions and mentalities; and the object life cycle. Chapter 3, 'Material Experiences, 1933–45', begins by reaching back beyond 1933/1938, assessing curators' use of objects to demonstrate the Jewish participation in *Heimat* culture. As the chapter shows, these exhibition-makers may not appear, strictly speaking, to be 'exhibiting the Nazi past' but they are, as is fundamentally the case in

[53] Almost identical fox terriers have appeared in 'Glanz und Grauen' (an exhibition discussed in later chapters) and in the permanent exhibition at the Gedenkstätte und Museum Sachsenhausen.

Jewish museums, exhibiting the pre-Nazi past in direct response to the Nazi past. There follows a consideration of more typically 'Nazi' objects, both those with an obvious propaganda purpose—now framed critically in the museum—and those that represent more subtly the mentalities of the German and Austrian majority. Finally, Chapter 3 considers objects from the nadir of the era: objects from the concentration camps and objects relating to the sufferings of the non-persecuted majority during wartime. The objects discussed in Chapter 4, 'Material Collapse, 1945', all bear clear marks of a time of transition: for the non-persecuted majority a time to shed the trappings of the old regime (a process now clearly criticized in the museum) and for Jewish victims a time to return to life with whatever material was available.

Chapter 5, 'Material After-Lives Between the Attic and the Museum', is the longest part of the study, reflecting the fact that much of the most interesting thinking about objects is happening in relation to their fates after 1945. Many of the objects discussed here were produced between 1933 and 1945 but kept long afterwards. Whether they were hidden away or cherished and kept on show can tell the museum visitor much about how the different social groups (persecuted and non-persecuted) lived with the Nazi past. Other objects were produced or damaged in the long process of 'coming to terms', of arriving at a more honest understanding of the majority's role in National Socialism.

Finally, Chapter 5 shows how objects continue to be reshaped once they cross the threshold to the museum. These processes chime with what exhibition-makers at the Gedenkstätte Mauthausen said in their text 'Objekte erzählen Geschichte' in their 2003 permanent exhibition: 'Diese Spuren der Vergangenheit sind aber auch Teil der heutigen Realität. Sie werden laufend geformt, verändert, historische Objekte werden restauriert, in Sammlungen neu geordnet und auch persönliche Erinnerungen ändern sich im Laufe der Zeit' ('These traces of the past are also part of today's reality. They continue to be shaped and changed; historical objects are restored or assigned to different categories within the museum collection; and even personal memories change over the course of time'). When I visited that exhibition in 2006, the text seemed too challenging in its abstraction for an average visitor. Now it seems to reflect quite plainly German and Austrian exhibition-makers' understanding of the mutability of objects from the years 1933–45.

CHAPTER 2

Between the Material and the Immaterial

2.1 Broken Glass

This chapter establishes a conceptual framework for the critical analysis of exhibition practice that follows it. Since the overarching argument of this book concerns the relationship between the abstract and the material, my discussion of concepts proceeds from a concrete example. The broken shards of a crystal vase, displayed in 2012 at the Dokumentationszentrum Reichsparteitagsgelände, serve to tease out initial thoughts about the relationship between physical reality and intangible realities, as embodied in objects that date from the National Socialist era and its after-years. Subsequent sections of the chapter systematize these preliminary thoughts using three frames of reference that have already been modelled—more or less fully—in scholarship: the museum object as signifier; the object as conduit for experiences, emotions and mentalities; and the life cycle of the object.

In order to make these conceptual tools serviceable for a study of history exhibitions about the years 1933–45 in Germany and Austria, the chapter will need to distinguish between those characteristics that are shared by all museum objects—their passage through successive life phases, for instance—and those that are specific to objects connected to National Socialism and its legacies. In narrowing the focus from the general to the particular, it will help to keep two opposing aspects of National Socialism in view. First, the National Socialist regime and its agents produced, instrumentalized, stole, transported, sold, recycled and

C. Paver, *Exhibiting the Nazi Past*, The Holocaust and its Contexts,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77084-0_2

destroyed vast numbers of objects between 1933 and 1945, while ordinary people acquired, lost, exchanged, transported, salvaged or recycled objects in response. These processes continued after 1945, when millions of objects were partially or wholly destroyed, hidden, neglected, found and restored. Second, 1933–45 was a period in which the key events and outcomes were not material products such as inventions or constructions but, rather, many millions of human actions and engagements—injustices, displacements, injuries, murders and bereavements—which in turn left a post-war legacy of survivals, new beginnings and psychological scarring.

First, then, the glass shards. The 'Aryanization' process, by which the Nazi state gradually deprived Jews of property, possessions and the right to work in the 1930s, has been a recurrent theme in exhibitions since the late 1990s, reflecting an interest in how the non-persecuted German majority witnessed, participated in and in some cases profited from persecution of their Jewish fellow citizens. The exhibition 'Entrechtet. Entwürdigt. Beraubt. "Arisierung" in Nürnberg und Fürth' ('Disenfranchised, Humiliated, Robbed: "Aryanization" in Nuremberg and Fürth') was therefore typical of many local reckonings with this shameful aspect of civic history.

In a section of the exhibition devoted to the radicalization of anti-Jewish policies in the context of the Pogrom of November 1938, a small glass case was flanked by full-height photographs, one showing the public burning of synagogue furniture, the other the burnt-out shell of a synagogue. The label for the glass box, which contained nine or ten pieces of broken glass, read: 'Während der Pogromnacht in der Wohnung der Familie Jakob zerstörte Kristallvase. *Leihgabe Eva Rössner*' ('Crystal vase, destroyed in the home of the Jakob family on the night of the pogrom. *Loaned by Eva Rössner*'). The intact base of the vase was set flat on the floor of the case, making it possible to reconstruct its shape in one's imagination. No attempt was made to show the museum's ordering hand, in the way that a set of archaeological fragments might show signs of classification, visual alignment or reconstruction. Instead, the shards were arranged in a studiedly random way, facing in different directions, with either the internal or external surface upwards, evoking the pattern in which they might have fallen at the moment of breakage.

The lack of explicit direction in the caption allowed for various meanings and connections to emerge which, between them, range across the analytical models introduced in this chapter. First, the broken vase stands

in various ways for wider meanings and contexts, corresponding to the linguistic figures of **synecdoche**, **metaphor and metonymy**. Like all museum objects the glass is a fragment of a bigger historical process and therefore a synecdochic figure. The Jakob family was just one of many who experienced violent harassment; the object was one of tens of thousands smashed up over two days of violence; the violence was more than just physical and was part of wider government policy. The vase need not itself have been fragmented for it to play the conventional museum role of the part that relates to a whole, but the violence that broke the object serves as a metaphor for the violence subsequently inflicted on human bodies and the vase's fragmented state for family lives torn apart by Nazi persecution. Finally, if we understand metonymy as a relation of contiguity, including the contiguity of cause and effect, then the shards of the vase evoke what broke them: the angry heft of racial hatred. In museum exhibitions about the November Pogrom, Nazi hatred is evoked largely through photographs of the aftermath of looting and destruction; a narrow selection of mostly exterior motifs shows bodies passively observing. In its smashed state, the vase brings us much closer to the muscle power of violence.[1]

In a literary text, such figurative readings might be considered clichéd or simplistic, but museums, as purveyors of public history, tend to draw on a stock of available figures rather than creating original ones. Allowing for this relative crudeness of effect, the last-mentioned, metonymic figure is perhaps the most powerful effect of the shards, for they return us to the moment at which Nazi men broke into an apartment and vented their racist aggression by smashing up whatever their hands and sticks could reach. As such, the shards also fit the second model outlined in this chapter: objects conceptualized as conduits for (rather

[1] The Geschichtswerkstatt des Vereins Rückblende Gegen das Vergessen in Volkmarsen, Hessen, a small amateur museum of Jewish life and culture, has the only reconstruction I have seen of a wrecked Jewish apartment. Though professional museums generally avoid reconstructions, this one, based on an account given by the victim, is surprisingly effective. Where repetitive photographic motifs generally keep us at a distance from the vandalism, here, crockery has been smashed, drawers emptied and chairs turned over. A 2002 exhibition at the Jüdisches Museum Wien, 'Eine Nacht und ein Tag. Eine Ausstellung zum 9/10. November 1938 in Wien' ('One Night and One Day: An Exhibition about the 9th and 10th November 1933 in Vienna') deliberately did without photographs of the Pogrom because they had become so over-used (conversation with Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, 2006).

than simply 'witnesses' to or 'documents' of) **experience**, **emotions and mentalities**. In this case, the Jakobs' experienced the acquisition and display of the vase (however that might have come about) as pleasurable; they experienced the threat of state power through the vandalism of their possessions, with its implicit threat to their bodies; they mourned the lost object by keeping its fragments. The mentality of the perpetrators, on the other hand, conditioned by prevailing political conditions, expressed itself in a loss of inhibition, allowing antipathy to be unleashed physically on fellow citizens' belongings.

The shards of glass also draw attention to the **life cycle** of the object, the third scholarly model that will be outlined and appraised in this chapter. In general, the breaking of an object leads to its disposal, disqualifying it from acquisition by a museum. Exhibitions about National Socialism, however, contain many damaged and broken objects and much that would, in all other contexts, be classed as rubbish. While there is no single unifying factor in such displays of rubbish, the phenomenon is obviously connected to the violence and destruction of the period. In this case, the end of the vase's useful life is particularly acutely expressed: whereas a broken household implement might continue to function partially, or be re-functioned, a decorative glass object ceases once and for all to fulfil the function for which it was manufactured the moment it is no longer whole. By drawing attention to the moment at which the swing of an SA man's arm re-categorizes the object as rubbish, the display focuses on the meaning of this radical devaluation. The smashing of the vase neither interfered in the functioning of the household nor impoverished the family, but this very pointlessness expressed the state's arbitrary power. The vase had at least two more life phases left after its useful life ended (and a third if one counts its museum display). Its preservation as precious rubbish after the attack speaks of the psychological scars left on the family, possibly also of lingering hopes for a return to normality. Its preservation down to the third generation speaks of the intergenerational transmission of Holocaust effects.[2]

Even if rarely made explicit in the individual captions assigned to objects, meanings such as those elaborated above are readily available to

[2] Internet research indicates that Eva Rössner is the Jakobs' granddaughter: http://blankgenealogy.com/holocaust/Histories%20and%20stories/Dannenberg/Dannenberg,%20Einstein%20and%20Jacob%20Family%20during%20the%20Nazi%20Period.pdf [accessed 29 May 2018].

visitors because museums make clear, in their broader narratives and in their paratexts, that it is people, and not objects, that matter in narratives of National Socialist persecution and murder. No museum invites its visitor to think that it is a shame—from the point of view of the material world—that a vase was broken. Culturally aware visitors may occasionally grieve for an irretrievably lost artwork, but the vast majority of broken, stolen or misappropriated objects are shown to demonstrate what the Nazis and those who supported them did to people, what kind of people Nazi supporters were and what suffering the victims endured.

At the same time, because the Nazis harassed and persecuted its victims *through* objects (through their public display, their vandalism, their theft, and—in the camps—their imposition, prohibition or use as weapons), and because German history museums see it as their primary aim to give voice to the victims' suffering, the significance of an object loops from object to person and back to object. Having acted as a signifier, object, agent or currency within the Nazi system, the object is more than a passive historical witness: its physicality was invested with emotion, caused pain or enabled survival. This is one strand of Axel Drecoll's defence of the use of objects, rather than 'documentation', in German history museums. Things, he says, are not just exhibits, but can teach visitors about 'die Gegenstandsbeziehungen gewöhnlicher Leute' ('ordinary people's relationships to objects') and about 'die Materialisierung von Politik' ('the way in which politics takes material form'). He reminds us that: 'Gerade Dinge im Sinne von Produkten sind und waren im NS-Regime auch und vor allem Teile symbolisch vermittelter Bedeutungssysteme, die kollektiven Sinn und soziale Integration stifteten' ('Under the Nazi regime, things, particularly in the sense of products, were also – in fact, primarily – components in mediated systems of meaning that created a sense of collective identity and social integration').[3] Drecoll is making an argument specifically about how to present the majority culture (what the Nazis called the 'Volksgemeinschaft') in museums but what he says applies equally to other categories of object, including those belonging to the victims,

[3] Axel Drecoll, 'NS-Volksgemeinschaft ausstellen. Zur Reinszenierung einer Schreckensvision mit Verheißungskraft', in *Die NS-Volksgemeinschaft. Zeitgenössische Verheißung, analytisches Konzept und ein Schlüssel zum historischen Lernen?*, ed. by Uwe Danker and Astrid Schwabe (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2017), pp. 105–22 (p. 121).

which are also not simply exhibits from the past but acted and were acted on, signified and were given meaning, in ways that can help us understand the victim experience. Sometimes, then, the thing is the thing, so to speak, but only ever because the thing was the agent or object of human thoughts and feelings.[4] It is this interplay between the human and the material that this chapter seeks to systematize more clearly and that the study as a whole explores.[5]

The chapter draws together ideas from across several disciplines—history and sociology; cultural memory and museum studies; and art history and material culture studies. It also draws together conventional academic research and semi-academic writing produced in the context of exhibitions for publication in exhibition catalogues. It is because these connections (and their implications for exhibition practice) are still emerging that this book is able to make a significant contribution to the field.

2.2 Objects as Signifiers and Fragments

Puzzling over a bunch of keys that were donated to the Jüdisches Museum Hohenems in 2007 and that were alleged to have belonged to 'Aryanized' properties, Anika Reichwald asked, in a curator's note displayed alongside them, what they, and the act of keeping them, might 'stand for':

[4] Atina Grossmann, whose work is discussed in Sect. 2.3, performs this kind of loop when she first argues that the victims' material losses in the 'Aryanization' process were fundamentally immaterial ('These are the immaterial losses, the identities forever disrupted that could never be put back together again') but then returns to the material: 'Interestingly, however, these profound, intangible losses are often linked to the re-imagining, and then listing, of particular objects'. Atina Grossmann, 'Family Files: Emotions and Stories of (Non-)Restitution', *German Historical Institute London Bulletin*, 34.1 (2012), 59–78 (pp. 73–74).

[5] The opposition between 'human' and 'material' is heuristic and not intended to deny the materiality of the human body. Beyond the human remains from the Holocaust, whose museum presentation has been well researched, a pertinent example of the human body experienced materially can be found in the catalogue of 'Ein gewisses jüdisches Etwas' ('A Certain Jewish Something', 2009 at the Jüdisches Museum Frankfurt). Although the 'Etwas' that Eva Szepesi brought forward was a framed photograph of herself as a child, the accompanying text makes clear that the key 'Etwas' are her plaits, the loss of which at Auschwitz she still deeply mourns. Jüdisches Museum Frankfurt am Main (ed.), *Geschenkte Geschichten. Zum 20-Jahres-Jubiläum des jüdischen Museums Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt am Main: Societätsverlag, 2009), pp. 224–25.

> Steht die Aufbewahrung dieser Schlüssel für eine "Bewahrung" der Macht, die die Nazis über ihre Opfer hatten – ein Gefühl von Superiorität und Bedeutungsgewinn? Stehen diese Schlüssel und Schlösser für ein Unrechtsbewusstsein – ein Gedanken an die entrechteten, vertriebenen und ermordeten Juden?
>
> (Does storing these keys stand for a "conserving" of the power that the Nazis had over their victims – a feeling of superiority and of an increase in consequence? Do the keys and locks stand for a consciousness that a wrong has been committed – recalling the Jews who were deprived of their rights, driven out, and murdered?)[6]

The previous owner, Reichwald implies, loaded the keys with meaning by acquiring them, thinking about them and keeping them safe, and they can carry a trace of that meaning, however faint and imperfectly encoded, to the museum visitor. Evidently, the understanding that objects in museums are 'Semiophoren' or 'Zeichenträger' ('transporters of signs'),[7] standing for more than themselves, holds true for the topic of National Socialism as much as for any museum topic. This still leaves us with the question of what kinds of signification are possible. Likewise, if we accept that all museum collections are characterized by 'Fragmentarik' ('fragmentariness'),[8] because it is only possible to preserve a small part of the material residue of the past, it is still useful to define further what form that fragmentariness takes for the topic of National Socialism.

When, in 1990, Gottfried Korff and Martin Roth spoke of the importance of a 'visuelle Rhetorik' in the museum,[9] they were doubtless speaking figuratively, yet terms from ancient rhetoric—synecdoche, metonymy, metaphor—can help to pin down the logic by which museum objects are made to stand for aspects of the past, in particular, as in the case of

[6] Hanno Loewy and Anika Reichwald (eds), *Übrig. Ein Blick in die Bestände – zum 25. Geburtstag des Jüdischen Museums Hohenems* (Hohenems, Vienna, and Vaduz: Bucher, 2016), p. 60.

[7] Krzysztof Pomian, *Der Ursprung des Museums. Vom Sammeln*, trans. by Gustav Roßler (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1988).

[8] Gottfried Korff and Martin Roth, 'Einleitung', in *Das historische Museum. Labor, Schaubühne, Identitätsfabrik* ed. by Gottfried Korff and Martin Roth (Frankfurt am Main and New York: Campus Verlag, 1990), pp. 9–37 (pp. 18, 21).

[9] Korff and Roth, p. 23.

Reichwald's keys, for abstract and ephemeral actions, mentalities and emotions. These are, as will become clearer in Sect. 2.3, central to the historical study of National Socialism and its aftermath but are not themselves amenable to collection and display.

In rhetoric, synecdoche involves substituting the part for the whole or the species for the genus.[10] In museums, which must miniaturize the past world, this substitution is more common than its inverse: the whole standing for the part, or the genus for the species. In metonymy, an object or abstraction is replaced by a contiguous object or abstraction. The contiguity need not be spatial—it may be temporal, causal or logical—but the assumption is that there is 'eine reale Beziehung' ('a real relationship') between the two terms.[11] This separates metonymy from metaphor. Synecdoche, then, assumes a partial identity between the terms of the substitution; metonymy assumes that the terms are non-identical but contiguous; and metaphor assumes the terms are non-identical and not contiguous, but similar. While some substitutions common in ancient rhetoric (Gods standing for their domain, for instance) have little relevance to museums, others are perfectly applicable: a container stands for its contents, a tool for its user, a product for its producer, a singular for a plural, and so on.

In the museum context, the 'real relationship' assured by synecdochic and metonymic figures of substitution is now always in the past: the object *was* part of something; it *was* contiguous to something. Nonetheless, this real relationship is particularly valued by the exhibition-makers in this study, whose priority is to document the National Socialist past factually. Metaphor might seem a less obviously useful figure for this topic, but the succeeding chapters will show that exhibition-makers use damaged objects to stand for the damage done to people and use hidden or destroyed objects to stand for post-war attitudes of denial and repression.[12]

[10] Definitions are drawn from: Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik* (Munich: Hueber, 1960), pp. 292–98; Gert Ueding and Bernd Steinbrink, *Grundriss der Rhetorik. Geschichte, Technik, Methode* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1986).

[11] Ueding and Steinbrink, p. 272, and Lausberg, p. 292.

[12] The permanent exhibition of the Nordico Stadtmuseum Linz, opened in 1999 (and viewed in 2006, since when it appears to have been remodelled), presented a compressed narrative of the city's history, with a single vitrine to represent the National Socialist era. A caption identified its two objects: 'Wiege zur Feier der Namensgebung (statt Taufe) mit Blindgänger einer 200 Kilo-Bombe' ('Cradle made to mark a child's naming ceremony (in

Given that every museum object is in some way synecdochic (a small part of a larger past that cannot be archived in its totality) and in some way metonymic (having been contiguous with multiple aspects of the past), using these terms is pointless unless we pose supplementary questions. Beyond asking 'Part of what?' and 'Contiguous with what?' we must ask, for instance: 'What kinds of contiguity make objects from this era worthy of collection and display?', '*Which* time does a museum make an object contiguous with?', 'What entities are even recognised as "wholes" that can be represented by their parts?' and 'Does the museum, in its display practice, unconsciously adopt part/whole structures assumed by the former regime, or does it expose them as artificial?'. I take these in turn.

Beginning with the kinds of contiguity that are considered important for this historic era, we can draw on Mieke Bal, who applies the terms 'synecdoche' and 'metonymy' to the activity of amateur collectors. They choose additions to their collections on the basis of whether they are an exemplar of their class or a link in a chain. She reads this collecting behaviour through Freud's theories of fetishism, because in the imagination of the infantile fetishist body parts stand for the whole body and objects that are close to the body for the body.[13] Bal is concerned with collecting practices outside of the museum but it is obvious that history museums, which—with rare exceptions—cannot preserve bodies, are reliant on body substitutes, including objects that were close to the body. While such objects have traditionally played a role in museums' celebration of great men and women, they have taken on a different role in the case of the Nazi regime, which, on the basis of ideological discourses of the body, carried out unprecedented levels of bodily destruction, including the obliteration of bodily traces. In addition, camp inmates were

place of a christening), with an unexploded 200 kilo bomb'). The exhibition-makers had placed the bomb inside the traditional craftwork cradle, which bore the words 'Für Volk und Vaterland' in hand-painted Gothic script. In this combination, the two objects stood for the opposition between life and death. One could read their combination as representing an ideology that wanted to shape the individual from cradle to grave or as a causal statement of 'this is what you get': offer up your children to a corrupt regime and it will sacrifice them in war. Such obviously metaphorical arrangements are very rare.

[13] Mieke Bal, 'Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting', in *A Mieke Bal Reader* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006; first publ. 1994), pp. 269–88 (pp. 278, 282).

deliberately reduced to the ownership of objects kept close to the body or used on the body, as the bare minimum required for the survival of the usable human being. Together, these contexts make the metonymic contiguity of object and body (but also the metaphorical substitution of damaged material for damaged bodies) key to this topic.

The importance of mentalities for historians of National Socialism, which will be discussed in Sect. 2.3, means that metonymic relations of cause and effect play a key role for this topic even if, as the opening example of the keys cautions, actual motivations are often only loosely inscribed in, and readable from, objects.[14] Metonymic figurations in the museum should remain open to challenge because museums are not necessarily even-handed in their representations of time and causality. As Sect. 2.4 acknowledges, a single object has a long lifespan, and museums may (often must) artificially connect an object with one part of its biography to the exclusion of others. More broadly, museums have a tendency to simplify time, to separate out eras and periods for their clearer contemplation. Objects may therefore be chosen to help museums construct and control time, but can confound this aim by showing the messiness of time and the simultaneity of the old and the new in real settings. We will see in subsequent chapters that while museums are generally very precise about one particular cause-and-effect sequence (Germany persecuted and attacked others *before* its majority began to suffer in war) and almost compulsively precise about the time span during which Germany and Austria failed to adequately acknowledge responsibility for the Nazi past, there is sometimes a deliberate blurring of the distinction between the period in which people were damaged and the period in which objects relating to them were damaged. In such cases, metaphoric readings based on contemporary, retrospective perceptions of National Socialism may take over from the factual realities of the object's use phase. Similarly, we will see examples in Chapter Five of metaphors of 'burial' and 'hiding in plain sight' being used to stand for social processes not necessarily causally connected to the actual burial or hiding of the object on display.

[14]For Simon Knell, 'objects remain weak repositories of information about processes, actions, and relationships' and require labels to supply context. Simon J. Knell, 'Museums, Reality, and the Material World', in *Museums in the Material World*, ed. by Simon J. Knell (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 1–28 (p. 26).

Turning to the question of whether museums accept or challenge the part/whole relations that existed in the historical era on display, uniforms are an example of a class of object that is routinely shown whole. This is not unreasonable given that this was how most citizens encountered them, but recreates the visual effect intended by the Nazis. Occasional alternative approaches defamiliarize this practice: the display of uniform badges with their manufacturers' labels still attached switches attention to the uniform as a composite industrial product from which manufacturers profited, while the display of samples of 'brown' cloth (actually in remarkably varied shades) exposes the 'Braunhemd' ('brown-shirt') as a manufactured idea of unity.[15] Conversely, yellow stars are over-familiar to us as 'whole' objects, which is how the Nazis intended them to be seen (one on each body), but museums increasingly show them still attached to each other on sheets of yellow stars, switching focus to the organization that went into producing and distributing these objects of persecution.[16]

Another reason why the synecdochic relations evoked in the exhibition space should be open to challenge is that they make assumptions of typicality that are inevitably a professional judgement. Based on extensive fieldwork undertaken in German *Stadtmuseen*, Susanne Hagemann criticizes the use of 'ein auffallend begrenzter Objektkanon' ('a distinctly limited canon of objects') to represent National Socialism, including badges, toys, weaponry and uniforms, air raid paraphernalia and 'der obligatorische Volksempfänger' ('the obligatory Nazi-produced radio').[17] It is possible to recognize all the items on Hagemann's list

[15]The badges at the Stadtmuseum München and at 'Glanz und Grauen. Mode im "Dritten Reich"' ('Glamour and Horror: Fashion in the Third Reich', 2012 at the LVR-Industriemuseum)'; the cloth also at 'Glanz und Grauen'. The harmonizing of 'brown' in propaganda but not in material reality is discussed by Kerstin Kraft, 'Mythisierungen in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart', in LVR-Industriemuseum (ed.), *Glanz und Grauen. Mode im dritten Reich* (Bönen/Westfalen: Kettler, 2012), pp. 79–85 (pp. 84–85).

[16]Notably at the 2001–2017 permanent exhibition of the Jüdisches Museum Berlin and at 'Nationalsozialismus in Freiburg' ('National Socialism in Freiburg', 2016 at the Augustinermuseum Freiburg).

[17]Susanne Hagemann, '"Leere Gesten"? Darstellungsmuster in Ausstellungen zur NS-Zeit', in *Entnazifizierte Zone? Zum Umgang mit der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus in ostdeutschen Stadt- und Regionalmuseen*, ed. by Museumsverband des Landes Brandenburg (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015), pp. 77–92 (pp. 79, 82).

without necessarily sharing her weary sense of repetition and cliché. The history exhibitions in my, broader, fieldwork sample certainly favour some objects over others and occasionally display objects rather lazily. However, the now routine collection of personal stories from donors has meant that even exhibits that are typical of a typical class of object often show significant variations.[18] Moreover, exhibition-makers often uncover little-known objects from the National Socialist era, such as objects made only for a short time in wartime or that had a particular currency or significance in the economy of the camps. Nevertheless, even an expanded canon is necessarily selective and this study will remain alert to the choices exhibition-makers make about which parts can stand for the whole.

The notion that, in synecdochic figurations, the singular can stand for the plural and vice versa is also complicated for this topic. Naomi Tereza Salmon's seminal photographic exhibition *Asservate / Exhibits. Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Yad Vashem* treated victims' objects singly, through portraiture, in defiance of their lack of material value.[19] In her preface to the catalogue, Aleida Assmann notes that humans are hard-wired to think synecdochically and that this causes problems for exhibition-makers dealing with the Holocaust, who need visitors to take in large numbers of the same object. This thought is prompted by her hearing a tourist say, at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum: 'Du brauchst da nicht mehr lang zu gehen, da kommen nur noch Schuhe' ('You don't need to carry on along there: it's just more shoes').[20] While German and Austrian museums generally have fewer of any one category of object than the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, they, too, must respond to this human tendency. Large numbers of objects are important proofs of the scale of violence, but reproduce the Nazis' de-individualization of its victims; singling out objects can serve to re-individualize victims but does not challenge the visitor to understand the sheer repetitiveness of Nazi persecution and murder. In the context of heaps of

[18] For a museological disagreement about how 'typical' Jewish-owned furniture is (and whether typicality should be a selection criterion), see Paul Williams, *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), p. 30.

[19] 1995 at the Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt am Main.

[20] Aleida Assmann, 'Das Ding an sich als Spur des Verbrechens. Zu Naomi Teresa Salmons Photographienzyklus "Asservate"', in *Asservate /Exhibits. Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Yad Vashem* ed. by Naomi Tereza Salmon (Ostfildern: Cantz, 1995), pp. 10–13 (p. 10).

objects, Steffi de Jong sees Holocaust museums as involved in 'a constant push-pull between a focus on the perspective of the victims and a focus on the deeds of the perpetrators'.[21] In practice, as Sect. 3.4 will show, forms of display are found that involve small numbers of objects (rather than a singular object) and that allow for a mental 'Hochrechnen' (projecting a larger number from a smaller sample). At Germany's national rail museum, the DB Museum, an extract from a name list of deportees is written onto a display wall. Although only 25 male names are recorded, they are numbered, as they were in the deportation list, from 401 to 425, meaning that the viewer imagines the number sequence stretching downwards and upwards, adding more names. The repetitive labour involved in the preparation for murder is reinforced by the middle initial 'I'. (for 'Israel') imposed on each man, though the variety of the men's real names makes a nonsense of Nazi attempts at homogenization.

In praise of museum objects' rich capacity for signification, Korff writes: 'Was sich zunächst als Defizit ausnimmt, die Fragmentarik, erweist sich als Vorteil bei der historischen Imagination. Das Bruchstückhafte fordert zur Erklärung, zur Deutung, zur jeweils neuen und aktuellen Aneignung heraus' ('What appears at first to be a deficit – the fragmentariness of museum objects – turns out to be an advantage to the historical imagination. What is fragmentary demands explanation and interpretation, an appropriation which is new and relevant to each successive age').[22] When it comes to exhibitions about National Socialism, the openness to interpretation that Korff appreciates runs up against the need to limit interpretations to what is democratically acceptable and useful. Drecoll argues that because museums have a duty to explain majority behaviour under National Socialism, 'die Darstellungsintention ist […] zwangsläufig erheblich normativ aufgeladen, der Widerspruch zur prinzipiellen Deutungsoffenheit musealer Exponate […] kaum auflösbar' ('the representational aims are necessarily freighted with normative values and it is almost impossible to resolve the contradiction between this and museum objects' fundamental openness

[21] Steffi de Jong, *The Witness as Object: Video Testimony in Memorial Museums* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2018), p. 125.

[22] Gottfried Korff, 'Zur Eigenart der Museumsdinge (1992)', in *Museumsdinge. Deponieren – Exponieren*, ed. by Martina Eberspächer, Gudrun Marlene König and Bernhard Tschofen (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna: Böhlau, 2002), pp. 140–45 (p. 143).

to interpretation').[23] In other words, exhibition-makers working in this field use a medium—the object—which positively encourages imaginative responses because it was never intended for communication (at least not with the current audience); at the same time, the exhibition-makers feel compelled to steer the visitor towards particular meanings.

This happens largely through what Sandra Dudley calls the 'object-information package', the pairing of objects with text.[24] At the exhibitions in this study, main messages are stated at the outset of the exhibition, reiterated at the beginning of each new chapter, and, where necessary, applied to individual objects on captions. Museum paratexts (notably contributions to catalogues) also offer approved models for interpreting objects in an exhibition. Beyond this, exhibition-makers rely on common cultural understandings from outside the exhibition setting to shape and constrict possible readings. While these are more difficult to pin down, I see evidence for them particularly in connection with objects from the years after 1945. Perhaps because these belong to the democratic era and therefore the visitor's recent past, they are often left to speak for themselves. Even Reichwald's unusually explicit commentary on the keys, which supplies the visitor with two possible readings, assumes that the visitor has the cultural background to understand why she is speculating about mentalities in relation to worthless objects that have served no purpose for seventy years. Reichwald tacitly assumes an understanding that, for Austria specifically, the question of whether majority Austrians carried their emotions and mentalities across the watershed of 1945 or converted to democratic views is particularly important.

Dudley is critical of the 'object-information package', which she sees as negating the materiality of the object, but in the context of German

[23] Drecoll, p. 112 (see also p. 118). Yvonne Kalinna reaches a similar conclusion, that objects at the former camps are assumed to be effective ways of transmitting narratives about the past, with little acknowledgment that the stories to be transmitted 'einer allgemeinen – also gesellschaftlich wie politisch determinierten – erinnerungskulturellen Auffassung entsprechen' ('correspond to a general, that is, socially and politically determined interpretation of memory culture'). Yvonne Kalinna, 'Auf Spurensuche vor Ort? Objekte, Dinge, Überreste in der Gedenkstättenarbeit', in *Schwierige Orte. Regionale Erinnerung, Gedenkstätten, Museen*, ed. by Justus H. Ulbricht (Halle (Saale): Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 2013), pp. 43–60 (p. 59).

[24] Sandra H. Dudley, 'Museum Materialities: Objects, Sense, and Feeling', in *Museum Materialities: Objects, Engagements, Interpretations*, ed. by Sandra H. Dudley (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 1–17 (p. 3).

and Austrian history exhibitions about National Socialism, controlling an object's meaning discursively in order to control messages about the Nazi era is considered crucial. Few exhibition-makers would want visitors simply to engage sensually with the physical characteristics of an object. My own readings attempt to walk a line between demonstrating the interpretability of objects from the years 1933–45 and showing how interpretations are encouraged or restricted: by exhibition-makers' texts or arrangements, by exhibition paratexts and by an assumed cultural consensus.

One final point about the fragmentariness of the museum collection needs to be made. In the context of the Mahn- und Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück, Sigrid Jacobeit has written of 'die sparsame Dingwelt der KZ-Geschichte' ('the sparseness of the object base that underpins concentration-camp history').[25] Compared with other historical topics, this is doubtless true. The fact that museums at former concentration camps show archaeological finds from the grounds is one indication that they do not have a free choice from an intact and well-preserved object base. This 'sparseness' should not be overstated, however. Ongoing programmes of object collection mean that current iterations of concentration-camp museums use objects in ways that are comparable to other history museums. Even if the museum's architecture and display aesthetic evoke an atmosphere of documentary sobriety and commemorative respect by refusing to use objects as 'eye-catchers', individual vitrines generally display objects in conventional numbers. In the museum of the Gedenkstätte Bergen-Belsen, for instance, it is possible to take a photograph from such an angle that no objects are in view, but the vitrines connect a conventionally broad range of objects to the biographies of camp inmates.[26] De Jong rightly singles out a pair of gloves at Bergen-Belsen for discussion, since the accompanying video is a rare example of a *Zeitzeugin* holding an object as she speaks of the emotions attached to it. However, it is incorrect to call the gloves 'one of the very few

[25] Sigrid Jacobeit, 'Geleitwort', in *Züge nach Ravensbrück. Transporte mit der Reichsbahn 1939–1945*, ed. by Karolin Steinke (Berlin: Metropol, 2009), pp. 7–9 (p. 7).

[26] At the Gedenkstätte Buchenwald, a few, large objects related to the inmates' suffering are visible along the vistas; otherwise, the grey walls of the display cases dominate and objects can only be seen by stepping close to table vitrines or by entering one of three enclosed spaces titled 'Dinge – Geschichten' ('Objects – Stories'). From the doorway of the building devoted to the Soviet Special Camp at the Gedenkstätte und Museum Sachsenhausen, the visitor sees

objects in the Bergen-Belsen Memorial'.[27] While the architectural design might evoke absence or a lack of material comfort, the job of the exhibition-makers is to narrate the complex realities of a past that was full of objects.

Similar ambiguities characterize Jewish museums, which are readily associated with lack and loss but which can in practice often fill a display space with many objects, as the 2001–2017 permanent exhibition of the Jüdisches Museum Berlin showed. Writing in 2000, Sabine Offe identified two generations of German and Austrian Jewish museums: a first (often run by non-Jews) with a regrettable tendency to buy objects unconnected to the locality in order to fill the available space; and a second that began to leave visible gaps in object displays to speak of the 'Fehlen und Fehl-am-Platzsein' of local Jewish history (its 'lack' and the fact that it is 'in the wrong place').[28] In the decades since Offe's study, Jewish museums have collected a great deal more material culture, mostly by means of outreach work with local residents and with victims and their families. At the same time, as Jewish museums and other museums of the National Socialist era have professionalized they have adopted (and visitors have come to expect) conventional practices of selective display. Together, these two opposing tendencies—collecting more and showing less—mean that the visitor is not automatically aware of a decimated object base. If a museum is showing 90% of its holdings (to show what little it has) that would not necessarily look any different from a museum that is showing a more conventional (and professional) 10% of its holdings.

only the horizontal reading surfaces of a mass of display tables; closer up it becomes clear that many objects are set in vitrines in the tables. Similarly, in Barrack 39 at Sachsenhausen, which is devoted to the everyday life of the prisoners, six display modules take up a minimal amount of space along a central axis, and each appears to contain only one object. However, nineteen drawers within the modules contain a range of objects and documents.

[27] Possibly de Jong saw the museum when it was not yet complete. Steffi de Jong, 'Who is History? The Use of Autobiographical Accounts in History Museums', in *Museums and Biographies: Stories, Objects, Identities*, ed. by Kate Hill (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2012), pp. 295–308 (p. 305).

[28] Sabine Offe, *Ausstellungen, Einstellungen, Entstellungen. Jüdische Museen in Deutschland und Österreich* (Berlin and Vienna: Philo, 2000), p. 223; also pp. 213, 221, 279.

These developments may have made it more important for Jewish museums to make explicit the fragmentary nature of their collections, which goes beyond the conventional selectivity of all museum collecting. Simply by calling one of its six display modules 'Sachen /Objects', the Jüdisches Museum München encourages a questioning approach to how this museum came by its objects. By choosing only seven objects, each accorded its own vitrine, the museum puts sparseness on display.[29] The accompanying text reads: 'Wenige Dinge sind übrig geblieben, die auf die jüdische Geschichte und Kultur von München verweisen. […] Eine umfassende Ausstellung zu München mit Originalobjekten ist nicht möglich' ('Few objects have survived that tell us about the Jewish history and culture of Munich. […] It is not possible to make a comprehensive exhibition about Munich using original objects'). At the same time, this is the number of objects that will fit comfortably in the underground display space, and it is enough to satisfy modern museum consumers. It remains to be seen how the new exhibition at the Jüdisches Museum Berlin, set to open in 2019, will balance its rich holdings and large floor space against a professional tendency towards sparing displays and the suggestiveness of absence (which is, of course, already built into its architecture).

2.3 Mentalities, Experiences, Emotions—and Objects

If museum objects are, in general, material signs pointing to immaterial aspects of the past, what do they point to? 'Mentalities', 'experiences' and 'emotions' might sum up the non-material aspects of the past that are of most interest to exhibition-makers working in the field of National Socialism. These broad categories encompass not only the sufferings of the persecuted groups and of the non-persecuted majority but also the complex cultural, social and personal contexts that produced a range of historically significant behaviours in peacetime and war. Yet, what look like commonsensical categories—mentalities, experiences, emotions—are, in German as in English, also key terms in the field of social history. All have been subject to repeated conceptualization and systematization and all can be appended to 'history'/'Geschichte' to denote a sub-discipline or methodology: *Geschichte der Emotionen*,

[29] Jutta Fleckenstein and Bernhard Purin (eds), *Jüdisches Museum München / Jewish Museum Munich* (Munich, Berlin, London and New York: Prestel, 2007).

Mentalitätsgeschichte, *Erfahrungsgeschichte*.[30] While the practice of naming sub-disciplines tends to make the divisions between them seem clear-cut, in practice there is some overlap, with 'experience' and 'emotions' often used in combination and 'mentalities' and 'experiences' generally considered as sub-fields of *Alltagsgeschichte* or History of the Everyday. Though all three categories can produce research in any era of history, in the German context National Socialism has been a key object of study.[31]

My interest lies not in charting the history of these categories in scholarship, but in drawing out some of the ways in which they might be made useful for the study of history exhibitions about National Socialism. 'Mentality' and 'experience' have been employed mostly in relation to the non-persecuted majority. While this work can sharpen our understanding of majority post-war memory, the terms have not generally been brought into connection with the study of objects. This is true also of research into the emotions of the majority, which is extensive but not notably concerned with objects. By contrast, interesting connections between objects, emotions and victim experience have been drawn in recent, semi-scholarly work. Clearly, some synthesis of these strands is needed to help understand the ways in which the museums under study construct links between the immaterial and the material.

The term 'mentalities' is generally deployed in studies that ask what allowed members of the non-persecuted majority to become complicit in or even active participants in persecution and murder. It serves those historians and sociologists in search of an answer to the question 'How could they?'. Thus, Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey appealed, in 1998, for more

[30] For useful introductions to the terms and to the methodologies that rely on them (in the German historical context), see, for instance: Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, 'Plädoyer für eine dynamische Mentalitätsgeschichte', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 24 (1998), pp. 476–97; Konrad H. Jarausch, 'Towards a Social History of Experience: Postmodern Predicaments in Theory and Interdisciplinarity', *Central European History*, 22.3/4 (1989), pp. 427–43; and Ute Frevert, 'Was haben Gefühle in der Geschichte zu suchen?', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 35 (2009), pp. 183–208.

[31] In 1989, when historians were beginning to take stock of *Alltagsgeschichte* as an approach, Alf Lüdtke reflected that 'in Germany, it is studies of *Alltag* in the Nazi period that have had truly reverberating implications'. Alf Lüdtke, 'Introduction: What is the History of Everyday Life and Who are its Practitioners?', in *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*, ed. by Alf Lüdtke, trans. William Templer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995; first publ. 1989), pp. 3–40 (p. 4).

terminological exactitude in the use of 'Mentalität', using the case study of anti-semitism in twentieth-century Germany to illustrate the benefits of this precision.[32] In their 2011 study of secretly taped conversations among German POWs, Sönke Neitzel and Harald Welzer reject 'Mentalität' (with its suggestion of a fixed personal outlook) as too simple a term, identifying instead a series of social, cultural and historical 'Referenzrahmen' ('frames of reference') that together create a dynamic of violence.[33] However, these frames of reference correspond broadly to Gilcher-Holtey's highly inflected concept of 'mentality' (which is based on Adorno) and Neitzel's and Welzer's publishers repeatedly invoke 'Mentalität' in publicity texts, suggesting that it has considerable popular currency. I use it as a convenient shorthand in what follows.

Unlike 'mentality', which tends to be connected with a positive or passive attitude to National Socialist ideology and policy, 'emotions' and 'experiences' are used to describe both positive and negative life experiences under National Socialism. For the non-persecuted majority, these fall into a roughly chronological sequence: the positive experiences generally relate to the years 1933–39 and the negative experiences to the sufferings of the war years (bereavement, bombing, rape), though the pleasures of soldierly comradeship cross over into the second period. UK German Studies over the last decade have tended to focus on the post-war memory of suffering, encompassed by the phrases 'German wartime suffering' or 'Germans as victims' (where 'Germans' means the non-persecuted majority and potentially includes majority Austrians).[34]

The most useful studies of emotions and experience draw an arc between what was felt, thought or experienced before 1945 and what

[32] Gilcher-Holtey, esp. pp. 487–97.

[33] Sönke Neitzel and Harald Welzer, *Soldaten. Protokolle vom Kämpfen, Töten und Sterben* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2011), p. 16.

[34] Bill Niven (ed.), *Germans as Victims: Remembering the Past in Contemporary Germany* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Laurel Cohen-Pfister and Dagmar Wienroder-Skinner (eds), *Victims and Perpetrators—1933 and Beyond: (Re)presenting the Past in Post-unification Culture* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006); Helmut Schmitz (ed.), *A Nation of Victims: Representations of German Wartime Suffering from 1945 to the Present* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007); Stuart Taberner and Karina Berger (eds), *Germans as Victims in the Literary Fiction of the Berlin Republic* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009); Paul Cooke and Marc Silberman (eds), *Screening War: Perspectives on German Suffering* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010); and Helmut Schmitz and Annette Seidel-Arpac (eds), *Narratives of Trauma: Discourses of German Wartime Suffering in National and International Perspective* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2011). These

memories were possible or likely as a result, after 1945. Introducing a rare volume on pleasure under National Socialism, Pamela E. Swett, Corey Ross and Fabrice d'Almeida note that since members of the non-persecuted majority of Germans are known to have remembered the years 1933–45 as 'the good times' we must ask: 'What role did small, everyday pleasures and amusements play in the construction of this memory?'[35] The title of a 2010 volume of essays edited by Jörg Echternkamp and Stefan Martens, *Experience and Memory*, frames the whole collection in terms of this link between what was experienced and what was subsequently remembered.[36] In his introduction, Henry Rousso explains that 'experience' and 'memory' have been coupled together to highlight 'the necessity to analyze the economy of individual emotions during the war as a preparatory step in order to understand the subsequent memories of the war'.[37] This formulation signals that although Echternkamp's and Martens's volume is organized around the term 'experience' emotion is a key component of the war experiences that contributors seek to analyse. The three contributions on Germany (all on the experience of the non-persecuted majority) are peppered with references to emotions: anxiety and panic, pride and solidarity, trust and distrust, humiliation and disappointment, among other things.

These contributions on the German case are an explicit or implicit response to the criticism—which was the liberal orthodoxy from the 1960s to the 1990s—that the post-war German majority failed to adequately commemorate and atone for the crimes and persecution committed in its name and, in some cases, by them, hiding the Nazi past beneath a blanket of silence and wilful forgetfulness. By better understanding what Germans experienced, scholars now hope to

studies take their cue from the spate of new writing and film-making about the suffering of the non-persecuted majority in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

[35] Pamela E. Swett, Corey Ross, and Fabrice d'Almeida, 'Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany: An Introduction', in *Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany*, ed. by Pamela E. Swett, Corey Ross and Fabrice d'Almeida (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 1–15 (p. 1).

[36] Jörg Echternkamp and Stefan Martens (eds), *Experience and Memory: The Second World War in Europe* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2010; first publ. in German: Paderborn: Schöningh, 2007).

[37] Henry Rousso, 'A New Perspective on the War', in Echternkamp and Martens, pp. 1–9 (p. 2).

explain—without judgement—why personal suffering was more likely to be remembered than the suffering of others. This approach was championed by Alon Confino, who argued in 2006 for employing a 'history of sensibilities' (a further terminological variation, drawn from Lucien Febvre, which combines mentalities and emotions) in the study of National Socialism and its aftermath.[38] We cannot understand how cultural memory developed in Germany after 1945, argues Confino, without understanding what majority Germans (which is what he intends by 'Germans') experienced *before* 1945:

> Whatever Germans became after 1945 must lie in some measure in their experiences and memories before that period. Whatever postwar memories were, they should be linked with what people during the war thought they were doing, and with what people after the war thought they had been doing during the war.[39]

Confino argues further that if there is a need to think about what Germans remembered, this requires an acknowledgement that they did not do nothing but forget. National Socialism was regularly talked about in the post-war private sphere: 'in a car ride, at the family dinner table, at a church gathering, or in the local pub'.[40] As an example of the now superseded scholarly paradigm of 'forgetting', Confino twice cites Wolfgang Benz, who claimed in a 1990 essay that 'National Socialism was treated for a whole generation with collective silence and widespread amnesia'.[41] While allowing that repression was one response to the past, Confino insists on a more complex picture: 'The previously common argument in historical literature that the Germans kept the Nazi past hermetically sealed and silenced does not stand up to historical evidence.

[38] Alon Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p. 210.

[39] Confino, p. 200. Confino goes on to speak of Germans' experience as 'their wartime activity as killers and exterminators', a sweeping generalization that does not strengthen the argument.

[40] Confino, p. 205. Likewise, Axel Schildt argues that 'The war was never talked about more than in the 1950s' and that 'The war was so strongly present' (in the immediate post-war years) 'that it was not necessary to recall it'. Axel Schildt, 'The Long Shadows of the Second World War: The Impact of Experiences and Memories of War on West German Society', in Echternkamp and Martens, pp. 197–213 (pp. 205, 206).

[41] Confino, pp. 224, 236.

We may not like everything that Germans had to say about their experiences during National Socialism, but they were not silent about them'.[42] Again, Confino uses 'Germans' as a shorthand for the non-persecuted majority.[43]

So far I have made a case that emotions (or 'experience') and mentalities are a key scholarly concern in relation to the National Socialist era. What does this have to do with objects, and specifically with museum objects? As Andreas Gestrich and Daniel Wildmann have noted in a volume of essays that addresses this very issue, material culture lies outside the interests of most historians of emotion.[44] Confino and others in the arts and social sciences are generally more interested in the discursive arenas for processing the National Socialist past, including the family and the *Stammtisch* (meeting of friends in the pub),[45] than in how objects function to process memory, even though the same war which, according to historians of emotion, evoked distrust, anxiety and disappointment, evoked those emotions in the context of (and sometimes in direct response to) widespread loss of homes, fraught attempts to salvage possessions, handling of weapons, the transportation of war souvenirs and the ritual preservation of material reminders of the war dead.

In their study of family memory, *Opa war kein Nazi*, Welzer and his team of sociologists use the metaphor of the 'album' to represent family memory in contradistinction to the 'encyclopaedia' of public historical memory, such as is taught in schools.[46] For them, the family album

[42] Confino, p. 220.

[43] For a study of an equivalent myth of *Jewish* silence about the Holocaust, see David Cesarini and Eric J. Sundquist (eds), *After the Holocaust: Challenging the Myth of Silence* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2011).

[44] Andreas Gestrich and Daniel Wildmann, 'Objects and Emotions: Loss and Acquisition of Jewish Property', *German Historical Institute London Bulletin*, 34.1 (2012), pp. 4–7 (p. 4).

[45] Confino, p. 141. Compare Dorothee Wierling, 'The War in Postwar Society: The Role of the Second World War in Public and Private Spheres in the Soviet Occupation Zone and Early GDR', in Echternkamp and Martens, pp. 214–28 (p. 225).

[46] Harald Welzer, Sabine Moller, and Karolina Tschuggnall, *Opa war kein Nazi. Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust im Familiengedächtnis* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2002). More recently Mary Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives: Generations; Violence Through the German Dictatorships* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) and Oliver von Wrochem and Christine Eckel (eds), *Nationalsozialistische Täterschaften: Nachwirkungen in Gesellschaft und Familie* (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2016).

has a largely emotional content: 'Heldentum, Leiden, Verzicht und Opferschaft, Faszination und Größenphantasien' ('Heroism, suffering, doing without and sacrificing oneself, fascination and fantasies of greatness').[47] Though their 'album' is metaphorical in as much as it stands synecdochically for all forms of family memory, material or immaterial, Welzer and his team do at least notionally include in its scope real letters, photographs and other family documents. More directly helpful is sociologist Margit Reiter. Based on her interviews with elderly Austrians, Reiter concluded that families were not entirely silent about National Socialism, even if the cliché of 'Schweigen' ('keeping quiet') was trotted out with reliable regularity, and that a knowledge of the past was communicated partly in non-verbal form, through the Nazi material culture that younger generations found about the family home, including medals, documents and books.[48] As we shall see in later chapters, pre-1945 objects from the post-1945 family home are a key category of museum exhibit.

While the work summarized so far has tended to take the experience of the non-persecuted majority as its focus, other work in material culture studies, museum studies and memory studies has addressed the emotional attachments to objects owned by Jewish victims. These include not only Jewish attachments to Jewish objects, but non-Jewish attachments to Jewish objects, a realm of emotional experience that does not fit readily under the heading of 'wartime suffering'. This work tends to be semi-academic, either contributed to exhibition catalogues or written from the basis of practical experience with objects, though sometimes also on the basis of sociological fieldwork. As a result, these essays do not—singly or together—fully systematize knowledge of how objects channel, provoke or record emotions. Nonetheless, collectively they tell us something about a new focus on the emotionality of Jewish objects which can be of use also for understanding the emotional component of objects owned by the non-Jewish majority.

Katarina Holländer initiated an exhibition format called 'Ein gewisses jüdisches Etwas' ('A Certain Jewish Something'), which invited local

[47] Welzer, Moller, and Tschugnall, p. 10.

[48] Margit Reiter, *Die Generation danach. Der Nationalsozialismus im Familiengedächtnis* (Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, 2006), p. 73.

people to donate an object with a Jewish connection and tell its story.[49] She views emotions as a component part of objects, rather than as a discrete immaterial counterpart to the material thing. Citing the *Aeniad* as an inspiration for her project ('Es sind Tränen in den Dingen' / 'There are tears in things'), she suggests that there is an emotional need to use objects for historical storytelling:

> Wir brauchen das Objektive der Geschichten, die uns helfen, uns unserer Geschichte zu vergewissern. Gefäße für Geschichten, Projektionsflächen, Bilder. Dinge, wie Knoten in Taschentüchern. Behälter für die geweinten oder ungeweinten Tränen, oder, man kann auch sagen: Anlässe für Gefühle. Für Bedenken.
>
> (We need the 'objective' aspect of stories, which helps us to make sure of our story. Containers for stories, projection screens, images. Things, like knots in handkerchiefs. Containers for tears both shed and unshed, or, to put it another way: occasions for emotions. For questioning and reflection).[50]

The use of metaphor here (objects as containers and knots in handkerchiefs) indicates that this is less a systematization of the object–emotion relationship than an evocation of it, but Holländer does suggest a two-way process by which objects both allow existing emotions to take shape and arouse new emotions.

Essays in the Gestrich and Wildmann volume mentioned above offer similar evocations, with a little more scholarly underpinning. Atina Grossmann's essay on restitution applications by Jews argues that the applications betray stronger attachments to everyday items than to major works of art and in turn arouse emotion: a 'toxic mix of disappointment, frustration, [and] fury'.[51] Grossmann matches her methodology to her theme by taking a self-consciously un-scholarly, emotional approach to the subject. Writing as a second-generation Jew about her academic research into her family's restitution claims against Germany she is frank

[49] The format was first tried out in Zurich in 2007, and thereafter at the Jewish museums in Frankfurt, Augsburg, Munich and Hohenems. Members of the public were asked to contribute 'a certain Jewish something' to the museum, with a one-page story about its meaning to them. This event subsequently became the basis for an exhibition.

[50] Katarina Holländer, 'Gegenständliche Geschichten', in Jüdisches Museum Frankfurt am Main, pp. 14–16 (p. 14).

[51] Grossmann, 'Family Files', p. 68.

about her fantasies of owning just one of the potentially life-changing pieces of modern art listed in the restitution claims and never recovered. She recalls purloining, from a German state archive, a set of photographs of her grandfather's former apartment that the restitution authorities neglected to return to him.[52] She then makes an explicit plea that a history of the emotions attached to stolen Jewish property include not just the survivors but also the second-generation descendants who may still be dealing with their parents' disappointments. Perhaps more surprisingly, she pleads for attention to the original 'Aryanizers' and their heirs: 'The history of this process remains unworked through, especially perhaps for the heirs of those who enriched themselves, or simply made their lives and homes more pleasant, more decorative, more "modern", with Jewish goods and property'.[53]

While Grossmann's essay is about objects and emotions outside the context of the museum, 'Aryanization' and the restitution process have been the subject of significant exhibitions, as Chapters Three and Five will show. Thanks to his role as a museum director, Hanno Loewy's essay in the Gestrich and Wildmann volume is closer than Grossmann's to the subject of the museum. His essay focuses on the emotions that *precede* museum collection and display (and are therefore often silenced in the display), specifically on the sometimes complex emotions that make the difference between an object entering the museum or not.[54] A pair of lederhosen is donated because it suits the American descendants to express their family story in this way (with a measure of irony) but a music box is not donated because a family still feels attached to it despite having lost all connection to its Jewish roots.[55] The Jüdisches Museum

[52] Grossmann, p. 71.

[53] Grossmann, p. 73. Grossmann also calls for a study of the feelings of the bureaucrats who dealt with restitution claims (p. 60).

[54] Hanno Loewy, 'Diasporic Home or Homelessness: The Museum and the Circle of Lost and Found', *German Historical Institute London Bulletin*, 34.1 (2012), 41–58.

[55] Loewy, 'Diasporic Home or Homelessness', pp. 50, 52.

Hohenems is characterized by a high degree of reflection about the emotional push-pull of the museum as a storehouse for formerly Jewish objects. As Loewy mentions in the essay, a window in the stairwell at the museum has been inscribed with a comment made by a former Jewish resident of the town, when told of the intention to set up a museum there: 'Mit was kann man in Vorarlberg ein jüdisches Museum einrichten? Da müssen die Leute ja im Dunkeln das Zeug bringen' ('What can you fill a Jewish museum with in Vorarlberg? People would have to bring the stuff in the dark').[56] Evidently, shame felt by members of the non-persecuted majority at having acquired Jewish objects can keep objects out of the museum. However, the subject of Loewy's final example, which is discussed further in Sect. 5.3 and involves a man keeping hold of the last remnants of the Hohenems synagogue for seven decades, suggests other possible emotions: philo-Semitic sympathies and personal feelings of ownership over one's experience of the past (a variation on the feelings of Reichwald's imagined key-keeper).

In the catalogue of an exhibition about schools under National Socialist rule, another museum director relates a story of the emotions involved in a donation by a member of the non-persecuted majority. In 2012, a woman brought forward a series of photographs of the funeral procession of a local teacher, which showed that after the priest's final blessing a Nazi flag was dipped into the still open grave. She kept the donation secret from her husband because he would have worried for the family's reputation. She herself defended the family by claiming that the teacher had not been a Party member. The museum evidently found this hard to believe (given the evidence of the photographs) and cited it as a 'Musterbeispiel dafür, dass Museen nicht nur Orte der Erinnerung, sondern auch der Verdrängung und Entsorgung sind' ('perfect example of how museums are not just places of memory but also places of repression and waste disposal').[57] This theory (supported by Peter Sloterdijk, as we shall see in Sect. 5.6) suggests that the transition of objects to the

[56] Loewy, 'Diasporic Home or Homelessness', p. 54.

[57] Schulmuseum Bergisch-Gladbach (ed.), *'Wie wir in Reih' und Glied marschieren lernten'. Schule im Nationalsozialismus* (Bergisch-Gladbach: Schulmuseum Bergisch-Gladbach, 2012), p. 7.

museum should not be understood simply as a donation from the private sphere to the public sphere by the civic-minded, nor in theoretical terms as a transfer from one symbolic state to another. In some cases, a transaction takes place by which members of society get rid of a moral or emotional irritant and the museum supports this negative process in the interests of strengthening the historical archive.

Emotions were also discussed in the context of two exhibitions about art theft and restitution, one German, one Austrian: 'Raub und Restitution. Kulturgut aus jüdischem Besitz' was organized jointly by the Jüdisches Museum Berlin and the Jüdisches Museum Frankfurt, and was shown at these two museums in 2008 and 2009, respectively; 'Recollecting. Raub und Restitution' was mounted by MAK, Austria's museum of the applied arts, in the winter of 2008–2009.[58] Of the two exhibitions, the Austrian 'Recollecting' was, as its name implies, more closely concerned with issues of memory. Beyond conventional discussion of political memory discourses (notably Austria's less than exemplary record of effecting restitution after 1945), the exhibition aimed to investigate the subjective relationship between owners and objects.[59] For my purposes, it is the academic essays in the catalogue that are of particular interest. There, Welzer argues that objects have a 'mnemonic energy', but sees this as a double-edged sword: objects from the past can not only help fulfil a desire to remember, but can also 'ambush' and 'burden' the second- and third-generation descendants who come into contact with them.[60] For Aleida Assmann, the objects with which we surround ourselves are not dead, that is, solely material, but rather 'die ebenso intime wie lebendig pulsierende Peripherie unserer Person' ('the pulsating periphery of our person, which is as intimate as it is alive'), suggesting the extension of both body and identity into the

[58] Inka Bertz and Michael Dorrmann (eds), *Raub und Restitution. Kulturgut aus jüdischem Besitz von 1933 bis heute* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008); Alexandra Reininghaus (ed.), *Recollecting. Raub und Restitution* (Vienna: Passagen Verlag, 2009). I discussed these catalogues in a review essay: Chloe Paver, 'Objects and Emotions Exhibited: Two Catalogues on *Raub und Restitution*', *German Historical Institute London Bulletin*, 34.1 (2012), 79–87.

[59] Alexandra Reininghaus, 'Zur Ausstellung', in Reininghaus, pp. 11–18 (pp. 11, 12).

[60] Harald Welzer, 'Die mnemische Energie der Dinge. Über einen subkutanen Aspekt des Restitutionsproblems', in Reininghaus, pp. 97–104 (p. 102).

objects that surround us.[61] Historian Nicole L. Immler points out that the restitution of objects is a rare exception and that the much more common 'solution' to cases of loss of property or of life chances is the award of financial compensation.[62] Her work interviewing survivors and descendants about what financial compensation has meant to them suggests that it leads as often to negative emotions as to positive intergenerational dialogue.

Both catalogues also tackle the emotions felt by the majority population about restitution, particularly the loss of national culture when restituted objects leave the country: the two key cases at the time were Kirchner's 'Berliner Straßenszene' and Klimt's 'Adele Bloch-Bauer I'. By taking politically incorrect emotions of resentment seriously, rather than dismissing them, the catalogue-makers seem to want to ensure that they are discussed within a reasoned debate.[63] Rudolf de Cillia and Ruth Wodak report on a research project that investigated the attitudes of majority Austrians towards restitution, showing that opinions about restitution often follow a 'Ja, aber …' model, in which the necessity of making reparations is acknowledged in principle, but financial compensation is rejected as unnecessary or unfair. [64]

Taken together, these various essays suggest that exhibition-makers working in the field of National Socialism understand that, even long after 1945, objects from the National Socialist era have a strong emotional charge for both the majority and the victimized minorities. Historians of experiences and mentalities, meanwhile, understand that these are central to answering key questions about how National Socialism rule unfolded. By bringing these strands of thinking together we can think of exhibitions as exploring how individuals thought and acted—and then remembered—with and through things. Reichwald's text about the keys shows how an arc can be drawn from experience to memory in the context of a museum object since it suggests that the feeling of empowerment experienced by the 'Aryanizer' may have led him to preserve the keys long after that power was no longer socially

[61] Aleida Assmann, 'Das Gedächtnis der Dinge', in Reininghaus, pp. 143–50 (p. 149).

[62] Nicole L. Immler, '"Es sind Zahlungen – keine Wiedergutmachung". Stimmen zur Entschädigung im Gespräch mit Familien', in Reininghaus, pp. 87–96.

[63] For a more detailed analysis of this aspect see Paver, 'Objects and Emotions Exhibited'.

[64] Rudolf de Cillia and Ruth Wodak, 'Resitution: Ja, aber … ', in Reininghaus, pp. 243–58.

licensed. While she conjures up two post-war Austrians (one unrepentant and one repentant), her reasoning does not follow Confino's logic (where understanding leads to acceptance), since the Austrian who remembers as he experienced is implicitly to be condemned; only the Austrian who breaks the chain between experience and memory is presented for approval. As Chapter 5 in particular will show, in the context of German and Austrian history museums understanding the experiences of members of the majority need not lead to a greater understanding of post-war failure to remember correctly or adequately.

2.4 Object Life Cycles

In his still influential—and recently reissued—*Rubbish Theory* (1979), Michael Thompson argues that society divides objects into the *transient* (objects that decline in value from the moment of production) and the *durable* (objects whose value rises over time and that are therefore kept indefinitely).[65] For an object to pass from the first category to the second—for a piece of ephemera to become a collectable, for instance—it must first pass through an intermediate state in which it exists unnoticed, or 'covertly', as Thompson has it, as 'rubbish'. By 'rubbish', Thompson does not mean what goes to the incinerator or the landfill site; in the concrete examples he discusses he is thinking of objects—whether as big as houses or as small as ornaments—that lose value but survive materially, usually in less prominent or valued places than before, where they exist in a 'timeless and valueless limbo'.[66] The Victorian Stevengraphs he uses as an example survive either inside homes, as part of a loved or unloved family heritage, or in low-level systems of exchange: the flea market and bric-à-brac shop. If they unexpectedly become durable, there is a transfer 'from the rag-and-bone man to the knowledgeable collector, from the junk-shop window to the Bond Street showroom'.[67] Thompson thus uses the term 'rubbish' as a synecdoche for the full range of society's no-longer-valued objects. The rubbish state in which some objects exist is, for Thompson, a phase of disuse rather than an endpoint of disposal.

[65] Michael Thompson, *Rubbish Theory: The Creation and Destruction of Value* (London: Pluto Press, 2017; first publ. 1979).

[66] Thompson, p. 27.

[67] Thompson, p. 60.

While Thompson is only marginally interested in museums, Krzysztof Pomian sees the rubbish phase as an intermediate stage between use and the cultural archive: 'Die Abfolge: Ding, Abfallprodukt, Zeichen mit Symbolcharakter wird von der Mehrheit der Gegenstände durchlaufen, aus denen sich das kulturelle Erbe zusammensetzt' ('Most objects that constitute our cultural heritage pass through the sequence: thing / refuse product / sign with symbolic character').[68] In this model, as we can see, objects gain the power to signify on their accession to the museum.

Writing partly in response to Thompson, Igor Kopytoff popularized the notion that objects can be studied in terms of a 'biography' and that we can ask of things questions that we ask also of people, such as: 'What are the recognised "ages" or periods in the thing's "life", and what are the cultural markers for them? How does the thing's use change with age, and what happens when it reaches the end of its usefulness?'.[69] More recently, Karin Dannehl has drawn a finer distinction between 'object biographies', that is, what happens to a particular object during its lifetime, and the 'object life-cycle' which encompasses every stage that an object of a particular class passes through, from production to consumption.[70]

Writing at the end of the 1980s, Charles Saumarez Smith took issue with Thompson's and Kopytoff's assumption that, as artefacts cross the museum threshold, they 'enter a safe and neutral ground, outside the arena where they are [*that is, were, CP*] subjected to multiple pressures of meaning'.[71] In fact, he argues, in the museum they continue to circulate and be revalued or reinterpreted depending on contingent needs. One of his examples—a lichen-covered statue from the eighteenth century—is used to show that the conventional museum practice of restoring

[68] Krzysztof Pomian, 'Museum und kulturelles Erbe', in *Das historische Museum. Labor, Schaubühne, Identitätsfabrik*, ed. by Gottfried Korff und Martin Roth (Frankfurt am Main and New York: Campus Verlag, 1990), pp. 41–64 (p. 43).

[69] Igor Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process', in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, first publ. 1986), pp. 64–91 (pp. 66–67).

[70] Karin Dannehl, 'Object Biographies: From Production to Consumption', in *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, ed. by Karen Harvey (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 123–38.

[71] Charles Saumarez Smith, 'Museums, Artefacts, and Meanings', in *The New Museology*, ed. by Peter Vergo (London: Reaktion, 1989), pp. 6–21 (p. 12).

objects to a pristine state covers over their often chequered life history, whose physical traces are extant in the museum only for the duration of the objects' time as new and unprocessed acquisitions. Saumarez Smith offers two further examples of objects at the Victoria and Albert Museum that—far from being 'static, safe, and out of the territory in which their meaning and use can be transformed'—have been radically re-purposed and revalued (in his view de-valued) by changes in display priorities at the museum.[72]

In her study of *Dingkarrieren* or 'object careers', Hilde Doering likewise proposes that the display exhibit is not ready-made at the museum threshold. Rather, a series of operations performed on an object take it through successive iterations of itself, to bring the exhibit into being: it is successively 'Sammelstück, Lagerstück, Werkstück, Ausstellungsobjekt' ('collection piece, depot piece, workshop piece, exhibition object').[73] Writing closer to the topic of National Socialism, in his study of post-catastrophe museums, Williams concurs that the museum's professional practices help constitute the museum object and define its value:

> The force of the "museum effect" – that is, the enlargement of consequence that comes from being reported, rescued, cleaned, numbered, researched, arranged, lit, and written about – enables objects from the past to be valued in entirely new ways.[74]

Williams also implies that this increase in value is in part an expectation brought to the museum experience by visitors: 'The association of the museum with all things historically precious and valuable is one that remains largely stable in the public consciousness'.[75]

Dudley, meanwhile, considers what persists of an object's pre-museum life inside the museum vitrine. For her, materiality connotes not just form and material (as conventionally listed on a caption), but 'all and any traces of the passage of time and, especially, physical human interaction. Materiality implies […], engagement – be it cognitive, emotional or

[72] Saumarez Smith, p. 9.

[73] Hilde Doering, 'Dingkarrieren. Sammelstück, Lagerstück, Werkstück, Ausstellungsobjekt', in *Geschichtskultur in der Zweiten Moderne*, ed. by Rosmarie Beier (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2000), pp. 263–78.

[74] Williams, p. 28.

[75] Williams, p. 23.

imaginative alone […] or physically, bodily, participative as well'.[76] When visitors view objects behind glass, she argues, they employ more than just the privileged sense of sight, drawing on their broader sensory knowledge of what such an object is like.[77] She therefore proposes that museums should actively invite visitors to empathize with what the original owner felt about an object and how they handled it when it was in use.

What matches and mismatches can be found between these foundational definitions of the museum object and the exhibition objects discussed in this study? The notion of object biographies and life phases will be key to the study in various ways. At the most basic level, objects from the years 1933–45 have often 'been through a lot' or been on journeys, in ways that can evoke and commemorate individual human sufferings. For a historical era in which mass experience and individual experience are constantly in tension in the museum,[78] Dannehl's distinction between the shared 'life-cycle' and the individual 'biography' is potentially useful. Moreover, if every object has successive life phases, museums are free either to make a narrative of these phases or to make the object stand for a single phase. The museums in this study have particular reasons, for instance, for taking an interest in the manufacturing stage of objects: the widespread Jewish involvement in manufacturing before non-Jews profited from the 'Aryanization' of their firms; the industrial murder methods of the Holocaust; and the use of forced or slave labour by firms. Likewise, the choice to focus on what happened to an object between 1945 and 1990 rather than on its useful life between 1933 and 1945 is, as Chapter 5 shows, often significant.

One possible limitation of 'biographical' approaches in museum studies and material culture studies is that, while they use a metaphor borrowed from human life and apply it to the object world, they do so only to understand material culture better. Exhibition-makers working on the topic of National Socialism are more likely to see the object biography as an analogue for its owners' biographies. Indeed, often, as I have suggested already, no analogy is involved: what happened to the person was that their possessions were stolen or that an inhumane prison regime

[76] Dudley, p. 7.

[77] A view echoed by Dannehl (p. 130).

[78] This tension is the foundation for Cornelia Geißler, *Individuum und Masse. Zur Vermittlung des Holocaust in deutschen Gedenkstättenausstellungen* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015).

changed how they interacted with objects. Dudley's approach is therefore more relevant: the object in the vitrine is—if the exhibition-maker will only draw it out—materially linked with whoever engaged with it mentally or emotionally during its use phase, and with how it was used and altered in the real world. All of these aspects are of especial interest to exhibition-makers dealing with the era 1933–45 and its aftermath, as they attempt to understand and explain extraordinary human behaviours and experience.

Saumarez Smith's idea that the object can be revalued or reordered within the museum collection might seem to have less relevance to the museums under discussion here, which are of much newer foundation than the V&A and have spent most of their lifetime building up collections, not reconfiguring old ones. Besides, as we saw in Sect. 2.2, exhibition-makers can read objects only within a limited interpretative range, so that objects really do seem to be free from the 'multiple pressures of meaning' to which they were subjected in the outside world. An object acquired because it belonged to a concentration-camp inmate, for instance, could be given more or less prominence, stored away or loaned out, but is unlikely ever to be substantially reinterpreted. Nonetheless, some of the museums under scrutiny here have gone through more than one generation of exhibition and some objects have found themselves re-purposed. Examples are discussed in Sect. 5.7. Moreover, where Saumarez Smith criticizes museums for erasing physical signs of wear and tear from museum objects on their accession, hiding the museum's intervention from the visitor, the tendency in German history museums is to preserve physical traces of use and abuse, not simply because few objects are worthy of restoration, but because the marks are important pointers towards intermediate moments in time.[79]

Thompson assumes that a select number of objects will make it out of the invisible category of rubbish to become durable, but not that museums will want to put the phase of disuse and neglect on display. He acknowledges that the art world is beginning (in 1979) to use rubbish as

[79] An example from Germany's more recent history can show how conservators may deliberately preserve decay: when the Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland was closed for refurbishment in 2017, the museum offered tours of the depot. The guide explained that conservators had found a way to preserve the mud on a grand piano caught in the Dresden floods of 2002.

a resource, citing Gustav Metzger's use of refuse bags as *objets trouvés*,[80] but he views this as exceptional and is not concerned with history museums. For the museums in this study, the display of rubbish (or, occasionally, the making of objects *into* rubbish) has nothing to do with a rebellion against the snobbery of high culture and everything to do with exploring the period after 1945, when Germany and Austria 'forgot' and objects were cast aside or fell into disuse.

What is needed for the present study is a model that acknowledges a simultaneous preoccupation with the material reality of junk and with its metaphorical power; for the loved and unloved family heritage that accidentally saved old objects in post-war Germany and Austria is not just a factual reality but also an intellectual concern. Thompson mentions 'the servants' attic' as a place to which Chippendale chairs might be relegated;[81] in Germany and Austria, attics, flea markets and other storage spaces for discarded items act as a real-life source of material for museum display and, at the same time, can be made to serve in the exhibition space as a metaphor for aspects of national identity (which is not something one could ever say about the servants' attic).

Aleida Assmann's work on the spatial metaphorics of remembering and forgetting can help build a bridge from Thompson's categories to the German case. She reads 'rubbish' ('Abfall' or 'Müll') as the metaphorical antithesis of the archive and sets the archive and the rubbish dump alongside other storage spaces—such as the locked trunk and the attic—that have served as metaphors for cultural remembering. Which metaphorical meanings are tapped depends on how such a space is ordered:

> Wo der Raum strukturiert und geordnet ist, haben wir es mit Medien, Metaphern und Modellen des Speicherns zu tun. Wo der Raum hingegen als ungeordnet, unübersichtlich und unzugänglich dargestellt wird, können wir von Metaphern und Modellen des Erinnerns sprechen.
>
> (Where the room is structured and ordered, we are dealing with media, metaphors, and models of memory storage. Conversely, where the room is

[80] Thompson, p. 131.

[81] Thompson, p. 43.

> described as disorderly, difficult to view in its entirety, and inaccessible, we can speak of models of remembering.)[82]

In a later essay 'Canon and Archive', Assmann examines processes of forgetting, distinguishing between 'active cultural forgetting', which involves 'intentional acts such as trashing and destroying' and 'passive cultural forgetting', which is demonstrated by 'non-intentional acts such as losing, hiding, dispersing, neglecting, abandoning, or leaving something behind'. Echoing Thompson, she continues: 'In these cases the objects are not materially destroyed; they fall out of the frames of attention, valuation, and use. What is lost but not materially destroyed may be discovered by accident at a later time in attics and other obscure depots'.[83] Although Assmann is not directly concerned with museum practice (and not, in this context, concerned with National Socialism), her work elucidates the culturally available metaphors for remembering and forgetting, which exhibition-makers draw on.

Once junk of various kinds arrives in the history museum it does not automatically increase in value as Thompson implies. In material terms, such objects remain worthless: depending on their relationship to the victims or the majority culture, they may be treated as precious in the museum space or their worthlessness may be put on show or even enhanced by the display. In either case, their value to the museum as signifiers is not in dispute, but in the process of display museums routinely carry out acts of honouring or dishonouring these low-value items. Among other things, this means that the 'hiding', 'neglecting' and disorderly storage that Assmann sees as key metaphors for non-intentional acts of forgetting, are sometimes staged, intentionally, in the museum (that is, once the objects have, in theory, been lodged once and for all in the orderly archive). This allows them to point away from their current status as objects of intentional social remembering to earlier social processes of forgetting in the post-war years.

In a study of National Socialist architectural remains at Nuremberg, in particular of the *Zeppelintribüne*, Sharon Macdonald has argued that

[82] Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume. Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (Munich: Beck, 1999), p. 162.

[83] Aleida Assmann, 'Canon and Archive', in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, ed. by Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2010), pp. 97–107 (pp. 97–98).

one strategy for undermining any residual emotive power invested in the remaining structures at Nuremberg is calculated neglect, which dishonours the architecture by refusing the maintenance of its aesthetics of perfection and symmetry.[84] However, Macdonald shows that this strategy is subject to changing value judgements and unpredictable in its effects. Some visitors to the site perceive neglect to be a symptom of repression on the part of the authorities (who, they imagine, are hoping the site will simply crumble away into oblivion) and at least one stage in the *Tribüne's* history an opposing strategy of restoration has been used in order to demonstrate a will to face up to the past.[85] Moreover, because Albert Speer had calculated on producing a structure that would, in the very distant future, fall into an impressive state of monumental ruin, only certain types of 'neglect' can re-signify the structures: while plants growing in the cracks are potentially dishonouring, a pile of gargantuan stones would arguably fulfil Nazi ambitions. By contrast, when exhibition-makers are deciding how best to 'dishonour' National Socialist objects, neglect (which might mean letting fabric moulder or be eaten by moths, letting posters bleach in the sun, and so on) is not generally an option. Once an object enters the museum it is entrusted to the conservators to be preserved in perpetuity and any neglect has to be symbolic and visual rather than material. At least one object discussed in Sect. 5.1, however, suggests that exhibition-makers may occasionally do violence to objects if their desire to downgrade them overrides their curatorial instincts.

So far I have been concerned with the life cycle of objects in general, but since photographs will play a role in my analysis, and since they are generally thought of as documents rather than objects, it is worthwhile considering them here, specifically in terms of their life cycle. German-speaking museum practitioners call three-dimensional objects with largely two-dimensional qualities 'Flachware' ('flatware'). The viewer expects these images and documents to be displayed flat as they are designed to be read or scanned from a frontal position. This key quality is retained even if the object is copied or digitized, so that the viewer is barely, if at all, aware of the loss of an extra dimension in the transfer to screen or the loss of authenticity in the transfer to a new substrate. This ease of reception must be accounted a bonus rather than a deficit and

[84] Sharon Macdonald, 'Words in Stone? Agency and Identity in a Nazi Landscape', *Journal of Material Culture*, 11 (2006), 105–26.

[85] Macdonald, pp. 122, 119.

whole documentation centres (such as the NS-Dokumentationszentrum München) exploit the communicative value of *Flachware*. The loss of the third dimension, is, however, tantamount to the loss of the social practices surrounding objects during their use phase. Of course, the image or document is in the museum precisely because it acted on people or shaped events in the past, but its use phase is reduced to visual and written information. This obscures the fact that images and documents—including photographs, letters, newspapers and flyers—are consumed, exchanged and put to use every bit as much as more obviously three-dimensional, functional objects.

An essay by Elizabeth Edwards (in Dudley's volume on 'museum materialities') argues against this approach.[86] Regretting the tendency of museums to view photographs as 'unproblematic documents', Edwards insists that they are 'representational' *and* 'material'. While the 'representational' dimension emerges from their reception in two dimensions, the material is, she argues, the dimension in which they are invested with emotions and physically changed by use, handling, storage and exchange.[87] Although she acknowledges that the two dimensions are interlinked (people handle photographs in certain ways because of the image they record, not independently of it), Edwards aligns herself with research which:

> has stressed the social dynamics of photographs in specific cultural environments, as photographic objects are handled, caressed, stroked, kissed, torn, wept over, lamented over, talked to, talked about and sung to, in ways that blur the distinction between person, index, and thing. Furthermore, the performative material culture of photographs stresses their physical presence in the social world. They are written on, exchanged, displayed, and performed in a multitude of ways in that they are placed in albums, wallets, frames or lockets, stuck on walls, hidden in shoes, or buried in biscuit tins away from the eyes of the secret police.[88]

Cornelia Brink argues in similar terms that the photograph should be understood as an object: 'Menschen schauen Fotos nicht nur an, sie tun

[86] Elizabeth Edwards, 'Photographs and History: Emotion and Materiality', in Dudley, *Museum Materialities*, pp. 21–38.

[87] Edwards, p. 21.

[88] Edwards, p. 23.

auch etwas mit ihnen. Manche Fotos werden als Objekte behandelt, sie werden retuschiert, montiert, beschnitten, zerrissen, zerkratzt, übermalt, besonders gerahmt et cetera' ('People do not just look at photos, they do things with them. Many photos are treated like objects: they are retouched, mounted, cut, ripped, scratched, painted over, framed in a particular way, etc'.).[89] As examples of objectified photographic images she cites 'das Fotoalbum, das im Kreis der Familie durchgeblättert wird; Aufnahmen, die in Schuhkartons verwahrt und vergessen werden' ('the photograph album, that is leafed through in the family circle; pictures kept and forgotten in shoe boxes').[90] Like Edwards, Brink insists that conceptualizing photographs as objects is key to understanding how emotions become encoded in photographs.

Edwards's and Brink's scholarly approach corresponds to approaches taken to photographs in many German history museums and can be applied equally to other personal documents such as letters and diaries, even to public documents such as newspapers and political propaganda material, in as much as these had a social life. The use phase of these objects (their making, purchase, sharing, exchange, and/or storage) is of particular relevance to the museums in this study in their quest to understand mentalities and attitudes and to demarcate the threshold between passive and active involvement in the regime. Sections 3.1 and 5.1, in particular, explore these issues.

***

My intention in the chapters that follow is not to slavishly label the ways in which objects signify as synecdochic, metonymic, or metaphorical. That would be as dull as it would be unproductive. Instead, the main chapters show that keeping these categories in mind can help to pin down how an object functions in a display and to identify aspects of signification (claims of typicality, part-whole relations, or relationships to time) that have become conventionalized or 'taken as read'. My readings focus on those objects that are deployed for their ability to capture immaterial experiences and mentalities in material form. Particularly for exhibition-makers' exposition of the post-war years, the object's life cycle is central, and itself becomes the focus of display. Such object narratives

[89] Cornelia Brink, 'Bildeffekte. Überlegungen zum Zusammenhang von Fotografie und Emotionen', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 37.1 (2011), 104–29 (p. 127).

[90] Brink, p. 127.

need not be uncritically celebrated. Offe has been critical of the redemptive promise of salvage discourses in relation to Jewish material heritage, and other criticisms will emerge in this book.[91] Nonetheless, these new practices in museums need to be studied, and such a study can complement the substantial body of work on literary and filmic representations of the National Socialist past. This work routinely analyses the way in which emotional experience and the memory of emotions attach themselves—in the minds of fictional characters—to objects or photographs, typically stored within the family home.

[91] Offe, *Ausstellungen, Einstellungen, Entstellungen*.

CHAPTER 3

Material Experiences, 1933–45

3.1 Jews and *Heimat*: Objects and Belonging

Noting the difficulty of translating *Heimat* into English, Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman offer a series of definitions, beginning with 'a physical place, or social space, or bounded medium of some kind which provides a sense of security and belonging'. '*Heimat*', they suggest, 'protects the self by stimulating identification, whether with family, locality, nation, folk, or race, native dialect or tongue'.[1] While in the nineteenth century *Heimat* was largely associated with rural tradition, in the twentieth century it was increasingly appropriated to the cause of nationalism. Under the Nazis, a *völkisch* ideology narrowed the definition of *Heimat* further to a sphere from which Jews, characterized as 'without roots in a Heimat or national identity', were a priori excluded.[2] Thus, while majority Germans supposedly related culturally to their locality, Jews supposedly did not. However intellectually discredited this mendacious distinction was after 1945, it did not automatically self-correct in post-war reality. If the number of Jewish survivors remaining in Germany and Austria or returning there after 1945 was very low, vanishingly small numbers returned to the countryside. This long-lasting Holocaust effect

[1] Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat: A German Dream. Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890–1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 23.

[2] Boa and Palfreyman, p. 7.

C. Paver, *Exhibiting the Nazi Past*, The Holocaust and its Contexts,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77084-0_3

(namely the absence of Jews from environments in which their routine engagement with *Heimat* culture could be taken up again) justifies the inclusion, in this section, of objects that reach back before the watershed of 1933.

Germans and Austrians today are unlikely to connect Jewish culture with local and especially rural traditions, whether local costume, festivals, dialect or landscape. Indeed, contemporary art is able to trade on the idea that Jewish culture and German folk culture are understood as opposites. In the art exhibition 'Heimatkunde. 30 Künstler blicken auf Deutschland' ('Homeland. 30 Artists Reflect on Germany', 2011 at the Jüdisches Museum Berlin), the exhibition-makers interpreted 'Heimat' chiefly in terms of German national culture and identity, but some of the selected artists engaged with the theme in terms of local or rural culture. An artwork by Victor Kégli, created in 2001, recalled the German folk-tale tradition in its title 'Herschel und Gretel' and comprised two coin-operated mechanical dolls, shaped in imitation of handcrafted Erzgebirge toys.[3] The two machines, one a figure of an orthodox Jew and one a figure of a blonde girl in a dirndl, were placed in front of the museum. By placing a coin in a slot on each machine, the visitor could make them turn and bow to one another.[4] When they bowed, her plaits and his sidelocks (payot) moved, emphasizing their stereotypical attributes.

A final vitrine in the 'Heimatkunde' exhibition showed mass-produced kitsch and media images that betrayed or played with stereotypes of Germanness. This included two objects equivalent to Kégli's automata: two rubber ducks, one in lederhosen and a felt hat, and the other in Jewish orthodox garb. The exhibition clearly intended both pairs of objects to be read ironically, with the Jewish figure in each case playfully disrupting German national stereotypes just as the industrial production of the objects subverts their traditional craft aesthetic.

[3]The work can be viewed in action at http://www.victorkegli.com/de/herschel-gretel [accessed 29 May 2018]; photographs are available in Jüdisches Museum Berlin (ed.), *Heimatkunde. 30 Künstler blicken auf Deutschland* (Munich: Hirmer, 2011), pp. 88–91.

[4]Austrian artist Azra Akšamija's contribution to 'Heimatkunde', 'Dirndlmoschee', also used folk culture. While folk costume and Islam are not contradictory in Akšamija's native Bosnia, the creation of this piece in Austria and its showing in Germany would seem to rely on the idea that Germanic folk traditions are understood to be in opposition to non-Christian cultures and that this opposition is ripe for subversion. Ibid., pp. 14–17.

In this context, I am less interested in whether the Nazi opposition of folk culture and Jewish culture can be subverted by parodying it than in the fact that this version of German folk culture, which uses *Tracht* (traditional rural costume) and artisanal craftwork as a visual shorthand, reproduces the Nazis' reduction of *Heimat* to a small subset of conservative rural traditions that artificially exclude other markers of local identity and belonging. For both Jews and non-Jews, these might in reality have had as much to do with modernization and industrialization in their locality or with newly forged local traditions such as football teams or classical music groups as they did with folklore. Boa and Palfreyman rightly see National Socialist *Heimat* discourses as contradictory,[5] but *Heimat* was just as muddled in everyday life: by the 1930s, most Germans and Austrians, if they engaged with *Heimat* culture, engaged with a mass-produced and mass-mediated version, even as the 'real' version continued to exist. Jews and non-Jews participated equally in hybrid forms of industrial-folk culture. German and Austrian relationships with the materiality of local belonging were therefore always more complex—and interesting—than the kitsch simplifications of 'Heimatkunde' imply.

A rare example of an exhibition that explicitly discussed Jewish participation in this cultural muddle about *Heimat* was 'Hast du meine Alpen gesehen?' at the Jüdisches Museum Hohenems, discussed in more detail below. Alongside a screen showing family photographs of Jews in *Tracht*, a text read:

> Tracht zu tragen konnte vieles bedeuten: Identifikation mit einer Lebensumwelt, Spiel mit einer als urwüchsig geltenden Gegend, Zurschaustellung einer politischen Weltanschauung, modischer Trend in einem städtischen Umfeld oder chices Outfit bei den Salzburger Festspielen. Nichtjuden und Juden nahmen gleichermaßen an diesem gesellschaftlichen Spiel teil und kleideten sich aus unterschiedlichsten Motivationen in Tracht und Dirndl.
>
> (Wearing *Tracht* could mean a number of different things: identifying with the environment one lived in, playing with the idea of a region that was considered elemental and unspoiled, showcasing a political world view, a fashion trend in an urban environment, or a chic outfit for the Salzburg Festival. Jews and non-Jews alike participated in this social game and wore *Tracht* and dirndls for a whole variety of reasons.)

[5] Boa and Palfreyman, pp. 14, 22.

On the whole, the exhibitions from which examples are taken below do not explicitly discuss *Heimat* in this way, as a heterogeneous and sometimes incoherent discourse, yet regardless of stated intent they, too, show that, before 1933 and 1938, Jews freely exercised their right to engage in all facets of *Heimat* culture, including its inconsistencies.[6]

Against the background of an ongoing disconnection between Jewish culture and *Heimat* culture since 1945, Jewish museums in Germany and Austria today are concerned to reconnect Jewish culture with the *Heimat*, understood broadly as a belonging to place. Not that museums have to go out of their way to find material evidence of Jewish belonging in a locality: provided objects survive locally, they testify to the involvement of Jews in almost every area of activity. The Jewish male-voice choir in Haigerloch, for instance, used the Hohenzollern Castle as the central motif for the choir's procession banner. The castle, an emblem of German history for nearly a millennium, is so distinctive in the landscape that most visitors to the exhibition at the Ehemalige Synagoge Haigerloch will have seen it on their journey there before they see the banner in its display cabinet. At the Jüdisches Museum Hohenems, a contented-looking pig adorns an invitation from the Jewish innkeeper to the local population, dated February 1938, to attend a 'Schlacht-Partie', a festive buffet of fresh wurst and cold cuts that evidently has a strong and continuing tradition in western Austria, making this a meaningful visual motif for a local museum audience. Accordingly, the caption does not spell out that some Austrian Jews contributed to local culinary practices even up to the month before the Anschluss (though it does remind the visitor that this example was in defiance of Jewish culinary laws).

In a neat combination of local traditions of varying vintages, the Jüdisches Museum Schnaittach shows a membership card for Nuremberg FC and a copy of a *Fasnacht* magazine to recall a Jewish villager's fanatical support for the local football team and his involvement in theatre and carnival, including editing the magazine. Schnaittach also uses a photograph of a local man on a motorbike to tell of his role in founding

[6]The fashion exhibition 'Glanz und Grauen' devoted a section to *Tracht* (though not in connection with Jewish culture) and questioned our era's stereotyping of *Tracht* as quintessentially Nazi. One object that summed up the complex relationship of 1930s women to *Tracht* was a fashionable summer dress in an urban approximation of *Tracht* style, its fabric decorated all over with a motif of a woman in authentic *Tracht*. LVR-Industriemuseum (ed.), *Glanz und Grauen. Mode im dritten Reich* (Bönen/Westfalen: Kettler, 2012), p. 78.

the local chapter of the German automobile association. Understood in the abstract, motor vehicles stand for modern mobility as the antithesis of rootedness in the *Heimat*, but in practice they facilitated the exploration of the regional *Heimat*: in the background of the photograph is a half-timbered *Fachwerkhaus*.[7] Besides, the founding of a local chapter was an act of local association; while the ADAC was a recent foundation, it was one from which Jews were promptly excluded in 1933, as the caption notes. Finally, a vitrine containing objects from a Jewish-run shop that were available for sale in the early 1930s includes two Christian devotional objects, which testify to Jewish–Christian interaction: a set of rosary beads and a christening card. As if to demonstrate the industrialization of the material culture of the *Heimat*, these mass-produced objects imitate artisanal craftsmanship: lacework in the decorative border around the card and metalwork in the cross on the rosary beads.

While no Jewish museum sees itself as writing a history of material culture, the material form routinely given to social activities and allegiances means that they inevitably present evidence for one. Thus, the Jüdisches Museum Fürth also shows the ways in which Jewish locals, no differently from their non-Jewish neighbours, participated in a mass-produced material culture that borrowed from folk and artisanal traditions, while at the same time they also engaged in unambiguously modern aspects of the local society and economy. The museum devotes a room to the topic of 'Heimat', defining it broadly in terms of belonging and more particularly in terms of bourgeois assimilation to the majority culture. In a vitrine devoted to an assimilated couple, an edelweiss badge denotes membership of the ramblers' association, the Alpenverein. A ceramic pipe shows a romanticized hunting scene: a placeless, manufactured expression of devotion to country traditions, but nevertheless one that Jews and non-Jews shared. Nearby, objects illustrate the Jewish contribution to two of Nuremberg's centuries-old industries: brewing and the international toy trade. They, too, illustrate the duality of industrial production: a version of Happy Families is decorated with kitsch

[7] Bernhard Purin (ed.), *Jüdisches Museum Franken in Schnaittach. Museumsführer* (Fürth: Jüdisches Museum Franken—Fürth und Schnaittach, 1996), p. 33.

images of children in *Tracht*; a game titled 'Wer kann's?' ('Who can do it?') is illustrated with geometric metal shapes and uses a modern font.[8]

Alongside these items, the Fürth museum shows a 1920s tin of gingerbread (*Lebkuchen*), Nuremberg's key culinary delicacy. Gracing its label is the dome of the late-nineteenth-century synagogue. Evidently, the manufacturer was non-Jewish (the caption does not say otherwise and the business continues to trade under his name), but the synagogue was an iconic local building in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Internet searches suggest that it was a popular postcard motif, probably because the neoclassical dome contrasted starkly with the medieval buildings that line the river. The designer of the label for the gingerbread tin appears to have copied such a photograph in watercolour. In a room called 'Heimat', this reminds visitors of how wilfully restrictive the Nazi definition was, given that, before 1933, Nurembergers appeared well able to expand the notion to include Jewish culture, even in connection with local folk recipes. Museum visitors from Fürth and Nuremberg will recognize toys, beer and gingerbread as part of their own local identity today but may be more challenged than their 1920s forbears were to envisage them as partly Jewish.

Commercial objects similar to the gingerbread tin can also be seen at the Jüdisches Museum München, which, as Robin Ostow has noted, is 'probably the only major Jewish building in Germany where the entrance is marked, in large letters, with a local and traditionally Catholic welcome—"Grüß Gott"'.[9] In one of the seven vitrines in the module 'Sachen / Objects', a curator introduces us to advertising stickers, a short-lived advertising medium invented around 1900 and in use until the 1920s. Affixed to letters as decoration, the stickers provided free advertising. The stickers on show advertise Jewish-owned firms operating out of Munich. Some of them, particularly those selling fashions, are decidedly modern. Others advertise *Tracht*. Yet others use kitsch

[8] Viewed in September 2017; objects are swapped in and out of this vitrine periodically.

[9] Robin Ostow, 'Creating a Bavarian Space for Rapprochement: The Jewish Museum Munich', in *Space and Spatiality in Modern German-Jewish History*, ed. by Simone Lässig and Miriam Rürup (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2017), pp. 280–97 (p. 280). This southern German greeting is part of Sharone Lifschitz's installation 'Speaking Germany' (discussed also in Sect. 5.7), passages from which are pasted onto the windows of the museum. It is therefore a quotation from an interview with one of her participants, but its position by the door makes it do double service as the museum's local greeting to its often international visitors.

folklore images to sell their objects: the Unionsbräu München advertises its beer with a little boy acting as waiter, striding along in his lederhosen and woollen shin warmers. Some show the distinctive outline of Munich's Frauenkirche, while a beef dripping and margarine producer uses Walhalla as its motif. The curator's interpretation of the collection does not draw attention to this participation in Bavarian *Heimat* culture, which is perhaps taken for granted as a continuing feature of advertising today, but points rather to the joint experience of modernity, to the way in which Jews and non-Jews shared in the blossoming of a new consumer culture in Munich until Jewish firms were wiped out by the Nazis.

The temporary exhibition 'Hast du meine Alpen gesehen? Eine jüdische Beziehungsgeschichte' ('Did you See my Alps? A Jewish Love Story', 2009 at the Jüdisches Museum Hohenems), cited briefly above, was particularly important in reconnecting Jewish culture and *Heimat* culture.[10] The question in the title was one that Samson Raphael Hirsch expected God to ask him when they finally came face to face. Like similar exhibitions shown at around that time, 'Hast du meine Alpen gesehen?' showed that the Alps were an international space and also in some ways an urban one, given Vienna's tradition of Alpine summer retreats.[11] In that sense, the exhibition was rather more complex than just a celebration of Jewish native engagement with the Alpine *Heimat*. Nonetheless, among all the journeying, exploring and mapping, an intense relationship to place emerged. Jews (including a young Walter Benjamin and Jean Améry) were shown posing for family photographs in *Tracht*. Jews were shown to have collected *Tracht* and the specialist craft of *Federkielstickerei* (quill embroidery), to have recorded folk songs on phonographs, manufactured *Tracht* costume and *Tracht* dolls and, in the case of pioneer ethnographer Eugenie Goldstern, studied authentic, that is pre-industrial Alpine material culture. Thus, while table decorations for a transatlantic liner, made by Austrian doll designer Lilli Baitz for the HAPAG line in 1932, illustrated the mass production of Alpine kitsch for a modern mobile elite, a Krampus doll and two primitive home-made toy cows collected by Goldstern in the high mountains illustrated the

[10] Hanno Loewy and Gerhard Milchram (eds), *Hast du meine Alpen gesehen? Eine jüdische Beziehungsgeschichte* (Hohenems and Vienna: Bucher, 2009).

[11] See my article: Chloe Paver, 'What's so Austrian about the Alps? Local, Transnational, and Global Narratives in Austrian Exhibitions about the Alps', *Austrian Studies*, 18 (2010), special issue: 'The Alps', 179–95.

authentic, non-picturesque origins of commercialized *Heimat* products. Meanwhile, a series of objects, from advertising posters to deckchairs and a 'rocking bath', acted as props in another story: as tourists and tourist entrepreneurs (including pioneers in medical tourism and railway building), and as alpinists and skiing pioneers, Jews before 1933 helped construct a modern version of the Alps in which the mountain range was visited, travelled through and consumed.

The danger of grouping these objects together might have been to level out all cultural differences between Jews and non-Jews and thus create a retrospective idyll of successful coexistence based on Jewish disavowal of their heritage, or to construct the kind of *Beitragsgeschichte* (history of the Jewish contribution to German and Austrian culture) of which Inka Bertz is rightly suspicious because it may imply that it is German and Austrian culture, and not Jews themselves, that has lost out as a result of the Holocaust.[12] While the exhibition made clear that everything we consider quintessentially Alpine today was created (or documented) with considerable Jewish input, both information texts and objects reasserted what was Jewish about this experience. The text for a chapter entitled 'Die Alpen leben – die Heimat erfinden' ('Living the Alpine Life – Inventing *Heimat*') proposed that though urban Jews and non-Jews shared the experience of seeking a supposedly unspoiled culture in the Alps it meant something different to Jews: on the one hand, rooting themselves in place was a defensive response to discourses about their supposed 'rootlessness'; on the other, a measure of distance from Alpine culture allowed them to perceive new connections and contribute creatively to the cultural construction of the Alps. Elsewhere, the information that the classic Alpine symbol, the edelweiss, was popularized by Jewish author Berthold Auerbach (a potential anecdote for a *Beitragsgeschichte*) was brought to life by an object from the family heritage of the museum's director. In 1918, an ancestor had given his fiancée a dual-language, German-Hebrew prayer book with a pressed edelweiss inside. Seen objectively, this was a fortuitous rather than historically significant pairing: the lovers might just as well have pressed some other flower in the book, and it is only a botanical accident that the edelweiss maintains its unmistakable form so well when pressed. Nonetheless,

[12] Inka Bertz, 'Jewish Museums in the Federal Republic of Germany', in *Visualizing and Exhibiting Jewish Space and History: Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, ed. by Richard I. Cohen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 80–112 (p. 87).

pressed flowers have a particularly strong haptic connection to the pages between which they are placed, and that physical contiguity between the quintessentially Alpine flower and Jewish script, the key vehicle for the transmission of religious tradition, helped make the specificity of a Jewish bond with *Heimat* powerfully present and physical in the exhibition space. More prosaically, kosher tea towels for milk and meat and other ephemera from the Bermann's Hotel Edelweiss in St. Moritz, much of it decorated with the hotel's Star of David logo, illustrated the ongoing demand for Jewish hotels in the Alps.

Any discussion of *Heimat* and Jewish material culture must give generous space to the Jüdisches Museum Schnaittach, some of whose objects were introduced above, because the history of the museum and its buildings is intertwined with the history of the village's Heimatmuseum or local history museum. Notions of *Heimat* have therefore been negotiated at the site in a much more direct way than at other regional or rural Jewish museums, where *Heimat* is one topic among others. Moreover, as the following discussion shows, these negotiations have revolved around objects and their quality of 'localness'.

This smaller sister museum of the Jüdisches Museum Fürth opened in 1996. Its foundation history has been told by its former director, Bernhard Purin, and by Ruth Ellen Gruber in her 2001 study of the Jewish museums of Europe:[13] the once considerable Jewish community of Schnaittach was, by the 1920s, much reduced by urban flight; in the 1920s and 1930s, some of Schnaittach's Jews offered objects to the recently founded Heimatmuseum; the director of the Heimatmuseum, Gottfried Stammler, helped prevent the destruction of the synagogue during the November Pogrom of 1938; Stammler then moved his Heimatmuseum into the forcibly vacated Jewish buildings; and, finally, Stammler returned some Jewish objects to Jewish communities after 1945, retaining others for his museum, which operated until the 1990s. For Gruber, the story of co-operation between the local Jewish community and Stammler 'demonstrate[s] both the integration of Jews

[13] Bernhard Purin, director at Schnaittach 1995–2002, now director of the Jüdisches Museum München, recalls his role in the creation of the Schnaittach museum in 'Building a Jewish Museum in Germany in the Twenty-First Century', in *(Re)Visualizing National History: Museums and National Identities in Europe in the New Millennium*, ed. by Robin Ostow (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), pp. 139–56. Gruber, *Virtually Jewish*, pp. 166–68.

in the local mainstream', before 1933, 'and the precariousness of this integration'.[14] She reports that when Purin took up his post as director of the Jüdisches Museum Schnaittach in the 1990s, he found the local inhabitants wedded to the idea that Stammler had been the saviour both of the synagogue and of Jewish belongings, despite documentary evidence that he was happy to take advantage of the emigration and deportation of the Schnaittach Jews to build up his collection and increase the status of his museum.[15]

To the accounts by Purin and Gruber, one might add that the Stammler legend was propagated by a 1981 publication by two non-Jewish *Heimatforscher*, Walter Tausendpfund and Gerhard Philipp Wolf, which praises Stammler for 'saving' the synagogue and its contents and sympathizes with him when he has to return objects to the Jewish Restitution Successor Organisation after 1945.[16] This book was still available in the bookshop of the Jüdisches Museum when I visited in 2011, though the volunteer manning the desk was curiously reluctant—given that it was on sale—to sell it to me, fearing that I might not read it sufficiently critically. I am told that it was a remnant of the old Heimatmuseum shop stock and it has since been removed from sale. In the 1990s, Tausendpfund's and Wolf's book was still sufficiently convincing for a UK historian, Martyn Housden, to cite Stammler as an example of anti-Nazi courage, a saviour of Jewish heritage fit to stand alongside Germany's resistance aristocracy. In a sourcebook for

[14] Gruber, p. 166.

[15] Gruber, p. 167. Purin tells the story in Bernhard Purin, *Judaica aus der Medina Aschpah. Die Sammlung des Jüdischen Museums Franken in Schnaittach* (Fürth: Jüdisches Museum Franken—Fürth und Schnaittach, 2003), pp. 7–9.

[16] Walter Tausendpfund and Gerhard Philipp Wolf, *Die jüdische Gemeinde von Schnaittach* (Nuremberg: Korn und Berg, 1981). For their view of Stammler, see particularly pp. 45–46, where he figures as 'mutig' and 'furchtlos' ('brave' and 'fearless') while the Jewish community, who were willing to give him objects 'vor ihrem Weggang' ('before they went away'), do not appreciate his work on their behalf after 1945. The book has little to say about the Holocaust, a word it avoids, speaking instead of 'das Ende der neuzeitlichen Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland' and 'die beispiellose Judenpolitik im "Dritten Reich"' ('the end of the modern history of the Jews in Germany' and 'the unprecedented Jewish policy in the "Third Reich"', p. 7).

school students that is still in print, Housden includes him in a list with Helmuth von Moltke and the White Rose group.[17]

It would be possible for the museum to make a lot of the ambivalent figure of Stammler, who saved the synagogue from fire for his own use and showed a fascination with Jewish material heritage but little obvious empathy with Holocaust victims. He offers a ready-made story, and the museum could add a second and third layer of controversy by showing how his biography was spun in exculpatory ways in the 1980s and 1990s, reaching even an international audience in Housden's work. But one has to ask what purpose this would serve. While academics at their writing desk can easily demolish outdated views, museums work in communities, and the Jüdisches Museum Schnaittach needs the goodwill of a community that still respects Stammler. Tausendpfund is a respected local dialect poet, who would doubtless write the 1981 book differently were he to write it now. Arguably the best riposte to Tausendpfund's and Wolf's statement that the Schnaittach judaica are a lasting memorial to Stammler's courageous protection of them[18] is not to criticize their muddled mythologizing—and kick up a local storm—but to draw as little attention to Stammler as possible and to use the objects he collected as a lasting memorial to the Jewish community.

On the whole, this is what the museum does. The opening exhibition text reflects on objects as 'Erinnerungsträger' ('carriers of memory') within Jewish tradition and Jewish-German history. Stammler's role in the establishment of the Heimatmuseum and its Judaica collection is mentioned on the next main information board, though the museum deals with him rather more mildly than Gruber's robust critical account implies, using passives and other agentless expressions which leave the question of his agency unclear (possibly because details cannot now be reconstructed). Objects 'gelangten', 'wurden einverleibt' and 'wurden aufgenommen'; they are also referred to as 'beschlagnahmte Gegenstände' (they 'came', 'were incorporated', 'were accessioned' and are termed 'confiscated objects'). Objects in the neighbouring vitrine acknowledge the puzzling ambiguity of his role. Stammler's painstakingly handwritten labels for the Judaica in his collection contrast with two street signs, 'Judenschulgasse' and 'Museumsgasse'. These illustrate

[17] Martyn Housden, *Resistance and Conformity in the Third Reich* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 147, 160.

[18] Tausendpfund and Wolf, p. 47.

the change of name that he campaigned for in 1935. A letter from the Jewish religious community, dated 1932, accedes to Stammler's request for implements used to make mazzot for display in the Heimatmuseum: evidently Stammler considered Jewish material culture to be a necessary component of a local history museum collection. Alongside is a piece of wood on which two carpenters, having been brought in to help adapt the synagogue to the needs of the Heimatmuseum in 1939, carved their names, one with a decorative swastika.

While subsequent display cases redirect the focus to the people who owned the objects and the lives they led, the story of the objects' acquisition by the *Heimatmuseum* continues to play a ghosting role, appearing on that part of the caption that gives the objects' provenance. A display case devoted to food preparation contains a copper water jug ('Geschenk von Isaak Ullmann, vor 1925' / 'Gift from Isaak Ullmann, before 1925') and a handbook for kosher butchers ('Aus dem Besitz von Moses Gutmann, 1938 übernommen' / 'Formerly belonging to Moses Gutmann, adopted 1938'). The visitor is left to work out that Moses Gutmann is unlikely to have voluntarily relinquished his belongings in 1938 and to ponder the gulf separating the free donation of an object before 1925 and the museum's 'adoption' of an object in 1938. Emma Ullmann (who would later die at the hands of the Gestapo) donated many objects, some in the wake of an accidental fire at her house, and the museum shows a handwritten note from her to Stammler, explaining how a Jewish gartel was used (Fig. 3.1). The fact that Stammler accepted a Passover greetings card from her in 1933 adds to the curiously ambivalent impression of Stammler's *Heimatmuseum*: the collector was not just interested in Jewish folk objects of the kind that represented a disappearing rural world (the traditional remit of a *Heimatmuseum*), but also in modern mass-produced objects that indicated still thriving religious practices.

While the Jüdisches Museum Schnaittach draws as little attention to Stammler as is necessary, the museum building continues to speak volubly of him. Gruber's necessarily brief account of the museum, in a wide-ranging study of European museums, omits to say that the Jewish Museum shares its premises with the Heimatmuseum Schnaittach, a continuation of Stammler's original museum, now run by a charity, which has ceded its Judaica to the Jewish museum. While the ground floor, including the rooms of the rabbi's house, cantor's house, synagogue and women's prayer room, is occupied by the Jewish museum, allowing it

Fig. 3.1 A 'gartel' donated by Jewish villager Emma Ullmann to the Schnaittach Heimatmuseum in 1933, with a handwritten explanation of how it functioned, Jüdisches Museum Schnaittach. Photograph: Chloe Paver

to use the building as an exhibit and giving it primary status within the building, a large part of the upstairs is given over to the Heimatmuseum.

In a sign that the Heimatmuseum is now a guest in a formerly Jewish building,[19] the Jewish museum has made three interventions in these upstairs rooms. The ghostly outlines of two *mezuzot* are picked out by frames painted in the Jewish museum's signature blue, and their use is

[19]The building itself is owned by neither museum, but rather by the local council.

explained. In another room, a section of the floor has been removed to expose the roof of the synagogue. The Jüdisches Museum uses this architectural detail to explain (on another of its blue exhibition boards) the theological significance of synagogue design and the tradition of *genizot*.

Set within these manifestly borrowed rooms, the permanent exhibition at the Heimatmuseum nowadays owes little to Stammler except its impressive collection of antique objects, though he is commemorated as its founder with a bust. It might make a neater story if Schnaittach's Heimatmuseum were hopelessly old-fashioned, wedded to an unreformed, sentimental view of the *Heimat*, but it is not. A model of new museology, evidently put together by an ethnologist, the Heimatmuseum reflects critically on earlier museological practices. It shows how an idea of *Heimat* was artificially constructed in the original museum, for instance by cobbling together a farmhouse interior out of bits and pieces of different buildings and presenting it as a faithful reconstruction. Although everything in the Heimatmuseum was collected locally, very few objects have demonstrable links to the locality and the captions tell no stories of their owners, suggesting that little of their original context was recorded. Perhaps to make a virtue out of a necessity, the exhibition-maker has arranged many of the objects by type (crockery, containers, clocks, etc.) and makes generalized ethnological statements about the role of these object types in human society. Captions explain what objects are or why their material is interesting but only in very few cases why they matter to Schnaittach. The result is that, while the Heimatmuseum exhibition is professional, it is arguably less local, less evocative of the *Heimat*, than the Jewish museum downstairs. This did not stop visitors, until quite recently as the manager told me, from insisting that they had come to see 'unser Museum' ('our museum') rather than the imported Jewish museum. The regular temporary exhibitions in the Heimatmuseum, put together by the local history association, are noticeably more localized than its permanent exhibition. An exhibition marking the hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the First World War showed Stammler's letters home from the front, his dog tag and his military portrait, while also reprinting an autobiographical sketch he wrote in the 1950s, in which the only thing to happen between 1936 and 'der Zusammenbruch des Reiches' ('the collapse of the Reich') was his godson's conscription.

In 2000, Sabine Offe expressed concern that the workings of German collective memory might simply re-enact the divisions between a

Volksgemeinschaft (now a community of the descendants of the perpetrators) and a Jewish minority (now a community of the descendants of the victims). At the same time, she expressed the hope that it might be possible to break out of the vicious circle: 'Collective memory ought […] to allow for definitions of nonexclusive identities, for images of a relationship between Jews and non-Jews not defined by National Socialist ideology alone'.[20] Offe is cautiously optimistic that Jewish museums can fulfil this role. Ultimately, however, she suspects that Jewish museums in small towns continue to exclude: the Jews who are remembered have no share in contemporary village life and the villagers may have only a marginal interest in the Jewish museum.

The Jüdisches Museum Schnaittach is caught in this dilemma: it points to forms of Jewish and non-Jewish relations (in fact, the sharing of museum objects) that were not defined by National Socialist ideology, yet responsibility for Jewish and non-Jewish history are, as a direct result of National Socialism and its social legacies, institutionally divided. While the Heimatmuseum's charity does engage with Jewish history on information boards around the town, it evidently sees no reason to tell Jewish stories in relation to its museum collections (now minus the Judaica).[21] At the same time, given the need of Jewish museums to retain a separate identity in order to address many decades of public indifference or denial, it is genuinely difficult to envisage what a museum would look like that brought Schnaittach's Jewish and non-Jewish history together in a clear and appropriate relationship. Nonetheless, some objects might be brought together: the *Fasnacht* newspaper, edited by a Jewish local, and objects representing non-Jewish experiences of carnival (from the relatively short historical period in which the festival was shared); or the metal instruments used for cutting mazzot and, assuming the *Heimatmuseum* has them, baking equipment from the non-Jewish bakers. For the time being, the slightly awkward social compromise of two museums facing in different directions inside one architectural shell may in fact articulate the local situation better than any such co-operation would.

[20] Sabine Offe, *Ausstellungen, Einstellungen, Entstellungen. Jüdische Museen in Deutschland und Österreich* (Berlin and Vienna: Philo, 2000), p. 81.

[21] A temporary exhibition about local trade guilds shown in 2012 ('Von der Zunft zur Innung—Handwerk im Wandel' or 'Trade Guilds Past and Present: Artisan Work through the Centuries') cited a seventeenth-century complaint against Jewish butchers by the butchers' guild. Apart from this curious fact, which was not analysed, Jews were not mentioned. It was taken as read that guild members were Christian.

Though this section has concerned itself with Jewish belonging in the *Heimat*, Boa and Palfreyman note the following of a character in Michael Verhoeven's film *Das schreckliche Mädchen*, a camp survivor: 'Of all the characters in the film, the old communist speaks with the strongest dialect accent which signals that lefties need not be city folk but can belong in the Heimat, even if they are somewhat thin on the ground in provincial Bavaria'.[22] Museum objects, too, can wrest *Heimat* from its continued association with right-wing culture. In its *Heimat* room, the Jüdisches Museum Fürth shows a beer mug celebrating Kurt Eisner's tenure as socialist Prime Minister of Bavaria. Likewise, in its permanent exhibition about National Socialism, 'Chiffren der Erinnerung', the Münchner Stadtmuseum shows a beer stein with a traditional, elaborately patterned tin lid and painted motif. Because the stein can be seen from a distance, the visitor registers its form before reading the caption. This sets up an expectation of a National Socialist object. However, this section deals with political opponents interned in Dachau, and the stein is decorated with an image of Karl Marx's grave and the motto 'Proletarier aller Welt, vereinigt euch'. Though the vessel itself is from the post-war years, it was given to a socialist survivor of Dachau. In its newer, semi-permanent exhibition 'Typisch München', the Stadtmuseum also shows the lederhosen of Oskar Maria Graf, a socialist who insisted on his Bavarian identity even in exile. That such objects surprise is an indication of the continuing strong association of *Heimat* culture with conservatism.[23]

3.2 Mentalities and Materials

At exhibitions that deal broadly with the events of 1933–45, objects relating to the peacetime years 1933–39 make up a large part of the material culture on display. It does not follow that they are necessarily the most interesting objects to study: most are used as conventional hooks on which to hang narratives about National Socialist culture

[22] Boa and Palfreyman, p. 165.

[23] For a recent newspaper article registering surprise that a green politician should believe in *Heimat* in the age of the AfD, see: http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/sz-serie-was-ist-heimat-ein-linker-biobauer-fordert-die-heimatliebe-zurueck-1.3814376 [accessed 29 May 2018].

and crimes and about the culture and lives of the victims. Propaganda items play a particularly prominent role. As I have argued elsewhere, these select themselves for exhibition but generally evoke only their own intended effect, not their actual reception by citizens, meaning that, unless well contextualized by information texts, they run the risk of over-simplifying visitors' understanding of mentalities.[24] In the section that follows this one, I consider some of the more common propaganda items such as Hitler busts, but in this section I focus on objects that are chosen because they appear to record traces of the mentalities of the majority. As was already clear from the example of the house keys discussed in Sect. 2.2, mentalities do not inscribe themselves especially clearly onto objects. As a result, exhibition-makers sometimes need to reach beyond conventional three-dimensional objects, for instance by treating photographs and language as objects.

Home-made objects decorated with Nazi motifs serve a particular function in exhibitions, demonstrating the willingness of ordinary Germans and Austrians to support the regime. These objects function as a metonym for the effort, will and, in some cases, imagination that went into producing them, confirming what mass-produced propaganda items cannot, at least not in isolation: that many people actively concurred with the regime's ideology. At 'Hitler und die Deutschen. Volksgemeinschaft und Verbrechen' ('Hitler and the Germans: Nation and Crime', 2010 at the Deutsches Historisches Museum), a tapestry embroidered by a group of church needlewomen was displayed; it showed members of the BDM, HJ and SA marching with swastika flags towards a church.[25] This kind of object fits Neitzel's and Welzer's model of 'frames of reference' in as much as it shows how existing social structures (in this case, the gendered tradition of church embroidery) play a part in forming attitudes and actions. At the Münchner Stadtmuseum, a photograph shows young women embroidering a tapestry for use in the propaganda pageant 'Zweitausend Jahre Deutsche Kultur'. Men's

[24] Chloe Paver, 'You Shall Know Them by Their Objects: Material Culture and Its Impact in Museum Displays About National Socialism', in *Cultural Impact in the German Context: Models of Transmission, Reception and Influence*, ed. by Rebecca Braun and Lyn Marven (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010), pp. 169–87.

[25] Hans-Ulrich Thamer and Simone Erpel (eds), *Hitler und die Deutschen. Volksgemeinschaft und Verbrechen* (Dresden: Sandstein, 2010), pp. 216–17.

crafts are also represented: a railwayman hand-painted a mug with the eagle and swastika, for instance (at the DB Museum), and an image of Hitler's face made by inlaying different coloured fragments of wood (at the Dokumentationszentrum Reichsparteitagsgelände) was most likely made by a male hobbyist. The exhibition 'Glanz und Grauen. Mode im Dritten Reich' ('Glamour and Horror: Fashion in the Third Reich', 2012 at the LVR-Industriemuseum) complicated this picture slightly. It showed a young girl's embroidery sampler, on which she practised her stitches by stitching the alphabet, her name, the date 1934 and two swastikas. The caption noted that this was unusual because strict regulations governed the reproduction of the swastika and other Nazi symbols, in order to prevent their trivialization. While the rules doubtless applied most strictly to commercial items (which is why, the caption explains, we do not find swastikas on fashion accessories or household textiles), the caption nonetheless suggests that there might be a slight disjunction between the usefulness of these home-made items to exhibition-makers and the extent to which they were really typical of the time.

Moreover, even if some items of this kind seem like solidly reliable signifiers (for who spends many days making a marquetry image of Hitler's face if he is anything other than a supporter?), some caution is called for. The travelling exhibition 'Volk – Heimat – Dorf',[26] which depicted rural Bavaria under National Socialist rule, displayed an eye-catching piece of agricultural machinery: a honey centrifuge (Fig. 3.2). Mounted on top of its metal tank were a crank wheel and handle. The spokes of the crank wheel had been formed into the letters of 'Sieg Heil'.[27] The catalogue is careful not to read this as straightforward proof of Nazi allegiance: it might have been an expression of naïve reverence ('naïve', presumably, because it hardly suited Nazi propaganda aims to see its slogans built into crude farm machinery); but it might also have been an ironic comment on the propaganda machinery of National Socialism.[28] This alternative reading might seem far-fetched—based more on a retrospective imposition

[26] 'Volk – Heimat – Dorf. Ideologie und Wirklichkeit im ländlichen Bayern der 1930er und 1940er Jahre' ('Nationalism, Local Identity, and the Village: Ideology and Reality in Rural Bavaria in the 1930s and 1940s', 2017 at a series of farming museums; viewed at the Bauerngerätemuseum Hundszell).

[27] Birgit Angerer, et al. (eds), *Volk, Heimat, Dorf. Ideologie und Wirklichkeit im ländlichen Bayern der 1930er und 1940er Jahre* (Petersberg: Imhof, 2016), p. 20.

[28] Angerer, p. 21.

Fig. 3.2 Honey centrifuge in the collection of the Freilichtmuseum Glentleiten, shown in the exhibition 'Volk – Heimat – Dorf', 2017. © Bezirk Oberbayern, Archiv FLM Glentlteiten

of the metaphor of 'machinery' than the likelihood of a cynic expending so much effort—but at least cautions against over-hasty assumptions. The caption in the exhibition room was less questioning, declaring the crank handle to be 'ein sprechendes Zeichen für den Fanatismus seines Nutzers' ('an eloquent indicator of its user's fanaticism'). A visitor to the exhibition at Hundszell had drawn a question mark in biro after this comment, hinting at a public awareness of the dangers of reading

mentalities into objects. Possibly, the visitor objected to the statement: 'Das sich beim Arbeitsvorgang unablässig drehende Handkubelrad wiederholte gebetsmühlenartig das "Mantra" der nationalsozialistischen Bewegung' ('As the user operated it, the continuously turning crank wheel repeated like a prayer wheel the "mantra" of the National Socialist movement'). Because English does not use the metaphor of the prayer wheel for the endless repetition of the same words (an established figure of speech in German), an English-language reading of the object might be less likely to assume that the turning of the wheel was connected to the repetition of political slogans for the purposes of strengthening political faith. In reality, the wheel uttered no words and the farm labourer may have had thoughts only for the honey yield as he turned the crank, even if in all other circumstances he approved of National Socialism. This does not stop the honey centrifuge from being a rare and fascinating object, but it needs to remain tethered to the realities of local political activity during its use phase. The surrounding exhibition, which was very well researched, largely served that tethering role.

While home-made items can thus at best serve to show a general complicity in the regime, it is more difficult to replicate, in object form, the kind of complex understanding of mentalities that scholars such as Neitzel and Welzer and Gilcher-Holtey work to produce. As a result, exhibition-makers often resort to text. For instance, after the first Wehrmacht Exhibition was reproached for trading in rather sweeping generalizations about mentalities of soldiers, the second devoted a section to a more precise investigation of 'Handlungsspielräume', the room for manoeuvre that soldiers at the Eastern Front had and the uses they chose to make of it.[29] In order to examine these areas of flexibility within the tight structures of the dictatorship and in order to tease out the interactions between social position, circumstance and beliefs that (in line with the 'frames of reference' model) activated one potential course of action rather than another, the second version of 'Verbrechen der Wehrmacht' told long, complex narratives, backed up by full documentary evidence. The case of Helmuth Groscurth's intervention in—but not prevention of—the murder of ninety children was typical of this complexity, requiring the visitor to read long documents several times to reach even tentative conclusions about Groscurth's attitudes and strategies.[30] While the

[29] Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung (ed.), *Verbrechen der Wehrmacht. Dimensionen des Vernichtungskrieges 1941–1944* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2002), pp. 579–627.

[30] Ibid., pp. 598–605.

exhibition thereby contributed important work in history and sociology, this is not a strategy that can be widely reproduced in exhibitions that need to attract an audience.

Exhibition-makers occasionally find documents in which historical agents talk about objects and in doing so betray political attitudes, even if the objects no longer exist to be shown. This was the case at the exhibition 'Pädagogik und Gesellschaft. Schule und Nationalsozialismus im Land Thüringen' ('Education and Society: Schools and National Socialism in the Region of Thuringia', 2012 at the Thüringsches Hauptstaatsarchiv Weimar), which was concerned, amongst other things, to show how strong support for the NSDAP in Thüringen led to an earlier takeover of power in that state than in the rest of Germany. In 1934, public institutions were instructed to remove symbols of the previous parliamentary regime. The exhibition displayed three letters from local headmasters confirming their compliance. One confirmed that he had ordered the speedy removal of the Weimar-era regional coat of arms, and another that the red and black strips of cloth from a pre-1933 flag had been kept for re-use and the now redundant yellow cloth set aside for use as cleaning rags. The third headmaster boasted: 'Fehlanzeige: Unsere Schulfahne haben wir am 22. April 33 zusammen mit einigen Schriften marxistischen Inhaltes auf dem Marktplatze öffentlich verbrannt' ('Nothing to report: we publicly burned the school's flag on the market square on 22nd April '33, together with some books containing Marxist content'.). Whatever our difficulties today in reading mentalities from objects, it is at least clear from these museum documents that doing things to objects was an important way of expressing attitudes. Evidently, a conventional repertoire of dishonouring actions towards objects existed that enabled Germans to express their contempt for the old order.

An example in which a long verbal discussion of objects was combined with an exhibited object to explore mentalities could be seen at the exhibition 'Kahn & Arnold'.[31] The main part of this modest exhibition, created by a textile museum to remember and honour the families of two Augsburg textile entrepreneurs, showed objects owned by the families before the Holocaust and objects taken into exile or acquired in

[31] 'Kahn & Arnold. Aufstieg, Verfolgung und Emigration zweier Augsburger Unternehmerfamilien im 20. Jahrhundert' ('Kahn & Arnold: The Rise, Persecution, and Emigration of two Families of Entrepreneurs from Augsburg in the 20th Century', 2017 at the Staatliches Textil- und Industriemuseum, Augsburg).

exile. The final module of the exhibition was an audio station at which one could listen to actors reading from the files of one family's restitution case after 1945. The case involved a Horch limousine which had been bought from the family by the head of the Gestapo for less than its market value and sold on for his personal profit. The men who gave sworn affidavits after the War remembered a good deal of material detail even if they had forgotten the substantive points. While they had no recollection of the Gestapo chief driving the car around Augsburg, they remembered exactly the procedures that applied when, in the course of a 'Judenaktion' in 1938, Jews were forbidden from driving cars and had to cede them to the Gestapo. The more valuable cars were kept under cover in the police garage, not left out in the rain, they remembered; cars with a certain engine capacity had to be reported to Berlin, as some were requisitioned by the ministries. A police driver remembered going back to the owner's house to pick up the custom-made luggage and carpets that fitted in the Horch. The legal language in these exchanges was dry as a bone and the whole audio file a patience-sapping eighteen minutes long, so that it is difficult to imagine that any visitor would listen to it all, were it not that, as one sat on the seat provided, one looked across the main hall of the museum at a spectacular gleaming 1930s motor car, which the exhibition-makers had manoeuvred into place between the vitrines of textiles and dresses.

By its presence, the car conjured up emotions that were being carefully suppressed in the legal documents.[32] None of the men mentioned the car's gleaming chrome, the deep reflections in its paintwork, the soft leather of its hood and seats or the sweep of its wheel arches. Without the car in the room, their protestations that taking away Jewish cars was a matter of following tedious official routine might almost have seemed plausible; with the car in sight as one listened to them, their covetousness rose like a spectre. The material fact of the car transported the exhibition visitor back beyond the testimony to 1938, when the car was there in Augsburg, shining brightly, promising luxury, status and good taste, and within the Gestapo chief's grasp. An exhibition-maker once told me that she disliked the DHM's habit of showing 'Beeindruckungsdinge' ('objects designed to impress'), particularly cars from its extensive

[32] The exhibition had no catalogue, but the car can be viewed in the advertising video at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kHpoDPYzi8w [accessed 29 May 2018].

collection. Here, though, the car's capacity to impress (and I write as someone with no interest in cars but who was thoroughly seduced by this one) was precisely the effect required to help the visitor travel back to the past and empathize with the material desire that helped drive the 'Aryanization' process.[33]

It remains the case that exhibition-makers rarely find objects extant that can, without unnecessary simplification, compress complex discursive evidence of mentalities—of the personal dispositions, learned behaviours, reward-seeking and moral codes that made persecution and genocide possible—into a single piece of material culture. One response to this challenge has been to display photograph albums. Whereas individual photographs are generally used as documentary evidence of events or as illustration, photograph albums are an object that was made, kept and used to communicate a version of the recent past to others. Once again, the perceived failings of the first Wehrmacht Exhibition, which used single, decontextualized photographs too loosely, led to changes in practice. The exhibition *Fotofeldpost. Geknipste Kriegserlebnisse 1939–1945* ('Photos from the Front: Snaps of War Experiences, 1939–1945', 2000 at the Deutsch-Russisches Museum) made a point of showing whole photograph albums as evidence of social practices of self-presentation and memory formation; others have followed suit. Though most such albums relate to war experiences (and are considered in Sect. 3.5), private photograph albums from 'Kraft durch Freude' holidays show two related rewards offered by National Socialism: the leisure activities that form the motif of the images; and the affirmative personal and family narrative represented by the album.[34] A photograph album at 'Volk – Heimat – Dorf' documented a man's time in the Reichsarbeitsdienst. The man's enjoyment of his deployment was expressed as much in a hand-drawn cartoon of a Nazi trumpeter sounding a fanfare as in his collation of the photographs. An album shown at 'Ordnung und Vernichtung. Die Polizei im NS-Staat' ('Order and Annihilation: the Police and the Nazi Regime') when it visited Nienburg was captioned as

[33]Walking over to the car after listening to the audio file, it became clear that this was not, in fact, the disputed Horch (which had, of course, been sold on) but another family car in which a family member escaped to Britain. Yet that substitution made no difference to the mesmerizing effect of the car's presence during the audio story, an example of how sound and object can work together.

[34]Shown, for instance, at 'Glanz und Grauen' and at the Dokumentationszentrum Prora.

belonging to a policeman who served at the KZ Moringen. While individual photographs on the opened pages of the album acted as documentary evidence of police involvement in this early concentration camp in the 1930s, the man's careful compilation of selected motifs (groups of colleagues, a radio communications training session) spoke also of his pride at being integrated into a professional work team. This kind of display is still, of course, a long way short of scholarly investigations into the motivations and room for manoeuvre of policemen who played a role in the Holocaust, but the shift towards showing whole photograph albums in vitrines is a clear attempt to shift the focus to the 'frames of reference' of social roles and ties.

Occasionally, it is the caption recorded on the original photograph rather than the photographic image that is the display object. At the Deutsch-Russisches Museum, the transition to an exhibition room about German occupation is marked by a large photographic reproduction, showing a woman wading through a river. In the vitrine alongside it, alone and given plenty of space, the back of the original photograph is on display (with a mirror behind to confirm that it belongs to the image). The caption reads 'Die Minenprobe' ('Testing for Mines').[35] Whatever the man who wrote the words thought of what he was doing on the Eastern Front (and for all we know he may have been sceptical of National Socialism), his choice of an abstract noun denoting a military process suggests that at this instant he focused on the means to secure the soldiers' safe passage and not on the woman's fear of death in a situation of extreme powerlessness, nor on the legal issues surrounding the military exploitation of civilians.

This caption is evidence of a second response to the dearth of objects that can represent the complexity of mentalities: making language into an object. By this, I mean something other than the display of text meant to be read continuously, which is the norm at exhibitions, and something other than the pasting of relevant quotations onto walls, which has become quite conventional. Rather, I mean that exhibition-makers

[35]The catalogue shows the image in question, and the museum's caption, but not the arrangement in the vitrine, in which the photographer's caption is the object. Deutsch-Russisches Museum Berlin-Karlshorst (ed.), *Deutsch-Russisches Museum Berlin-Karlshorst. Katalog zur Dauerausstellung* (Berlin: Deutsch-Russisches Museum Berlin-Karlshorst, 2014), pp. 76–78.

isolate fragments of language in order to invite the same kind of contemplation and reflection accorded to three-dimensional objects. This happens most literally at the Deutsch-Russisches Museum, which lays out cardboard-block words in its first display case (an example I examine in Sect. 4.1). More often, however, fragments of text are isolated on display surfaces or on historical documents, as a series of examples will demonstrate.

The Erinnerungsort Topf & Söhne in Erfurt, opened in 2011, is located in the former administration building of the factory that built crematorium ovens for Auschwitz-Birkenau, which means that the building is its prime exhibit. Accordingly (though very unusually), the exterior of the building is used as a display space for a fragment of language. Wrapped around two sides of the building at third-floor level (at a height where it can be seen from passing trains), painted lettering spells out the phrase 'Stets gern für Sie beschäftigt, …', a letter-writing cliché akin to 'Always glad to be of service'. This rather gnomic statement is repeated on a board at street level, where we learn that it was the closing formula in the firm's response to a request from Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The Topf & Söhne museum is unusual in putting mentalities front and centre of its displays. It invites reflection on what motivated the firm's involvement with the National Socialist regime and generalizes from this to other firms, since Topf & Söhne was, as museum texts repeat, 'ein ganz normales deutsches Unternehmen' ('a thoroughly ordinary German firm'). The exhibition texts stress that Topf & Söhne was obliged neither to do business with the SS nor to improve the efficiency of the crematoria, even if the SS was a more formidable customer than some. The letter from which the mural quotation is taken expresses this ambiguity: the building office at Auschwitz-Birkenau telegrammed Topf & Söhne to inform the company that engineer Prüfer's presence was 'unbedingt erforderlich' ('absolutely necessary') and ended with the imperious instruction 'rückdrahtet Zustimmung' ('wire back agreement'). Two of Topf & Söhne's managers replied by letter—not by return telegram—that they were happy to send Prüfer 'des öfteren' (often). This makes the closing formula 'Stets gern für Sie beschäftigt' insincere in its immediate use and yet honest about the desire to continue the commercial relationship. Texts in the main exhibition space conclude that, since compulsion played no role, the company appeared to be motivated only by the personal ambition of some of its employees and by an unthinking acceptance that the state had the right to kill.

Such 'room for manoeuvre' narratives are important in German memory work because they are more challenging than the idea of a populace kept in check by fear.[36] As the first exhibit that the visitor encounters, the phrase on the exterior wall of the Erinnerungsort therefore represents an interesting attempt to draw the visitor into unusually demanding engagements with questions of historical mentality.

The isolation and display of handwritten 'telltales' on bureaucratic documents represents another way in which language takes on the features of an object in the exhibition space. Even though all typewritten text is produced by hand and therefore by definition the product of human decisions and actions, both pro formas and typewritten text are associated with automatized processes for which no one person is responsible. Generally, the typist is assumed to be mediating the instructions of others, and typed documents are thus, by and large, made to stand in exhibitions for Nazi policy and practice in general. However, handmade alterations and annotations, like the handmade objects discussed above, speak of the individual will, energy and resolve that was required to carry out Nazi policy, of the repetitive labour necessary to keep the processes of discrimination in motion. The exhibition 'InventArisiert. Enteignung von Möbeln aus jüdischem Besitz' ('Inventarized, Aryanized: The Confiscation of Jewish-Owned Furniture', 2000 at the Hofmobiliendepot in Vienna), which is discussed further below, displayed and analysed a handwritten remark 'Judenmöbel. Erledigt' ('Furniture of Jews. Dealt With'). The neatly written words record a bodily trace of knowledge, action and co-operation and suggest, at the very least, that the theft of Jewish property was sufficiently unsurprising to be assimilated into the normal

[36] Pól Ó Dochartaigh and Christiane Schönfeld (eds), *Representing the 'Good German' in Literature and Culture After 1945: Altruism and Moral Ambiguity* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2013), pp. 4–7. For Ó Dochartaigh and Schönfeld, so-called 'good Germans' (the rare resisters among the majority) challenge the self-image of post-war Germans because they are 'ordinary people who debunk the myth of paralysis' (p. 7). The example of Topf & Söhne shows that historical figures do not even need to have been 'good' to serve that role, just not cowed.

institutional routine.[37] In its previous permanent exhibition (2001–2017), the Jüdisches Museum Berlin showed a moment of ambivalent resistance captured in such a telltale: a guard at an SA concentration camp, on admitting his former doctor, wrote 'Nicht mißhandeln' ('Do not maltreat') on the typewritten admission docket. This small object was accorded a vitrine of its own.[38]

The exhibition 'Anständig gehandelt. Widerstand und Volksgemeinschaft 1933–1945' ('Decent Behaviour: Resistance and the Racial Community, 1933–1945', 2012 at the Haus der Geschichte Baden-Württemberg) showed a good many objects, but the sight visitors saw when they arrived and left was an oversized screen (about three metres by four) onto which abstract words were projected in sequence. The words included: 'Gewissen', 'Verantwortung', 'Schande', 'Schuld', 'Anstand', 'Treue', 'Ehre', 'Pflicht' and 'Kameradschaft' ('conscience', 'responsibility', 'disgrace', 'guilt', 'decency', 'loyalty', 'honour', 'duty' and 'comradeship'). The wall had no caption, but its size, together with the appearance and disappearance of the words as a projector faded them in and out, meant that the visitor was invited to reflect on these words as if they were as much an exhibit as the colourful tin drum that appeared nearby in the first vitrine. Though 'Gewissen' is a word now readily associated with resistance, the words that were on display cannot be divided simplistically between the resisters and the unresisting masses, since both groups may have felt they were

[37] In his essay in the catalogue, Herbert Posch is cautious about what can and cannot be read out of the available evidence in terms of individual motivations, but nevertheless sees this telltale as significant. Herbert Posch, 'InventArisiert. Raub und Verwertung—"arisierte" Wohnungseinrichtungen im Mobiliendepot', in *InventArisiert. Enteignung von Möbeln aus jüdischem Besitz*, ed. by Ilsebill Barta-Fliedl and Herbert Posch (Vienna: Turia and Kant, 2000), pp. 10–43.

[38] Exhibitions about the role of librarians in handling stolen books during the National Socialist era may sound trivial. However, library books are the object of various shorthand systems of classification and, precisely because such marks are isolated from the white noise of continuous text, they can stand effectively for the willingness of working people to do the job of the regime. See, for instance, Cordula Reuß (ed.), *NS-Raubgut in der Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig* (Leipzig: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, 2011), which shows how the stamps of dissolved libraries—of freemasons, trade unions and so on—were dutifully crossed out (pp. 48, 67, 77, 79). Even if the theme of such exhibitions is generally provenance, rather than mentalities, articles in their catalogues suggest that the exhibition-makers are interested in understanding the complicity of employees, and images from the vitrines indicate that these stamps and scribbles are put prominently on show.

motivated by 'Anstand', 'Treue', 'Ehre', 'Pflicht' and 'Kameradschaft'. 'Schande', though readily applicable to the actions of the regime, was, in the 1930s, applied by supporters of the regime to the Treaty of Versailles. Aleida Assmann has argued that majority Germans experienced 'Schande' after 1945 as an imposition of moral humiliation by the Allies and therefore rejected it.[39] The visitor was therefore invited to consider how individuals construct their values in relation to others and how they may have justified their passive or active support for the regime by building a positive self-image.

Several methods for isolating language as an exhibit were on show when the Austrian exhibition 'Sex-Zwangsarbeit in NS-Konzentrationslagern' ('Sexual Forced Labour in Nazi Concentration Camps') was acquired by the Mahn- und Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück in 2015. The memorial site worked with a group of art students to reconfigure the exhibition, about women forced to serve their male fellow inmates as prostitutes. The students covered a wall with single words from inmate vocabulary and Nazi vocabulary (Fig. 3.3), including 'Schlampe', 'Freiwillge' and 'Asozial' ('tart', 'volunteer' and 'asocial'). Together, the words represented the system of values in which the women were trapped—primarily, of course, by the Nazis but in part also by the attitudes of the inmates. A glossary set out in a lever-arch file explained the historical context for some of the words no longer in use. Elsewhere, an audio file played actors' voices reading transcripts from a post-war trial in which communists squabbled over who had used prostitutes (considered to be bad communist form), without hearing testimony from the women. Finally, a ring-binder contained short quotations. According to the caption, they had been deliberately decontextualized so that the visitor could read them associatively and most appeared to be quotations from male inmates commenting on the women prostitutes or other inmates' use of them. While historians of mentalities would baulk at the use of isolated snippets of discourse, the binder invited the visitor to reflect that the web in which the prostitutes were caught was constructed of mentalities and their linguistic expression, including trivialization of their situation ('die emsigen Frauen' / 'the industrious women'), contempt

[39] Aleida Assmann and Ute Frevert, *Geschichtsvergessenheit. Geschichtsversessenheit. Vom Umgang mit deutschen Vergangenheiten nach 1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1999), pp. 118–28.

Fig. 3.3 Display of words at the exhibition 'Sex-Zwangsarbeit in NS-Konzentrationslagern', Mahn- und Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück, 2007. Photograph: Chloe Paver

('der Schrott', 'Weibspersonen, die ihr Leben in der Gosse verbracht hatten' / 'dross', 'loose women who had spent their life in the gutter'), imputations of dirt, greed or fakery and curious national inflections of misogyny (no Luxembourg woman ever became a prostitute, said one man). Today, the permanent exhibition at Ravensbrück makes use of some of this material, notably the transcripts of the communist trials, but the

focus is shifted to the women, their suffering, agency and witnessing. In place of the wall of words and the binder of quotations is an installation on lenticular plastic by Arnold Dreyblatt, with snippets of text from SS sources appearing and disappearing as one looks at the boards from different angles. While this is appropriate for a site that honours the victims it is less challenging than the earlier, fuller exploration of the flawed mentalities of some male inmates.[40]

The many exhibitions on 'Aryanization', the state-sponsored theft of Jewish property and possessions in the 1930s, also rely to a degree on language as object, particularly in the form of lists of stolen property, usually either inventories or auction records.[41] The former are used to represent bureaucratic complicity in the theft and the latter the rewards available to the majority if they accepted the exclusion of Jews. Mostly, objects disappeared into non-Jewish households and if they are shown now the stress is on their post-1945 life phase (the time during which they were not willingly returned to their owners), as Sect. 5.3 will show. Very occasionally, objects were bought at auction by non-Jewish friends and relatives and are therefore available to be shown.[42] The exhibition 'Legalisierter Raub. Der Fiskus und die Ausplünderung der Juden in Hessen 1933–1945' ('Legalized Theft: The Tax Office and the Looting of the Jews of Hessen, 1933–1945') showed a book of sheet music, one of the few items that a non-Jewish woman was able to buy back from her Jewish friend's shipping crate of belongings, which was confiscated in Hamburg after her emigration. Extracts from the woman's diary complicated the museum visitor's likely condemnation of the auction-goers.

[40] Dreyblatt's Ravensbrück work is not especially complex, perhaps because it exposes and critiques the perpetrator perspective in ways that align straightforwardly with the museum's own work, but it should be understood in the context of his much more interesting work on memory and the archive elsewhere. See, for instance, Astrid Schmetterling, 'Archival Obsessions: Arnold Dreyblatt's Memory Work', *Art Journal*, 66.4 (2007), 70–83.

[41] Shown, for instance, at '"Arisierung" in Leipzig. Verdrängt. Beraubt. Ermordet' ('"Aryanization" in Leipzig: Excluded, Robbed, Murdered', 2007 at the Stadtgeschichtliches Museum Leipzig) and at 'Entrechtet. Entwürdigt. Beraubt'.

[42] For instance, a chess table at 'Nationalsozialismus in Freiburg'. Peter Kalchthaler, Robert Neisen, and Tilmann von Stockhausen (eds), *Nationalsozialismus in Freiburg* (Petersberg: Imhof, 2016), pp. 150–51, 269.

For her, the buyers are 'durchaus nicht kalte Aasgeier' ('not cold vultures at all') but only taking the opportunity to acquire goods that are in short supply. The surrounding context of the exhibition was more condemnatory.

The 2000 exhibition 'InventArisiert', mentioned above in connection with its bureaucratic telltale 'Judenmöbel. Erledigt', and which I know from its catalogue and from discussions with the exhibition-makers, united some of the techniques and issues discussed so far and therefore warrants a lengthier discussion. A play on words between 'inventarized' and 'Arynanized' allowed the punning title 'InventArisiert'. The 'Aryanized' objects had been stolen from eight Viennese apartments and absorbed into the collections of the Austrian state furniture store and museum, the Hofmobiliendepot. Having discovered that the museum had no moral right to the objects, and concerned to restitute them to their former owners or their heirs as soon as was practically possible, the exhibition-makers chose not to display the furniture. They reflected that to display an object bodily—even in order to confess that the institution has no right to it—is to assert ownership over it.[43] Instead, the museum commissioned a photographic artist, Arno Gisinger, to take 'portraits' of each of the stolen objects and substituted the photographs for the objects in the exhibition space. Three pieces of information were overprinted on each photograph: the object's inventory number; a representative example of the object's fate after its acquisition by the museum; and its status in the year 2000. Where the objects were no longer in the museum's collection—because they had been sold, lent out and not returned, or lost track of—the photographer took a picture of the blank floor and wall and subsequently printed the name of the object over the image.

Gisinger's photographic portraits, which may have drawn on Salmon's 1995 *Asservate* project for inspiration, had deliberately contradictory effects. On the one hand, they treated the objects—whether present in three dimensions or replaced by words—with the kind of individualizing respect not accorded to their owners by the Nazis (a display practice discussed also in Sect. 3.4). Even if an object was part of a set, it was photographed on its own, while shifts in the 'horizon' (where the

[43] Ilsebill Barta-Fliedl and Herbert Posch, 'Vorwort', in *InventArisiert*, ed. by Barta-Fliedl and Posch, pp. 8–9 (p. 9).

floor met the wall) showed that a separate empty photograph was taken for each missing object. At the same time, the photographs invoked the bureaucratic discourse and utilitarian practices of Nazism, which violently stripped each object from its living context of personal use, experience and emotion within a family home and put it at the museum's disposal, to be redistributed as it saw fit. 'Verwertung' and 'verwertbar' ('exploitation', 'available for exploitation') are key words in the catalogue essays.[44] The separation of the objects from one another evoked this readiness for transportation and reallocation, while the scuffed floor on which the objects sat invoked the museum as institution. In reality, as a photograph in the catalogue shows, a museum depot is characterized by stacking and overlapping, suggesting that Gisinger's photographs stood for the moment of inventarizing rather than the subsequent storage.[45] In a few cases, the exhibition-makers were able to show images of the missing domestic context, thanks to family photographs, which were displayed in desk vitrines alongside the photograph installation. But even where these were not available, the sparseness of the photographs evoke the original context in the negative: the framed oil paintings and watercolours, standing on the dirty floor, demand visually to be hung above a mantelpiece; cabinets want to be filled with ornaments; and a mirror wants to reflect more than the black floor.[46]

The words for the missing objects imitated the bureaucracy of the inventory list and evoked a double absence: the apartment emptied by the Gestapo and the objects replaced by words because they had since been destroyed or lost. Yet, these word lists were perhaps more powerful than the domestic photographs in evoking the missing setting, grouping themselves together into little domestic scenes ('Lehnsessel', 'Fauteuil', 'Spieltisch', 'Tisch' / 'chaise longue', 'armchair', 'table',

[44] Posch, 'Inventarisiert'.

[45] Barta-Fliedl and Posch, p. 23.

[46] The exhibition 'Spurensuche. Provenienzforschung in Bamberg' ('Searching for Traces: Provenance Research', 2017 at the Historisches Museum Bamberg) played with this idea of suggestive absences in a slightly different way. In the ante-room to the exhibition, quotations showing local people desperate to get their hands on 'Aryanized' items (and resentful that the authorities were taking the best pieces) were framed in a faux-gilt picture frame. Beside the frame was a mocked-up mantelpiece. A paler paint had been used on the wall to create shadows, as if an ormolu clock, two cameo frames and a larger painting had been removed from the room.

'card table'), but then sometimes dissolving back into a bureaucratic list when the words become repetitive or disconnected: ('Tisch', 'Tisch', 'Tischchen', 'Tischchen', 'Tischchen', 'Kasten' / 'table', 'table', 'side table', 'side table', 'side table', 'chest'). Indeed, sometimes the sequences of words flickered between comfort and bureaucratic ruthlessness. The sequence 'Federpolster', 'Federpolster', 'Federpolster', 'Rosshaarpolster', 'Plumeau', 'Plumeau', 'Daunendecke' ('feather pillow', 'feather pillow', 'feather pillow', 'horsehair pillow', 'eiderdown', 'eiderdown', 'quilt') envelops an absent human body in warmth even as it evokes the Gestapo list-maker and the rigorously correct museum inventorizer. Ernst van Alphen has written about the problematic nature of name lists of victims, which have the potential to re-individualize the victims but which also re-enact the Nazi mania for listing the victims in order to exploit and murder them with maximum efficiency.[47] When they use inventories and auction lists of 'Aryanized' objects, exhibition-makers sometimes want to keep both those aspects in view.

This section has considered how Dudley's 'object-information package' functions when exhibitions are attempting to understand how the non-persecuted majority thought and felt. Conventional objects can struggle to speak reliably of emotions and mentalities without the help of extensive text. Paradoxically, it can sometimes be more fruitful to turn small doses of text from the years 1933–45 into objects, by isolating them from their discursive contexts and offering them for contemplation. The 2016 exhibition 'Nationalsozialismus in Freiburg', which is discussed in more detail in Sect. 5.2, used the large-font heading 'Emotionen' for a sub-chapter. The very fact that this heading was used for a text that was more generally about the workings of propaganda shows that a history of emotions approach is taken seriously by today's exhibition-makers. At the same time, talking about emotions or mentalities in the vicinity of objects is not quite the same as showing objects that speak of emotions and mentalities, and that, as we have seen, proves a challenge. As later chapters will show, other elements of the Nazi past, including suffering and memory, prove more amenable to material display.

[47] Ernst van Alphen, 'List Mania in Holocaust Commemoration', in *Revisiting Holocaust Representation in the Post-Witness Era*, ed. by Diana I. Popescu and Tanja Schult (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 11–27.

3.3 Hitler Busts and Nazi Symbols

In a volume of essays on the representation of twentieth-century history in Austrian regional *Landesmuseen*, Monika Sommer examines a temporary exhibition about Hitler's plans for the city of Linz. This was shown by the Oberösterreichisches Landesmuseum during Linz's tenure of the title European Capital of Culture in 2009.[48] Sommer homes in on a tableau of objects relating to a visit that Hitler made to the Landesmuseum in 1938: a visitor's book signed by Hitler, the desk at which he sat briefly to sign it, and a Hitler bust, placed on the floor to dishonour it. Sommer cites a journalist who, unusually among reviewers of the exhibition, asked what this display meant for museum collections: 'Am Boden ein Hitlerkopf, der die Frage aufwirft, was mit belasteten Denkmälern geschehen soll. Zerstören? Verstecken? Bezeichnen? Erklären?' ('On the floor, a Hitler bust, which raises the question of what one ought to do with tainted historical objects. Destroy them? Hide them? Label them? Explain them?').[49] For her part, Sommer is more worried about the honour accorded to the desk by a museum that chose to preserve it for its tenuous connection with Hitler and has still not thrown it out. Regretting that the museum invites its visitors to respond conventionally to the desk as document, she adds her own questions to those of the journalist:

> Tatsächlich rühren diese Fragen an grundsätzliche Aufgaben der Institution Museum, Bewahren und Ausstellen: Muss es einen Schreibtisch in den Depots einlagern, der nur aufgrund der Tatsache musealisiert wurde, dass Adolf Hitler ihn für wenige Momente nutzte? Wie kann einem Objekt, dessen Existenz im Museum sich der Anbiederung an das NS-Terrorsystem verdankt, wie der in Linz ausgestellte Schreibtisch, seine museale Aura, die unweigerlich nobilitiert, genommen werden? Ist nicht die Karteikarte, die die Aufnahme des Artefakts dokumentiert, das eigentlich historisch wichtige Objekt?[50]

[48] Monika Sommer, 'Experiment und Leerstelle. Zur Musealisierung der Zeitgeschichte in den österreichischen Landesmuseen', in *Zeitgeschichte Ausstellen in Österreich. Museen—Gedenkstätten—Ausstellungen*, ed. by Dirk Rupnow and Heidemarie Uhl (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar: Böhlau, 2011), pp. 313–35. The exhibition was: '"Kulturhauptstadt des Führers". Kunst und Nationalsozialismus in Linz und Oberösterreich' ('"The Führer's City of Culture": Art and National Socialism in Linz and Upper Austria', 2009 at the Oberösterreichisches Landesmuseum).

[49] Bernhard Lichtenberger, cited by Sommer, p. 334.

[50] Sommer, p. 334.

> (These questions touch on fundamental tasks of the institution 'museum', namely to conserve and to display. Is it obliged to keep in its depot a desk that was only accessioned into the museum because Adolf Hitler used it for a few seconds? Given that the desk in Linz owes its presence in the museum to a craven desire to please the National Socialist terror regime, how can the museum deprive it of its aura as a museum object, which undoubtedly ennobles it? Surely the index card which documents the accession of the artefact to the museum collection is the really important historical document?)

Simply by being extant in the museum, Sommer argues, the desk acquires an ennobling 'museale Aura', equivalent to Williams's 'enlargement of consequence'. In suggesting that the inventory file card would be a more appropriate exhibit, Sommer is asking for the metonymic figuration to be switched from one phase in the object life cycle (its encounter with Hitler) to two others: the weeks that followed, when the museum used its collection practices to immortalize its connection with Hitler; and the seven decades since then, during which the museum did nothing to reverse that decision. The shift in message that Sommer advocates (but does not spell out) would be slight but significant, from the message 'Your regional museum was once so infatuated by Hitler that it cherished the desk at which he signed the visitor's book, as if his bodily presence were miraculous. We now recognise the iniquity of placing art in the service of a murderous regime, which is why we've put the Hitler bust on the floor' to the message: 'Your regional museum was once so infatuated by Hitler that it not only cherished his signature but wasted museum resources on preserving, for seventy years, both the desk he sat at and the knowledge of what it was used for. We now see the desk as worthless but consider it important to recognise how museum functionaries can become politically indoctrinated and to admit how long it took us to come to that realization'. Just such evocations of the '70 years' will be discussed in Chapter 5. Though the objects here are from the majority culture, the display that Sommer envisages is similar to that of 'InventArisiert' in its refusal to endorse questionable objects by placing them in the display space.

Sommer does not answer her many rhetorical questions, but regrets that Austrian museums have still not found a satisfactory means of displaying National Socialist objects critically. For Axel Drecoll, too, all exhibition-makers who present majority experience to visitors must walk a

narrow line between presenting the Nazis' methods of enticing the populace and re-enacting those same methods or, put another way, between 'Objektzentrierung und Auratisierung' ('placing the object centre-stage and according it an aura').[51] In practice, exhibition-makers have found diverse ways of counteracting the 'museale Aura' of Nazi objects and the 'ennobling' effect of the museum space. Admittedly, some methods are no more sophisticated than the Hitler bust on the floor that Sommer rightly views as rather shallow. I have seen objects related to the regime partially obscured or dimly lit; laid horizontal instead of upright; turned to reveal their less photogenic reverse sides or undersides; and taken off their pedestals and placed on the floor, as in Sommer's example.[52] I have seen Hitler's face variously pixelated, pasted over, relegated to a corner and placed in a darkened vitrine.[53] Swastikas are routinely obscured or

[51] Axel Drecoll, 'NS-Volksgemeinschaft ausstellen. Zur Reinszenierung einer Schreckensvision mit Verheißungskraft', in *Die NS-Volksgemeinschaft. Zeitgenössische Verheißung, analytisches Konzept und ein Schlüssel zum historischen Lernen?*, ed. by Uwe Danker and Astrid Schwabe (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2017), pp. 105–22 (p. 107).

[52] At the exhibition 'Hitler und die Deutschen', Nazi memorabilia was shown in a darkened vitrine; Sect. 5.1 gives examples of items laid on their side in an attic; at the Stadtmuseum München, uniform badges are turned upside down to reveal their manufacturers' labels; at the DB Museum, a bust of the Reichsbahn director under National Socialism has been taken from its plinth in the stairwell and placed on the floor of a vitrine, with an empty plinth behind it. An eagle set conventionally on a plinth heightens the humiliation.

[53] At 'Graben für Germanien. Archäologie unterm Hakenkreuz' ('Digging for Germania: Archaeology Under the Swastika', 2013 at the Focke-Museum), monochrome images of Hitler and other Nazi officials were pixelated but still identifiable. On a mocked-up *Litfasssäule* (advertising column) at 'Linz im Nationalsozialismus. Ideologie und Realität' ('Linz under National Socialism: Ideology and Reality', 2008 at the Wissensturm Linz), posters were overlapped so that Hitler's head was obscured while the familiar uniformed pose, with a hand on one hip, remained visible. At the Erinnerungs- und Gedenkstätte Wewelsburg 1933–1945, a Hitler bust is placed with its back to the side of the vitrine, crowded on all sides by other objects and without spotlighting. At 'Was ist Deutsch?' ('What is German?', 2006 at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum), a bust of Hitler was placed inside a darkened vitrine; the visitor had to press a switch to illuminate it. At 'Nationalsozialismus in Freiburg' ('National Socialism in Freiburg', 2016 at the Augustinermuseum, Freiburg) a Hitler bust was placed in a corner between more compelling objects, on a low plinth below eye height. (By contrast, in the catalogue the same bust is given almost a full page and is lit and photographed as an art object would be (Kalchtaler et al., pp. 130–31).)

modified.[54] Partly hiding the swastika probably works no less efficiently today for the fact that the Nazis did the same: sometimes propaganda posters showed only part of the swastika, with the rest exceeding the frame or disappearing behind a figure. Leaving the 1930s viewer to complete the state symbol presumably confirmed their comfortable familiarity with it; today it shows exhibition-makers' discomfort. At the NS-Dokumentation Vogelsang, a swastika flag has been folded up so carefully in its small vitrine that while its three colours and roundel are visible, not even the telltale ends of the hooked cross are on show. While I make no great intellectual claims for this variation on a theme, it seems to push the object right up to a boundary beyond which it will no longer be itself, to place it in a state in which the part is only just still able to represent the whole.

This section focuses particularly on busts and other representations of Hitler and his henchmen. These are a challenge to museums because they represent the Nazis' own self-aggrandizement, meaning that any display that does not counter that self-evaluation would seem to endorse it. To answer the rhetorical question posed by the journalist cited by Sommer, a museum cannot ceremonially smash or otherwise damage busts because, even if their art value is nil, their historical value is still appreciable, and destroying them in one context would make them unusable in any other, traducing the museum's mission to archive objects in perpetuity. What comes to exhibition-makers' aid is the fact that a particularly strict set of conventions pertains to the normal, that is respectful, display of busts, and it is a simple matter to subvert those conventions, as Sommer's opening example shows. In conventional display,

[54]The Gedenkstätte Buchenwald, for instance, shows a swastika flag crudely scrunched up. At 'Linz im Nationalsozialismus', the overlapping posters partially obscured swastikas. The exhibition 'Wie wir in Reih' und Glied marschieren lernten. Schule im Nationalsozialismus' ('How We Learned to March in Rank and File: School Under National Socialism', 2012 at the Schulmuseum Bergisch Gladbach) deconstructed Nazi flags in various ways, including replacing the swastika in the roundel with a photograph of schoolchildren parading before the Town Hall. Swastikas were truncated or reconfigured in the display architecture of 'Glanz und Grauen' and 'Who Was a Nazi? Entnazifizierung in Deutschland nach 1945' ('Who Was a Nazi? Denazification in Germany after 1945', 2016 at the AlliiertenMuseum). For an image of a similar effect see Norbert Winding, Robert Lindner, and Robert Hoffmann, 'Geschichtsaufarbeitung als Ausstellung. Das Haus der Natur 1924–1976—die Ära Tratz', *Neues Museum*, 14.4 (October 2014), 62–67 (p. 66).

busts are set with the head upright, in imitation of the human body. Typically, they are set against a wall, facing forward. The face of the person to be honoured is given maximum visibility, with blank space around it and no other objects touching it. Busts are to be observed but never touched and never used in any way. Generally, a bust is shown singly, though it may be shown in a row of busts or images of other people of equal status. A plinth or other shelf gives the bust height, normally above the average eye height.[55]

Generally speaking, then, exhibition-makers have only to lie a Hitler bust on its back, turn it to the wall, sit it on the floor, handle it or put it in a box with other objects, to combat its self-honouring tendencies. Here, I analyse a few more interesting examples; more will be discussed in Sect. 4.2, which deals with the vandalism and destruction of Nazi paraphernalia after 1945. The fact that the Deutsches Historisches Museum owns a bust of Hitler by sculptor Bernhard Bleeker may have led it to accord the object a relatively respectful position in its permanent exhibition. Although it is surrounded by contextual information about the cult of Hitler, which somewhat crowds it visually, it nevertheless sits on a plinth about a metre and a half from the ground, facing forwards with a wall behind it. Conversely, the fact that the Dokumentationszentrum Reichsparteitagsgelände owns a worthless brass bust of Hitler may have licensed it to treat the bust with disrespect. The bust sits on a plinth, but only about a metre off the ground and is mounted on a metal shaft. All busts are, of course, disembodied, but the convention of sitting them on a flat surface that evokes the continuation of the body below shoulder level hides this, whereas the shaft draws attention to it. The Nuremberg bust is also lit from below in such a way that the underside of the chin is more visible than the primary features of Hitler's face. The screws that hold it in place are clearly on show, and the particularly functional rear view—conventionally hidden against a wall—is on full show. There is nothing to stop the visitor touching the bust. Rather than drawing attention to itself, the bust draws the eye to the brighter photograph behind, a life-size image of a factory workshop, where similar busts are in mass

[55]This must be a particularly venerable convention since even Vitruvius, writing in the first century BC, insisted on it. 'Let the busts of ancestors with their ornaments be set up at a height corresponding to the width of the alae'. Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, Book VI, widely available online.

production. Three women are seen painting, polishing and wrapping the busts at the end of the production process, actions that are at odds with the conventions for bust display because they involve touching the body of the person to be honoured. In this way, the brass bust, already cheap and unimportant but in danger of being valorised by its museum context, is consciously 'cheapened' by its mode of display and by the reconnection with the earliest phase of its life cycle, before distribution ensured that each bust was displayed singly and removed from human contact. As a result, the same point made by the Deutsches Historisches Museum in its exhibition texts—that Hitler's image became a commodity—is here made physically and visually accessible to visitors. The bust is further cheapened by a collection of Hitler kitsch in a vitrine opposite. A motley collection of mass-produced and home-made Hitler tributes (including the marquetry Hitler head discussed in Sect. 3.2) is overlapped, stacked one against the other, to create a sense of jumble that the museum does not value.

A more conceptual appropriation of the bust form was on show at the exhibition 'Frau, Familie, Volk und Rasse. Die Reichsmütterschule Berlin-Wedding im NS-System' ('Women, Families, Nation, and Race: The National School for Mothers in the Wedding District of Berlin under the National Socialist Regime', 2013 at the Mitte Museum, Berlin). The exhibition showed two photographs of the dining room of the local 'Mütterschule'. At one end hung a reproduction of Dürer's 'Maria auf der Rasenbank, das Kind stillend' of 1503; at the other end was a bust of Hitler set on a plinth with a Nazi flag behind it. Thus, although Hitler was not the topic of the exhibition, he was one of two idols that the young women at the school had been invited to venerate. In the exhibition space, a reproduction of the Dürer engraving was juxtaposed with an approximation of a Hitler bust, not separated across a monumental space but contrasted directly with each other. A stylized swastika flag (its bottom half dissolving into drips of blood) completed the arrangement. The profanation of Dürer in this display (from today's point of view) served to highlight the Nazis' misappropriation of Germany's cultural traditions. The 'bust' of Hitler had been improvised from a generic glass head of the kind used in milliners' shops. This empty vessel, which depersonalized and cheapened the dictator's head, had been stuffed with pages from magazines and newspapers, scrunched up into balls. The scrunching had been sufficiently carefully carried out that Hitler's face appeared, incomplete but still recognisable, eight or nine

times around the surface of the head.[56] In this way, the exhibition-makers referenced but rejected Hitler's self-presentation. Given the topic of women's lives, it seems more likely that they were using the cheapening effect of mass media as a gesture of disrespect than that they were commenting on our modern-day saturation with Hitler's image, but that was also a possible reading.

When it stopped at Hundszell, visitors to the travelling exhibition 'Volk – Heimat – Dorf' (with its 'Sieg Heil' honey centrifuge) were greeted by a familiar image of Hitler with his hands on his hips, blown up to life size and seen along a vista through the centre of the exhibition (Fig. 3.4). Since vistas are conventionally used to draw positive attention to items of special worth, this was disconcerting, but as the visitor drew near, it became clear that Hitler was not being presented as he would want to be seen.

The Hitler vitrine was the centrepiece of a small section about the Nazis' conflicted attitude towards *Tracht*, which they both promoted and denigrated. The vitrine illustrated their Janus-faced attitudes because one side showed Hitler in lederhosen while the reverse showed *Tracht* of a type that Nazi ideologues denounced as 'unfarmerly' and 'degenerate' because it did not correspond to the Nazi bodily ideal and was too closely linked to Catholic festivals. At close quarters, one could see that in front of the life-size photographic portrait of Hitler in lederhosen stood a mannequin, comprising just a torso, itself dressed in lederhosen. Hitler's photographed head peeped above it, substituting for the dummy's missing head. The dummy's abdomen was naked and modelled in the usual muscled form. This constellation created several disjunctions. Unlike Putin, Hitler controlled his image in such a way that he was never photographed semi-naked; had he been, his abdomen would not have looked like this. The contrast between photographed body and body doll had the effect of derealizing the propaganda image. In addition, the authentic lederhosen from a local museum collection were worn and aged, realistic but hardly suitable for propaganda. The overall effect was to ridicule Hitler's flirtation with *Tracht*.

[56] A close-up of the milliner's glass head is available at the museum's website, but does not show the installation quite as I saw it. It shows a single image of Hitler unfolded inside the glass, whereas in the exhibition space the head was packed with many pieces of paper and Hitler's face appeared multiple times. http://mittemuseum.de/deutsch/ausstellung/vergangene-ausstellung/reichsmuetterschule-berlin-wedding-in-ns-system/reichsmuetterschule-berlin-wedding.html [accessed 29 May 2018].

Fig. 3.4 Mannequin dressed in lederhosen, with a photograph of Hitler behind, at the exhibition 'Volk – Heimat – Dorf', Bauerngerätemuseum Hundszell, 2017. Photograph: Chloe Paver

One final example of a bust of a senior Nazi confirms how aware exhibition-makers are of the valorizing effect of the bust form. The exhibition 'Entrechtet. Entwürdigt. Beraubt. "Arisierung" in Nürnberg und Fürth' ('Disenfranchized, Humiliated, Robbed: "Aryanization" in Nuremberg and Fürth', 2012 at the Dokumentationszentrum Reichsparteitagsgelände) showed a bust of local Nazi agitator Julius Streicher, who had personally supervised 'Aryanization' activities. This particular display module was entitled 'Zur Menschenführung ungeeignet' ('Unsuited to Leadership Responsibilities') that being the verdict

reached by a Nazi commission after Streicher was found to have encouraged unregulated 'Aryanization' in Franken. The bust lay on its back, face up, inside a table vitrine, so that the viewer looked down on it from above. Beneath the bust, evoking the idea of packing paper, was a slightly scrunched cover page of the *Fränkische Tageszeitung*, one of the newspapers Streicher owned. A caption explained that the bust was commissioned by a local artists' association in honour of a visit by Streicher, and a duplicate was destined for the offices of the *Fränkische Tageszeitung*. Streicher's fall from grace meant that it was never delivered. Because the bust remained in the possession of its artist, it was part of his *Nachlass* and was accessioned by the Dokumentationszentrum 'unausgepackt' ('in its still packed-up state'). By staging the bust as 'still packed up' (without undue concern for naturalism, since it would hardly have been packed up in a single page of the *Fränkische Tageszeitung*) the museum returned it to a particular phase in its life cycle, before accession to the collection. This allowed the exhibition-makers to evoke the moment of Streicher's political undoing, when his star fell and his bust became redundant, and, at the same time, to express the museum's current horror of Streicher by refusing to set his likeness upright at a conventional height, even though, having passed through the accession process, he is most likely stored upright on the depot shelf.[57]

Collecting these examples together runs the risk of giving an exaggerated sense of their importance. On the whole, exhibition-makers are likely either to avoid objects that might emit a National Socialist aura or to exhibit them in fairly straightforward ways. An exhibition that played too many tricks with objects would likely communicate its message poorly. Nor do I claim any special sophistication for these methods. A museum has only so many devices in its repertoire for singling out objects for special attention: raising, centring, facing forward, framing and spotlighting, for instance. Sommer expresses the same idea in terms of the physical museum props—'Rahmen, Sockel, Kordel und Vitrinen'

[57]A similar display of a bust on its back in packing paper was shown at '1945. Niederlage, Befreiung, Neuanfang' ('1945: Defeat, Liberation, New Beginnings'), 2015 at the DHM. The display drew attention to the point at which—as a direct consequence of Marshall Pétain's disgrace—his bust was withdrawn from public space and made redundant in its symbolic function. Deutsches Historisches Museum (ed.), *1945. Niederlage. Befreiung. Neuanfang. Zwölf Länder Europas nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2015), p. 236.

['frames, plinths, rope barriers, and glass cases']—that help create an aura of importance.[58] It follows that the mechanisms for devaluing objects are relatively crude inversions of these display conventions: decentering, piling up, turning backwards or upside-down, taking off plinths, removing from protective cases, etc. Even if the precedent of Fred Wilson's work with US museum collections gives these simple inversions a serious pedigree,[59] I do not claim any complex intellectual effects for them in the German and Austrian context. There, exhibition-makers are not trying to expose long-standing, unconscious biases in the museum but rather to prevent a widely hated but over-familiar figure from being passively and unreflectively consumed. At their best, such displays reflect on how the Nazis accorded themselves visual power and make thoughtful choices about which stage of an object's life cycle is to be invoked. This is all the more necessary since busts, though nothing like as ubiquitous as they were during the Nazi era, continue to function conventionally in Germany and Austria today. The only object on display in the main exhibition at the documentation centre Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand is a bust of Stauffenberg.

3.4 Material Economies and Sign Systems of the Camps

Concentration camps are often associated with damaged and degraded items: objects that indicate the poverty in which inmates were forced to live or objects that, having survived the camps, degraded during years or decades of neglect. Indeed, as this section will show, sometimes no clear distinction is drawn between those chronological phases so that the drabness caused by post-war neglect is allowed to stand for maltreatment and neglect before 1945. Camps were complex places, however, and this kind of object is not necessarily typical of museums at the former camps. Increasingly, gifts from survivors and their families, coupled with meticulous research, are allowing museum curators to piece together what

[58] Sommer, p. 334.

[59] Relevant installations are documented in: Maurice Berger (ed.), *Fred Wilson: Objects and Installations 1979–2000* (Baltimore: Centre for Art and Visual Culture, University of Maryland Baltimore County, 2001), esp. pp. 54, 74, 78–79, 80–81; and Jennifer A. González, *Subject to Display: Reframing Race in Contemporary Installation Art* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2008), pp. 65–119 (esp. p. 85 and, for busts and empty plinths, p. 84).

objects meant—what they did and what they signified—within the camp. At the same time, a key way of honouring the victims is to emphasize their creativity and inventiveness during their imprisonment, and this also broadens the range of objects on show.

I start, however, with those items from the camps that appear as particularly degraded, as several points can be made about their display. Having survived the time when the camps were in operation—when they were already used, sometimes by more than one owner, but not necessarily damaged—they have since undergone further material decay and damage. They may have been left behind in damp and cold storage spaces in the former camps; buried and later dug up; or discarded outside the camps during forced marches and left on uncultivated ground where there was no imperative to clear them away. In nearly all cases, in 1945 these objects were not considered museum items that should be conserved and stored according to museum standards. Today, they are important documents of the existence and suffering of people who were not allowed to leave conventional traces of their lives and deaths. In what follows I focus on these objects' openness to interpretation, the unspoken assumptions in their display and their sometimes exclusive use.

The Gedenkstätte Buchenwald has made extensive use of items that were buried in rubbish pits during the time of the operation of the camp. In particular, items from the so-called Halde II ('Rubbish Dump II') were excavated in an archaeological dig that began in 1996 and were incorporated into the permanent exhibition that was in place from 1995 to 2015 (the exhibition that replaced it is discussed later in this section). Certain categories of common object were displayed in series: shaving brushes whose bristles were worn away and whose metal handles were corroded and split; combs with teeth missing; and worn and rotted shoe soles. Dented and rusted pots and pans were piled up along the bottom of several vitrines, just above floor level, evoking a kind of dump even though each object had in reality been through the museum's conservation process.

Some of these serialized objects appeared with little contextualization, simply as documents of the existence of their owners. Others, which had been altered by inmates, either to improve the possibility of survival or to express individual feelings and thoughts, were spread out on shelves rather than piled up or overlapped and were linked to the notion of 'Selbstbehauptung' ('self-assertion'). The visitor was invited to read them as expressions of an agency that was especially admirable given the

conditions of the camp. One evocative example was a home-made set of playing cards. The suit symbols and royal images were just recognizable but had faded with time and the card from which they were cut was yellowed and dirtied with age and use. Some of the cards had been turned face down, revealing that the inmates had resourcefully repurposed Osram light-bulb packages. The offcuts from the Osram packaging were also piled up in the vitrine. In all other museum contexts, it is difficult to imagine what would be gained by showing the material that a maker cut away to make something else, especially to make something fairly rudimentary with no monetary value. Here, the offcuts evoked the will to make and, more specifically, the will to maintain humanity and a civil life through play, both extraordinary within the camp system.

In a separate display in the 1995–2015 exhibition at Buchenwald, a selection of items from the rubbish dump were laid out in a long table vitrine, with clear space between each (Fig. 3.5). Most were buttons, some still bright, many chipped, broken or bent; among the buttons were broken spectacles, false teeth and shaving brushes. By separating out objects that had previously been piled in a dump, the exhibition-makers countered the anonymized and dehumanizing treatment of the victims by the Nazis. Regardless of whether multiple items had in reality belonged to one person, each button became a life lived, respected in its individuality by receiving the same treatment (visibility, space) as a valuable object. At the same time, the visible signs of the objects' life phase as rubbish represented the Nazis' treatment of people as disposable, while the damage done to the objects served as a metaphor for the physical and psychological damage done to their owners. As with the other uncontextualized displays of damaged items (the combs, shaving brushes, etc.), this metaphor worked even though the two kinds of damage were mostly done in different contexts, with the damage to the objects often occurring after the inmates' deaths. In other words, while some of the shoe leathers on display may well have worn away on the death marches (and therefore be bodily connected to the physical assault on the inmates), combs, buttons and razors had mostly likely broken or rusted in the ground. Yet the visitor was unable—and not invited—to distinguish between objects damaged because inmates were being maltreated and objects damaged later, in the ground. Fragments of false tooth plates powerfully evoked their owners' murder because, being indispensable to the body's functioning, they would not have been relinquished willingly, but while their breakage evoked metaphorically what

Fig. 3.5 Part of a long table vitrine displaying objects dug up from the 'Halde II' rubbish dump at Buchenwald, on view at the permanent exhibition of the Gedenkstätte Buchenwald, from the mid-1990s to 2015. Photograph: Chloe Paver

the Nazis did to concentration camp inmates, it was almost certainly not part of whatever was done to these individuals, but rather an after-effect of disposal. Where an archaeologist would be obliged to distinguish factually between different phases of degradation, exhibition-makers in this field are driven by the quest for appropriate expressions of respect for the victims.

At museums outside the former camps, such broken and decomposed items are sometimes the only or key items shown from the camps. The 2001–2017 permanent exhibition at the Jüdisches Museum Berlin presented the camps mostly through image and word (photographs, projections and name lists), but contained one vitrine of objects that were discarded on a death march. Ten items were well spaced out along a vitrine; mostly made of metal, their material was badly corroded, but they were recognisable as personal items such as a razor and a spectacles case.

In a similarly well-spaced out display, the Deutsch-Russisches Museum (DRM) shows eight items, including broken fragments of crockery and a broken pipe, that were dug up in 1991–92 on the grounds of the former camp at Maly Trostenets. Nearby, the DRM shows three single children's shoes, grey from decay, that have come from the former camp at Majdanek. A similar display of shoes from Majdanek at the Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr (MHM) in Dresden enables the museum to make the Holocaust central to its display about the Second World War even though its own collections are not related to the camps. In this case, sixty shoes appear in a vertical display case, in six rough rows, 'facing' the visitor (i.e. with the uppers facing forwards and the toes downwards) and with blank space around each shoe.

Noting the obviously staged arrangement of these shoes, Silke Arnold-de Simine considers that the MHM

> takes great care not to mimic the way the shoes were collected and stacked in the camps. Their re-collection in the museum re-individualizes the shoes, even if they stay nameless. Shoes are the closest one can get to bodily remains: the leather of the shoes behaves like a second skin and through constant wear moulds to fit the owner's feet.[60]

Arnold-de Simine rightly identifies a technique similar to that used in the old button display at Buchenwald, where separation is a respectful act of re-individuation; she also stresses the metonymic contiguity of the 'second skin'. We should distinguish, however, between such isolated displays in urban museums and the multiple, interrelated displays in camp museums. Whereas at the MHM shoes substitute for the absent bodies they were once contiguous with, Buchenwald and other camp museums have a wealth of body-close objects for other reasons: these were often all inmates had in a system that needed them only to eat, shave (if male) and dress for work.

Arnold-de Simine argues that despite the documentary use of the shoes at the MHM, at other sites around the world shoes and similar items have become 'powerful visual trauma icons'. Familiarity with Holocaust discourses, she notes, allows them to stand for atrocities while simultaneously disconnecting them from particular historical realities.[61]

[60] Silke Arnold-de Simine, *Mediating Memory in the Museum: Trauma, Empathy, Nostalgia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 80–81.

[61] Arnold-de Simine, p. 81.

Arguably, the degradation of the shoes at the MHM shows that this may happen to a degree even within a factual Holocaust display. Arnold-de Simine does not mention the decayed state of the MHM shoes, perhaps because it is so familiar from similar displays (including at the Imperial War Museum, London). In other circumstances, as any fashion museum can attest, it is possible to keep leather shoes in good condition for centuries, but the MHM's shoes are squashed, dirtied and a uniform grey-black. The state of the shoes is not objectively connected to the murder of their wearers: they were in good condition when the murders took place and the Nazis set out to kill the owners, but not to damage their shoes. A photograph from 1944 of sheds overflowing with shoes, shown alongside the three shoes at the DRM, suggests that leather may have begun to degrade due to inadequate storage as Nazi control of the War unravelled; certainly it continued to degrade after 1945, when shoes were not considered valuable museum objects. Yet because their condition evokes a powerful sense of physical damage, neglect and dishonouring decay—all of which are useful metaphors for the Nazi treatment of people—the disconnection between their state and the murders is not articulated. Whereas in other cases (as will become clear in Chapter 5), neglect of objects after 1945 is both foregrounded and criticized, and the dates of object life stages named precisely, here the objects' change in form is left uncommented as it usefully strengthens their non-factual meanings.

This is arguably the case even at the DRM where the three children's shoes are used, in a section on 'Beweisstücke' ('pieces of evidence'), to point to their own role in the collection of evidence against the Nazis after 1945, in the absence of other proofs such as bodies. Because the shoes are given space and attention (a trio of objects well spaced out in a brightly lit vitrine), they cannot help but function also as badly damaged stand-ins for murdered children. Three shoes are presumably the minimum number that can evoke the much higher number of victims (made visible in the photograph of piles of shoes).

If the display at the MHM is a little more complex than the three shoes at the DRM, it is only because at least two women's shoes are recognizably in styles that are still produced today. One in particular, a strappy gold and black sandal that could have been manufactured yesterday, creates a sudden and surprising effect of synchronicity. It is arguably more powerful in conveying the victims' direct transition from a life in normal society to murder by shooting squad than the more formless and degraded shoes, which speak of the aftermath of the murder, not of what preceded it.

Despite the widespread use of such degraded objects as loosely chronologized stand-ins for suffering and death in the camps, especially the camps in the East, museums at the former camps on German and Austrian soil are characterized by a much wider range of objects. Given the moral imperative to document the crimes and to honour the victims, an anthropological approach to objects, such as was theorized by Arjun Appadurai in *The Social Life of Things*, which explores objects 'in motion' within systems of exchange and value, would seem misplaced at the former concentration camps.[62] However, the camps were such an extraordinarily strange extra-social space that their systems of material culture can be viewed through an anthropological lens just as effectively as can the pre-historic, early modern and non-Western case studies in Appadurai's seminal collection. While memorial sites would be unlikely to characterize their own approach as anthropological,[63] and while documenting and honouring are clearly their priority, this characterization is nonetheless useful for understanding display methods at the former camps.

It is certainly hinted at in the title of the art exhibition 'MenschenDinge / The Human Aspect of Things' (2006 at the Gedenkstätte Buchenwald), which comprised photographs and video interviews with employees or associates of the memorial site, each seen handling objects from the collection. It will be discussed further in Sect. 5.7 but is relevant here because several interviewees spoke of the difficulty of understanding what an object found in archaeological digs did and meant within the system of camp objects. Historian Harry Stein puzzled for years over a hinged object until a survivor was able to tell him that the Jews who were admitted when the

[62] Arjun Appadurai, 'Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value', in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013; first publ. 1986), pp. 3–63.

[63] Describing the approach of the latest permanent exhibition, the head of the Mahn- und Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück speaks only rather generally of more careful contextualization than previously, and greater differentiation between different inmate experiences (Insa Eschebach, 'Die neue Hauptausstellung der Mahn- und Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück', in *Das Frauen-Konzentrationslager Ravensbrück. Geschichte und Erinnerung*, ed. by Alyn Beßmann and Insa Eschebach (Berlin: Metropol, 2013), pp. 11–17). For the head of the Gedenkstätte Buchenwald, the key feature of its new permanent exhibition is its stress on the local populace's acceptance of the camp system, an emphasis that is intended to counter democratic backsliding today (Volkhard Knigge, 'Jedem das Seine', in *Buchenwald. Ausgrenzung und Gewalt. 1937 bis 1945,* ed. by Volkhard Knigge (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2016), pp. 6–8).

construction brigades of the Hungarian army were dissolved carried their identity details on a piece of paper in a locket, rather than wearing the more common identity tag.[64] Archaeologist Ronald Hirte spoke of having to work out why men in the camp would need a makeshift clothes iron (to kill lice).[65]

The current permanent exhibitions at Buchenwald (opened 2016) and Ravensbrück (opened 2013) are particularly meticulous in their explanations of the complex material economies and sign systems of the camp.[66] Where the 1995–2015 exhibition at Buchenwald had shown the well-known striped uniform, a dedicated section in the new exhibition shows the full diversity of clothing, which derived from the complex rules and hierarchies in the camp and from material shortages in the later stages of the war. For instance, some Soviet POWs were obliged to wear their uniforms with the insignia removed; for two years only, striped winter coats were issued; and for a short time, the SS sold leather shoes. The system of badges and triangles has always been well explained at former concentration camps, but the Buchenwald display decodes other, less-accessible meanings and consequences of uniforms within the camp system. A cap is used to illustrate the fact that, since doffing a cap to the SS guards was obligatory, the loss of a cap could be life-threatening; wooden clogs caused foot infections; and wearing cloth shoes was part of the punishment regime in the detention cells. I give these details not to replicate the exhibition information—which is more extensive—but to indicate how the museum has used its work with *Zeitzeugen* (who have donated most of the items and explained their significance) to reconstruct the production, regulation, circulation and signification of objects in the camps.

Today, at both Buchenwald and Ravensbrück, one sees many home-made objects that bear little resemblance to the degraded, broken and

[64] Esther Shalev-Gerz, *MenschenDinge/The Human Aspect of Objects* (Weimar: Stiftung Gedenkstätte Buchenwald und Mittelbau-Dora, 2006), p. 75.

[65] Shalev-Gerz, p. 90. For a summary of what we know about how objects functioned in a system of exchange that was exclusive to the camps, see Ulrike Kistner, 'What Remains: Genocide and Things', in *Representing Auschwitz: At the Margins of Testimony*, ed. by Nicolas Chare and Dominic Williams (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 104–29. While Kistner studies the historical reality rather than museum representations of it, she prefaces her study with photographs of fragments remaining in the soil at Auschwitz.

[66] Given more space, the Gedenkstätte Bergen-Belsen (whose latest main exhibition opened in 2007) would make an equally good case study.

rusted objects that have—not unreasonably, but rather selectively—come to stand for life and death in the camps. Many objects are imaginative, finely worked and colourful (if faded). Some of the more creative Buchenwald objects are discussed in another context in Sect. 5.7, but at Ravensbrück they include a crouching dog carved from a toothbrush handle, a miniature tea service carved from fish bones, a bookmark appliquéd with a cartoon figure in gingham trousers, and miniature boots made from bread, complete with string laces and foil hobnails.[67] Because the objects look little different from objects made at home, in a peacetime situation in which the state is not persecuting its citizens, they could potentially be as misleading as some of the degraded objects, suggesting that the women inmates were freely expressing their creativity and emotions. Ravensbrück's texts are careful to point out that, except where objects were commissioned by the SS (in which case any impression of personal pleasure was produced under duress), they had to be made clandestinely using stolen materials. Wearing jewellery, we are told, was forbidden, but women made it all the same. The mainly female inmates made objects not only for personal use but also as gifts and for barter. This means (though the texts do not quite spell it out) that while the objects sometimes expressed real emotional attachments, the museum visitor should not automatically read joyfulness out of their cheerful appearance: in some cases, brightness and decoration might simply have made them more suitable for barter; in all cases, anxiety is likely to have accompanied their making. Captions suggest that manufactured objects, too, should not be read as if the rules of our world apply: we are told that a pair of scissors was entrusted to one particular inmate rather than passed around, to prevent suicides.[68]

Together, these examples show that today's exhibition-makers at camp museums place a higher value on understanding what objects did and meant within the *univers concentrationnaire* than on uncontextualized traces or 'trauma icons'. In this context, it is significant that a rusted lipstick tube, found discarded in the grounds of Ravensbrück in 1985, is not used suggestively or contemplatively (either as a cipher for a destroyed life or as a metaphor for German indifference to the past between 1945 and 1985), but rather to prompt an explanation of

[67] Beßmann and Eschebach, pp. 18, 156–65.

[68] Beßmann and Eschebach, p. 62.

one special use of lipstick in the camp that lies outside our contemporary understanding of this familiar object: to make women look healthier when selections for murder were taking place in the hospital blocks.[69] Conversely, good-as-new objects used entirely factually can on occasion evoke more horror than damaged ones used suggestively: also at Ravensbrück, an apparently new and still perfectly serviceable child's hat increases the shock that its wearer, having known only life in hiding and life in the camp, was killed at the age of three.[70] Whereas rotted grey shoes should not logically (i.e. in our mind's eye as we stand before the vitrine) have a person in them, this hat should have a child in it—a child in colour, not in black and white.

Though Ravensbrück has worked extensively with *Zeitzeuginnen* since 1990, many such objects were accepted by the GDR-era museum and no personal story can now be attached to them, so that they are grouped together to stand generally for social practices in the camp. The child's hat, having been donated in 2005 by the surviving sister, is one of the museum's personalized objects, which are used particularly in the section on inmate groups from different home countries. A fluffy white rabbit with a red ribbon around its neck, representing Hungary, seems especially out of place in a former concentration camp.[71] The white rabbit is, in fact, a replica, made after the War, but its maker used it to recall the rabbit that she made for the Easter celebrations of 1945, using material misappropriated from her place of slave employment: artificial snow that was affixed to camouflage nets at a Daimler-Benz factory. Though Jewish, she had received similar, chocolate bunnies at Easter in her childhood and hoped to cheer her fellow inmates with the snowy mascot. Though this is as far as the caption goes, we can read this object in line with the statements made elsewhere in the exhibition. Like other home-made objects the original of this rabbit may have looked like an object from the world outside the camps, but that was part of its function within the camp; unlike a present made outside the camp, it was made at a personal risk and expressed solidarity in the face of threats to life and health by the state. The rabbit is also akin to some objects examined in Sect. 4.1 in that it encodes the complex chronologies of the war's end.

[69] Beßmann and Eschebach, p. 256.

[70] Beßmann and Eschebach, p. 57. Unlike in the catalogue, the hat is set on a stand in its vitrine, its shape framing an absent face.

[71] Beßmann and Eschebach, p. 69.

The camouflage material from which it is made envisages a future that will not come, for the war will not see another winter and the availability of artificial snow for camouflage is already moot by Easter 1945.

The special relationship between time and camp objects has been studied by Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer. Their model seems to me sufficiently important that I apply it here in some detail to a home-crafted object from the context of the deportations, though my rather downbeat conclusion will be that, outside of the camp museums, exhibition-makers deploy such objects out of a generalized sense of their sentimental value rather than from any academic understanding of material testimony and its complex relationship to time.

In making a case for expanding the concept of 'testimony' to include objects from the camps, Hirsch and Spitzer invoke Barthes's argument that time constitutes a second 'punctum', a piercing realization of the incommensurability of the 'then' of the photograph and the 'now' of its viewing. Hirsch and Spitzer see the need for a more complex model to account for the historical case of genocide. In this model, they substitute the persecuted victim for the photographer. The victim knows of his (or her) imminent death but nevertheless envisages a future for himself and/or for his descendants and creates objects that can transmit his past and present into that future. For Hirsch and Spitzer, it is this rebellion against an untimely death which is the 'punctum', or piercing insight from the past, for viewers of objects today.[72]

Though the object that Hirsch and Spitzer go on to analyse only partly exemplifies their model, the general model adds a useful layer of complexity to the notion of temporal contiguity that I discussed in Sect. 2.2. Museum objects are conventionally chosen because they were present at a given moment in the past; they offer an unbroken chain of material presence linking that past to the here and now. Hirsch and Spitzer argue that in the context of an immediate threat to life victims may themselves experience an intense sense of time as a chain, paid out

[72] 'In ordinary circumstances, people who use or produce the objects that survive them, or who are depicted in photographic images, face indeterminate futures that are made poignant by the certainty we bring to them in retrospect. In the context of genocide, however, intended victims actually anticipate their own untimely deaths in a *near* future. In the images or objects that emerge from such traumatic circumstances, the act of hope and resistance against that knowledge may well be the punctum'. Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, 'Testimonial Objects: Memory, Gender, and Transmission', *Poetics Today*, 27 (2006), 353–83 (p. 360; their emphasis).

link by link in a reliable historical rhythm, even as historical reality violently breaks that chain in their murder, and that objects they make may encode this temporal experience.

The exhibition 'Ordnung und Vernichtung. Die Polizei im NS-Staat' ('Order and Annihilation: the Police and the Nazi Regime', 2011 at the Deutsches Historisches Museum) was typical of many exhibitions which, while primarily about the perpetrator culture, honour the victims with as many objects and documents as are compatible with the main narrative. One such object, included as background evidence of police involvement in guarding deportation trains, was a cartoon-like strip of drawings, made by dividing a side of paper into 24 boxes. According to the caption, it was made by a father, Nico Herschel, as a farewell present for his new-born son when he and his wife handed him over to non-Jews for safekeeping in 1943.[73] Thus, though an image is conventionally experienced in two dimensions as a scannable surface, this cartoon had the quality of a three-dimensional object because it was designed to be transported and stored before being put to use. Each box in the grid showed a stage in the boy's life, starting with his birth a month or so before and stretching into the imagined future of the 1960s. After learning to use a potty, to crawl, to read and write and to play football, the boy Tsewie travels to the Jewish homeland ('Eretz') in 1962. In 1964, he marries, after which his parents send a telegram from Holland to announce a visit. In 1967, a son is born, for which grandfather Nico has chosen a name. These events are told partly in the past tense, as if from a vantage point in the far future, looking back at the life of the boy and the man.

Though the images are childishly playful, the rich engagement with each stage of the son's future suggests an unusually intense awareness of time. Few parents pause to think in which calendar year their new-born child will go to school, let alone what calendar year it will be when he will be twenty-two years old and on the point of marriage. While some new parents indulge visions of their baby growing up to pursue a particular profession, few can feel impelled, in month two of the infant's life, to telescope the twenty-five coming years into a clear overview. In historical fact, as the brief caption told visitors, the parents were murdered six months later at Sobibor.

[73] Florian Dierl, Mariana Hausleitner, Martin Hözl, and Andreas Mix (eds), *Ordnung und Vernichtung. Die Polizei im NS-Staat* (Dresden: Sandstein, 2011), pp. 236–37.

The drawing has a conventional enough metonymic relationship to the deportation of Jews from Holland and the rescue of a child by non-Jewish helpers. The object owes its existence to these events. Yet, time is fractured because Herschel lists dates that are radically out of sync with historical actuality. In reality, the parents are murdered by box four or five out of the twenty-four on the page and a full twenty-one years before the father's projected holiday with his son and daughter-in-law. The future of the 1960s is so rarely invoked in any documents from 1933–45 (whether generated by the victims or the majority) that its invocation here is jolting. In today's popular culture, the 1960s is a decade from which, thanks to the successes of the space race, the future was envisaged; it is not a future we imagine anybody having hoped for twenty years earlier. Herschel's cartoon reminds us of the relative proximity and plausible attainability of the 1960s for Jews who were about to be murdered in the 1940s, forcing us back into the unique 'now' of the Holocaust. This might be considered its temporal 'punctum'.

Reading further in line with Hirsch and Spitzer, the object is not just a projection by the still hopeful victim Herschel of a future life, but also a real, material tool of memory transmission. The cartoon is a familial time capsule, designed to be decoded when the child is old enough to understand it. Births are conventionally accompanied by objects that cannot conceivably serve a baby but that anticipate their growing up, but here, too, the conventional anticipation of future years is disturbed. By the time the real Tsewie was old enough to read what had been written for him, the sender of the message had been dead for six or seven years and had played no role in shaping any but the first couple of images of the life envisaged for him.

In the 2006 essay I am using here—'Testimonial Objects: Memory, Gender, and Transmission'—Hirsch and Spitzer are just as concerned with gender as with memory and transmission. Noting a scholarly hesitation about invoking gender in analyses of the Holocaust, they attribute it to 'the fear of thereby detracting attention from the racializing categorizations that marked entire groups for persecution and extermination'.[74] Given that they cite a good many studies of gender and the Holocaust, the number of which has swelled since 2006, it is difficult to gauge how strong this scholarly hesitation really was, but I have made a similar

[74] Hirsch and Spitzer, p. 162.

argument about history exhibitions in Germany and Austria,[75] and certainly Hirsch's and Spitzer's comment that 'gender, in circumstances of such extreme persecution and trauma, may well be an immaterial, even offensive, category',[76] chimes with my experience of exhibition-makers' work. Their predominant concern is to document the facts and honour the victims, not (as they might see it) to engage in sociological study, and they therefore tend, with the exception of Ravensbrück, to level out gender differences in the victim communities. It is possible to read Nico Herschel's cartoon through the lens of gender in a way that is indeed 'immaterial' and 'even offensive' in the light of the fact that he and his wife would soon be brutally murdered with no concern for which of them was male and which female. Nico Herschel wrote a caption over two boxes that read: 'Because Dad is an accountancy teacher / he [i.e. Tsewie] is given the accounts book at the age of four' (my translation from the Dutch). Herschel shows the boy 'in action' as a soccer goalkeeper. He imagines that his son will have a firstborn son, and gives his fictional grandson a name that includes the name of his own father.[77] Looking through a gender lens helps bring into focus that this object is not just a material means of transmission (transported from one household to another and stored until it can be decoded) but also a text *about* bodily and cultural transmission in the succession of the generations. Deprived of the normal phase of bonding with his new-born son and faced with the imminent possibility of death, Nico Herschel fantasizes an intact process of family transmission from grandfather to father to son to grandson and imagines it within solidly familiar gender parameters. However close to offence this reading steers, it allows us to reflect that the imminent threat of murder at the hands of a foreign state was not an incentive to rethink patriarchal norms.[78]

[75] Chloe Paver, 'Gender Issues in German Historical Exhibitions About National Socialism', *International Journal of the Inclusive Museum*, 1.3 (2008), 43–55.

[76] Hirsch and Spitzer, p. 162.

[77] This is confirmed by the database of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which loaned the object to the exhibition.

[78] This is, of course, a question of position, and Ruth Klüger's Holocaust experience was a strong prompt to rethink patriarchal norms. At the same time, she makes clear that any expectation that the Holocaust should have brought out the best in people is a fantasy projected retrospectively and a fundamental misunderstanding of what genocidal persecution is and does. Ruth Klüger, *weiter leben* (Munich: dtv, 1992; repr. 2012), p. 72.

My intention here is not so much to demonstrate that Hirsch's and Spitzer's model for reading objects made by Holocaust victims works well. I have probably done that quite adequately, but this is not a study of Holocaust objects independent of context.[79] Rather, I want to point up the difference between a sophisticated reading of an object and the less challenging, popular readings on offer in the museum's communication processes. The museum's short caption makes no mention of gender or modes of memory transmission. At most, it invites reflection on the anachronisms in the object by contrasting the projected reunion between the son and parents with the parents' murder at Sobibor. This is more obviously an invitation to empathize with the family's loss than an invitation to reflect on temporal disjunctions as a feature of Holocaust experience and post-Holocaust memory. While all museum communication, as public history work, necessarily involves simplification, the DHM's invitation to engage with the object in a rather shallow way should also be understood in its German context. This exhibition's mission was to expose the culpability of the police force under National Socialism while honouring the victims of the police force's actions. For that to happen, it needed to return a voice and a sense of agency to the victims. The manifold meanings of the cartoon as Holocaust testimony did not need to be exploited. I have yet to see an exhibition devoted to Holocaust testimony (whether contemporaneous testimony or retrospective testimony) as an object to be analysed, though many exhibitions use such testimony as a means of communication.

Finally in this section, a word about objects made by forced labourers for barter or as gifts. Shown at camp museums and in exhibitions that touch on forced labour, these represent another important category of home-made object. Generally, the captions prioritize the exchange story, eliding the fact that the often playful designs express a lightness of spirit

[79] Having said that, if readers want a further application for Hirsch's and Spitzer's paradigm of testimonial objects, they might consider a pair of shoes on display at the Ehemalige Synagoge Haigerloch. Wanting to be sure that his son would have a good pair of shoes in adulthood, a local cattle trader gave his twelve-year-old boy his own 'best' shoes to take on a *Kindertransport*. The father was murdered before the boy was big enough to fit the shoes, but the son kept them in his UK home and bequeathed them to his daughters, who donated them to the museum. The contrast between the adult male shoes in the glass case and the boy recipient, and between him and the women who inherit the old-fashioned men's shoes, creates the kind of temporal disjunctions about which Hirsch and Spitzer write. The shoes are not illustrated in the otherwise comprehensive museum catalogue, details of which are given in Chapter 5.

that cannot be assumed to have been felt by the prisoner, for whom it might rather have been a means of working value into the object. This is true, for instance, of a straw handbag shown at Ravensbrück: it was commissioned by an SS man from a prisoner and given to a woman in the local town, who kept it until 2001 (such exact dates are discussed in Chapter 5). It is therefore not to be assumed that the expertly crafted straw work expresses the creative spirit of its oppressed maker—just that she possessed a skill that could be used by others in their own sentimental exchanges. The heart-shaped pot made of intricately woven straw and lined with fabric that is shown on the cover of this book is displayed at the Deutsch-Russisches Museum. According to the caption, it was given by a male Soviet prisoner of war to a mother and daughter in 1943, because they treated him well when he was employed to bring in the harvest. The caption qualifies this positive 'Good German' story: such kind treatment of a prisoner was the exception, not the norm. The caption also tells the viewer that the pot was stored carefully by the family until it was given to the museum in 2011 (another typically exact date). Presumably because of its immediate visual appeal, the museum has used this box as one of the images it offers to members of the press. In the vitrine itself, the lid is closed to protect the flowery lining from light, and the fabric on the lid has faded, but the impression of skilled creative work remains. The caption does not spell out what the broader display context implies, namely that the sentiment behind the heart, however sincere it might have been, is not equivalent to sentiments expressed through hearts outside the camp system. The slave labourers' use of objects for exchange and grateful appreciation is both a symptom of their helplessness in a cruel system and a mode of self-expression during a prolonged attack on the self.

Heart motifs are surprisingly common on objects produced by hand in the camps, and Enrico Heitzer has similar thoughts about a knitted heart in the collections of the Gedenkstätte und Museum Sachsenhausen. Such objects, he writes, are difficult to deal with in exhibitions because they convey a 'kontrafaktisch[e] Anmutung. Eigentlich repräsentieren sie Mangel, Beschäftigungslosigkeit und Isolation, zeigen aber vordergründig das glatte Gegenteil' ('a counter-factual impression. In reality, they represent deprivation, enforced idleness, and isolation, but superficially they represent the exact opposite').[80] At the time

[80] Enrico Heitzer, 'Stoffherz von Leonore Fink. Die Herausforderung der zweifachen Geschichte Sachsenhausens', in *Vom Monument zur Erinnerung. 25 Jahre Stiftung Brandenburgische Gedenkstätten in 25 Objekten*, ed. by Ines Reich (Berlin: Metropol, 2017), pp. 90–98 (p. 92).

Heitzer was writing, the heart was being used as the lead image for a small work-in-progress exhibition at Sachsenhausen, where it was shown along with a second, leather heart.[81] Both were made after 1945 by prisoners of the Soviet Special Camp, where enforced idleness was part of the punishment. The prisoners made remarkably similar objects to prisoners of the National Socialist regime, facing the same problems of accessing forbidden materials and making forbidden objects. This means that, with due adjustment for political circumstances, Heitzer's central point—that objects made during imprisonment cannot be read as if they were objects made in freedom—is still useful in the context of this study. The leather heart, for instance, was given as a present in the context of an exchange of food rations, so that the sentiment it expressed was limited by conditions of hunger. It is therefore significant that Heitzer's misgivings were expressed in an essay in a museum paratext and not in the captions to the work-in-progress exhibition. Such reflection on objects and emotions often takes place on the fringes of exhibitions rather than in communication with the visitor.

Often, exhibition-makers are interested in using this category of home-made camp object to propose answers to a question that is key for historians of mentalities: How much did ordinary Germans know? Since forced labour was one activity that made the boundary around the camps permeable, any objects that passed from labourers to members of the majority population speak of public knowledge of the camp system, giving the lie to post-war excuses of ignorance. And since these objects often represent the folk crafts of Eastern Europe, they serve as material proof of a foreign presence in places in Germany and Austria that have long preferred to forget their temporary enslaved residents.[82]

[81] 'Werkausstellung Sowjetisches Speziallager Nr. 7 / Nr. 1 in Sachsenhausen. Haftalltag und Erinnerung' ('Work-in-Progress Exhibition—Soviet Special Camp No. 7 / No. 1 in Sachsenhausen: The Daily Life of the Inmates and their Memories of this Time'), 2017 at the Gedenkstätte und Museum Sachsenhausen.

[82] More research would be needed to establish whether straw work would have been recognised as Eastern European at the time, but two objects in Sachsenhausen's display about contacts between the town and the camp—a painting of a man in folk costume and a toy 'troika' (sleigh and three horses)—are clearly non-German. Both were given by forced labourers as presents to civilians who provided food and both were kept within the family until donation to the museum.

The pared back, modular display at the new Denkort Bunker Valentin has just six 'topic islands' ('Themeninseln'), each with only one object or object group. Consequently, it isolates the 'What did locals know?' question that is sometimes only implicit in larger, more discursive exhibitions.[83] A topic island with the title 'Berührungspunkte' ('Points of Contact') tells of the many and varied contacts between local villagers and the building site at Rekrum, where a U-boat pen was being constructed. Exchange and barter were common despite prohibitions; children traded firewood for handmade toys; and local tradesmen had commercial dealings with the building site.[84] Forced labourers report encountering a mixture of kindness and hostility from the local populace. The object chosen to represent these interactions is a hand-worked metal tin: on its lid, the words 'Bremen 12. Juni 1944' are framed in a heart-shaped cartouche and a rectangular border. The caption tells us that a young lad, a member of the majority, received the tin in exchange for bread, for which a hungry forced labourer had begged him. By focusing on the fact that the transfer of an object is simultaneously a transfer of knowledge of conditions for slave labourers, the museum arguably elides an important emotional component: the maker is unlikely to feel any of the joy or the fondness for Bremen that the engraving—a date inside a heart—would suggest outside of the situation of the dictatorship, even allowing that such mementos are always conventionalized simplifications of complex sets of feelings. The survival of this category of object is almost entirely reliant on Germans and Austrians keeping them in their homes until recently, a phenomenon studied more closely in Sects. 5.1 and 5.3. As will become clear there, exhibition-makers draw attention to that period of storage as a period when, by analogy, memories of National Socialism are also 'stored'. A stored object which is itself a storage object (and therefore relegated to a kind of functional invisibility) redoubles this effect. Accordingly, the visitor is told in the caption that the German owner kept his bicycle repair kit in the slave labourer's tin for decades after the end of the war.

[83]The Deutsch-Russisches Museum also separates out this element, under the heading 'Begegnungen' ('Encounters').

[84]Toys made by forced labourers and exchanged for bread were also shown at 'Volk – Heimat – Dorf' though they are not recorded in the catalogue.

Despite my use of a two-part structure in this chapter, which allows display practices to be isolated and analysed, there is no categorical distinction between negative (degraded) objects and positive (creative) objects in museums at former concentration camps. All the objects, as we have seen, have a negative context. Some objects dug up from the ground still bear clear marks of self-assertion and creative endeavour, however decayed they look. Equally, even well-preserved handmade objects have generally faded, unravelled or become scuffed over time. In this context, scholars should be wary of catalogue, inventory or advertising photographs, in which objects have been photographed in studio conditions against a white background. These invariably brighten and deepen colours and sharpen outlines, as well as distorting scale. It is unclear whether this is a function of professional photographic routine or whether it is encouraged by exhibition-makers, either to honour the victims through the optimal presentation of their objects or to present the museum's collection in the best light. Whatever the case, the use of such enhanced photographs of handmade objects as lead images for exhibitions or as press images indicates that exhibition-makers are aware that these better preserved, especially creative objects unsettle visitor expectations. It is precisely their ambivalence—the familiar cheer of handcrafted objects versus their production in radically unfamiliar conditions of dehumanization—that makes them thought-provoking.

3.5 Material Experiences of the Non-persecuted Majority in Wartime

Although history exhibitions about National Socialism generally follow wider trends in German cultural memory, the quantity of scholarly and media attention directed at the sufferings of the non-persecuted majority in wartime is not matched by a corresponding amount of exhibition space.[85] Notwithstanding some well-documented exhibitions about the bombing raids or about flight and expulsion from the eastern territories, most exhibitions focus squarely on the suffering inflicted by members of the majority on others, on the willingness of majority Germans and Austrians to accommodate themselves to National Socialism and on rare

[85] The extensive scholarship was listed in Sect. 2.3.

examples of resistance from among the majority. Even where the Second World War is in focus, the stress tends to be on the reprehensible behaviour of majority Germans. Thus, while the fashion exhibition 'Glanz und Grauen' acknowledged the clothing deprivation caused by the wartime economy and the bombing raids, it also showed that the regime's currency manipulations allowed Wehrmacht soldiers to send millions of packages of clothing from the conquered territories to their families in the Reich.[86]

Nonetheless, museums and exhibitions that focus on the Second World War are more likely than others to reflect on the suffering of the majority population. Here, I discuss four exhibitions—in Dresden, Berlin, Hamburg and Oberammergau—that exemplify exhibition practice.[87] All of them frame majority suffering carefully within a narrative of German responsibility; all show that war involves a wide range of human experiences, including, but not limited to, suffering; and all show that war involved encounters with a changed and changing material culture. While that last idea is familiar enough from conventional military history museums, which show the soldier's engagement with weaponry, museums in Germany also explore more subtle forms of material experience during the Second World War, including experience of new commercial products made available in wartime, changed contexts for craft skills, or radical revaluations of objects.

Given Dresden's status as the iconic locus of suffering in wartime,[88] it makes sense to begin with the Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr (MHM), mentioned already in connection with its display of shoes from Majdanek. Having reopened in 2011 after an architectural reconfiguration by Daniel Libeskind and a complete reordering of the permanent exhibition, this complex museum covers the history of all of Germany's modern wars. It deserves more extended analysis than I can give it here, but in the space available I will argue that objects relating to majority suffering are carefully framed to ensure that it is not possible to assume a victim position uncritically.

[86] LVR-Industriemuseum, pp. 44–45.

[87] That all the examples are German is perhaps indicative of the fact that Austria identifies less strongly with the history of the Wehrmacht, though wartime bombing is sometimes an exhibition topic.

[88] The key study of this phenomenon is Anne Fuchs, *After the Dresden Bombing: Pathways of Memory, 1945 to the Present* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Given that the museum is unusually explicit about its own methodology, the challenge is to read beyond its own interpretation of its work. Rejecting the conventional definition of a war museum as a technical museum, the MHM claims to combine a social-history approach, which acknowledges the role of civilians and women in war and reflects on wartime mentalities, with an anthropological approach that explores the causes and expressions of violence. However ahistorical that might sound, the museum puts the Holocaust at the heart of its understanding of the Second World War, as was clear from the shoe display analysed above. The museum's publications stress that the War cannot be represented as unfolding separately from the Holocaust and that the military played an active part in the genocide.[89] In the museum itself, the section on the Second World War begins not with the invasion of Poland but with the creation of an exclusionary society from 1933 onwards. A viewing platform in Libeskind's wedge-shaped intervention in the old building, which looks out towards the place where the first bombs rained down on the city, can only be reached by walking through a display on German bombing of other European countries.

A sentimental contemplation of the suffering of the non-persecuted majority is therefore, in theory at least, designed out of the exhibition space. Instead, the museum expresses the liberal orthodoxy in Germany: majority Germans can speak openly about the sufferings that they endured in wartime, provided they first examine the origins of that suffering and acknowledge the far greater suffering endured by other nations and by persecuted groups.

Arnold-de Simine has questioned the anthropological approach of the MHM, particularly in its thematic sections, seeing it as diverting from the real political causes of war.[90] This is a valid concern, though the 'love/hate' artwork she cites in evidence is not typical of the museum,

[89] Gorch Pieken and Matthias Rogg (eds), *Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr. Ausstellung und Architektur* (Dresden: Sandstein, 2011), pp. 18–19, 34–35. Produced while the new museum was in development, this volume contains essays about the redesign of the museum and introductions to individual objects. A more conventional catalogue is: Gorch Pieken and Matthias Rogg (eds), *Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr. Ausstellungsführer* (Dresden: Sandstein, 2011), pp. 21–23, 33–35. Also Gorch Pieken, 'Contents and Space: New Concept and New Building of the Militärhistorisches Museum of the Bundeswehr', *Museum and Society*, 10 (2012), 163–73 (p. 171).

[90] Arnold-de Simine, pp. 71–86 (pp. 85–86).

more a cautionary tale about commissioning artworks. The section on children's war play begins in anthropological mode with self-made guns: a stick that a young child brandished as a gun and a waffle that a child shaped into a pistol. However, the display then moves on to show how successive German societies have used toys to shape children's notions of war. Here, National Socialist toys feature in some numbers. The toy display ends with a fantastically extended parade of 'soldiers': toy soldiers, robots, tanks and other plastic figures have been set up in formation, marching forward. This illustrates the hypothesis on the accompanying information board that by enacting military scenes children indulge fantasies of a world they can control. Since the corridor leads to a dead end, the visitor can only walk along the parade from the back to the front and the familiarity of the format sets up the expectation of a standard bearer or a general at its head. Instead, separated by clear space from the serried ranks behind it is a single, charred metal toy tank recovered from the ruins of Dresden (Fig. 3.6). Implicitly, this illustrates a second hypothesis on the information board: that children's fantasies of power contrast sharply with their helplessness in real war. Like all such burned material, the toy tank substitutes for the damage done to bodies, reminding us that the human organism cannot withstand the same levels of heat. Like all objects relating to child victims, the toy tank runs the risk of creating an ahistorical pathos. However, the immediate context of Nazi indoctrination through toys, the specific connection to the Dresden firestorm and the wider context of the museum make that unlikely.

Doubtless understanding that it must deal particularly sensitively with the subject of suffering in the city of Dresden, the MHM devotes a separate section to 'Leiden' (suffering). An overview text (in German and English) points to the particular difficulty, for a museum, of making pain, grief and wartime mentalities visible in object form:

> Schmerz, Angst, Entsetzen und Trauer sind Empfindungen, die sich nicht ausstellen lassen. Das gilt ebenso für die Selbsterkenntnis vieler Menschen, dass sie sich unter Kriegsbedingungen anders verhalten, als sie je von sich geahnt hätten.
>
> (Pain, fear, horror and grief are sensations that cannot be shown in a museum. This also applies to the realisation of many people that they behave in war differently than they would have expected.)

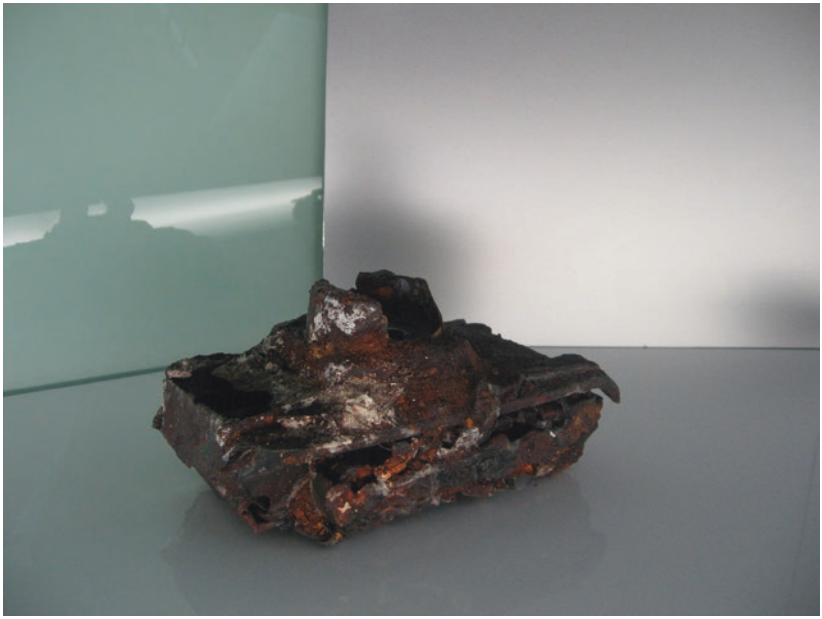

Fig. 3.6 Charred toy panzer from the ruins of Dresden, placed at the head of a parade of toys at the Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr. Photograph: Chloe Paver

This text identifies both emotions and mentalities as key concerns, understanding mentalities in Neitzel's and Welzer's terms as something context-dependent rather than constitutional. A set of prostheses serves as one illustration of these thoughts, but most of the 'Leiden' objects are set inside a grey pod, accessed by a narrow opening and dimly lit. This chapel-like space, which is divided into the subsections 'death', 'injury' and 'memory', contains objects considered more sensitive than the prostheses. Simply by isolating 'suffering' as an aspect of war and by giving examples from a range of wars, the museum may seem to risk the kind of universalizing that it is at pains to avoid. This risk is arguably heightened by a display, on the outside of the grey pod, of materials warped by the Hiroshima explosion. Inside the pod, the simple language used to present the facts of death and injury in war, bypassing all the usual rhetorical filters through which war is imagined, is reminiscent of Elaine Scarry's 1980s deconstruction of war violence. For Scarry, 'the central activity of war is injuring and

the central goal in war is to out-injure the opponent', even if strategists of war never speak of injuring as an aim.[91] This is echoed by the MHM's information board, which tells visitors that injuring opponents is often of greater strategic value to military commanders than killing them.

Yet, despite these generalizing tendencies, the Holocaust is made central to the 'Leiden' display. An overview text, which begins by discussing death as a component of all wars and noting the tendency of individuals to exceed normal behaviours in war, ends by singling out the Second World War as unique because of the way in which the state legitimized war crimes. Photographs show the pogrom led by the Wehrmacht in Lvov.

Licensed by this historicizing frame, two objects arouse pathos for victims from the majority culture. One is an agonized letter from a mother, tortured by her inability to retrieve the body of her soldier son from Sicily; the other is a board game adapted for use by a blind person. Its owner's father, a committed Nazi, determined to shoot himself and his family when Germany was defeated, but misfired, blinding his daughter.[92] The game, one of few adapted objects she owned as a child, had become particularly precious to her and was therefore only on short-term loan when I saw it in 2012. Even such a historically specific object can be read through Scarry. Noting the human propensity to envisage pain by reference to objects because it remains otherwise incommunicable,[93] Scarry argues that the 'arenas of damage' in war are 'first, embodied persons; second, the material culture or self-extension of persons; third, immaterial culture, aspects of national consciousness, political belief, and self-definition'.[94] The first two forms of damage, though only a means to achieving the third, 'function as an abiding record of the third, surviving long after the day on which the injuring contest ended, objectifying the fact that such a contest occurred'.[95] In this case, normal

[91] Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: OUP, 1985), p. 12.

[92] Pieken and Rogg, *Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr. Ausstellungsführer*, p. 28.

[93] Scarry, p. 16.

[94] Scarry, p. 114.

[95] Ibid.

cause and effect are reversed since the father responds to the immaterial damage done to his 'national consciousness, political belief, and self-definition', by injuring his child. Long after the war has ended, her damaged body and its extension (the adapted game) objectify the violence of war. Indeed, the game allows her anonymity to be respected by acting as a metonym for her blinded body, which is not put on show.

As an overall proportion of the population, vanishingly small numbers of German children were killed by their Nazi parents, still fewer maimed. There is therefore a danger that this game either exerts a fascinating appeal as the product of infanticidal Nazi evil or that it is read as standing, in extreme form, for the 'scars' inflicted on a younger generation by their parents' previous allegiances. Like all children's toys, the game risks arousing pathos and implying that simply to be young was to be a victim of Nazism. On the other hand, as a 'self-extension' of the blind woman, the game was not, in material fact, a self-pitying object but rather a way of preserving her individuality and imagination after an attack on her existence.

The Deutsch-Russisches Museum is the successor to a Soviet-run museum in East Berlin, set up in the villa where the surrender on the Eastern Front was signed. Its most recent permanent exhibition opened in 2013. Like the MHM, the DRM is careful to frame any discussion of what happened to Wehrmacht soldiers within a clear statement of German responsibility. To this end, a darkened space acts as a preface to the exhibition, setting out the racist and expansionist policies that shaped the war aims in the East. Like the MHM, the museum makes clear how other nations (particularly the Soviet Union) suffered. And like the MHM, the DRM uses the damage done to objects not just as a historical document but as a stand-in for the damage done to the human body, which cannot directly be shown. In a section on the invasion of the Soviet Union, bricks from the city of Brest document the Russians' fierce defence of the city. The glazed appearance of the brick has been produced, we are told, by German flame-throwers. That in turn invokes the threat to human bodies from such unsurvivable destructive force.

On the whole, German objects at the DRM are used critically to show the majority experience (in particular the experience of soldiers) as one that inflicted harm on others. Whereas the MHM showed a *Feldpostbrief* that expressed a mother's cry of anguish, the DRM examines *Feldpost* as a communication phenomenon and links it to what soldiers knew of atrocities on the Eastern Front. A commercially produced box for storing

Feldpostbriefe, decorated with an iron cross and swastika, is shown on its own in a vitrine. On its lid, the words 'Aufbewahrte Feldpostbriefe' ('For keeping letters from the front') are printed in a modern cursive font (rather than a stereotypically National Socialist font).[96] On the display wall above the vitrine are quotations from soldiers' letters to relatives back home, giving information about killings. The box therefore anchors the statement on the information board that the millions of letters sent to and from the front allowed civilians to learn of atrocities or hear rumours about them. Less explicitly, the box draws an arc—as Rousso and Confino would have us do—from the question 'What did they know?' to the question: 'How did they remember?', showing that war memory was being shaped even as war was being experienced. The manufacturers who responded to the war with this new product promised buyers a future in which an extensive correspondence between the home and the front would be treasured in the family home. Indeed, aside from the swastika, little will have prevented it from fulfilling that function even after Germany's defeat.

A comparable object appears in the section on the siege of Leningrad. Here, the museum shows a concertina-folded photographic panorama of Leningrad's port, viewed from across the Neva. The leporello, as such pieces of printed ephemera are known, was probably produced on the orders of the Wehrmacht: the cover has the title 'Vor Leningrad 1942' ('Outside Leningrad, 1942') and shows three Wehrmacht soldiers, one looking through binoculars, one looking through the sights of an artillery gun and one attending to the gun. Labelling on the panorama identifies prominent buildings: factories, shipyards, railway stations and cathedrals. The text for the vitrine says nothing about the leporello other than to name and date it, but gives broad details of the siege: Hitler's express orders to starve the city rather than take it; the length of the siege; and the number of casualties from hunger and artillery fire. Above the leporello are three photographs of the same woman, showing her lose weight and age visibly as the siege wears on. Thus, despite the sparing text, the context of the vitrine comprehensively negates the viewpoint of the leporello.

[96] Deutsch-Russisches Museum Berlin-Karlshorst, p. 147. In 2012, an exhibition devoted to graphic design under National Socialism showed that Nazi policy towards typography was inconsistent and its control of the graphic industries partial: Thomas Weidner and Henning Rader, *Typographie des Terrors. Plakate in München von 1933 bis 1945* (Heidelberg: Kehrer, 2012).

The staged image of soldiers in the act of looking and lining up targets creates a fiction that a siege is an act of non-aggressive long-distance spectatorship, a fiction compounded by the intact city in the photograph. This blanks out the real damage done to buildings and people by artillery fire and aerial bombardment. The place adverb 'vor' is exposed as grossly euphemistic, hiding an aggressive attack on millions of civilians behind the impression of an inactive but purposeful staking out. The conflation of military reconnaissance and a tourist medium (the city panorama) hides the cruel threat to the city behind a pretence of civil normality. It is the privilege of the besieger to manufacture souvenirs, and this again links experience to memory, envisaging a future in which this military engagement will be recalled as an orderly and controlled operation. Indeed, the object has an unusual relation to time. Whereas museum objects typically 'witnessed' the era they reference in a straightforward way, by co-existing with it, this object records the time before the siege (in the image of an intact city taken from close to the waterfront, presumably in a reconnaissance exercise) and the time of the siege (overwritten onto the photograph by the manufacturers). It also points to how long the siege was: long enough for the Wehrmacht to commission this object and for someone to design it, produce it and distribute it to the troops.

Elsewhere, some objects at the DRM reflect the pain suffered by German soldiers. German POWs, for instance, are shown to have crafted objects in the camps in the same way as Soviet POWs, though the section on German POWs is smaller and less conspicuous than the section on Soviet POWs, which exposes the more brutal German regime. In a section on wounding is a small tin of frost protection cream ('Frostschutzsalbe'), manufactured specially for the Wehrmacht. This object is, like the heart-shaped straw box discussed in the previous section, one of a few chosen for posters and flyers by the museum and offered to journalists for illustration.[97] It is therefore clearly considered a key item in the collection. As noted in Sect. 2.4, Sandra Dudley argues that while museums privilege sight because the vitrine prevents objects from being smelled or handled, viewers of objects through glass still use their other senses to apprehend an object.[98] In this case, the German

[97] Deutsch-Russisches Museum Berlin-Karlshorst, p. 49.

[98] Sandra H. Dudley, 'Museum Materialities: Objects, Sense, and Feeling', in *Museum Materialities: Objects, Engagements, Interpretations*, ed. by Sandra H. Dudley (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 9.

visitor is likely to be able to feel the little tin in his or her hand because such tins (which are lighter than those sold in the UK) are still on sale in German supermarkets. Thus, while the caption explicitly links the cream to instances of frost-bite due to inadequate clothing, the insubstantiality of the tin—its lack of heft in the hand—emphasizes how completely inadequate even this secondary protection was against the Russian winter, creating empathy with the German soldier. Elsewhere, the museum shows how this same lack of protection led to an encounter with Russia's home material culture in the form of the straw overshoes worn by locals. Alongside one of these shoes in a vitrine, the museum shows a photograph of a medical orderly trying one on for size in the presence of a vendor. The caption, however, negates the idealized framing of this cross-cultural encounter: most German soldiers simply stole the shoes. Overall, the DRM is not a museum that devotes much space to the feelings of the German soldier.

The Mahnmal St Nikolai, which reopened after a major redesign in 2013, is Hamburg's main museum devoted to the period 1933–45, with a particular focus on the bombing of Hamburg in 1943. It carefully frames its portrayal of the bombing raids with explicit statements of German responsibility for bombing cities in other countries and for persecuting Jews and others under cover of the war. A series of documents illustrates the eagerness of Hamburg citizens to occupy flats vacated by Jews or to acquire their belongings. The museum's narrative structure (which visitors may or may not follow) clearly implies that only once a sense of cause and effect and therefore historical responsibility has been established can the terror experienced by Hamburg residents be explored.

The museum is unusual in its explicit statements about the emotions experienced by the participants in the historical moment. Principally, of course, this was fear of death, but the museum also points out that for the persecuted (Jews and forced labourers) the raids simultaneously gave hope of liberation. The museum makes space to explore the emotions of the Allied pilots, who had reason themselves to fear death and were prevented from empathizing with those on the ground, causing post-traumatic effects. Despite this concern to cover all perspectives, most space is devoted to the experience of the German majority, and several vitrines connect their experience and emotions to the revolutions in the material order caused by the air war. One vitrine shows a collage of warped, charred and smashed objects, recovered from the rubble

and now displayed in loose imitation of a pile of debris, overlapping and untidily arranged. As with all such staged rubbish (discussed further in Chapters 4 and 5), the disorder is kept in balance with the needs of museum display: key objects are laid face upwards and separated out so as not to impede visibility. The caption reads: 'In den Trümmern liegen unzählige Dinge unbekannter Menschen nebeneinander. Jeder Fund erzählt von persönlichen Schicksalen. Die Bomben(-splitter) haben ihre Geschichte mitgeschrieben' ('In the rubble, countless objects that belonged to persons unknown lie side by side. Each find tells the story of an individual fate. The bombs and shrapnel have shaped their stories'). The stress here is on metonymic relations, pointing from the objects to the fire that damaged them and to the human beings who were detached violently from their belongings. The museum has presumably been able to choose from a wide range of the 'countless' objects recovered from the rubble and has chosen domestic items: cutlery, a broken clock, the broken-off head of a china dog. It is precisely the lack of coherence among these objects (their ability to point towards the home without amounting to anything like an imaginative reconstruction of a home) that evokes the home as a shattered whole. A cameo reproduction of Joseph Karl Stieler's 1828 portrait of Goethe is presented frontally to the viewer. One side of Goethe's face has melted. This is clearly more than mere documentary evidence, evoking as it does Germany's wilful destruction of its own cultural values as much as the factual loss of a middle-class milieu. Glass bottles are warped into fantastical shapes, evoking not only the scientific fact of great heat but also the inability of human beings to survive if their flesh is chemically transformed to this degree. Indeed, the museum might be considered to shy away from more direct representation of charred and crushed bodies, though the photographic volume *Der Brand* by Jörg Friedrich, which caused a scandal by reproducing such photographs, is made available in a reading corner at the end of the parcours.

Whereas the rubble vitrine evokes the widespread anonymization produced by the catastrophe—the disconnection of objects and people—another set of vitrines links five individual objects (a cigarette tin, a tin pan, a preserves jar, a pair of straw shoes and a briefcase) to individual experiences. Although these objects are shown in a section called 'Persönliche Erinnerungen und Deutungen' ('Personal Memories and Interpretations'), and therefore might just as well be discussed in Chapter 5, they draw an arc from experiences of the firestorm, which

turns the material order upside down, to memories of the firestorm. Cigarettes were bartered so that bicycles ('die waren doch ein Vermögen wert' / 'they were worth a fortune') could be transported over the rubble-strewn roads; this witness recalls the stench of dead bodies. A father bought the pan to replace those in his family's lost household; his daughter associates it with his death shortly afterwards and still uses it. The preserved jar represents those that a witness emptied to slake his thirst and cool his body in the scorching cellars. The straw shoes represent those that a nurse gave to a woman with phosphorus burns to her feet. The briefcase survived at the cobbler's while its schoolboy owner was killed by a bomb; his younger brother, who had always coveted it, inherited it. The five objects are in one sense just props, only fortuitously acquired or used in the context of the firestorm. Yet somehow this very arbitrariness conveys the sense that they stand for the psychological processes of traumatization discussed on the display board. In memory, the inconsequential objects trigger strong sense impressions and emotions: the smell of death, fear of entrapment, bereavement, survivor guilt, threat of suffocation and burns.

My final example of the tightrope that exhibition-makers walk in portrayals of majority war experiences is a temporary exhibition, 'NS-Herrschaft und Krieg. Oberammergau 1933–1945' ('National Socialist Rule and War: Oberammergau 1933–1945', 2015 at the Oberammergau Museum). Compared with other local exhibitions, in which *Bürgerengagement* is usually palpable, the exhibition texts at Oberammergau read like distanced, professional public history narratives. This had the merit of enabling the exhibition-makers to untangle the unusually complex status of the town within the National Socialist system. As a tourist resort, Oberammgergau was fully involved in the anti-Semitic harassment of Jewish holidaymakers. The Passion Play had the support of the Nazis, who ignored its religious content, yet the organizers sometimes resisted political interference. The Passion Play made this most German of towns a cosmopolitan place, with modernist design proposals for the play's poster coming from all over Europe in 1940. Yet German refugees from South Tyrol were not made welcome and other groups of incomers—forced labourers and armaments technicians—had to be accommodated. Possibly because the local story was so atypical, there was a less clear sense of contrition than in other village and town exhibition narratives I have read. While the exhibition texts certainly gave an honest account of National Socialism in

Oberammergau, they were not particularly concerned with uncovering individual responsibility.

If the exhibition texts were neutral, the material displays were quite the opposite. An ante-room contained material donated by local families and the long central vitrine in the main room contained a procession of carved wooden figures. Figurative wood-carvings are Oberammergau's second most important cultural product, after the Passion Play. Based on a centuries' old tradition, they are the most visible product in the shops that line the streets today. To fill the main vitrine with wood-carving was therefore a clear appeal—and challenge—to the locality, asking how far wood-carving was appropriated by National Socialism. An information board explained that the wood-carvers' craft, which had already started to follow the trend towards a pared-down, angular carving style, needed little adaption to appeal to National Socialist tastes, but that wood-carvers also accommodated themselves to the times in their choice of subject matter. The long vitrine contained idealized figures of farmers, sportsmen, Hitler Youth boys and soldiers. Also in the vitrine was a large eagle holding a wreath from which the swastika was removed after 1945 and a commemorative plaque honouring two soldiers, carved with the conventional national symbol of oak leaves. A caption indicated that since most wood-carvings from the era of the Third Reich were burned as firewood in the years of shortage after 1945, these were rare survivors.

Six wooden hands and a single wooden foot were central to the exhibition in two ways (Fig. 3.7). They formed the central exhibit in the long vitrine, distinguished from the exhibits on either side by their low height, their lack of fine relief work and their incompleteness (as representations of only part of a human body). They were also the motif chosen for the exhibition flyer, which showed a photograph of a man and a woman shaping wooden hands at a workbench, while more than a dozen hands in various stages of completion sit on the bench in front of them. Two similar photographs appeared on the display case. An information board explained that these prosthetic body parts, intended for injured soldiers, became one of the main licensed outputs of the wood-carvers' workshops during the war and that women were drafted in to do some of the less fine work during the absence of male wood-carvers at the front.

For visitors from outside the town, the hands may have looked much like the prostheses at the MHM, evoking the responsiveness of technology to war and the pathos of war damage. To create the hands, the

Fig. 3.7 Prosthetic hands and foot made by Oberammergau woodcarvers, shown at the exhibition 'NS-Herrschaft und Krieg. Oberammergau 1933–1945', 2015 at the Oberammergau Museum. Photograph: Chloe Paver

man and the woman in the photograph are using fine motor skills that are forever lost to the soldier amputees. Yet displaying carved wood in Oberammergau is nothing like displaying carved wood in Dresden. While the hands were a metonym for the mutilated bodies they would be attached to, they did not even point to the mutilated bodies of Oberammergau men since they were made for export. To local inhabitants, the prostheses and the flyer image may well have evoked sadness since they represent a degradation of the wood-carver's art, a sorry waste of the carvers' prodigious skills on basic serial, secular work with no connection to the locality and no family tradition.

While the row of carvings in the glass case did not follow a strict chronology, there was an underlying one. A farmer's wife and child in a static pose faced the entrance to the main exhibition room, representing the status quo in 1933, but the subsequent series of male figures

had been carved in various clichéd attitudes of gazing ahead, marching, straining forwards or (in the case of a grenade-throwing soldier) preparing to propel themselves forwards. The exhibition-makers set them up to strive in the opposite direction to the farmer's wife, towards the end of the case. Following the implied chronology, a complicity with Nazi ideals of masculine action led to injury (prostheses) and then death (a memorial plaque). Yet, the last word in the chronology was given to the wood-carvers as individuals. The information board and captions explained that joining the army or being conscripted did not put an end to the wood-carvers' work. The Wehrmacht encouraged hobbyists and the wood-carvers used their craft as a way of coping with war and imprisonment. Among the items shown was a wildly whimsical 'tree of life', very unlike the standardized figurative wood-carvings generally made in the town, which one wood-carver fashioned while stationed in Egypt. A kitsch carving of a cherub holding hands with a boy and a girl—a wood-carver's promise to his sister that their guardian angel would protect them—was given unexpected power by a second caption that revealed that the wood-carver was killed in fighting in 1944.

As in Hamburg, we see in Oberammergau the social contract that allows wartime experiences—including experiences of nationalistic fervour, of suffering, fear, and bereavement—to be articulated. Frank and objective acknowledgments of opportunism, prejudice, stupidity and violence (such as are given mostly in the texts) make a space available for personal and family memories of the Second World War. In a town that still relies on its wood-carvers to help drive the local economy and consolidate the town's tourist branding, exploring the links between wood-carving and National Socialism was brave and honest. Arguably, that honesty allowed the exhibition to reassert the individual creativity of the wood-carvers under National Socialism and to evoke the hardship of their being torn not just from the safety of home and family but also from the context in which they should have been using their skills to prosper in a peaceful life.

Finally, a word about photograph albums. Many exhibitions—including several of those examined here—show photograph albums compiled by soldiers. The indispensability of this object for history exhibitions ever since the pioneering 'Fotofeldpost' exhibition in 2000 can be measured by the fact that several were included in the exhibition 'Hitler und die Deutschen. Volksgemeinschaft und Verbrechen' ('Hitler and the Germans: Nation and Crime', 2010 at the Deutsches Historisches

Museum) to represent the *Volksgemeinschaft* at war. As with photograph albums recording civilian life in the years 1933–39, soldiers' albums serve not to document past events, as single photographs might do in their two-dimensional form, but rather to evoke the conscious act of taking and compiling photographs to represent the self to others and to store anticipated memories. This allows exhibitions to stress the importance of understanding mentalities and their social formation or, looked at from a different angle, to fulfil visitor expectations that a serious exhibition will address the question of mentalities. Photographs in such albums mostly show scenes of *Kameradschaft*, occasionally Jewish villagers and townspeople, only rarely atrocities. The DB Museum in Nuremberg shows facsimiles of two albums compiled by railway engineering teams sent to Poland to repair the railways. In a foreword to one album, a brigade leader presents the album to his superiors at the Reichsbahndirektion Augsburg so that the bosses can see what qualities the men showed in adversity, contributing to the success of the operation 'durch ihr fachmännisches Wissen und durch ihre persönliche Haltung' ('through their professional knowledge and personal behaviour'). While the first photographs in the selected extracts seem to perform this act of professional communication successfully (showing evidence of disciplined teamwork), later photographs show round-ups of 'Störenfrieden' ('troublemakers') and of Polish Jews who are forcibly assembled to clean up a station. One photograph shows a man in Jewish dress holding a broom in one hand, but not, at that moment, using it. A sarcastic caption addresses him and imitates his supposedly broken German: '… ist schwierig was? Gutester Herr, altes Jud' kann nicht arbeiten' ('It's difficult, huh? Good sir, old Jew cannot work'). While all scholars of photography would caution against reading mentalities out of individual photographs,[99] the visitor can at least surmise that the engineer who made the album had no objection to the treatment of the old man and was confident that the Reichsbahndirektion Augsburg would not object to his tone. Thus, while showing a single photograph album in a museum setting is always bound to fall below scholarly standards for photographic analysis, wartime albums allow exhibition-makers

[99] On this issue, see particularly Klaus Hesse, 'Die Bilder lesen. Interpretationen fotografischer Quellen zur Deportation der deutschen Juden', in *Vor aller Augen. Fotodokumente des nationalsozialistischen Terrors in der Provinz*, ed. by Klaus Hesse and Philipp Springer (Essen: Klartext, 2002), pp. 185–212 (pp. 188, 189).

at least to draw attention to different kinds of social license (assumed or actual): the license to see and to know, to think in certain ways, and to communicate those views.

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This chapter has considered which categories of object are available to exhibition-makers to document the history of 1933–45, and in particular which have the capacity to convey typical emotions and mentalities of that time, given that these are understood, in both academic historiography and public history, to be the main key for unlocking the workings of the dictatorship and the involvement of the *Volksgemeinschaft* in it. Beyond the general challenge of locating immaterial emotions and mentalities in material form, exhibition-makers face the added challenge that the emotions and mentalities of 1933–45 remain somewhat out of reach today: out of reach beyond a Holocaust that destroyed irreversibly much of the sense of Jewish belonging to place, especially in rural areas; out of reach to a democratic society that can barely imagine the workings of the camps, having long neglected to engage with them; and out of reach beyond decades of post-war condemnation, not just of the crimes, but also of perceived failures to face up to them after 1945.

Writing in 2006, Aleida Assmann called the condemnation of the Nazi-era majority, especially in the 1960s, a 'looking back in anger' that only began to cede to a 'looking back in empathy' in the 1990s.[100] However, in 2006 she saw the national master narrative of historical responsibility for the atrocities as remaining intact even after majority experiences of suffering were given license to enter the public realm.[101] This is confirmed by the many history exhibitions I have viewed since then, in which any 'looking back in empathy' is carefully framed by continued strong criticism of the *Volksgemeinschaft* and continued strong criticism of the post-war democratic society it progressed to be, as will become clearer in Chapter Five. A forgiving arc between experience and memory ('they remembered like this because they had experienced that') is only rarely drawn.

[100] Aleida Assmann, 'On the (In)compatibility of Guilt and Suffering in German Memory', *German Life and Letters*, 59 (2006), 187–200 (p. 192).

[101] Ibid., pp. 197–98.

CHAPTER 4

Material Collapse, 1945

In 1989, David F. Crew noted that one of the successes of an *Alltagsgeschichte* approach had been to show that the turning points identified by historians (1933, 1945) were not the turning points experienced by ordinary people, for whom wartime hardship, for instance, was more likely to end with the suspension of rationing.[1] Twenty years later, in an introduction to a volume of essays on experiences of the Second World War, Henry Rousso took a similar line, distinguishing between the conventional definition of a war's end—the cessation of hostilities—and what French calls the 'sortie de guerre' or 'disengagement from war'. From the point of view of the individual, he writes, 'Not everybody arrives at the war's end at the same time, or under the same circumstances, or even with the same short-, mid-, or long-term consequences'.[2]

In nevertheless dividing my main chapters into 'before 1945', '1945' and 'after 1945', I take my lead from exhibitions themselves, which structure their material chronologically and use the date 1945, often

[1] David F. Crew, '*Alltagsgeschichte*: A New Social History "From Below"?', *Central European History*, 22.3/4 (1989), Special Issue: 'German Histories: Challenges in Theory, Practice, Technique', 394–407 (p. 404).

[2] Henry Rousso, 'A New Perspective on the War', in *Experience and Memory: The Second World War in Europe*, ed. by Jörg Echternkamp and Stefan Martens (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2010; first publ. in German: Paderborn: Schöningh, 2007), pp. 1–9 (p. 5). Compare, in the same volume, Axel Schildt, pp. 197–213 (p. 199).

C. Paver, *Exhibiting the Nazi Past*, The Holocaust and its Contexts,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77084-0_4

in anniversary years, as an organizing principle and publicity hook. Ten years after its 2005 exhibition 'Der Krieg und seine Folgen. 1945' ('The War and Its Consequences: 1945'), the Deutsches Historisches Museum (DHM) showed '1945. Niederlage. Befreiung. Neuanfang. Zwölf Länder Europas nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg' ('1945. Defeat. Liberation. New Beginnings: Twelve European Countries After the Second World War'), which I discuss below. Thus, while disrupting chronological certainties is a mark of sophistication in academic historiography, it has less value in public history, which uses known key dates to transmit clear messages to a non-academic audience. An exhibition with the title 'Disengagement from War 1944–49 and Beyond' would not be a great draw (at least not for some time yet).

Nonetheless, in practice, history exhibitions are alive to the complexities of the 'disengagement from war', tending to foreground those metonymic features of objects that mark or trace time in more subtle ways than a simple stamp of '1945', sometimes also reading the marks and traces metaphorically. Section 4.1, which briefly broadens this study's focus to Europe, considers how exhibition-makers select objects for their ability to encode processes of transition and transit. Section 4.2 returns to Germany and Austria and considers why museums are drawn to objects that were smashed, toppled, buried or recycled in 1945 for what they say (or can be made to say) about national psychology. Section 4.3 discusses the parallel process by which Jewish survivors readjusted to a new life outside the Nazi camps, also improvising and recycling, while at the same time renewing Jewish cultural life.

4.1 The *Sortie de Guerre*: Objects Caught in Time

All exhibitions about the end of the Nazi regime in Germany and Austria must engage in one way or another with the constructed nature of time because, as Bill Niven has shown, the meaning of the date 1945 has itself been disputed in the public sphere.[3] In the DHM's exhibition '1945', the 'Befreiung' of the title refers to liberation from occupation, yet German visitors will have read the binary of 'defeat' and 'liberation' in the light of the debates about whether 1945 should be understood from

[3] Bill Niven, '8 May 1945 in Political Discourse', in *Facing the Nazi Past: United Germany and the Legacy of the Third Reich*, ed. by Bill Niven (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 95–118.

the standpoint of the non-persecuted majority (for which it was, by and large, a defeat) or from the standpoint of the victims (for which it was a liberation from terror). While the exhibition title might superficially suggest an intention to give equal weight to these viewpoints, the exhibition space was arranged hierarchically and sequentially. Before entering any of the segments devoted to individual countries and their new beginnings, visitors had to pass through a stark white 'core'. This bright, object-free atrium was decorated with statistics about Nazi crimes and about the losses incurred in the war unleashed by Nazi Germany. Thus, though the museum's director, writing in the exhibition catalogue, promised 'Multiperspektivität' and 'widersprüchliche Lesarten',[4] this was in practice only on offer once the moral non-negotiables had been established. This kind of framing is common in today's German history exhibitions, though not always as explicit as here.[5]

The Deutsch-Russisches Museum does something equivalent in its permanent exhibition (opened 2014) by using words as objects (a technique that was discussed in Sect. 3.2). In the anteroom to the hall where the surrender on the Eastern Front was signed, a vitrine contains not objects, as expected, but words in block form, including 'Kapitulation', 'Trauer', 'Befreiung', 'Freude', 'Verlust', 'Hoffnung' and 'Angst' ('surrender', 'sorrow', 'liberation', 'joy', 'loss', 'hope' and 'fear'), and their Russian equivalents. A German visitor will understand that these words evoke the differing emotions felt in 1945, depending on which side one was on and, in Germany, on whether one belonged to the majority or to a victim group. In this way, the museum gives German visitors explicit license to bring their families' emotions into the historical exhibition (and to openly express negative feelings about defeat), provided the relativity of those emotions is acknowledged from the outset.

Returning to the DHM's '1945', its lead image, used on the catalogue, posters and flyers, presented 1945 as a clear caesura, and,

[4] 'Multi-perspectivity' and 'contradictory interpretations': Alexander Koch, 'Vorwort', in Deutsches Historisches Museum (ed.), *1945. Niederlage. Befreiung. Neuanfang. Zwölf Länder Europas nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2015), pp. 6–7 (p. 6) (though see my comments in Sect. 2.2 on how this freedom is limited).

[5] 'Nationalsozialismus in Freiburg' opened with two small photographs, one showing Nazi supporters massed on the town square, the other showing the ruins of the town in the winter of 1944/45. No comment was offered but a clearer visual statement of cause and effect (corresponding to the German phrase 'Das hat man davon' or 'That's what you get') is difficult to imagine. Placed alongside a remnant of the synagogue, this introduction firmly rejected, from the outset, any identification with a majority victim position.

interestingly for this study, as a clear material caesura. A photograph by Yevgeny Khaldei showed the poet Yevgeniy Dolmatovsky walking through the streets of Berlin on the day of the city's surrender, laughing as he carried a bust of Hitler tucked in the crook of his arm.[6] Five years earlier, in 2010, when the DHM produced the first national exhibition on Hitler ('Hitler und die Deutschen'), it had decided that the best way to deny Hitler's ideology any credence was not to reproduce his face on posters. This time, the DHM was willing to show his face, framed by the ridicule of defeat.

Though not itself an object, Khaldei's image placed objects—and their role in 1945—centre stage, showing how the pleasure of defeat expressed itself in a desecration of Nazi objects. This may seem straightforward: the moment when Hitler's likeness can be carried casually in the street is the moment his power has vanished. However, museums are one of a restricted number of places in which busts are conventionally put on show. As Sect. 3.3 showed, busts are objects whose use is still hedged around with social restrictions, subject to rigid conventions of bodily comportment in which museums normally concur. Unlike other objects which can be used in multiple ways and passed around, a bust must be immobile, untouched, upright at a certain height, surrounded by blank space and permanently visible, though chiefly from one angle. It might from time to time have to be transported, but it will be packaged and invisible for the duration. It has no place in traffic, on the move, on the open street. By walking along with the bust in the crook of his arm, holding it as he would a football or a cabbage, Dolmatovsky violates all of these conventions except the visibility of the subject's face, which he respects only in order to make his act of cultural devaluation visible. By propagating an image showing the transgression of museum norms of respect for material culture, the DHM signalled its own critical perspective on the Nazi regime. Like the DRM's vitrine of words the poster also invited identification with the (mostly) non-German experience of 1945 as liberation.[7]

[6] Deutsches Historisches Museum, *1945*, p. 248 (for details of the cover photograph).

[7] Other exhibitions show similar objects damaged in the euphoria of victory. The Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr shows a portrait of a nineteenth-century general, his eyes punched out by Soviet bayonets as a sign of the soldiers' contempt for German militarism. The NS-Dokumentation Vogelsang shows the remains of an eagle buried in rubble by British forces.

While the exhibition publicity thus reduced '1945' to a single, unambiguous object, the exhibition itself showed time and objects to be interwoven in more complex ways. Though the catalogue made no claims to a new or specialized approach, it was clearly informed by *Alltagsgeschichte* in its discussion of the emotions and mentalities of Europe's post-war populations and the exhibition seemed to take up Rousso's challenge to acknowledge the messiness and asynchronicity of the 'disengagement from war'. This was neatly encapsulated in an object that was itself a chronometer: a pocket watch smashed at the moment when a Belgian soldier was blown up clearing German mines, in August 1945, in one of the war's brutal aftershocks.[8] The chronological fuzziness that might be expressed in adverbs such as 'still', 'even now', 'too late' and 'not yet' was encoded in many objects. Individuals, the exhibition suggested, might attempt to neaten and align time by fixing significant moments concretely, for instance by dating objects, but that date could as easily be in 1944 as in 1945. The exhibition also took pains not to reduce wider historical processes to a turning point of 1945, given that the end of hostilities overlapped with other processes such as colonial rule.[9] Nor were the years 1944–45 presented as an unambiguous new beginning, even for the liberated. For many people, the exhibition showed, the cessation of hostilities came too late or failed to fulfil the promises of an end to suffering. A series of objects will illustrate these points.

Objects that showed the subjective will to mark the end of Nazi rule in material form included a rattle of the kind used at football matches. A Belgian inventor patented a design of rattle in February 1944 but kept its purpose secret: when the liberation came, it was to have Belgian and British flags affixed on each side and be used to greet the liberators.[10] Other people made and dated objects to be sure of fixing a life-changing moment in lasting three-dimensional form. These included a lily of the valley, picked, pressed and dated ('Picked on the way home from Germany, near Neumünster, on 21.4.45') by a Danish resister and camp

[8] Deutsches Historisches Museum, *1945*, p. 169. The museum returns at other points in the exhibition to this delayed killing by German munitions, which killed more than 2400 people in France, for instance (p. 189).

[9] Deutsches Historisches Museum, *1945*, p. 171.

[10] Deutsches Historisches Museum, *1945*, p. 168.

survivor,[11] and a ceramic plate, one of several commissioned by a camp survivor as presents for friends who had sent packages to him during his captivity at the Vught concentration camp.[12] Where a commemorative plate would conventionally be imprinted with the date of a wedding or other special occasion, this one was dated 'Vught 1943–1944'. The plate showed a pair of hands reaching skywards, as if in supplication. Above them, within a halo of light, where a religious motif would conventionally be, was a brown paper parcel, tied with string. The camp survivor created an object to recall that he was saved by material goods (and the love of friends who sent them) and in doing so showed that he had now returned from a world of bare survival to a world in which his emotions could be freely expressed, through a conventional material mark of gratitude commissioned in the normal market for goods. This was therefore an object that told about objects and emotions, about the suspension and reinstatement of a conventional material economy of emotional exchange.

A positive aspect of this exhibition was that it showed how women expressed their experience of the end of hostilities by making clothing or having clothing made. Dutch, Belgian, French and Norwegian women all, in their national contexts, made dresses in celebration of the end of the war.[13] One victory dress, however, was never put to use. Made in the French national colours and decorated with a cross of Lorraine, it was lovingly hand-sewn by a mother for her daughter to welcome back a father imprisoned for his work in the resistance. Its purpose was never fulfilled because he died in a sub-camp of Struthof in March 1945.[14] A Ukrainian ethnic smock, carried by a Ukrainian–Polish family when they were forcibly resettled in another part of Poland, also became an anachronism in the shifting sands of the transition. The caption revealed that this token of a home culture was only worn for a very short time as it was expedient to fit into the new Polish ethnic environment. Withdrawn from use, the smock was kept as a memento.[15]

[11] Deutsches Historisches Museum, *1945*, p. 104.

[12] Deutsches Historisches Museum, *1945*, p. 156.

[13] Deutsches Historisches Museum, *1945*, pp. 124, 153, 168, 185, and 190.

[14] Deutsches Historisches Museum, *1945*, p. 190.

[15] Deutsches Historisches Museum, *1945*, p. 76. The Donauschwäbisches Zentralmuseum shows similar objects, taken on the long treks westwards but quickly unusable in the context of assimilation.

In the section on Germany, the components of a doll's tea set were suspended on wires, perhaps to contrast their playfulness with the grim realities of persecution and war.[16] Given to two child camp survivors after their liberation by the Soviets, the toys represent the moment at which childhood resumed for them, yet the caption undermined any sentimental meaning because it recorded that the children's parents died of typhus very shortly afterwards, before they could be repatriated. Another such object caught in time between new life and death was a diary, kept by a Belgian Jew in hiding.[17] In the catalogue (I do not have a record of it in the exhibition room), the diary is open at 26 and 27 September 1944, by which time the man's wife and children had been deported to Auschwitz and by which date his survival had become miraculous. Though the diary predates liberation, the caption interpreted it as representing the author's lack of liberation in 1945: unable to rejoice because he could not find his family, he died in July 1945. The forward march of time implied by successive diary pages is thus cut short: however miraculous the 27 September 1944, there would be no 27 September 1945.

As some of these examples show, the DHM was, like other exhibition-makers, interested in the object odysseys that continued to happen during this time, showing objects that refugees and deportees took with them, luggage used to return home, looted objects that were restituted and factory plant transported to the Allied countries as reparation.[18] Other objects fell into the black hole left by the Holocaust: either they had been displaced and could not make a return journey or their owners had been displaced and could not be reunited with them. A cobbler's toolbox—its pliers, scissors and knives still a metonym for the skilled hands that had used them—could not be returned to the Jewish owner who had given it to Dutch neighbours for safekeeping. As the caption put it, the guardians of the toolbox 'waited in vain' for the neighbours to return, taking us back to a moment when pre-war Jewish culture was still materially present, but in suspension.[19]

[16] The catalogue shows some of the tea-set pieces photographed on a surface (Deutsches Historisches Museum, *1945*, p. 26), but in the exhibition there were many more pieces, each suspended on a wire to create a kind of shower of tiny toys.

[17] Deutsches Historisches Museum, *1945*, p. 172.

[18] Deutsches Historisches Museum, *1945*, pp. 74, 76, 88, 104, 105, 205, 208, 237. In some cases (p. 226), exiles remained in exile and so objects from Germany did not return until this exhibition.

[19] Deutsches Historisches Museum, *1945*, p. 157.

While some of the interpretations here (for instance of the Vught plate) are my own rather than the exhibition-makers', my underlying point is that the rich assortment of objects sourced and chosen by the exhibition-makers implicitly constructed a panorama of the emotions of 1945 while also showing how inextricable from the material individual experiences of 1945 were. For this topic, display objects are much more than just referential props or proofs: they are (and are presented as) the material through which history was lived.

4.2 Vandalism, Disposal and Recycling

The experiences of the non-persecuted majority of Germans and Austrians are the more common focus of history exhibitions that address the experience of 1945 (understood as the constructed '1945') and objects are central to the majority experience of transition. At the moment of defeat every obviously Nazi-coded object immediately lost all material and social value for majority Germans and Austrians (while for a time having a residual value to Allied soldiers as booty). Exhibition-makers have become increasingly interested in this moment of mass devaluation and disposal, not for its own sake but because of the broader social meaning of this process.

Objects that were actually destroyed (burned or smashed to small pieces) and objects that were rendered irrecoverable by burial in large landfill pits are not available to museums for display. This narrows the available object base to those objects that were unsuccessfully disposed of and later found buried or hidden, or that were recycled in 1945. These real processes—burial, hiding, adaptation for continued use—happen to map neatly on to metaphors that are used to express moral disapproval of Germany's and Austria's half-hearted or non-existent acknowledgement of past wrongs. Thus, when objects from this moment of disposal are displayed, the key—though often unspoken—question is: Did Germans really switch from faith in a dictator to a belief in democracy just by shedding the material signifiers of the old regime? And the unspoken answer is often: 'No'. Similarly, where recycled objects are shown, the implication is that majority Germans preserved the core values that had led them to support Hitler, but 'dressed' them differently so that they might be of use in a new democratic order.

If we unpick the metaphor, the 'vehicle' is the superficially altered object, the tertium comparationis is failing or refusing to dispose of

something properly and the (unspoken) 'tenor' or 'ground' is the unreformed German post-war mind. But this is not to say that the material object serves only to point away from itself to implied moral failings, since the two are inseparably linked. Against the background of German and Austrian discourses about the Nazi past the very physicality of material disposal makes it suspect, detached as it is from mental and moral processes: to throw away the thing is not to rethink one's values. At the same time, real material shortages forced compromises on Germans and Austrians that were simultaneously material and moral. Reusing swastika flags for dresses and aprons of course meant retaining a physical link to the old regime but was a pragmatic response to poverty and shortage. Focussing on recycling as practical need may therefore express a less condemnatory attitude to the German majority in the post-war years.

I begin with objects from which evidence of allegiance to National Socialism has been physically excised, a particularly common display item.[20] Often the implication—that it was much easier to switch sides by erasing the signs of Nazism than to reflect on and regret one's involvement in a murderous regime—is unarticulated, relying on a moral knowledge brought to the museum by the visitor. Susanne Hagemann's study of German city museums lends weight to my assumption of such an 'invisible' discourse. Hagemann cites three objects from which Nazi emblems were effaced in 1945 and notes that museums exploit the owners' devaluation of their objects to express their own distance from them. One of the three, shown at the Kölnisches Stadtmuseum, was a painting of Hitler with scratches to the face. The exhibition-makers placed it on the floor of a vitrine and explained in the caption that, according to her family, the wife of the painter scratched out Hitler's face 'aus Enttäuschung über den Führer' ('because she was disappointed with the Führer'). The museum's own use of inverted commas around this phrase suggests a measure of distance from the family's story, without explaining the reason for it. Hagemann concludes: 'Für den "mündigen"

[20]For further examples, see: the DB Museum (bureaucratic items from the railways re-used after 1945, minus their emblems); the Erinnerungs- und Gedenkstätte Wewelsburg 1933–1945 (cutlery plundered from the fort in 1945, with the Nazi symbols etched out); and 'Volk – Heimat – Dorf' (the state insignia chiselled off a house plaque). The catalogue shows a further example in which swastikas have been turned into squares: Birgit Angerer et al. (eds), *Volk, Heimat, Dorf. Ideologie und Wirklichkeit im ländlichen Bayern der 1930er und 1940er Jahre* (Petersberg: Imhof, 2016), p. 271.

Besucher ist es offen gelassen, zu interpretieren. Den möglichen Schluss, dass Frau Rickelt keine Antifaschistin und Hitlergegnerin gewesen sein muss, obwohl sie dem "Führer" das Gesicht zerkratzte, kann er oder sie selbst ziehen' ('The "educated" visitor is left to interpret this as they see fit. They are free to draw the conclusion that Frau Rickelt was not necessarily an anti-fascist and opponent of Hitler, even though she scratched out the "Führer's" face').[21] Hagemann's own writing is elliptical here, since she leaves the educated *reader* free to draw the conclusion that the museum is using the donated object to typify mentalities of the majority population, silently criticizing Frau Rickelt (and with her many others) for tolerating Hitler's image in her house until a point at which it became expedient—but not dangerous—to switch sides. Wider experience suggests that this is quite likely the exhibition-makers' intention, although academic study of the topic will work better if we do not meet understatement with understatement. Hagemann's use of 'mündig' ('educated', 'intellectually mature') in inverted commas suggests a measure of uncertainty about this construct, which, like all 'attentive reader' constructs, risks acting as a pseudo-objective substitute for the first person. In this case, however, Hagemann has a point: museums, which are so explicit in their messages about National Socialism, do often seem to assume a visitor who can read between the lines to understand and criticize post-war attitudes. Moreover, it is indeed difficult to get a handle on the nature of this assumed 'Mündigkeit', although it certainly includes a moral disapproval of Germany's and Austria's inadequate remembrance after 1945 and an ability to spot examples of evasive, unrepentant and self-exculpatory behaviour.

When, occasionally, the implications of effaced Nazi symbols *are* spelled out, this indicates what visitors are expected to read into uncommented displays elsewhere. The exhibition 'Forschung, Lehre, Unrecht. Die Universität Tübingen im Nationalsozialismus' ('Research, Teaching, Crime: The University of Tübingen in the National Socialist Era', 2015 at the Museum der Universität Tübingen) devoted its final chapter to the period after 1945. It will be discussed in more detail in Sects. 5.2 and 5.6 but showed one significant object from the 1945 watershed.

[21] Susanne Hagemann, '"Leere Gesten"? Darstellungsmuster in Ausstellungen zur NS-Zeit', in Museumsverband des Landes Brandenburg (ed.), *Entnazifizierte Zone? Zum Umgang mit der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus in ostdeutschen Stadt- und Regionalmuseen* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015), pp. 77–92 (pp. 90–91).

A map of Albania, manufactured before 1945, had been shortened by cutting a strip off the bottom edge, leaving the top third of a circular ink stamp visible.[22] The caption read:

> Am unteren Rand der Karte erkennt man einen angeschnittenen Stempel aus der NS-Zeit. Dort liest man noch die Worte: "[…]alsoz. Deutsche Arbeiterp[…]" und "NSDAP". Durch das Wegschneiden des NS-Stempels ließ sich die Tafel in der Lehre weiter verwenden. Doch die Aufarbeitung der eigenen Geschichte leistete man so nicht.
>
> (At the bottom edge of the map one can see a stamp from the Nazi era which has been partly trimmed off. It is still possible to read the words: '"[…] al Soc. German Workers' P[…]" and "NSDAP". Cutting off the Nazi stamp made it possible to keep using the map as a teaching aid. But this was not a way to critically evaluate one's own history.)

The alteration to the map is first read as a practical way of allowing a utilitarian object to transition from one regime to the next. The exhibition-makers' interpretation in the sentence about 'Aufarbeitung'—that there is a substantive difference between physically removing signs of the previous regime and doing the hard mental and moral work of recognizing the ways in which one was complicit in it—is also, in one sense, factual. It is historically demonstrable—and fully demonstrated in this exhibition—that, in the decades after 1945, university personnel were slow to face up to their failings. However, the interpretation also makes the object *stand for* the difference between easy fixes and difficult moral self-evaluation, whether or not the particular geographer who shortened the map examined their own conscience in 1945.

The exhibition 'Who Was a Nazi?', which concerned the Allies' use of questionnaires to establish levels of complicity among the German populace,[23] offered a similar mixture of explicit interpretation and suggestiveness. Though mostly documentary, the exhibition showed three-dimensional objects from 1945, when public space was denazified by Allied decree. In one display case, the swastika had received various

[22] Ernst Seidl (ed.), *Forschung, Lehre, Unrecht. Die Universität Tübingen im Nationalsozialismus* (Tübingen: Museum der Universität Tübingen, 2015), pp. 264–65.

[23] 'Who Was a Nazi? Entnazifizierung in Deutschland nach 1945' ('Who Was a Nazi? Denazification in Germany after 1945', 2016 at the AlliiertenMuseum). The exhibition was in German despite its English title, which was borrowed from a historical publication.

treatments: stamped out of the roundel below a metal eagle; cut away from a police helmet; polished off the surface of an engraved belt buckle; effaced from a silver spoon by tapping repeatedly with a hammer on a nail; and inked out on a telegram. Nearby, a historical document spoke about objects: a notice from the Soviet military administration entitled 'Renewed Request' ('Erneute Aufforderung') reminded an evidently obdurate populace that it must hand over Nazi objects or face punishment. The objects subject to this amnesty included not just flags and printed propaganda but gramophone records of Nazi music and camping equipment used by the Hitler Youth. The document reminds us that this second method of removing Nazi material culture—collecting it and taking it out of circulation—is less easy to put on display than the effacing of insignia. I have yet to see a photograph of these material amnesties. The document also underlines that the clearing out of Nazi-coded material in 1945 was not—as it might appear in museums—a one-day spring clean but a drawn-out, iterative process involving hundreds of thousands of individual actions, massive organization and effort.

In fact, the altered objects shown in 'Who Was a Nazi?' suggested a mixture of effort and ease in the disposal of objects in 1945: on the one hand, human hands needed to work on objects for some time to polish out or hammer out insignia, making it a conscious (and potentially memorable) action; on the other hand, given that the Nazi regime had lasted twelve years, it is striking that the power invested in its material culture could dissipate overnight and the objects themselves be easily discarded. To a visitor with little knowledge of German memory concerns, this might imply that Germans willingly made the transition to democracy, but an information board guided the visitor away from that conclusion, contrasting the relative ease with which material culture could be adapted to a new reality with the difficulty of effecting a corresponding psychological and moral transformation. The relevant section read:

> Symbole und Alltagsspuren des NS-Staats ließen sich relativ einfach entfernen. Die Auseinandersetzung der Deutschen mit ihrer Vergangenheit und der eigenen politischen Schuld war eine weitaus schwierigere Aufgabe und sollte noch Jahrzehnte dauern.
>
> (Symbols and everyday traces of the Nazi state could be relatively easily removed. It was a much more difficult task for Germans to face up to their past and their own political guilt, and this task would take decades.)

This text encouraged the visitor to think about absent thoughts and emotions, but not in the conventional way in which an object present in the exhibition room is asked to stand for absent, immaterial human attitudes or emotions because these are, by their nature, ephemeral. Rather, the objects present in the exhibition room pointed towards immaterial human attitudes that did not materialize; they contrasted physical action with moral inaction.

The exhibition 'Ordnung und Vernichtung. Die Polizei im NS-Staat' ('Order and Annihilation: the Police and the Nazi Regime', 2011 at the Deutsches Historisches Museum) showed how the ordinary police force, through its cooperation with the NSDAP, Gestapo, Wehrmacht and SS, was thoroughly implicated in Nazi persecution and crime. The penultimate chapter 'Neuanfang, aber keine Stunde Null' ('A New Beginning, but no Zero Hour') was typical of all such epilogues: critical of postwar failure to take responsibility. It documented the reconstitution of the police service after 1945, stressing how few police officers faced disciplinary or legal action and how many—especially in the West—were able to continue their careers. Two items recycled in 1945 were shown in this section: a rubber stamp from the police headquarters at Hamm, with the eagle and swastika removed; and a green pre-1945 police uniform which had been dyed blue to make it usable under the new dispensation. The eagle-and-swastika insignia had also been removed from the uniform's cap.[24]

As the accompanying texts explained, these resourceful practices were common during a time of material shortage. In the context of the exhibition, however, police resourcefulness was not being celebrated, or even acknowledged as a reasonable response. Rather, the dyeing of the uniform from green to blue was a metaphor for a switch from one political allegiance to another. To be sincere, profound and long-lasting, such a switch would take considerable mental and moral effort; dyeing, by contrast, is a one-step process that involves a merely external change. The dyed uniform implied that the switch to democracy was superficial and not to be trusted. Of course, the real wearer of this uniform may have made a sincere conversion to democracy. Conversely, he may have continued to entertain ideas encouraged under National Socialism, up to and including murderous anti-Semitism. Either way, the transformation

[24] Dierl et al., p. 287.

or continuity of mentality, as the case may be, had nothing to do with whether he was issued with a new uniform or had to make do with a recycled one. Factually speaking, materiality and mentality are entirely disconnected here. However, the exhibit did not need a real, individual story in order to work as a metaphor, and nor did the museum provide one.

A neighbouring document did tell an individual story, however, one that helped to secure the figurative equivalence between a quick dunk in dye and an insincere conversion. In a letter to his superiors, Paul Salitter, a former NSDAP member, begged to have his job as a policeman back, promising to devote himself wholeheartedly to the new democracy, just as he had served Wilhelm II, Ebert, Hindenburg and the Third Reich before.[25] The caption also revealed that he was later discovered to have been in charge of guarding a deportation train. Even though this document gave the visitor a steer as to how to read the dyed uniform, the lack of explicit interpretation suggests that the exhibition-makers assumed a visitor who would easily read hastily remade objects as a metaphor for hastily (and therefore inadequately) remade political views. At the same time, the materiality of the object had the potential to return the visitor to the factual reality of the historical moment, to the extraordinarily sharp divide between last month and this month, between one political order and another.

The chances of finding objects that were disposed of in 1945 and that still bear the marks of their deliberate disposal must be quite low, but three examples below suggest that where they are found, museums seize on them. The first, in the permanent exhibition at the Dokumentationszentrum Reichsparteitagsgelände in Nuremberg, shares with the police example above a lack of explicit commentary. At the end of its parcours, the documentation centre tells the after-story of the Nazi Party rally grounds. A glass case sunk into the floor contains a heap of what looks like rubbish, including broken pieces of porcelain that once made up a likeness of a face (Fig. 4.1). A caption on a nearby wall reads:

> Bodenfunde aus einem Schrebergarten auf dem ehemaligen Reichsparteitagsgelände, Nürnberg 1998. Emailbecher mit Hakenkreuz; Hitler-Kopf aus Keramik, zerschlagen in ca. 30 Teile; 4 NS-Abzeichen.

[25] Dierl et al., pp. 285–86.

Fig. 4.1 Nazi waste dug up from an allotment in 1998, Dokumentationszentrum Reichsparteitagsgelände. Photograph: Chloe Paver

(Items dug up from an allotment on the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds, Nuremberg, in 1998. Enamel cup with swastika; ceramic bust of Hitler, smashed into about 30 pieces; 4 National Socialist badges.)

The display demonstrates that once museums acquire and display rubbish, valorizing and devalorizing tendencies pull against one another. The position on the floor suggests objects of little value that can (as the footprints on the glass suggest) be trampled underfoot with impunity, but the evocation of 'buried treasure' arguably also allows the visitor the vicarious excitement of uncovering an archaeological find. The fragments have been scattered across an artificial screed to imitate a small pile of discarded trash, yet at the same time they have enjoyed careful attention from the exhibition-makers. The enamel cup has been placed on its side so that the swastika shows; the four badges have all 'landed' face upwards; and one telltale piece of porcelain, showing a mouth and

moustache, has been separated out from the jumble and placed with the features uppermost so that even a visitor who fails to locate the caption can guess that this was a bust of Hitler. The objects' communicative value can only be exploited if their 'markings' are given visibility, but they must appear jumbled because what is to be communicated is the act of throwing them away. Were they to be scrubbed up, pieced together and placed at a discrete distance from one another on a display shelf, they would be unremarkable examples of large classes of mass-produced object and would tell a museum visitor nothing.

Why have these useless objects increased so much in value to the museum by dint of being thrown away? On the one hand, they can serve to symbolize the perceived shallowness of many Germans' post-war conversion to democracy, which consisted in hastily divesting themselves of the outward tokens of Nazi allegiance. In this context, it is significant that this was an improvised, private rubbish dump rather than an official, collective one, since it hints at private accommodations with the past unsupported by a collective moral framework. At the same time, the buried objects allow the interpretation that, for decades after the war, National Socialist values remained 'just below the surface', while their accidental retrieval might imply that Germany's belated confrontation of its past has not been an entirely voluntary act. Whether the original action of burying these objects was in reality symptomatic of any of these national pathologies (given that the particular man or woman who buried these objects may have recognized the iniquity of the old regime) has no bearing on their generalized symbolic potential.[26]

The Jüdisches Museum Wien mounted the exhibition 'Jetzt ist er bös, der Tennenbaum. Die zweite Republik und ihre Juden' ('That's Got Old

[26]The Deutsch-Russisches Museum stages a Hitler head in a similar way at the end of its main parcours. Placed on the floor of an inconspicuous vitrine, the bust, which has broken off its plinth, clearly represents its own disposal, though the exhibition-makers have ensured that Hitler's face is visible. The caption notes the widespread destruction or hiding of such likenesses in 1945 and reveals that this one was found at Karlshorst in 2001. Supplying the date at which it was unearthed is a routine discussed further in Chapter 5 and draws attention to the period of forgetting or inadequate remembrance between 1945 and the end of the century. This interpretation is likely to suggest itself to the visitor even though the date of the bust's discovery is fortuitous and had no causal effect on the length of time in which Germany did not face up to its past.

Tennenbaum Angry: Austria's Second Republic and its Jews') in 2005.[27] Compared with the relatively general steer given to the visitor by 'Who Was a Nazi?', this exhibition interprets the erasure and disposal of Nazi objects in 1945 more explicitly and critically. One of only three objects in the first, scene-setting segment of the exhibition was the remains of a concrete eagle and swastika.[28] The shape of the swastika was still clearly recognizable, though the surface of the concrete had worn away. The eagle still sported its feathers but was missing its wings and a head. Steel reinforcing rods stuck out untidily from either side.

The mention of 'anger' in the exhibition's title was not fortuitous as this was an unusually angry exhibition (adding a meta-level of emotion to the stories it told). The eagle was contextualized by a scathing information board that laid out the rank hypocrisy of majority Austrians, who first espoused Nazism and then claimed to have had nothing to do with it, indeed to have been oppressed by the Nazi regime: 'Konsequenterweise wurden flugs, doch nur halbherzig, die äußeren Zeichen des Nationalsozialismus in Österreich entsorgt. Denn ein großer Teil der Österreicher hatte die NS-Ideologie internalisiert und konnte sich nur schwer oder gar nicht vom braunen Gedankengut verabschieden' ('As a result, the external symbols of National Socialism in Austria were disposed of swiftly but half-heartedly, since a large proportion of Austrians had internalized National Socialist ideology and had great difficulty in leaving behind Nazi ideas').[29] The eagle was also flanked by two related objects: a large, home-made wooden horse used as a prop by anti-Waldheim protesters in the 1980s; and a television recording of the 1961 play *Der Herr Karl*, which served to explain the otherwise cryptic title of the exhibition. In this play, Herr Karl, a typical Austrian *Kleinbürger*, claimed not to understand why his Jewish neighbour Tennenbaum, newly returned from the camps, was still sore about the anti-Semitic treatment he received from Karl in 1938. For the exhibition-makers, Herr Karl represented the typical Austrian self-understanding in the post-war years: 'das gleichermaßen

[27] Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek (ed.), *Jetzt ist er bös, der Tennenbaum. Die zweite Republik und ihre Juden* (Vienna: Jüdisches Museum der Stadt Wien, 2005). I know this exhibition through its catalogue and from a discussion with Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek.

[28] Heimann-Jelinek, *Jetzt ist er bös*, p. 16.

[29] Heimann-Jelinek, *Jetzt ist er bös*, p. 14.

von Geschichtsverdrängung und Zynismus geprägt ist' ('characterized equally by historical denial and cynicism').[30]

Primed in this way, the visitor read the caption to the eagle:

> Dieses Adler-Fragment wurde aus einem Kärntner See geborgen – seine genaue Geschichte ist unbekannt. Heute ist es ein ins Gegenteil gekehrtes Symbol: Die Skulptur sah ursprünglich wie aus Sandstein gehauen aus, doch tatsächlich war sie nur aus Beton. Der Adler wurde wohl hastig zerschlagen und in den See geworfen, als die Armeen der Alliierten in Österreich einrückten. Das Fragment dieser Skulptur kann als 'einfach in den See geworfen' auch symbolisch für die spezifisch österreichische Vergangenheitsbewältigung stehen. Nationalsozialistische Überreste finden sich knapp unter der Oberfläche auch heute noch vielerorts – nicht nur in Kärnten.
>
> (This fragment of an eagle was dredged from Lake Carinthia – no other details of its story are known. Today it is a symbol that has turned into its opposite: the sculpture used to look like it was hewn in sandstone but it was actually just made of concrete. It seems likely that the eagle was hastily smashed up and thrown into the lake when the Allied armies advanced into Austria. As something that was 'just thrown into the lake', this fragment of a sculpture can stand symbolically for Austria's specific way of dealing with the past. National Socialist remnants can still be found just under the surface in lots of places – not just in Carinthia.)[31]

By pointing to the way in which the object had been turned inside out, with its fakery on show, the exhibition-makers revelled in its loss of power. The symbolic meaning that other exhibitions leave implicit was foregrounded (even if not fully spelled out). The object simultaneously functioned metonymically (what mattered about it was the action committed on it, smashing it up and heaving it over the side of a boat), synecdochically (what this unknown individual did, the majority of the population did), and metaphorically (throwing a swastika away in a place where it may later resurface is akin to rejecting National Socialist views while they remain rooted within you). Neither the original burial of an object nor the object's refusal to quite go away is itself proof positive that a given owner has not left the Nazi mindset behind: they may or

[30] Heimann-Jelinek, *Jetzt ist er bös*, p. 16.

[31] Heimann-Jelinek, *Jetzt ist er bös*, p. 16.

may not have done and that is not necessarily linked to what they did with objects. Nonetheless, the socially critical metaphor of burying (whose 'vehicle' is the burial of an object rather than its effective obliteration and whose 'tenor' is the burying of attitudes that remain latent) gains strength, in the museum context, from literally buried (or, in this case, submerged) objects.

I argued above that, when set in the context of an exhibition chapter that shows how the police failed to reform thoroughly after 1945, a dyed uniform does not celebrate police resourcefulness. In fact, a celebration of the resourcefulness of the *Mangeljahre* (years of shortage) after 1945 is likely to be considered apologist, unless clearly contextualized by statements that the German population was only in this position because its government, with its support, had started an aggressive and unprecedentedly destructive war under cover of which it had committed a genocide and pursued other policies of state harassment and murder. Such contextualization was absent from a display at the DDR Museum 'Zeitreise', an amateur museum of the GDR in Radebeul, now closed. Framed only by information on the role of the Allies after 1945 (not by any information on the regime they had defeated), the display showed the many objects that 'findige Köpfe' ('ingenious people') made out of the material remnants of the war. By contrast, 'Who Was a Nazi?' first established 'wie tief die NS-Ideologie das Leben der Deutschen durchdrungen hatte' ('how pervasively National Socialist ideology had worked itself into the life of Germans'), before it showed—alongside the obligatory recycled helmet and shell case—a child's pinafore dress made from a swastika flag. The dress was by far the brightest and most attractive object on display, though a lime green display wall dissociated it from Nazi political aesthetics. While Hagemann's 'mündiger Besucher' might read the dress as standing for a generation that brings up its children in the shadow of a murderous era which has not properly been dealt with and which remains present in memory and mentalities, the material presence of the dress in the exhibition room (and the need to explain what it was) also allowed the interpretation that it was just cloth, unable on its own either to transmit or counter National Socialist *Gedankengut*.

The exhibition 'Glanz und Grauen' had a similar structure. By the time visitors reached the final section, on 1945, they were in no doubt about the many ways in which fashion and textiles were implicated in Nazi ideology (most wickedly in the use of concentration camp prisoners to test out shoes), but the exhibition-makers acknowledged the need to

recycle fabric at a time of extreme material shortage. A series of pieces of adapted clothing, including a BDM blouse disguised by turning the buttons to face inwards, were shown on tailor's dummies (that is, not ironized or disparaged). The caption kept the possibility of reprehensible and neutral behaviour in view at the same time: '[Viele] konnten oder wollten sich nicht ganz von ihrer NS-Vergangenheit verabschieden – sei es aus ideologischer Unbelehrbarkeit, sei es aus Sparsamkeit und Not' ('Many people were unable, or did not want to, take leave of their National Socialist past – either because they clung obstinately to the ideology or out of thrift and poverty').[32]

One final example is a fragment of carpet shown at the Erinnerungs- und Gedenkstätte Wewelsburg 1933–1945. Locals rescued the particularly fine carpet, decorated with the Greek key pattern favoured by the Nazis, from the burning Wewelsburg in 1945 by throwing it out of the window, after which they cut it up and shared it out.[33] The caption read: 'Das erhaltene Teppichstück wurde mit zwei weiteren Teilen von der Vorbesitzerin sorgsam umkettelt und jahrelang als Bettvorleger genutzt' ('Together with two other pieces, the preserved piece of carpet was carefully hemmed by its owner and used for years as a bedside rug'). Ostensibly this is also an act of recycling, but the fact that the object is not a necessity and that it remains in the home for decades, its Nazi aesthetics and context ignored, implicitly places this final example back in the discourse of shamelessness that will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

4.3 New Material Beginnings for the Victims

While the non-persecuted majority were recycling objects that could still be of material use in a time of rationing and want, Jews and other survivors of the camp system were obliged to make a new start with whatever material was available to them. The exhibition 'Von da und dort – Überlebende aus Osteuropa' ('From Here and There: Survivors from Eastern Europe', 2011 at the Jüdisches Museum München) told

[32] LVR-Industriemuseum (ed.), *Glanz und Grauen. Mode im dritten Reich* (Bönen/Westfalen: Kettler, 2012), p. 76.

[33] Wulff E. Brebeck, Frank Huismann, Kirsten John-Stucke, and Jörg Piron, *Endzeitkämpfer. Ideologie und Terror der SS* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2011), p. 372.

the story of Jewish displaced persons who lived temporarily in Munich while awaiting departure to a new homeland. Museum director Bernhard Purin suggested that the exhibition's focus on objects (which survive in far lower numbers than objects from other eras of Jewish culture) was a new departure, as photography had until then been the main record of this topic.[34] Purin is probably alluding to a photography exhibition by the Fritz Bauer Institut, 'Ein Leben aufs neu. Das Robinson-Album. DP-Lager: Juden auf deutschem Boden 1945–1948', which toured from 1995 to 2016 and showed images from a Jewish displaced persons camp, without accompanying object displays. While the object world of the DP camp sometimes appears in frame, most of Ephraim Robinson's photographs focus on human activity.[35]

While exhibitions dealing more broadly with the Holocaust often end with a short chapter on the displaced persons camps and do sometimes show objects,[36] Purin is justified in claiming that the Jüdisches Museum München advanced this area of museum practice with 'Von da und dort'. Among the findings of the exhibition was that Jews in the displaced persons camps could not always simply dispose of the material possessions that they had acquired during their time in the Nazi camps, even though these had been forced upon them by a murderous regime or acquired for want of alternatives in deeply distressing circumstances. Thus, although in his description of the exhibits Purin invokes the conventional notion of objects as 'witnesses' ('Zeugen'), assigning them a passive role in which they happen to 'be there' when something historical happens, the exhibition itself attributed a more complex and active role to objects.

[34] Jutta Fleckenstein and Tamar Lewinsky (eds), *Juden 45/90. Von da und dort – Überlebende aus Osteuropa* (Berlin: Hentrich und Hentrich, 2011), p. 5.

[35] Jacqueline Giere and Rachel Salamander (eds), *Ein Leben aufs Neu. Das Robinson-Album. DP-Lager: Juden auf deutschem Boden 1945–1948* (Vienna: Brandstätter, 1995). Images of workshops indicate that manufacture became a way for inmates to take charge of their destinies. In his handwritten captions, Robinson made no comment on objects, except to note the miraculous survival of a mazzot-making machine. The catalogue's editors, however, mention the material shortages that preceded Robinson's positive images of functioning newspapers, theatres and schools (pp. 24, 26).

[36] For instance the major exhibition on forced labour, 'Zwangsarbeit'. Volkhard Knigge, Rikola-Gunnar Lüttgenau, and Jens-Christian Wagner (eds), *Zwangsarbeit. Die Deutschen, die Zwangsarbeiter und der Krieg* (Weimar: Stiftung Gedenkstätten Buchenwald und Mittelbau-Dora, 2010), pp. 150–53.

The exhibition-makers chose nine objects, eight of which were made of textiles, to act as starting points for each 'chapter' of the exhibition and to introduce the catalogue. There, they propose that clothing and textiles are particularly informative because they have complex social functions and can show how survivors rebuilt their identities.[37] Allusions to the Bible, to the Middle Ages and to nineteenth-century author Gottfried Keller suggest something between an anthropological and a cultural-historical approach to clothing as signifier, but this is quickly narrowed down to historical specifics: in the National Socialist era, clothing became an instrument of power, imposed on victims and used to hierarchize them in the camps. The exhibition-makers point out that on liberation in 1945 there was no one-off, transformative moment in which camp uniforms were discarded in favour of personally chosen, new clothes: Jewish victims at first continued to wear camp uniforms, then wore rags or the clothes of their German oppressors (for instance a Hitler Youth shirt worn by two young girls),[38] and then charitable donations handed out by aid agencies, which were often in a poor state.

On its flyers, posters and catalogue, 'Von da und dort' used the buckle end of a belt—one of the nine pieces of clothing—as a visual motif. The belt itself was the first object in the exhibition space, looped over a perspex peg; this gave an impression of its length and sturdiness and ensured maximum visibility.[39] A caption explained that on his liberation from Dachau, a Jewish survivor, Hersz Alexander, had adopted the belt, which had belonged to a dead fellow inmate, to secure his trousers around his emaciated body. The exhibition visitor could see that the belt manufacturer had supplied a number of holes for the buckle prong and that these have been supplemented by at least five further handmade holes, slightly ragged and off-centre, snaking along the belt away from its pointed end. Since the improvised holes advanced far beyond the socially conventional parameters for body shape assumed by the belt manufacturer, the belt could be read as a metaphor for the transgression of social and moral norms involved in the slow starvation of the prisoners. In fact, the alterations strain the manufactured purpose of the object to such a

[37] Jutta Fleckenstein and Tamar Lewinsky, 'Von da und dort. Zur Ausstellung', in Fleckenstein and Lewinsky, pp. 9–29 (p. 9).

[38] Fleckenstein and Lewinsky, p. 124.

[39] An image of the belt in the exhibition space is available at: http://www.muenchen-blogger.de/kultur/ausstellung-juden-4590-von-da-und-dort [accessed 29 May 2018].

degree (for this is clearly not the object that the camp inmate needs, but a completely different belt—perhaps a child's) that the altered object confronts the visitor, perhaps even more forcefully than over-familiar photographs, with the social deviancy of this treatment of the human body.

Within the broader context of the exhibition's narrative of the Liberation, the belt stresses that every survivor's life was lived against the background of—and initially in the physical presence of—those who did not survive. Even after liberation survivors did not have the luxury of showing conventional piety towards the dead by not reusing their personal belongings. Since the survivor Hersz used the belt in his return to life beyond the camps it represented its own material role in the continuing physical and mental suffering beyond the German surrender; and it embodied the hope of a gradual reversal of the physical effects of abuse in the camps, a reverse progression along the holes, back towards a socially average state of health, albeit with the indelible trace of the earlier suffering remaining.

Another recycled object on show in 'Von da und dort' was a woman's linen dress.[40] This had once been a winter coat which Haya Shwartzman had been given in Stutthof concentration camp and which had protected her from the extreme cold. After liberation she had it deloused and made into a dress; she took it with her when she returned to Lithuania and it subsequently served as her wedding dress. In the exhibition, the dress was mounted on a tailor's dummy so that its back was on show and placed at the end of a long vista. This highlighted its key feature: the outline of the star still traceable on the back of the dress. The exhibition made no judgment on the survivor's reuse of the material—it merely provided the facts above—but the object speaks of a relationship to the Holocaust past which is more complex than most exhibition visitors will have expected, since it does not fit either of two readily available paradigms: discarding the past to embrace the future or being traumatized by a past that one has yet to process. The visitor is transported back to a complex time for survivors in which the past of the Holocaust remained materially present and yet in which mere material remnants of the Holocaust did not necessarily disgust or distress a survivor. A piece of material which (thanks to its ghostly trace of a Jewish star) appears

[40] Fleckenstein and Lewinsky, pp. 12–13.

haunting to a museum visitor today, bearing as it does a trace of persecution that marked the victim's body on her wedding day, may have been experienced quite pragmatically after 1945, even as a positive marker of identity.[41] The murder of family members; the fact that Shwartzman had been in danger of death every day for many years; the fact that she had lost years when she should have been at school or in training: these must have been cause for distress, but not the thread holes around a now discarded Jewish star. Thus, while nobody would doubt that the survivor must have experienced *non*-material forms of post-traumatic stress, it is a contemporary construction that locates this haunting in the visible, tangible object. It is important to remember—though it is not necessarily in the interest of museums to make such fine distinctions explicit—that what may usefully stand today for a victim's traumatization is distinct from the forms of expression taken by her trauma as she lived through the process of recovery.

Objects used by emigrés in their new homeland play a similar role in exhibitions, showing how material resourcefulness was necessary for successful new beginnings. Even as they celebrate the bravery of emigrés, exhibition-makers are keen to make clear that survival by emigration was not a positive 'lucky escape' but an experience freighted with loss and anxiety. An object that expresses this ambiguity can be seen at the Jüdisches Museum Fürth: a Spears board game called 'Denk fix!' ('Think quick!') that requires players to come up with an example of a category for a given letter of the alphabet. A young girl took it into emigration in the USA in 1938. She showed her adaptability by rewriting the categories in her solid but still imperfect English ('movie actress', 'president of US', 'a vocation'), and when she ran out of cards she used her father's now redundant calling cards. One was shown face up in the vitrine, revealing that the father had been a lawyer in Fürth. The caption explained that he was never able to regain his footing in the legal profession in the States and that the family had to give up their middle-class lifestyle. The exhibition-makers presumably had the choice of which cards to show face upwards and which to hide in the stack. The

[41] This idea is supported by calling cards on display in the exhibition. At the moment when they re-entered bourgeois professions, and therefore might have been considered to be leaving the past behind, Jewish survivors had calling cards printed which included the names of the camps in which they had been interned, and in some cases their prisoner numbers. Fleckenstein and Lewinsky, pp. 61–62.

two German cards lying face up read 'Was möchtest Du werden?' ('What would you like to be when you grow up?') and 'Was wünschest Du Deinem Nachbar?' ('What do you wish for the person next to you?'). Answers to the first question were irrevocably changed by the family's forced move to the USA, though it is evident from the display that it was easier for children than adults to adapt. The second question (crossed out by the child in the process of discarding her mother tongue) is ambiguous because 'Nachbar' means both 'the person next to you' and 'neighbour'. What Germans wished for their Jewish neighbours in the 1930s and whether that included their disappearance are key questions in history exhibitions today.

In her study of fictional and autobiographical writings by the children of Holocaust survivors, Nina Fischer devotes a chapter to the role played by objects in second-generation 'memory work', Fischer's term for the second-generation's search for connections with the family past. Fischer cites two texts in which a survivor (in each case, the author's mother) revisits the family home in Poland immediately after liberation and is shocked to find the family's possessions still in place but a non-Jewish family living among them. 'I was shocked to see our furniture, to see the table set with my mother's beautiful Pesach crockery' recalls one mother; 'Everything was familiar, everything in the same place – except no sister, brother-in-law, niece, nephew' recalls the other.[42] In the first case, the mother responds physically to the shock by becoming breathless and speechless; in the second, she flees the apartment and faints. Conversely, an affectless response is elicited in another text, when a daughter recovers the family crockery from the same scenario (its reuse by the new Polish occupants of the apartment) and cannot understand why her father is not more moved by it. He responds: 'How can some pieces of china make me feel sad? The sad thing did already happen, and not to this china'.[43]

This is not a study that processes survivor testimony (real or fictional) in order to establish how historical survivors really engaged with objects. Nonetheless, Fischer's examples hold up a mirror to museum work because this kind of shock encounter with objects from pre-Holocaust

[42] Nina Fischer, *Memory Work: The Second Generation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 33 (citing Helen Max, *Searching for Yesterday: A Photographic Essay About My Mother, a Holocaust Survivor*) and p. 35 (citing Ann Kirschner, *Sala's Gift: My Mother's Holocaust Story*).

[43] Fischer, p. 58 (citing Lily Brett, *Too Many Men*).

life is generally absent from the museum space. Scholarly readings of museums tend to assume either an equivalence between empty spaces and the absence of human beings (as in the voids at the Jüdisches Museum Berlin) or a painful substitution of the thing for the person (the things are here because the people are not). Fischer's study suggests that in historical experience that was not a retrospective metaphorical interpretation but a bodily experience, as survivors confronted the fact that the people were not there when they saw that the things were still there. In museums, objects from the pre-Holocaust era that were rediscovered after 1945 may be figured as displaced or ownerless, but, as Offe argued in the 1990s, simply by being in the museum they are also positively figured as salvaged and safe. Offe was troubled by the care taken over Jewish objects in German Jewish museums, seeing it as 'a fictitious, symbolic gesture of attention, respect, and shelter that the museum bestows on the object and that was never granted its owner'.[44] The (post-)traumatic shocks triggered in survivors by encounters with objects—here, the emotional realization that their relatives are dead because someone unrelated is using their possessions exactly as the relatives once used them—are, in my experience, neither re-enacted nor recalled in history museums. Granted, this scenario was more common for those returning to Poland than those returning to Germany and Austria, where household possessions had generally been dispersed before deportation, so that the tales from the German and Austrian households are, as we shall see in Chapter 5, rather different. Nonetheless, the exhibitions under consideration here generally present objects with a lesser emotional charge, and mention is made of destroyed homes only in paratexts.

In rare cases, Jews were able, in 1945, to retrieve objects left behind on their departure from their home. The exhibition 'Heimat und Exil. Emigration der Deutschen Juden nach 1933' (2006 at the Jüdisches Museum Berlin) displayed a trunk of the kind intended to stand on its end and open like a wardrobe (a 'Schrankkoffer'). The accompanying text explained that after Herbert Lebram and his family fled Germany for the Netherlands they stored household objects in the trunk at the premises of a removals firm, presumably anticipating another move. They left the trunk with the company Neumann & Vettin of Amsterdam in 1941,

[44] Sabine Offe, 'Sites of Remembrance? Jewish Museums in Contemporary Germany', *Jewish Social Studies*, 3 (1997), 77–89 (p. 87).

went into hiding in 1943 and retrieved the trunk after liberation in 1945. Presented alone (as it is in the miniaturized online version of the exhibition),[45] the trunk might easily connote an act of safekeeping that grants the family a post-war reunion with familiar objects; this would create a comforting narrative of survival. Alongside the trunk, however, the exhibition (and catalogue) showed a bill from Neumann & Vettin, dated 9 November 1945, which charged Lebram for 57 months of storage.[46]

As is often the case, the visitor was left alone to draw conclusions from the objects. The following therefore represents only one possible reading, but one that shows the power of storage containers to point to phases in object biographies and issues of ownership. Since little that is measured in months lasts longer than 18 months, 57 months is a strikingly high number and draws attention to the extreme redundancy of the objects, which marked time in storage, artificially withdrawn from their useful phase in the life cycle. In turn, the 57-month limbo of the objects is a metonym for the shocking amount of time lost to Lebram while his life is on hold because of Nazi persecution. The objects remain curiously still and protected for 57 months while Europe erupts in chaos around them, a striking disjunction between the material and the human, reminiscent of the character's pronouncement cited above that 'The sad thing did already happen, and not to this china'. Neumann & Vettin's charge for insurance against fire and theft, at 6% of the value of the objects per year, throws into relief the much more pressing danger to Lebram's life after Germany's occupation of Holland: nothing could insure against the state's intent to enslave and kill.

Rather than the museum offering a fictitious shelter to objects that was never afforded their owners, as in Offe's model, the *Schrankkoffer* represents the victims' care for their own objects. Nonetheless, the same unsettling contrast—between sheltered objects and exposed people—is evoked. The bill also reminds visitors that the Holocaust was made possible not (as might seem more symbolically appropriate) by a total breakdown of the social order but by a continuation, everywhere beyond the killing sites and theatres of war, of normal social services and systems: here, the reliable storage service provided by Neumann & Vettin and

[45] http://www.jmberlin.de/exil/schrankkoffer.html [accessed 29 May 2018].

[46] Stiftung Jüdisches Museum Berlin and Stiftung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik (eds), *Heimat und Exil. Emigration der deutschen Juden nach 1933* (Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag, 2006), p. 71.

the system of insurance against unforeseeable damage. Finally, as is often the case, the emotionlessness of the bureaucratic document opens up a space for emotional responses in the visitor. The heartlessness—however legally correct—of charging someone for storage who had to relinquish his possessions for exactly as long as it took the German state to stop seeking to murder him prevents this from becoming a comforting object story about the restoration of property to survivors. This reading is in line with the stated aim of the exhibition 'Heimat und Exil' to show the emotional effects of losing a *Heimat* or of being forced to redefine it.[47] This final object shows once again that 1945 was not a straightforward liberation, but also a time of counting costs.

Even if the political collapse of 1945 plays a relatively small role in the exhibitions studied in this book—which are generally more concerned with the eras before or after 1945—it is clear that exhibition-makers prize objects from the transitional period for their capacity to encode time and the emotional experience of change, whether that encoding takes the form of willed marks or accidental traces. As in the other main chapters of this study, we see that exhibition-makers sometimes prioritize the material facticity of an object and sometimes its metaphorical potential, though a single object can sometimes flicker between these material and immaterial states.

[47] See Cilly Kugelmann and Jürgen Reiche, 'Vorwort', in Stiftung Jüdisches Museum Berlin, pp. 10–11, and also the poem 'Emigranten-Monolog' by Mascha Kaléko, which prefaces the catalogue (p. 13).

CHAPTER 5

Material After-Lives Between the Attic and the Archive

A significant development in recent history exhibitions in Germany and Austria has been the display and critical appraisal of post-war memory issues and debates. The abstract complexity of this exhibition topic means that I devote more space to it in this study than to objects as they relate to 1933–45. In exhibitions themselves, the proportion is more like 4:1 or 5:1. In other words, aside from a small number of exhibitions devoted entirely to memory processes, most are principally interested in informing an audience about events of 1933–45 (or 1938–45). Nonetheless, most history exhibitions devote at least a final chapter to the legacies of National Socialism, to what Peter Reichel, Harald Schmid and Peter Steinbach have termed the 'zweite Geschichte' or 'second history' of National Socialism.[1] Earlier, in 1987, Ralph Giordano had coined the more emotive term 'die zweite Schuld' ('the second guilt'), defining it as 'die Verdrängung und Verleugnung der ersten [Schuld] unter Hitler nach 1945 bzw. 1949, samt ihren Folgen bis in unsere Gegenwart' ('the repression and denial, after 1945 (or after 1949), of the first [guilt] acquired under Hitler's rule, together with the consequences that continue into our present time').[2] This self-critical

[1] Peter Reichel, Harald Schmid, and Peter Steinbach (eds), *Der Nationalsozialismus. Die zweite Geschichte: Überwindung, Deutung, Erinnerung* (Munich: Beck, 2009).

[2] Ralph Giordano, *Die zweite Schuld oder Von der Last, Deutscher zu sein* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 2000; first publ. 1987).

C. Paver, *Exhibiting the Nazi Past*, The Holocaust and its Contexts,
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terminology captures the ethos of most exhibitions, which are concerned not just to understand the National Socialist era but also to understand what social challenges and failings led Germany and Austria to take so long to face up to the Nazi past after 1945.

The typical narrative for the final chapter can be unintentionally formulaic: evidence is offered of continuations in personnel across the caesura of 1945; members of the majority are shown to have refused to help victims or to have continued to articulate Nazi values; and this is followed by evidence of how the fight to remember began and how, after initial resistance, campaigners finally won through. Since each exhibition is also an act of remembering, the final chapter serves as a frame for the present memory act, which the visitor is consuming, by pointing out the failings that preceded it. Given the recent research summarized in Sect. 2.3—which is less condemning of the memories of the non-persecuted majority after 1945—this rhetorical gesture may seem both stuck in the twentieth century and rather self-congratulatory. 'Others forgot', it would seem to proclaim, 'but we remember'; 'others remembered wrongly, but we remember well'. However, some exhibition-makers, as we shall see, work hard to acknowledge the moral complexities of post-war memory.

Just as individuals experienced historical events between 1933 and 1945 through an engagement with objects—through their loss and acquisition, their imposition by the state, their changing form or their appearance on the market—so material culture was a conduit or catalyst for memory of those events after 1945. Despite the widespread destruction and re-purposing discussed in Chapter 4, many objects from the Nazi era survived and choices about how to treat these objects often expressed attitudes towards the past—or at least can be made to stand for those attitudes in the exhibition space. Some objects lost visibility, neglected and ignored in spaces of limbo. Some remained visible but lost their connection to the events of 1933–45. Conversely, some objects from the 1930s and 1940s, especially those to which positive emotions or stories of survival were attached, were cherished, kept close and discussed. All such objects—which are discussed in Sects. 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3—can help history museums to make concrete the otherwise abstract workings of cultural memory in the post-1945 period.

Alongside this preoccupation, a duty to honour the victims means that exhibition-makers strive to avoid reducing them to their

victimization under National Socialism,[3] asking instead how they or their descendants lived on after 1945. This is discussed in Sect. 5.4. History museums thematize not only the perceived failings of the post-1945 era, but also, as Sects. 5.5 and 5.6 show, the breakthroughs of the 1980s and 1990s. Because history museums are themselves memory institutions, their treatment of objects over time constitutes an extension of their narrative of how Germany and Austria remembered the past after 1945. This continuation of the museum object's biography is the topic of Sect. 5.7.

5.1 Hitler in the Attic, in the Museum: How the Domestic Spaces of the Majority Culture Have Yielded Up Objects

A by-product of the recent exhibition boom has been the revelation that tens of thousands of objects from the years 1933–45 remain in German and Austrian homes.[4] When the Stadtmuseum Schwedt/Oder prepared an exhibition on the National Socialist era in 2012, it anticipated that donations solicited from local people might usefully supplement items from its own collection. In the event, the exhibition used only 25 objects from its collection and 220 from private donors.[5] Petra Bopp, one of the organizers of the first Wehrmacht Exhibition, called the hundreds of photograph albums offered to the organizers in the wake of the exhibition 'die Spitze eines Eisbergs […], der sich in unzähligen Fotoalben, Schachteln, Bündeln von deutschen und österreichischen Dachböden bis in die Keller fortsetzt und ausdehnt' ('The tip of an iceberg […],

[3] Paul Williams sees this as a danger of using what he calls 'witnessing objects' (objects that were present when violence took place) in memorial museums, which can reduce a life 'to its period of greatest suffering'. Paul Williams, *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), p. 31.

[4] I rehearsed some of the issues raised in this section, albeit with a different emphasis, in Chloe Paver, 'The Transmission of Household Objects from the National Socialist Era to the Present in Germany and Austria: A Local Conversation Within a Globalized Discourse', *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 9 (2016), 229–52.

[5] Anke Grodon, 'Zwischen Einschulung und Einberufung. Eine Ausstellung zum Alltag im "Dritten Reich" im Stadtmuseum Schwedt/Oder', in *Entnazifizierte Zone? Zum Umgang mit der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus in ostdeutschen Stadt- und Regionalmuseen*, ed. by Museumsverband des Landes Brandenburg (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015), pp. 126–36 (p. 129).

consisting of countless photo albums, cartons, and bundles, stretching from German and Austrian attics down into German and Austrian cellars').[6] This somewhat melodramatic evocation of war memories stockpiled in the two nations' family homes shows how short the jump is from domestic storage as a material fact to domestic storage as metaphor, something that becomes a running theme in this section.

Staying for now with material fact, while objects with a clear local connection or which testify to the lives of the victims are particularly prized by museums, the mass production of political objects under National Socialism means that much that remains in households is what one might call Nazi bric-à-brac: serialized, interchangeable objects of no historic value. Indeed, some categories of object survive in such numbers that organizers of a recent history exhibition in Freiburg asked local people *not* to bring them forward: 'Nicht benötigt werden Nazidevotionalien, Wehrpässe, Feldpost, Plakate und Ähnliches' ('What we do not need are Nazi memorabilia, soldiers' pass books, letters from the front, posters, and similar').[7]

Generally, once such objects donated by the public are incorporated into an exhibition, the story of their donation becomes irrelevant. They start a new life as signs that point from the present to the years 1933–45, about which they convey information. This is standard museum practice: an arc is drawn from the present to the past and the years in between are blanked out. The public does not visit a history museum to learn where objects have been all this time but to learn about their time in use. The sections that follow show, however, that 'where objects have been all this time' is sometimes precisely what German and Austrian history museums put on show. Items that have been in storage for decades do not just represent their 'own' time but also the period between their initial use phase and their accession to the museum. This phase of disuse coincides roughly with the period from 1945 to the end of the twentieth century,

[6] Petra Bopp, 'Wo sind die Augenzeugen, wo ihre Fotos?', in *Eine Ausstellung und ihre Folgen. Zur Rezeption der Ausstellung 'Vernichtungskrieg. Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941–1944'*, ed. by Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 1999), pp. 198–229 (p. 198). See also p. 226, note 2.

[7] Frank Zimmermann, 'Augustinermuseum bereitet Ausstellung über NS-Zeit in Freiburg vor', *Badische Zeitung*, 17 July 2015, http://www.badische-zeitung.de/freiburg/augustinermuseum-bereitet-ausstellung-ueber-ns-zeit-in-freiburg-vor--107824284.html [accessed 29 May 2018].

precisely the period characterized by conflicted or inadequate post-war responses towards the National Socialist past. Supplied with an appropriate caption, an object can make this time span and its system of values visible. Moreover, scholars now understand the memory conflicts of this era in terms of a split between official, state commemoration of National Socialism and private memory of National Socialism, and items from the family home promise to illuminate that split.

I noted in Chapter 2 that neither Thompson nor Pomian can quite account for the display of discarded items in German and Austrian history museums because both assume that objects pass through a state of 'rubbish' or 'Abfall' *on the way* to the museum. Once there, it is implied, their period in a 'timeless and valueless limbo' is of interest to nobody. Although concerned principally with the metaphorics of disposal rather than with disposal in the real world, Aleida Assmann offers a more useful model because she acknowledges the role played by 'passive cultural forgetting', that is, neglecting, but not destroying, the material of the past. For Assmann, the phase in which an object sits unused is culturally significant, at least as a literary trope or within a theoretical model of cultural memory.

Exhibitions in this study demonstrate that the passive cultural forgetting of the post-war era, which took place in private spaces outside the museum, is now being put on show in the museum—a space of active cultural remembrance—and viewed critically. Consequently, and in defiance of the normal logic of museum organization, history museums have begun to display objects from the 1930s and 1940s in the boxes in which they were stored after 1945. Donated objects may arrive at a museum in all kinds of pragmatic containers: cardboard boxes, carrier bags or bubble wrap. Normal museum practice would be to discard this extraneous matter, which is unlikely to meet conservation standards and is irrelevant to the object's future life as a cipher for an aspect of history. In examples discussed below, however, contents remain in their containers or the use of objects as containers after 1945 is pointed out.

Section 2.3 also cited some of the work in sociology on post-war majority family memory, noting that this scholarship has only an oblique interest in family-owned objects. Writing in 2008, literary scholar Anne Fuchs proposed that 'fifteen years after German unification, a new discourse has emerged about familial origins, legacies, and issues of generational identity' and that:

> the ever-increasing historical distance from National Socialism has released the hitherto hidden or repressed archives of private family memories. Once these entered the public domain, they challenged the limits of Germany's official remembrance culture, which had been defined by a discourse of contrition.[8]

Fuchs is using 'archives' figuratively at this point in her argument, and the overall focus of her study is on the *content* and *structures* of private German memory, that is, on the family as 'a site where official representations of the past are contested by alternative memories from below'.[9] Such 'alternative memories' involve a focus on personal pleasure and suffering, and these private memories are prioritized over the acknowledgement of complicity and over empathy with the suffering of Nazism's primary victims. While Fuchs's 'archive' is therefore an abstract store of attitudes to the past, she also has an interest in the materiality of the archive, because mementos feature in the literary texts that she analyses, in which younger generations search for the truth of the family past. In some cases, notably in Tanja Dückers's novel *Himmelskörper*, Fuchs worries that this leads to a 'gothicization of the past', as evoked by 'dark attics, secret drawers, strange paintings, hidden-away photographs, and diaries', or, in the case of Dückers's heroine, a jewellery box full of Nazi bric-à-brac, a 'miniature horror chamber' of her grandparents' devotion to Nazism.[10]

When Fuchs writes of 'archives of private family memories' being 'released into the public domain', she is referring to the trend, in the 1990s and 2000s, for publishing autobiographical, media and literary representations of what the non-persecuted majority remembered. As my opening comments show, museums offer the possibility for real, material family archives (understood broadly as any memory container or memory vehicle) to be donated by members of the public and released into the public domain of the exhibition space. Museums could simply profit from this rich new source of objects from 1933–45 to document the events of 1933–45, but some exhibition-makers also want the visitor

[8] Anne Fuchs, *Phantoms of War in Contemporary German Literature, Films, and Discourse: The Politics of Memory* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 1, 3.

[9] Fuchs, p. 4.

[10] Fuchs, pp. 60–61.

Fig. 5.1 Army mug of a former German armed forces soldier with a dedication to his grandson, Berlin, after 1945, on display at the Deutsch-Russisches Museum. Photograph: Chloe Paver

to understand family-owned objects as a particular category of memory carrier.

In the final section of its permanent exhibition, which is devoted to memory and the consequences of war, the Deutsch-Russisches Museum separates off 'Private Erinnerung' ('Private Memory') from other forms of engagement with the past and notes the divergence between private and official memory of the Second World War in both Germany and Russia. This meant, the caption says, that it was largely among family and friends that people processed their experiences psychologically after 1945. In the single vitrine devoted to the topic, the Russian example concerns the memory of female veterans; the German example is a tin cup that a grandfather gave to his grandson (Fig. 5.1). The grandfather pasted a typewritten message to his grandson onto the cup, explaining that it was particularly precious because water was so scarce in the Soviet POW camp. This matches the observation, on the accompanying text,

that communication about war experiences sometimes had to skip a generation because parents and children felt unable to talk. In this case, intergenerational memory transmission is channelled quite literally by an object: the memory is inscribed on the object, addressed to the grandchild and the object passed to him. But as the single object devoted to private German memory, the tin cup also acts as a synecdochic figure for all forms of intergenerational communication.

Few museums are quite so explicit about intergenerational transmission.[11] While 'generation' is a category that produces quantities of scholarly literature in German and Austrian memory studies,[12] exhibition-makers rarely use it directly, let alone interrogate its definitions and uses. Nor are exhibition-makers generally so understanding of how personal suffering might engender memories that exclude the primary victims of National Socialism. On the contrary, most museums seem to assume a tacit shared understanding that the majority population's self-centred memories of National Socialism are to be viewed critically. Captions about objects that survived in the home after 1945 are often understated and elliptical, in a way that cannot be explained away by the necessary brevity of museum communication.[13] This implies a largely internal, German-German (or Austrian-Austrian) conversation about the past, as visitors from abroad, who are in any case rarely offered translations, are unlikely to understand the politics of German and Austrian family memory. More positively, I argue below that, even if the meanings

[11] One further example is also a tin vessel: the tin pan at the Mahnmal St. Nikolai mentioned in Sect. 3.5. According to the caption, the owner keeps it in memory of her father who survived the firestorm and re-built a domestic space for his family (including this pan), but died soon afterwards. Her daughter cannot understand why she keeps something so battered. This illustrates a comment on the neighbouring information board: 'Der Feuerstrum prägte viele Familiengeschichten. Die Erfahrungen der Zeitzeugen beeinflüssen die Erziehung ihrer Kinder und sind wichtiger Bestandteil der kollektiven Familienerinnerung' ('The firestorm had a strong impact on many family histories. The experience of witnesses influenced the upbringing of their children and is still an important part of the collective family memory').

[12] As well as Fuchs, see: Mary Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives: Generations and Violence Through the German Dictatorships* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Caroline Schaumann, *Memory Matters: Generational Responses to Germany's Nazi Past in Recent Women's Literature* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008); and Laurel Cohen-Pfister and Susanne Vees-Gulani (eds), *Generational Shifts in Contemporary German Culture* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010).

[13] I am told that 340 characters are an expected maximum for object captions.

of such displays are not always as carefully controlled as the tin cup at the Deutsch-Russiches Museum, exhibition-makers avoid the gothicization of the past that Fuchs sees in Dückers's domestic cache. My judgement is that academic curiosity about the factual material reality of post-war memory storage and transmission keeps the displays the right side of the line between historical reflection and postmemorial fantasy.

I begin with an example from the NS-Dokumentationszentrum der Stadt Köln. The Winterhilfswerk or WHW could easily be presented in the straightforward format of relevant object plus historical narrative. Ostensibly a charity looking after those in need, it maintained a propaganda presence through street collections and encouraged donors to collect its badges, produced in ever new variations. In response to the donation of a collection of WHW badges by a member of the public, a museum might be expected to take the badges out of their makeshift container, catalogue each separately, store them in museum-grade paper and select a small number for the next exhibition requiring evidence of propaganda activities. Instead, in a section of its permanent exhibition devoted to the everyday experience of propaganda, the Dokumentationszentrum shows the whole donated collection. The badges are still pinned haphazardly to what appears to be the original paper. They sit in an old chocolate box, and its lid, on which the word 'Abzeichen' ('badges') is written in pencil in a childish hand, has been set upright in the vitrine.

An information text and label inform visitors about this object. The information text ignores the chocolate box packaging and makes the badges stand, conventionally, for their historic past and its context, albeit as understood from today's critical perspective. The WHW, it tells us, disbursed its funds only to those who were racially acceptable to the regime. The label, by contrast, reads: 'WHW-Abzeichen, überliefert in einem Pralinenkarton' ('WHW badges, preserved in a chocolate box'). The German 'überliefern', which means to transmit objects or ideas from the past to the present, focuses the visitor's attention on the later part of the badges' life cycle, after their use value was reduced to nought but during the sixty or more years for which they were nevertheless kept safe.

The brief label seems to assume that the German visitor will know how to read the badges' storage and transmission (their 'Überlieferung') in a way compatible with the museum's ethos. The recycled chocolate box with its childish handwriting speaks of the preservation of positive memories of National Socialism. This includes the pleasure of collecting

the badges as a child, though by extension also adult pleasures (evoked metonymically by the eaten chocolates) and therefore other rewards of National Socialism. In as much as the charity badges represent a contractual exchange—citizens donated money in support of a government cause in return for a token reward—they can stand for the larger social contract between the Nazi regime and its citizens, which traded belonging for the violent exclusion of others. In line with the scholarship outlined above, the chocolate box represents the storage of sentimental memories in the private sphere of the family, beyond the reach of more politically correct discourses about Germany's guilt and the victims' sufferings, such as were pronounced in Bonn or circulated in the media.

Given the immateriality of people's private thoughts about the past and given, at the same time, the historical importance of majority Germans' processing of the Nazi past, a storage box full of Nazi items, which makes concrete and visible the preservation of memories of pleasure in a safe space away from critical eyes, is a special gift to the museum. The metaphorical reading (where to store material treasures is likened to storing happy memories) works regardless of whether the particular owner of the chocolate box still felt some visceral tie to the Nazi years or made a sincere and contrite conversion to democracy and just forgot about the box in the attic: the unspoken assumption always appears to be that the former is the typical case. The danger of allowing the metaphorical reading is thus that it oversimplifies complex memory processes, which are reduced to 'keeping a place in one's heart' for the emotional rewards of the National Socialist era, without change across decades. However, while the chocolate box is obviously a metaphor, it is also material fact. Regardless of whether this particular owner ever looked at these objects again after 1945, their survival within the family's four walls indicates that material reminders of 1933–45 were commonly kept at home, where they could act as a periodic prompt to recall events and emotions but where they might also have been consciously devalued by relegation to low-value spaces in the home (surviving precisely because of the disrespect shown to them). Arguably, this material facticity encourages a more questioning, uncertain reading of post-war memory.[14]

[14]The chocolate box may have been saved partly because of the localism that I identified in Chapter 1 as important for German history museums. Made by a well-known Cologne company, Stollwerck, the chocolate box is decorated with a view of Cologne that is not

A more elaborate version of post-war storage was shown at the exhibition 'Bilderlast' ('The Burden of Images', 2008–09, at the Dokumentationszentrum Reichsparteitagsgelände). Its main display comprised photographs of local life in the 1930s and 1940s, which placed local complicity with Nazism beyond doubt. At the end of the photographic display, a room-sized display case had been roughly constructed from plywood, with three windows to the front. These offered a view onto a stylized attic full of 1930s and 1940s junk. As with both the Hitler kitsch discussed in Sect. 3.3 and the allotment find discussed in Sect. 4.2, there was a certain necessary tension in the 'Bilderlast' attic installation: the institution staged its disdain for a discredited ideology by associating it with detritus and by refusing to elevate the detritus to the status of treasured object, but all the time the institution was also maximizing the value of the junk as a display of memory practices.

The impression of worthless jumble was created in several ways: some objects were piled up in containers typically used for redundant household items (cardboard boxes, a suitcase); others were stacked against the wall or scattered about the floor. Objects overlapped and partially hid one another. The exhibition-makers were thus able to capitalize on the haphazard distribution of matter in an attic—the polar opposite of museum display—to belittle the objects. Moreover, none of the Nazi-coded objects were allowed to present themselves as the National Socialists would have wanted them to be seen. Of three images of Hitler leant against the left-hand wall, only one faced the viewer upright: another was laid on its side and a third was upside down, almost completely hidden by a picture of Goering. A picture book about Hitler had been laid open at an awkward angle so that the already fractured spine was further stressed, something no conservator of books would countenance. In that sense the display went further than similar displays, since there seems to have been a genuine, not just staged, neglect of the artefacts.

at all 'chocolate-boxy', uniting the cathedral, the iron Hohenzollernbrücke and the trade-fair halls, built for the international press fair of 1928. This version of civic pride—a city founded equally on culture and entrepreneurship, the ancient and the modern—is recognisable to Kölner today. The museum juxtaposes that appealing self-image with the knowledge of local support for National Socialism.

At the same time, since the objects clearly *were* valued by the exhibition-makers for their ability to evoke national memory processes, they could not be degraded to the point of being indistinguishable as Nazi objects. And since visibility is not a priority in a real attic, it had to be engineered. A cloth bearing the imperial eagle and swastika had been carefully scrunched up so that the eagle remained visible, leaving the visitor to supply the swastika; the exhibition-makers did not fold the cloth corner to corner so that only white showed. Similarly, a suitcase of National Socialist books looked more like a travelling salesman's sample case than a real (doubtless closed) suitcase relegated to the roof space: books were leant against the open lid facing outwards to the viewer. Finally, a mirror had been leant against one wall to increase the available display space, allowing smaller items (passbooks, badges and armbands), which were angled away from the viewer but towards the mirror, to be seen from where the visitor was standing.

While I might seem to be labouring details here, I am trying to convey the careful balance achieved by the exhibition-makers, which allowed them simultaneously to suggest 'This is junk, please do not be impressed by it' and 'This junk is both historically typical and deeply symbolic'. Though not describing the display in quite these terms, the museum was nevertheless unusually explicit about its intentions. An information board entitled 'Was vom NS-Staat übrig blieb' ('What Remained of the Nazi State') noted that many Germans claimed after 1945 not to have supported Hitler, throwing personal possessions such as uniforms, pictures of Hitler, or ceremonial daggers into manure pits ('Mistgruben') or rubbish bins ('Mülltonnen') to support their denial. Other objects such as those shown in the display, the text continued, still emerge from time to time when houses are spring-cleaned or cleared out ('bei Entrümpelungen'). The mentality of the majority under National Socialism is 'der Geist in der Flasche' ('the genie in the bottle'), and 'nur unser Wissen, was er angerichtet hat, kann ihn dort halten' ('only our knowledge of the damage it caused can keep it there').

Since the attic display contained neither manure pits nor rubbish bins, the comment about these points to a symbolic reading of the spaces to which objects were relegated. The post-war repression that is sometimes assumed but not articulated in such displays is here articulated explicitly, and the possibility of the past 'resurfacing' by accident is evoked by the 'Entrümpelungen', moments at which Assmann's 'passive cultural forgetting' has the potential to become active remembering because order

is brought to the disordered space. The image of the 'genie in the bottle' suggests a fear of Nazi values re-emerging, just as the junk can re-merge from the attic, but here the text leaves the material behind. The will to contain the fascist mindset (to keep the stopper in the bottle) is a political project unrelated to the management of a residue of junk in forgotten depots.

While it is surprising that the 'Bilderlast' caption did not point to the symbolic role of the attic in family heritage and generational succession—given that this is, as suggested in relation to Fuchs's work, a familiar trope in fiction—visitors are likely to have understood this because the space depicted is so obviously domestic rather than public or commercial. The objects in the staged attic do not need, in reality, to have come from an attic in order for the display to work. In reality, they may have been found on top of the wardrobe or in the cupboard under the stairs, or in any number of other mundane spaces with little symbolic potential. No exhibition-maker ever staged Nazi memorabilia in a garage or garden shed, since the attic, together with its figurative counterpart, the cellar (as paired together by Bopp, above), is a much more readily recognizable figure of memory and can stand synecdochically for all liminal spaces of storage.[15]

While the Dokumentationszentrum Reichsparteitagsgelände was fairly discursive in the text summarized above, more often, very brief comments in the captions are used to make objects representative of the time during which they were *not* discovered in the domestic space:

> Bei Umbaumaßnahmen am Wohnhaus nach über 50 Jahren kam die Schusswaffe wieder zum Vorschein.
>
> (The gun came to light more than 50 years later during renovations to the house.)

[15]The call for objects by the Dokumentation Obersalzberg, which opened this book, acknowledged the diversity of real storage spaces when it spoke of 'Keller und Dachböden, Schubladen und Schränke' ('cellars and attics, drawers and cupboards'), though at second mention the copywriter returned to the dyad 'Keller oder Dachboden' and this pairing was also used on an accompanying flyer (https://www.obersalzberg.de/neugestaltung/call-for-objects/ [accessed 29 May 2018]). This lexical habit may be more culturally relative than exhibition-makers and their translators acknowledge, given that for UK visitors, for instance, attics and cellars are likely to be figurative spaces only, not real ones.

and:

> Der Hoheitsadler wurde vor dem Einmarsch der Roten Armee in Dresden überklebt und erst 2006 wieder entdeckt.
>
> (The eagle emblem had been pasted over before the Red Army arrived in Dresden and was only rediscovered in 2006.)

In the first example, the object is a rifle that a returning Wehrmacht soldier immured at his parents' home rather than give up in 1945[16]; in the second example, it is a piano from a Wehrmacht casino emblazoned with an eagle and swastika, evidently passed down through a family since the donor's name matches the name of the man who requisitioned it. In both cases, the visitor is left alone with the information about the objects turning up in recent decades: each caption ends there. Does the hiding of the gun stand for the hiding of nationalist or fascist beliefs from public scrutiny, within the family sphere? Is the museum evoking the 50 years in which not just this gun, but other aspects of involvement in National Socialism were hidden? Both of these readings are available to the visitor schooled in Germany's memory culture. The one reading that the exhibition-makers do not encourage (since it would require explicit mention in the caption) is that the man acted out of purely personal, historically insignificant motives, such as poverty or paranoia. In the case of the piano, shown at the Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr, Dresden, knowledge of the swastika appears not to have been transmitted within the family, but there can be no point in telling visitors the date when it was discovered except to suggest that crude attempts at covering up the Nazi past continued into the new millennium.[17]

[16] Shown at 'Volk – Heimat – Dorf. Ideologie und Wirklichkeit im ländlichen Bayern der 1930er und 1940er Jahr' ('Nationalism, Local Identity, and the Village: Ideology and Reality in Rural Bavaria in the 1930s and 1940s', 2017 at various museums of rural life, viewed at the Bauerngerätemuseum Hundszell).

[17] An example from the scholarly literature can show how these metaphors circulate freely: 'Jahre der Tabuisierung der Vergangenheit haben […] gezeigt, dass ein Übertünchen der Geschichte die falsche Strategie ist und sie unter diesem Putz weiterhin hervorscheint' ('Years of placing the past under a taboo have shown […] that painting over the past is the wrong strategy and that the past continues to peep through this covering'). Aleksandra Paradowska, 'Unbequeme Erinnerungsorte. Ihre Bedeutung, Vermittlung und Bespielung', in *NS-Großanlagen und Tourismus. Chancen und Grenzen der Vermarktung*

In cases where there was no shame about National Socialism, objects relating to that time may, provided they were not adorned with the outlawed Nazi emblems, have been cherished and used, rather than discarded. Where this continued use is pointed out, it can stand for a lack of contrition. One such object appears at the NS-Dokumentation Vogelsang (formerly the elite Nazi training school Ordensburg Vogelsang). Having opened in 2014, the exhibition is more advanced than most in matters of accessibility for the disabled. Special provision is made for blind and partially sighted visitors, including a series of touchable exhibits. In the final section of the exhibition, the exhibition-makers explain that former Ordensburg pupils and trainees formed strong veterans' associations, cultivating a nostalgic vision of their time together. One of several souvenirs from the veterans' meetings is a wooden plaque with a relief of the Ordensburg and the inscription 'Vogelsang 1936–37', evidently made by an amateur wood-carver (Fig. 5.2). The caption for sighted visitors reads: 'Der Wandschmuck wurde wahrscheinlich als Erinnerung an die Dienstzeit des ersten Kurzlehrgangs in Vogelsang in den 1970er Jahren als Geschenk für einen Lehrgangsteilnehmer angefertigt' ('The wall decoration was probably made in the 1970s as a memento of the time served on the first short training course in Vogelsang and given as a present to someone who had attended the training course').

In as much as it exemplifies active remembering and the continued social circulation of objects and their attached ideas, rather than passive forgetting and storage in the stasis of the non-social attic space, this object is the polar opposite of the attic objects; yet it shares with those objects its domestic location and represents a variation on post-war lack of contrition. Here, feelings of pleasure about National Socialism are kept in the home, but within sight and with a feeling of license, at least among friends. In the museum space, the lack of a glass barrier and the braille caption gives the visitor permission to touch the object, even if force of habit means that most sighted visitors do not. If this piece of sentimental kitsch, which actively prioritized memories of pleasure over memories of the victims' suffering, is slowly degraded by the grease of

von Orten des Nationalsozialismus, ed. by Historisch-Technisches Museum Peenemünde (Berlin: Links, 2016), pp. 24–37 (pp. 35–36).

Fig. 5.2 Touchable exhibit at the NS-Dokumentation Vogelsang: a souvenir made by an Ordensburg 'veteran'. Photograph: Chloe Paver

fingertips and by human breath, it is presumably nobody's loss. Having said that, had it been possible for the museum to attach the object to a particular trainee's story, accompanied by useable testimony about post-war attitudes to the Ordensburg, we can be sure that the museum would have kept the plaque behind glass and found a different object for its blind and partially sighted visitors.

Another key family storage container for memories is the photograph album. As we have seen, these are increasingly used by exhibition-makers because the three-dimensional album represents the

photographer's mentality at the time of taking and collating the photographs between 1933 and 1945. Sometimes, exhibition-makers focus instead on the album's later life as a memory medium, making it stand for attitudes towards Nazism in retrospect. The attic installation discussed above, for instance, included a photograph album. Since it was not placed close enough to the viewer for individual photographs to be visible, it represented its genre (the 'unzählige private Fotos' or 'countless private photos' mentioned on the information board) rather than itself.

In the catalogue of the 'Fotofeldpost' exhibition, curator Ulrike Schmiegelt, who studied thousands of photographs in 120 albums, remains cautious about the efficacy of photograph albums in transmitting biographies within a family. Where albums were donated by family members, the children or grandchildren could generally supply no details about where and when the photographs had been taken and what they showed.[18] Schmiegelt's comments are a useful reminder not to overstate the role that photograph albums played in real intergenerational discussions about the war. Nonetheless, because each soldier who made up a photograph album imagined a future in which this would be the past he would tell about, and because the imagined future turned out be very different from the victory that most hoped for, photograph albums stand for the possibility of intergenerational discussion and also for its blanks and failures—for the impossibility of the children's generation understanding the experiences of their parents. This helps explain the proliferation of photograph albums in history exhibitions. The recent call from the Dokumentation Obersalzberg for new objects from the locality asks specifically for photograph albums.

In a section of its permanent exhibition on amateur photography in the Wehrmacht, the Deutsch-Russisches Museum shows objects belonging to two photographers. Wilhelm Meyer is represented by a camera, a diary of his work, a photograph album and a box of film canisters sent home to be developed. A second soldier photographer is represented by a collection of photographs which he sold on to men who did not own a camera. Together, the objects emphasize photography as a complex practice involving cooperation, communication, economic exchange and

[18] Ulrike Schmiegelt, 'Macht Euch um mich keine Sorgen …', in *Foto-Feldpost. Geknipste Kriegserlebnisse 1939–1945*, ed. by Peter Jahn and Ulrike Schmiegelt (Berlin: Elefanten Press, 2000), pp. 23–31 (p. 23).

materials taking up space. This could, however, be communicated without the containers in which their photographic material is stored, which point to the material survival of photographs in the post-war home. The collection of photographs for sale is kept in a wooden chest, partitioned to make a rudimentary filing system; the film canisters are stored in a box emblazoned with the brand name 'Maggi'. The museum may have chosen to keep the box partly because this food brand still thrives today, so that it is a familiar sight from supermarket visits and kitchen cupboards. To emphasize its role as storage, the lid has been leant against the side (rather than tucked away beneath or discarded as unnecessary to the display). Though both containers are contemporary with the photographic material—and therefore chosen by the photographers for storage before 1945—they speak of domestic storage spaces after the war since they are the boxes in which the materials arrived at the museum. A caption tells us that Meyer's widow donated the Maggi box to the museum. Given that he died in 1977, the visitor knows that the box survived among his possessions until then, and that his widow kept it a further thirty or so years until her donation.

The lids of the film canisters have been turned so that two handwritten labels face the viewer: 'Paris Versaille' [sic] and 'Kiew usw.' ('Kiev etc.'). These reflect Meyer's service on both the Eastern and Western Front and confirm what is known of soldiers' tourist activities in occupied France, which contrasted with the much harsher experience of the war in the East. Regardless of the actual content of the images captured on the film in the canisters, they represent a pool of memories that remained materially in the family home for fifty to sixty years, preserving a memory of the Second World War that ran counter to official memories (as taught in schools, formulated by politicians and mediated in the liberal press). Notwithstanding its links to earlier events in history, the Palace of Versailles plays no role in official German memory of the Second World War, but the film canister reminds us that for the soldiers who went to marvel at it while on leave from duty it was an architectural wonder that would be remembered well into the future. Similarly, for Meyer, Kiev was evidently a sight that was photographed at leisure, possibly a battle to be remembered, but that is not its role in official German memory. Since the 1941 battle was a major defeat for the Red Army, it is not remembered in the same way as Stalingrad. Rather, in state memory Kiev is the site of the massacre at Babi Yar. The 'usw.' or 'etc.' on the label is inadvertently evocative of this disjunction between the public and the private.

Because the DRM does not, as other museums do, draw attention to the date at which the photographs 'came to light' (with the implication that some kind of denial went on in the intervening decades), its display represents a factual account of family memory: self-centred but not necessarily morally lacking. The post-war citizen is therefore not always explicitly criticized by home-stored objects. 'Verführt. Verleitet. Verheizt. Das kurze Leben des Nürnberger Hitlerjungen Paul B.' ('Tempted, Misled, Slaughtered: The Short Life of the Nuremberg Hitler Youth Paul B.', 2004 at the Dokumentationszentrum Reichsparteitagsgelände) told the story of a generation of boys through a single representative, the son of a local public official, killed aged seventeen while working as an anti-aircraft auxiliary.[19] The central exhibit was a wooden chest containing items belonging to Paul B. This had been preserved by his parents and subsequently by his sister, and was discovered by chance after the sister's death.[20] While the information board did not detail how it came into the possession of the museum, it situated it within the family home by calling it Paul B.'s 'Nachlass' (possessions left behind after a death). It is difficult to tell to what extent the contents of the chest were staged, in comparison with the condition in which they were found, but images from different iterations of the exhibition suggest that there was some variation in display.[21] The exhibition-makers had certainly ensured that Nazi insignia were visible: a uniform jacket had been folded so that its rune badge was upwards; booklets were stacked cover upwards so that the eagle and swastika was visible. The visitor was not, as in other exhibitions, invited to read the storage of Nazi-coded objects critically as proof of (or as a metaphor for) an unwillingness to face up to National Socialist crimes; rather, in the careful packaging of the boy's belongings,

[19] Viewed at the Dokumentationszentrum in 2009 under the slightly different title 'Verführt. Verleitet. Verheizt. Hitlerjugend als Schicksal' ('Tempted, Misled, Slaughtered: The Hitler Youth as Fate').

[20] Hugo Molter, 'Das kurze Leben des Hitlerjungen Paul B.', *nordbayern*, 3 April 2011, http://www.nordbayern.de/region/forchheim/das-kurze-leben-des-hitlerjungen-paul-b-1.1123469 [accessed 29 May 2018].

[21] For a photograph of the contents of the chest, see: Martina Christmeier and Pascal Metzger, 'Nationalsozialismus ausstellen. Zum Umgang mit NS-Objekten im Dokumentationszentrum Reichsparteitagsgelände Nürnberg', in *Entnazifizierte Zone? Zum Umgang mit der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus in ostdeutschen Stadt- und Regionalmuseen*, ed. by Museumsverband des Landes Brandenburg (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015), pp. 191–208 (p. 197).

the visitor recognized common behaviour of parents obliged to bury a child, whose grief never resolves itself sufficiently to dispose of the child's belongings, even when, as in this case, they become socially as well as personally redundant. At the same time, the discursive framework of the exhibition—with its evidence of Paul B.'s devotion to the Hitlerjugend—made it difficult to adopt a simple and steady position of sympathy with the sufferings of the family.

Similarly, in its 2001 online exhibition 'Fundstücke' ('Finds'), the NS-Dokumentationszentrum der Stadt Köln showed a suitcase full of papers left, in 1957, by a Nazi doctor to his daughter, and donated to the museum in 1991. For each object in this exhibition, the museum wrote a text on its 'Herkunft' ('Where it came from'), 'Einordnung' ('How it can be categorized') and 'Verwendung' ('How it might be used'). In this case, the suitcase, which is the only surviving set of papers from a high-ranking Nazi official in Cologne, was considered 'usable' chiefly as an example of how the daughter of a perpetrator coped with her father's legacy. She was quoted as saying: 'Ich habe bis heute in Träumen, aber auch in der Realität Schwierigkeiten, Koffer zu packen und zu schließen' ('Even today, in reality as much as in my dreams, I have difficulty packing and closing suitcases').[22] In this way, the psychological disturbances of majority Germans who feel burdened by their parents' past are taken seriously (though, as usual, contextualized by stories of Nazism's primary victims). The association of family household storage with suppressed and resurfacing memory is here not a metaphor imposed by the museum but a real personal experience.

Finally, despite the underlying critical tone of many exhibits, museum professionals may experience the thrill of unexpected finds, a feeling that is occasionally shared with the public. 'Fundstücke' told stories of how objects found their way into the collections of the documentation centre: 'Erzählt wird die meist spannende und oft auch kuriose Geschichte von deren Auffinden' ('The exhibition tells the fascinating and often curious story of how they were discovered').[23] Individual stories of finding the objects were told in the tone of the treasure hunter: 'Sie hätten den Nachlass einer entfernten Verwandten übernommen, in dem sich auch Material aus der NS-Zeit finden würde. Ob wir Interesse hätten?

[22] http://www.museenkoeln.de/nsdok/fundstuecke/ [accessed 29 May 2018].

[23] https://museenkoeln.de/ns-dokumentationszentrum/default.aspx?s=494 [accessed 29 May 2018].

Hatten wir natürlich' ('They told us they had been sent the belongings of a distant relative who had died and that it included material from the National Socialist era. Might we be interested? Of course we were') and: 'Eine spontan aufblitzende Ahnung fand durch ein schnell geführtes Telefonat ihre Bestätigung: Frau Wimmers besaß genau jenes Buch, von dem Frau Pooth gesprochen hatte!' ('A quick telephone call confirmed the spontaneous hunch: Frau Wimmers was in possession of the very same book Frau Pooth had spoken of!').[24] More recently, in its call for objects for its expanded permanent exhibition, the Dokumentation Obersalzberg spoke of the National Socialist past as a trove of 'sleeping' materials: 'Vermutlich schlummern in vielen Privathaushalten in den Kellern und Dachböden, Schubladen und Schränken nach wie vor noch eine ganze Reihe spannender Hinterlassenschaften' ('There is probably still a whole series of fascinating family relics slumbering in many private households, in cellars and attics, drawers and cupboards').[25]

This coda is added to avoid an over-simplified conclusion that exhibitions display a blanket disapproval of post-war storage of material dating from 1933–45. Exhibition texts might be worded in such a way as to imply national failings, but professional museum work is driven by curiosity and the hunt for new material, as much for this topic as for others. In some aspects of their work, it makes sense for museum staff to admit that attics and cellars (and other, less figuratively productive peripheral spaces) are a practical boon.[26]

[24] http://www.museenkoeln.de/nsdok/fundstuecke/ [accessed 29 May 2018].

[25] https://www.obersalzberg.de/neugestaltung/call-for-objects/ [accessed 29 May 2018]. Outside of the German context, Suzanne Bardgett speaks of object-hunting for the Holocaust exhibition at the Imperial War Museum London: a railcar is 'on our wishlist' and a Pétainist street sign is 'a particularly good find' by a buyer. Suzanne Bardgett, 'The Material Culture of Persecution: Collecting for the Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum', in *Extreme Collecting: Challenging Practices for 21st Century Museums*, ed. by Graeme Were and J. C. H. King (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2012), pp. 19–36 (p. 26, 28).

[26] The sensational rediscovery of a silver locomotive once owned by a Jewish family and missing for 75 years was duly celebrated by the Jüdisches Museum Hohenems in an exhibition and a discussion event (Hanno Loewy and Anika Reichwald (eds), *Übrig. Ein Blick in die Bestände – zum 25. Geburtstag des Jüdischen Museums Hohenems* (Hohenems, Vienna, and Vaduz: Bucher, 2016), pp. 19–23; Hanno Loewy in conversation with Hans Thöni: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5o3h-Pq1wWc [accessed 29 May 2018]). Though the catalogue entry also alludes to the moral issue of non-Jewish possession after 1945, it is the excitement of discovery that comes across most clearly.

They are certainly not, as in Fuchs's example from Dückers's novel, an artificially constructed national chamber of horrors.

5.2 Hiding in Plain Sight: Remnants of National Socialism in the Public Sphere

The previous section showed how history museums have taken a special interest in the German and Austrian family home, in which objects from the years 1933–45 lived on after 1945. By noting their previous location in the domestic sphere, or the time span of their hidden life, or by displaying them in their storage containers, exhibition-makers use such objects as evidence of—and also as a metaphor for—processes of rupture and continuation, dissociation and identification among Germans and Austrians in the post-war period. Exhibition-makers are equally interested in how the Nazi past endured in the public sphere, the sphere to which museums themselves belong. This includes both publicly accessible spaces such as the streetscape, public buildings and flea markets, and semi-public professional spheres: hospitals, legal practices, universities and council offices. Though more than enough documentary evidence exists to show that, after 1945, majority Germans and Austrians did not always emphatically renounce their behaviour and beliefs under National Socialism and that many who had prospered by accommodation with the Nazis enjoyed successful careers after 1945, displaying material evidence (particularly the things that persisted in public and in the workplace after 1945) can make the lack of will for change or the positive desire for continuity visible and concrete.

As in the previous section, some of the examples analysed will show that the moral implications of post-1945 neglect of the past are not necessarily spelled out by the museum. Rather, the museum assumes a common cultural understanding, sometimes encoded in time adverbs such as 'bis' ('until'), 'noch' ('still') and 'erst' ('not until'). When exhibition texts state that something was still in place in 1985 or only removed or uncovered in 1980, it is to be understood that this is a consequence of social failure to deal with the past or, in the case of objects fortuitously discovered, a negative result of burying the past, a return of the unsuccessfully repressed. The 'timeless and valueless limbo' that Thompson imagines for objects in the rubbish phase is thus carefully timed by the museum. This timing gives the limbo its value, which in turn rests in its

perceived national typicality. While it is difficult to pin down what is only implicit, the routine and frequency with which museums tell the visitor how and, crucially, when objects came to light (without saying why this matters) supports my interpretation.

The final chapter of the national police exhibition 'Ordnung und Vernichtung', mentioned already in relation to its dyed uniform, was titled 'Die Wiederkehr der verdrängten Vergangenheit' ('The Return of the Repressed Past'). The chapter contained two 'erst' objects. The first, a memorial to policemen killed fighting in the Second World War, had been sculpted by an SS reservist and honoured two Gestapo officers who were executed as war criminals. It was, as the caption told visitors without further explanation, taken down from display 'erst 1988'.[27] The exhibition also showed a photographic reproduction of a 1930s mural entitled 'Die Neue Zeit'. Where the corresponding mural of 'Die alte Zeit' had shown three medieval knights, the 'new era' was represented by an SS man, a policeman and a Wehrmacht soldier. The caption ended laconically 'Die Gemälde wurden nach 1945 durch eine Wandverkleidung verdeckt und erst 1999 bei Restaurierungsarbeiten wieder freigelegt' ('The paintings were covered up by cladding in 1945 and not revealed again until renovation works were undertaken in 1999').[28] Here, the 'erst' is rather tendentious in as much as the police headquarters in Wuppertal could presumably just as well have been renovated in 1959 or 1969, had renovations become necessary at that time. The exhibition-makers are not arguing factually that individual police officers in Wuppertal knew the paintings were still there and thought of them with fondness or pride; that kind of knowledge of how materiality intersected with post-war mentalities would be extremely interesting but is now lost to historians. Rather, the photograph of the mural is allowed to stand for standard readings of the post-war 'second guilt': an aspect of the past is covered up and participants act as if they knew nothing about it, but the repressed past inevitably returns to confront a now more enlightened generation in 1999.

A similar object—one of a pair of statues depicting members of the Hitler Youth, sculpted in 1936—appeared in the exhibition 'Nationalsozialismus in Freiburg'. The statue served conventionally as

[27] Florian Dierl, Mariana Hausleitner, Martin Hözl, and Andreas Mix (eds), *Ordnung und Vernichtung. Die Polizei im NS-Staat* (Dresden: Sandstein, 2011), p. 97.

[28] Dierl et al., pp. 306–7.

a historical testament to the attractions and dangers of the Nazi youth organization, while also documenting the willingness of artists to serve the regime. The second half of its caption, however, turned it into a 'bis' object. It read: 'Nach dem Krieg arbeitete der Bildhauer die beiden Figuren zu "Pfadfindern" um. Bis 1982 standen sie im Außengelände der Lortzingschule' ('After the War, the sculptor remodelled the two figures as "scouts". Until 1982 they stood in the grounds of the Lortzingschule').[29] As in other cases, the reader is left to decode this information on the basis of shared cultural understandings. The story of the sculptor is easily assimilable to familiar narratives (discussed further below) about professionals who make a career under National Socialism and then, having avoided any punishment, adapt themselves in order to pursue their career under the new democratic order. In this context, the minimal nature of the changes made by the sculptor to turn a Hitler Youth into a boy scout—presumably removing an armband and badge—stands for the shallowness of conversions to democracy (regardless of whether the actual artist was in fact very contrite). The 'bis 1982' statement also chimes with familiar discourses about a belated reckoning with the past: nobody worries that a Nazi sculptor is still being validated through public visibility throughout the fifties, sixties and seventies, just as nobody starts considering Freiburg's share of culpability for National Socialist crimes until the 1980s (indeed, arguably until this, the first exhibition about the subject). In reality, primary school pupils at the Lortzingschule probably received a first-rate democratic education; if they did not, it was not because of the presence in their school grounds of stone Hitler Youths disguised as boy scouts. In this way, sometimes the figurative meaning of 'erst', 'noch' and 'bis' objects seems to take precedence over their material facticity.[30]

The story of the many professionals (for instance in universities, the Law and medicine) who, having benefitted from National Socialism, then thrived professionally and financially in the Federal Republic, has been told in dozens of exhibitions. It can easily be told using documents and images only, as it was, for instance, at the text-only exhibition

[29] For an image of the object, see: Peter Kalchthaler, Robert Neisen, and Tilmann von Stockhausen (eds), *Nationalsozialismus in Freiburg* (Petersberg: Imhof, 2016), p. 123.

[30] For another such 'sleeper' object at 'Freiburg im Nationalsozialismus', in which a painter has overpainted a Nazi salute with a friendly handshake, see Kalchtaler et al., pp. 140–41.

'"Was damals Recht war …". Soldaten und Zivilisten vor Gerichten der Wehrmacht' ('"As the Law Then Stood …": The Treatment of Soldiers and Civilians in Wehrmacht Courts', 2007 at the St.-Johannes-Evangelist-Kirche, Berlin). Here, simple design tactics—splitting a photograph of the perpetrator down the middle and attaching labels to each side such as 'Vor 1945 Militärrechtsgelehrter' and 'Nach 1945 Universitätsprofessor' ('Before 1945 Scholar of Military Law', 'After 1945 University Professor')—drew attention to the perpetrators' shameless re-invention of themselves after 1945. By contrast, victims' faces were shown whole. In cases like this, where the exhibition visitor is being asked to criticize the way in which the early Federal Republic gave social rewards to those who had supported the National Socialist regime, objects may well seem dispensable. At the same time, precisely because objects and social status are intrinsically linked, objects can express this story powerfully.

One of the six 'Themeninseln' or 'topic islands' at the Denkort Bunker Valentin has the title 'Der Blick der Verantwortlichen' ('The Perspective of Those Responsible') and covers typical ground for exhibition chapters about the post-war years. The three men most closely involved in running the building site at the Nazi U-boat pen (and therefore most nearly implicated in the suffering and death of large numbers of forced labourers) all pursued their professions unhindered after 1945; one had a street named after him. Only in the 1980s—as we see from a newspaper report and an image of a man carrying a sandwich board—did locals begin to protest at the lack of public concern for these men's involvement in a major Nazi project.

The object chosen for this exhibition module is an oil painting (Fig. 5.3). Unlike a painting made by a survivor that is displayed prominently elsewhere in the exhibition, this painting has been propped up against the exhibition scaffold at an odd angle, out of kilter with both the vertical and horizontal planes and well below eye height. Rather than inviting an aesthetic appreciation of the painting through a conventional hanging, the exhibition-makers ask visitors to consider it as an object that is now out of place and beyond use, and also as an object that the museum does not especially value. It has, however, been protected from fingers and dust by a discreet perspex cover, reminding us that the museum does, of course, value it: as damning evidence of a lack of remorse after 1945. The painting, dated 1944, shows work on the Valentin Bunker in full progress, a mass of cranes, concrete walls and

Fig. 5.3 Oil painting of the building of the U-boat pen at Rekrum, a gift from one civic engineer to another, displayed at the Denkort Bunker Valentin. Photograph: Chloe Paver

scaffolding. The sun is shining and no human beings are in sight, so that the viewer sees only the grandeur of a large civil engineering project. The caption tells us that the boss of the civil engineering practice responsible for the bunker gave the painting, after 1945, to Erich Lackner, the engineer who had overseen work on site. Lackner hung it in his office, where it remained until his death. We are not told when that was (in fact, it was 1992) but it is clear that it was several decades after 1945 since we are told that Lackner was only 30 when he took on the bunker project and that it launched his post-war career.

Though the caption—as is normal for exhibition texts about the post-war era—does not spell out the implications, the painting represents the two men's lack of a guilty conscience. They continue, after 1945, to celebrate their involvement in the Valentin Bunker project and recall their past through an image that focuses exclusively on the fulfilment of their creative vision, editing out the thousands of workers who endured

appalling conditions, including more than a thousand who died. The fact that the picture was painted in 1944 also conveniently arrests the project in time, obscuring the fact that the defeat of Germany rendered the engineers' work pointless. The two men's lack of remorse and society's failure to punish them could simply be recorded in text, but the painting has the power to make the visitor angrier. In its material form, the painting evokes the social spaces and practices of professional life, in which a person can afford to commission an oil painting, an oil painting is a suitably generous gift for a loyal colleague, and the wall of the office serves the public display of professional achievements. From where the visitor is standing, in a barely restored concrete shell built by slave labour, the privilege of the bourgeois interior—with its quiet good taste, expensive decorative items and opportunity for self-mythologizing—appears complacent, undeserved and hypocritical. This is, of course, also how post-dictatorship amnesties work, with the privileged keeping their social status, along with its material trappings, in exchange for acceptance of a new set of rules, but the museum does not encourage the visitor to think that far.

The exhibition 'Forschung, Lehre, Unrecht' showed a similar object with a slightly different chronological relationship to the crimes. In a classic example of a final exhibition chapter, 'Nach 1945' ('After 1945'), the exhibition demonstrated the hasty and superficial denazification processes at the University of Tübingen, continuities in personnel and efforts by the generation of '68ers to challenge the authorities about the university's 'brown past'. Included in the chapter was a charcoal drawing of woolly mammoths in an ice-age landscape, titled 'Im Lonetal' ('In the Valley of the River Lone'), dated 1958 and made by Robert Wetzel.[31] By this point in the exhibition, the visitor had already encountered Wetzel repeatedly, as a man with a finger in many pies who made himself culpable in multiple ways. This preparation meant that though the caption for the oil painting was enigmatically brief, noting only that Wetzel carried out archaeological digs and researches in the area around the Lone Valley both before and after the War, and that he gave the painting to a palaeontologist friend, the visitor was invited to read the painting as evidence of Wetzel's avoidance of punishment and lack of remorse after 1945.

[31] Ernst Seidl (ed.), *Forschung, Lehre, Unrecht. Die Universität Tübingen im Nationalsozialismus* (Tübingen: Museum der Universität Tübingen, 2015), p. 248.

The fact that a person who took an interest in palaeontology before 1945 is still drawing romanticized images of woolly mammoths in 1958 is not, in itself, evidence of a continuation of Nazi mentalities. Earlier exhibition boards showed, however, that even subjects such as archaeology let themselves be appropriated by the Nazis, so that the prehistoric motif raised the question of whether Wetzel had, by 1958, revised his view of the Germanic race's superiority in human pre-history. More pertinently, when read as a material marker of social distinction, the painting points to a life of comfortable acceptance in the middle classes. The object represents both the comfort of private space (since Wetzel gave it to his colleague's family) and the social space of middle-class professionals, where tasteful gifts are passed from one colleague to another. While the murdered victims who were exploited as anatomical specimens at Welzer's Institute remained anonymous and unhonoured, and while the survivors of discriminatory policies at the university lived with their pain, Wetzel was free to live out his social status by indulging a minor accomplishment and cultivating a circle of academic friends.[32]

The permanent exhibition at the Ehemalige Synagoge Haigerloch, discussed in more detail in Sect. 5.3, was produced by the regional state history museum, the Haus der Geschichte Baden-Württemberg, and opened in 2003. Although concerned largely with the victims' objects, the story of the post-war use of the synagogue building as a cinema and supermarket is kept clearly in view. In a reversal of the often-told story whereby a Jewish object has been found in the attic of a non-Jewish home (and Haigerloch has its fair share of those stories, too), the exhibition shows objects found in the attic of the synagogue building when it was restored for use as a museum: these include cinema artefacts, now displayed in the former projection room, and neon letters forming the trade name 'SPAR', which have been reconditioned so that they light up. These are positioned prominently on the building's central axis, at the

[32] The provenance given on the caption also indicates that the university acquired the painting for its own collection at some point, compounding Wetzel's social rewards. The exhibition 'Hast du meine Alpen gesehen?', discussed in Sect. 3.1, showed a romanticized landscape painting of a concentration camp in the Alps, made by a favourite painter of Hitler. The caption ended '1950 erwirbt die Kärntner Landesregierung dieses und andere Bilder Vollbehrs um jeweils 500.- Schilling' ('In 1950, the regional government of Carinthia bought this and other pictures by Vollbehr for 500 Schilling each'). It is assumed that the visitor will understand and join in with the museum's condemnation of post-war public investment in Nazi art.

back of the prayer room but facing the former Torah shrine. The fact that these objects are given such prominence but only minimally captioned implies an expectation on the part of the exhibition-makers that they will be easily decoded: they represent the local community's lack of interest, in the post-war years, in the Jewish history of the building and their lack of concern that a space considered sacred by one part of the community was deconsecrated. Given that one of the few facts visitors are told is that the cinema screen used to hang in the place of the Torah shrine, this is likely to be the message that visitors take away, even if one Jewish survivor says in interview that he does not think the building was in any way desecrated by its use as a cinema.

The old projection room at Haigerloch contains one more set of objects that stands for post-war attitudes, and these return us to the professional sphere, but also to the pavement and the rubbish bin. Four lever-arch files dated 1938 are shown, each in a vitrine of its own. Two are marked 'Betreff: Juden' ('Subject: Jews') and two 'Betreff: Einsatz des jüdischen Vermögens' ('Subject: Deployment of Jewish Property'). According to the caption, the files were kept in the district administration offices in nearby Hechingen until the building was decommissioned in 1973, when they were thrown into a 'Müllcontainer' (skip or dumpster). A local citizen found them by chance and took them into safekeeping.[33] The survival of the files for thirty years on shelves at the Landratsamt suggests at least a latent knowledge of the 'Aryanization' process locally. In 1973, throwing evidence of Nazi practices away no longer suggests a desire to hide Nazi allegiances but an indifference to the fate of Jewish families thirty years before. The files' survival thanks to an individual's intervention speak of a contrary will to remember, but one that had to await the founding of the museum some decades later to find a remembering community. Once more, this reading of a mentality from an individual's behaviour towards an object (where disposal = a preference for forgetting) works in the museum environment even if the actual person who threw the files away was a model democrat who, through overwork or distraction, failed to read the labels before tipping the files into the skip.

[33] Cornelia Hecht (ed.), *Spurensicherung. Jüdisches Leben in Hohenzollern. Eine Ausstellung in der ehemaligen Synagoge Haigerloch* (Stuttgart: Haus der Geschichte Baden-Württemberg, 2004), pp. 74–75. The caption in the catalogue is rather shorter than the caption in the exhibition space.

One final public space in which objects from the era of National Socialism half hide and half show themselves is the flea market. The strength of museums' interest in the storage (real or figurative) of memories within the family home, which was discussed in the previous section, shows itself all the more clearly if one considers that museums are not generally interested in the subsequent phase in the object life cycle: the release of 1930s and 1940s objects from the home into the flea market or bric-à-brac economy when the houses of the elderly or deceased are cleared. Whereas the Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, in its section on the events of 1989–90, has mocked up a street stall selling redundant wares from the GDR and the former Soviet Union—to make a statement about the rapid devaluation of the object world of communism—I have yet to see such a display (of a flea-market stall selling 1930s bric-à-brac) in a museum whose subject is National Socialism, despite the very evident interest of these museums in post-1945 memory.[34] Of course, the process by which objects from 1933–45 descended from the regular economy to the flea-market economy was slower and less dramatic than it was for communist objects in 1989–90: as we have seen, many were re-used and many took six or seven decades to leave the family home. Nonetheless, such objects are now freely available in flea markets and this latest phase in their life cycle might, in theory, be of interest to museums.

The 2010 exhibition 'Hitler und die Deutschen' touched on the subject. In its final chapter, on the after-life of Hitler, the exhibition addressed the market in Nazi memorabilia, noting that items with Nazi insignia still fetch inflated prices at flea markets and antiques auctions. The exhibition-makers displayed a haul of items, some original, some fake, that were confiscated by the police from an antiques dealer in 2005 because displaying the insignia of the NSDAP is a criminal office. Perhaps because such objects attract far-right buyers, the exhibition-makers did not mock up the flea-market experience to create a moment of

[34] However, the exhibition 'Antijüdischer Nippes. Populäre Judenbilder und aktuelle Verschwörungstheorien. Die Sammlung Finkelstein im Kontext' ('Anti-Jewish Knickknacks: Popular Images of Jews and Contemporary Conspiracy Theories. The Finkelstein Collection in Context', 2005 at the Jüdisches Museum Hohenems), used an antiques-shop mise-en-scène—antique display cabinets and real antiques for sale—to reproduce the milieu in which anti-Semitica now circulates, and to refuse the 'knickknacks' the ennobling status of museum objects.

immersive identification but displayed the objects in a darkened vitrine. By contrast, the exhibition catalogue follows curatorial convention by listing details of the seventy or so mementos—their date, materials, measurements, function, motifs and inventory numbers—with the same meticulous precision used for any museum treasures. This effect of re-valuation is offset only partially by the fact that some of the objects are categorized as 'Kopie' or 'Nachbildung' ('copy' or 'facsimile'). Of two photographs on these pages (one of a *Bierkrug*, one of a decorative plate), one is a fake and one real, but both images are equally glossy.[35] Evidently, the mechanisms for devaluing material culture are less practised by catalogue-makers than by exhibition-makers and the museum's archiving technologies may pull against its own messages.

The majority of flea-market material from the 1930s is closer to the contents of the imagined family attic at the documentation centre in Nuremberg than to the haul of especially marketable objects that was put on show (albeit darkened show) at 'Hitler und die Deutschen'. Provided that swastikas are not flagrantly on display, there is evidently no policing of the tens of thousands of objects that happen to bear the national insignia of the years 1933–45 or that bear no insignia but whose content might be inflammatory on closer inspection. A cardboard box that I sometimes use for seminar discussions contains the fruits of a short hour's browsing at a flea market in Charlottenburg in 2014. These include: coins and stamps from the Third Reich; Winterhilfswerk badges; commemorative album stickers from the 1936 Olympic Games; forces' mail (*Feldpost*); an insurance premiums card with eagle-and-swastika stamps affixed; and diverse photographs, most captioned in pencil with harmless information such as 'Sommer 1935, Buddelplatz Schillerpark' and 'Juni '43. Tiergartensee. Babi und Franziska' ('Summer 1935, children's playground, Schiller Park', 'June '43. Lake in the Tiergarten. Babi and Franziska').

On closer inspection, some of these randomly selected items betray considerable power as objects of communication and exchange. A postcard dated 13 December 1939 was sent from a soldier, Theo, to his parents in Berlin-Lichtenberg, who marked in pencil the date on which they received it. The standard tourist postcard shows Kozienice Castle in Poland, its name printed both as 'Pałac' and 'Palais', in expectation

[35] Hans-Ulrich Thamer and Simone Erpel (eds), *Hitler und die Deutschen. Volksgemeinschaft und Verbrechen* (Dresden: Sandstein, 2010), pp. 289–90.

of international travellers. The son writes: 'Im umstehenden Schloss haben wir einige Tage gelegen, nur war es nicht mehr so. Vollständig ausgebrannt. xxx Dort waren wir untergebracht' ('We slept in the palace overleaf for a few days, but it didn't look like this any more. Burned to the ground. xxx That's where we were quartered'). His three crosses correspond to three crosses he has drawn in pencil on the photograph of the palace, indicating a side wing which must have survived the fire set by the Wehrmacht on 12 September 1939. Schmiegelt writes of the tendency of German soldiers to photograph tourist sights because the war represented their first experience of foreign travel, and also of the lack of such ready-made sights in the East.[36] Here, we see something more complex. The son engages in the tourist habit of sending a postcard to document the interesting place he has seen even as war has made tourism impracticable and the sight unseeable. Instead of a simple metonymic contiguity of time, where a given object 'witnessed' the past—that is, was present at the same time as some historical event—the postcard is a historical anachronism: Theo buys and sends an image of what he would have seen had fellow soldiers not burned it down. The physical persistence of the postcard after its referent has been hollowed out by fire shows the inability of manufacturers to update the product world instantly in response to violence. In general terms, it is an important reminder that (contrary to what museums might suggest) we all live in a material muddle of the old and the new, in which not everything represents the modern and the 'now'.

Another photograph from the flea-market haul, captioned as showing an outing to 'Sakrow' on 28 August 1937, shows men and women sitting at a table in an outdoor restaurant, all looking to camera. Over the heads of two of the men, the owner of the photograph has drawn a Latin cross or obelisk sign (†), used in the German-speaking countries to indicate that someone has died. These crosses are decoded on the reverse, in the same handwriting as the date and place of the captured image. Emil Neumann died fighting on Crete on 20 May 1941 (i.e. on the first day of the German invasion of Crete); Heinz Schönherr died in 1940, evidently in a non-combat role, since he is 'verstorben' ('passed away') rather than 'gefallen' ('fallen'), though his young age suggests that it was in the context of war. Though it is unclear whether the obelisk marks

[36] Schmiegelt, p. 28.

were added to the photograph in 1941 or many years later, they take us back to a moment when the owner (possibly the young woman marked with an 'x' on the image) looked back at a photograph of August 1937 and registered that two of the young, happy company had died in war, or in the context of war, a few short years later.

More than most photographs I have seen in museums (even those that are shown as objects rather than images), the postcard of Kozienice and the photograph of the outing to Sacrow evoke Elizabeth Edwards's notion of the photographic object as something that is 'handled, caressed, stroked, kissed, torn, wept over, lamented over, talked to, talked about and sung to, in ways that blur the distinction between person, index, and thing' as well as 'written on, exchanged, displayed, and performed in a multitude of ways'.[37] Whether or not the soldier Theo felt any emotion for the loss of a Polish cultural treasure, he does not express it; it is more important to him to convey to his parents, with his three crosses, that he has been in this grand building in a faraway place. Whatever emotions the owner of the outing photograph felt about her two dead acquaintances—and we cannot know whether she was deeply touched or just dutifully respectful—her overwriting of the photograph is an emotional response that is structured by the caesura of the outbreak of war. A trace of that narrative, together with a trace of Theo's feelings about being in Poland, survived in a domestic setting somewhere for sixty or seventy years, until they found their way into a twenty-first-century flea market.

The point about this little box of flea-market finds is that, regardless of how fascinating the objects are, they have no value to museums as historical documents. Once let loose from the family home, objects can no longer be reconnected with historically verifiable family lives.[38] Even if some documents contain names and addresses, curators would be searching for a needle in a haystack if they tried to trawl through flea-market finds to identify a story that could be reliably and interestingly told.

[37] Elizabeth Edwards, 'Photographs and History: Emotion and Materiality', in *Museum Materialities: Objects, Engagements, Interpretations*, ed. by Sandra H. Dudley (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 21–38 (p. 23).

[38] See Schmiegelt: 'Ihren urprünglichen Gehalt verlieren private Fotos […] in dem Moment, in dem sie aus dem Kontext familiärer Erinnerungen gelöst werden' ('Private photos lose their original substance […] at the precise moment when they are freed from the context of family memory'), p. 24.

This means that tens of thousands of objects from 1933–45 ghost around Germany and Austria, set adrift from the families in which, before and after 1945, they channelled and sparked emotions, their texts often unreadable because of changes in handwriting, and preserved from incineration or landfill only by their residual value as old objects with the black-and-white aura of another time.

These objects belong to the realm of postmemory, theorized by Hirsch as a form of memory that connects to the past 'not through recollection but through projection, investment, and creation'.[39] As long ago as 1995, Israeli photographic artist Naomi Tereza Salmon engaged postmemorially with flea-market photographs in the exhibition 'Asservate – Exhibits', interspersing relics from the concentration camps with photographic *objets trouvés* that showed members of the non-persecuted majority enjoying themselves (and, in one case, a post-war German imitating Hitler).[40] Such uncontextualized images (which neither Salmon nor Aleida Assmann comments on in the catalogue) would horrify historians; in an art exhibition, supplied only with the information that they have been found in the market for second-hand goods, they imply that a counter-memory to that of the victims continues to circulate in German society and imagination, defined as a memory of pleasure, and presupposing the freedom to represent oneself bodily. Both J.J. Long and Anne Fuchs have demonstrated that postmemory is inherently problematic in its loose relationship to historical facts and lived experience, but in the 'post-witness era' it will be a key mode of engagement with the past and might be the logical next subject for the final chapter on post-war memory in exhibitions about National Socialism.[41]

[39] Marianne Hirsch, 'Projected Memory: Holocaust Photographs in Personal and Public Fantasy', in Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Spitzer (eds), *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999), pp. 3–23 (p. 8).

[40] Naomi Tereza Salmon, *Asservate—Exhibits. Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Yad Vashem* (Ostfildern: Cantz, 1995).

[41] J.J. Long, 'Monika Maron's *Pawels Briefe*: Photography, Narrative, and the Claims of Postmemory', in Anna Fuchs, Mary Cosgrove, and Georg Grote, *German Memory Contests: The Quest for Identity in Literature, Film, and Discourse Since 1990* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2006), pp. 147–65. Fuchs appraises Hirsch's concept, and Long's critique of it, in Fuchs, *Phantoms of War*, pp. 48–50. For a more upbeat (if less theoretically grounded) assessment of what imagination can achieve in the absence of memory, see Diana I. Popescu, 'Introduction: Memory and Imagination in the Post-witness Era',

5.3 Resurfacing and Restitution: Victims' Objects After 1945

This section draws together ideas from the previous two sections but focuses on objects belonging to the victims. It focuses further on Jewish victims because their belongings were subject to sustained and deliberate dispersal in the years of Nazi persecution, which means that their fate after 1945 is both an object of criticism in museums and consistently well documented.[42] Although the objects discussed are, or were, Jewish-owned, exhibition-makers are often concerned with the mentalities and emotions of the members of the majority culture who were their custodians after 1945. This makes it difficult to turn the analysis towards Jewish agency and experience; often even exhibitions explicitly about theft from Jews have a good deal to say about how non-Jews experienced theft from Jews. Section 5.4 will move beyond stolen and recovered Jewish objects to objects that represent Jewish life choices and life phases after 1945.

As with the National Socialist objects discussed in Sects. 5.1 and 5.2, museums often indicate where Jewish objects have been since the end of the National Socialist era. This may be as important as the story of their original ownership and use, because it reveals much about the status of the Jewish minority in Germany and Austria. Such provenance stories or object odysseys may be added to the caption using the kinds of narrative shorthand discussed already. For instance, if the final line of a caption to a sukkah or 'Laubhütte' (a temporary hut for celebrating the festival of Sukkot) reads 'Bis zum Jahr 2000 wurde sie als Geflügelstall verwendet' ('Until the year 2000 it was used as a chicken shed'), no further

in *Revisiting Holocaust Representation in the Post-witness Era*, ed. by Diana I. Popescu and Tanja Schult (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 1–7.

[42] The most common category of non-Jewish object to have survived in the home is the craft objects made by forced labourers, discussed in Sect. 3.4. The KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme, Erinnerungs- und Gedenkstätte Wewelsburg 1933–1945, Deutsch-Russisches Museum and Denkort Bunker Valentin all show examples. Typically, the use made of the object in the post-war years and/or the date on which it was donated to the museum is recorded on the caption to evoke (but not to comment on or analyse) the time span during which people remembered the forced labourers privately but museums had little interest in them. For instance (at Wewelsburg): 'Sie bewahrte jahrelang ihren Schmuck darin auf. 2008 überreichte sie es dem Kreismuseum' ('For years, she kept her jewellery in it. In 2008, she donated it to the district museum')—end of caption.

explanation is needed because it is assumed the visitor will recognize this as demonstrating five decades of disrespect of Jewish history and culture.[43] In other cases, the concept of the journey to the museum may act as a structuring principle for an exhibition. The 'Sachen / Objects' module at the Jüdisches Museum München supplies its seven representative objects with curator's notes, which ask questions about the circulation and storage of objects after 1945, about the self-selection that operates to designate an object 'Jewish', and about possible future restitution claims.[44] Loewy has noted that the permanent exhibition at the Jüdisches Museum Hohenems is bookended by questions of provenance: it begins with a quotation from a local Jewish woman about the shame non-Jews will feel if asked to bring forward formerly Jewish-owned objects for inclusion in the collection and ends with a box of old silver which, while identifiably Jewish, has lost all connection with places of origin or individual biographies.[45]

I discuss individual objects from Munich and Hohenems later in this section, but a useful introductory example is the permanent exhibition at the Ehemalige Synagoge Haigerloch. Each object or group of objects in Haigerloch is allocated a separate vitrine, spaced out across the main room. Both the captions and the catalogue give information about the object and about how it came to be found, preserved, or returned to Haigerloch. In the catalogue, the survival stories are told separately under the heading 'Spurensicherung' ('preservation of traces'), which is also the name of the permanent exhibition and the title of its catalogue. Though the 'Spurensicherung' texts are factual rather than analytical, they give an overview of the various ways in which German-Jewish and Austrian-Jewish objects survived between the 1930s and the end of the century. Objects were taken or sent into emigration; given to non-Jews for safekeeping; left behind in the houses of the deported, to be found,

[43] Shown at 'Alles hat seine Zeit. Rituale gegen das Vergessen' ('Everything has its Time: Rituals against Forgetting', 2013 at the Jüdisches Museum Berlin).

[44] The catalogue gives full information on the seven vitrines, though a new object has since been substituted for the top hat. Jutta Fleckenstein and Bernhard Purin (eds), *Jüdisches Museum München / Jewish Museum Munich* (Munich, Berlin, London, and New York: Prestel, 2007).

[45] Hanno Loewy, 'Diasporic Home or Homelessness: The Museum and the Circle of Lost and Found', *German Historical Institute London Bulletin*, 34.1 (2012), 41–58 (pp. 53–55).

often much later, by the non-Jews who moved in; relegated to the storage spaces of public buildings; kept circulating in the economy of the town; preserved in official—that is, non-Jewish—archives; or preserved in the specifically Jewish repository of the *genizah*.

My interest is not in the object stories per se, but rather in the fact that—contrary to normal museum practice, which assumes visitors have no interest in which attic, office or sitting room an object stood in before the museum acquired it—exhibition-makers put these object journeys on display and, indeed, build an exhibition around them. This encourages visitors to reflect on attitudes within the community between 1933 and 1945, but particularly on attitudes between 1945 and the twenty-first century, including the continued circulation of knowledge about local Jewish families after 1945, which remained attached to the material culture they left behind.

This starts with the biggest objects left behind: synagogues. One vitrine tells of an American who campaigned for the restoration of a synagogue nearby and contains a page from a scrapbook, into which he pasted an advert that appeared in the *Hohenzollerische Zeitung* in 1977. It reads: 'Synagoge in Hechingen zu verkaufen. DM 85.000' ('Synagogue for sale in Hechingen. 85,000 Deutschmark'). The catalogue text calls the newspaper clipping 'denkwürdig' ('memorable', 'notable') without saying why.[46] The caption in the exhibition room does not even go that far: it says only that the American was sent the clipping by an acquaintance and notes his scribbled comments on the rising value of the building after the Jewish religious community sold it—for want of a community to serve—in the 1950s. What understanding do the exhibition-makers and visitors share that will allow them to understand the advert as 'denkwürdig' (and worthy of display) without further explanation? Possibly just a vague sense that dealing in synagogues is a callous act in the light of the Holocaust—possibly a more sensitive reading of the advert as a record of mentalities. For the advert betrays both ignorance and knowledge among the majority population: ignorance of what constitutes a synagogue (certainly not an empty space that has not been used for religious purposes for thirty-five years because its community was dispersed and murdered); and yet, at the same time, confidence

[46] Hecht, p. 64.

in a shared knowledge that, thirty-five years previously, a Jewish community existed that used the building for religious purposes.

Another vitrine shows the banner of a Jewish male-voice choir. Having been discovered in the Town Hall attic in 1951, the banner was first given to the local non-Jewish male-voice choir for safekeeping and then, in 1960, sent to a Jewish lawyer in New York—evidently someone with no connection to Haigerloch—at which point local council members were content that they had 'given it back' (effected a 'Rückerstattung'). Since this is as much as the texts tell the visitor, we are left to interpret the inverted commas that the exhibition-makers place around 'Rückerstattung'. Post-war local representatives must have known that their Jewish fellow citizens had been murdered and dispersed, meaning that there was nobody to use this object. Rather than seek out survivors or relatives they engaged in crude acts of placing like with like (choir banner with choir or Jewish object with Jewish person), helpless responses to an anxiety about having to keep the object in existence rather than dispose of it. Anxiety about post-Holocaust possession of Jewish objects features in another 'Spurensicherung' story.[47] A Jewish survivor who visits Haigerloch in the 1980s is given a Hanukkah lamp by a non-Jew who had taken it into safekeeping for a Jewish neighbour before the deportations. The identity of that neighbour is now lost, so that—in a story repeated thousands of times across Germany and Austria and many times in history exhibitions—the object has become generically 'Jewish' by disconnection from its owner.

This is true also of small items of jewellery, shown in another vitrine, that survived because they were bought second-hand by a young non-Jewish woman, despite her misgivings about the shopkeeper's account that they had previously belonged to Jews from the town.[48] The veracity of the shopkeeper's story, we are told, can no longer be confirmed but is made plausible by local rumours that the women charged with carrying out body searches on Jews awaiting deportation kept some jewellery for themselves. Here, Jewish-owned objects circulate commercially as commodities after 1945. The knowledge of possible theft from Jews triggers anxiety without making buying taboo. A knowledge that objects have been stolen from Jews is transmitted openly in the town,

[47] Hecht, p. 35.

[48] Hecht, pp. 5–6.

Fig. 5.4 Handbag given to a non-Jewish neighbour by a Jewish woman about to be deported, Ehemalige Synagoge Haigerloch. Photograph: Chloe Paver

but the knowledge of exactly which objects were stolen from whom by whom is diluted and lost over time.[49]

A vitrine containing a small handbag tells another story of disconnection (Fig. 5.4). A local woman kept secret for forty years that this treasured possession was given to her by a Jewish friend, who stepped out of line on the way to the deportation train to ask her to look after it. Both the shorter caption and the longer catalogue text tell us that the

[49]The bundle of keys that opened Sect. 2.2, shown in 2016 at the Jüdisches Museum Hohenems with a curator's commentary, revealed a similar combination of local knowledge of 'Aryanization' but haziness about the details. The story that the keys had belonged to the son of a former SS man who had collected the keys of 'Aryanized' houses after the deportation of the last Jews was so unlikely it might even be a 'eine Phantasie, die einer unfasslichen Erinnerung Greifbarket verschafft oder den Marktwert der Objekte als "Antiquitäten" erhöhen soll' ('a fantasy which lends tangibility to an ungraspable memory or is intended to raise the market value of the objects as "antiques"'). Loewy and Reichwald, pp. 58–60.

non-Jewish woman stood up and told this story publicly at one of the first local events to invite discussion of memories of the Jewish families of Haigerloch, held on 21 October 1982 (the exact date is given). By the time of the exhibition's opening twenty years later, in 2003, this had become a story about the breaking of silence in the 1980s, in this case silence about friendship between Jews and non-Jews. It is also a story of private knowledge experienced as a material continuity. In a conventional museum, the fact that the name of the original owner has now been lost would probably make the handbag ineligible for display; but in this museum it represents the failure to reconnect names and objects securely after their forced disconnection. For Jewish objects, this disconnection goes beyond the normal loosening of connections between names and objects within all family and community narratives.

Overall, then, the display at Haigerloch moves memory discussions on from forgetting and silence after 1945 to complex forms of remembering, forgetting details, speaking openly, speaking in code, speaking to the wrong audience and not speaking after 1945. Memories were kept alive by the persistence of Jewish material culture in the absence of Jewish residents, though knowledge was allowed to fragment in a way that often detached objects from named individuals. Objects and the transfer of objects were accompanied by anxieties about who should possess them.

Already in this opening example of Haigerloch, the argument has returned to the private and public spaces of the majority culture (the home, the Town Hall, local shops), since this is where an unquantifiable number of Jewish-owned objects lived on after 1945, partly because they were too numerous to track down and partly because there was little political will to arrange for their systematic return to their rightful owners. The material fact that some majority Germans and Austrians did not relinquish objects they had acquired in the 'Aryanization' process is both a constituent part of Germany's and Austria's so-called second guilt and also strongly evocative of the wider workings of that guilt. For, if some Germans and Austrians had Jewish-owned objects in their homes and public spaces, they could not claim not to have known or even to have forgotten what happened under National Socialism, since they shared personal space with mementos of harassment and persecution. And if legal and administrative processes were not helpful to Jewish survivors and descendants of the victims in the small matter of household goods, that indicates a broader unwillingness to recognize the sufferings of the victims and the culpability of the majority culture.

Here, we can return to the Austrian art exhibition 'Recollecting' (2009), which was discussed in Sect. 2.3, because contributions to its catalogue (I did not visit the exhibition itself) considered the emotional currents that flow through objects. Whereas, in its display spaces, 'Recollecting' focused largely on the theft of culturally valuable objects, in the catalogue, Mirjam Triendl-Zadoff and Niko Wahl, two academics who had lent their expertise to the Austrian Historians' Commission on 'Aryanization', discuss the mass of everyday household objects stolen from Jewish homes. Focussing on their subsequent life cycle—'ihr vielfältiger BenutzerInnenwechsel, ihr Wertverfall, und schließlich ihr Verbrauchtsein und Weggeworfenwerden' ('their frequent changes of owner, their gradual loss of value, and finally, once used up, their disposal')—they note that some surviving objects are gradually being retrieved 'aus den Kellern und Dachböden der Stadt' ('from the cellars and attics of the city').[50] Others continue to be bought and sold in flea markets and antique markets where their value to the buyer lies in their looking like they have been used, even though the buyer has no way of knowing their story.[51] The article is prefaced by lines of poetry from a survivor-in-exile, Stella Rotenberg, including: 'Wir sitzen auf Stühlen, die nicht unser sind' ('We are sitting on chairs that are not ours'). Triendl-Zadoff and Wahl return to the poem at the end, applying its wisdom to today's non-Jewish majority in Vienna: 'Denn auch wir sitzen "auf Stühlen die nicht unser sind" und "essen von Tellern die nicht unser sind"' ('For we, too, are sitting "on chairs that are not ours" and "eating from plates that are not ours"').[52] Together with the hackneyed 'cellar/attic' image, the use of the poem reminds us of the attraction of 'Aryanized' objects as metaphors, beyond their material facticity. The academics express a sense of Austrian culpability by fantasizing an appropriation and consumption of Jewish objects that has continued unabated since 1938. As Triendl-Zadoff and Wahl note, most of the low-value 'Aryanized' objects are now unidentifiable, and even where stories are told about individual objects these have an informal, undocumented

[50] Mirjam Triendl-Zadoff and Niko Wahl, 'Geraubt, Benutzt, Verbraucht. Weil Dinge kein Gedächtnis haben', in *Recollecting. Raub und Restitution*, ed. by Alexandra Reininghaus (Vienna: Passagen Verlag, 2009), pp. 77–86 (pp. 78, 80).

[51] Triendl-Zadoff and Wahl, p. 79.

[52] Triendl-Zadoff and Wahl, p. 85.

quality (rather like in the Haigerloch example discussed above).[53] Nonetheless, for Triendl-Zadoff and Wahl, 'egal, ob benutzt, verbraucht oder verloren' ('whether they have been used, consumed, or lost') they have the potential to reconnect us to their original owners.

Triendl-Zadoff and Wahl evoke—without quite systematizing it—the imaginative power of 'Aryanized' objects for postmemory, which was discussed in the previous section in relation to National Socialist objects. In the context of practical museum work in which it is written, Triendl-Zadoff's and Wahl's argument is rather paradoxical, since exhibition-makers cannot show irrevocably lost, fully consumed or irreversibly anonymized objects. Their 'potential' can be evoked in a semi-academic article in an exhibition catalogue, but real exhibitions must work with the small subset of objects that have survived and that have been at least tentatively identified. At most, an exhibition might make room for one object or set of objects whose provenance is lost in the Holocaust, such as the box of silver or the second-hand jewellery mentioned above. The Jüdisches Museum Fürth shows a single vitrine of objects—including a china dog bought in an auction of Jewish property and a besamim tower picked up from the roadside in Silesia—about which almost nothing can be reconstructed other than what the people who found them say about them, illustrating how Jewish museums are routinely confronted with displaced and anonymized objects. Generally, though, the minimum requirement for an object to be displayed is that it has at least been discovered extant and can at least be attributed to Jewish owners. Even the story of the 'Wertverfall' and 'Verbrauchtsein' invoked by Triendl-Zadoff and Wahl—that is, the way in which an object's use value and monetary value were consumed by a non-Jewish owner after 1945—is rarely available in documented material form to the museum, so that this part of the life cycle is generally lost. A rare—and therefore especially evocative—exception is discussed below.

The 'Aryanized' objects that are shown in museums are therefore generally ones that have been stored in the same home for many decades, in full knowledge of their origins. The purpose of showing them is, in general, straightforwardly critical: to highlight the immoral appropriation of Jewish goods and the unwillingness to admit to complicity in Nazism even many decades after the end of the regime. This is the case,

[53] Triendl-Zadoff and Wahl, p. 79.

for instance, with a brass chandelier shown at the Jüdisches Museum Schnaittach. The caption explains that Gottfried Stammler, the director of the Heimatmuseum, 'rescued' it from the vandalized synagogue, from whose ceiling it had hung, following the pogrom of 1938 and sold it to a non-Jewish family who wired it for electric light so that it could be used in their home. It was donated anonymously to the museum in the 1990s, after five decades of domestic use.[54] Other examples are, however, more complex.

The travelling exhibition 'Legalisierter Raub. Der Fiskus und die Ausplünderung der Juden in Hessen 1933–1945' ('Legalized Theft: The Tax Office and the Plundering of Jewish Property in Hessen 1933–1945'), a cooperation between the Fritz Bauer Institut and the Hessischer Rundfunk, is the longest running exhibition about 'Aryanization' in Germany, having visited 29 venues in Hessen since 2002. A final showing at the Historisches Museum Frankfurt in 2018 is due to celebrate the exhibition's achievements. The longevity of the format can be attributed to the fact that at each venue new research was undertaken into local stories of dispossession and profiteering. At each venue, the exhibition-makers issued a public call for objects that once belonged to Jews. The advert was successively re-formulated to make it as unthreatening as possible and in recent years it read:

> Sind in Ihrer Familie Gegenstände überliefert, die jüdische Familien vor der Auswanderung oder Deportation ihren Nachbarn zur Aufbewahrung übergeben haben? Besitzen Sie Briefe, Fotografien oder andere Zeugnisse, die von ehemaligen jüdischen Nachbarn erzählen? Wurden in Ihrer Familie Gegenstände vererbt, die auf öffentlichen Versteigerungen so genannten 'nicht arischen Besitzes' erworben wurden?
>
> (Have objects been passed down in your family that Jewish families gave to their neighbours for safekeeping before they emigrated or were deported? Do you own letters, photographs or other documents that can tell us about former Jewish neighbours? Were objects handed down within your family that had been bought at public auctions of so-called 'non-Aryan property'?)

[54] Until some time after 2014, there were two chandeliers on show, and they were placed in glass cases in the main prayer room of the synagogue. I wrote about them in 'The Transmission of Household Objects' (pp. 242–43). I am told that that installation was dismantled to make it easier to use the synagogue for events. Now, just one is on show in the vitrines in the Frauenschul; the caption gives briefer but similar information to the old display.

This formulation begins with the least shaming possibility. The second possibility, that local people might have documentary evidence of Jewish co-habitation with the non-Jewish majority, is also unthreatening. Only at the end is the possibility mentioned that the current owners of the Jewish objects may have inherited them from parents or grandparents who acquired them at auctions of Jewish property, though the text still leaves the context of these auctions (the deportation of the rightful owners to almost certain death) unspoken. Two other elements of the call for objects indicate that the exhibition-makers anticipated responses of shame: it offered donors anonymity, and it included the name of a local Catholic or Lutheran priest who could be contacted in preference to the exhibition-makers. I am told that a priest was sometimes present at meetings between the exhibition-makers and owners of objects.[55]

Though this shame was part of the context in which each exhibition was developed—and doubtless meant that some objects never reached the display—it was not the topic of the exhibition. From my experience of three versions of 'Legalisierter Raub', the focus was firmly on what local Jews suffered rather than on non-Jewish sensibilities in the twenty-first century. A commitment to the victims may also have been the reason that makers of 'Legalisierter Raub' did not—as far as I was able to see—explore the emotions of those neighbours who waited in vain for Jewish neighbours to return so that they could return their goods. Were they saddened, angry, relieved? Nonetheless, the objects brought forward spoke for the fact that Germans who had Jewish neighbours did not forget them after 1945.

In the town of Wolfhagen, the public call elicited two clothes-hangers, each brought forward by a different donor and each bearing the name of a different Jewish shop that had once served the nearby town of Bad Arolsen. Though this might seem a disappointing result, such clothes-hangers are a staple collection item for history museums, allowing them to document the existence of 'Aryanized' Jewish firms.[56] Their cultural currency is strong enough that the Jüdisches Kulturmuseum Augsburg-Schwaben was able to use them on one of its advertising

[55]For this and all other unpublished information about the exhibition, I am obliged to the lead exhibition-maker, Bettina Leder-Hindemith.

[56]For instance, in '"Arisierung" in Leipzig. Verdrängt. Beraubt. Ermordet' ('"Aryanization" in Leipzig: Forgotten, Robbed, Murdered', 2007 at the Stadtgeschichtliches Museum Leipzig), where two coat hangers for the same department store were able to show the change

posters. A speech bubble emerging from one clothes-hanger contained the words: 'Bei Landauer kauften alle ein bis …' ('Everyone shopped at Landauer's until …'). This highlights (or constructs) two kinds of local post-war knowledge. On the one hand, the older people whose speech it imitates knew about the exile and deportation of the Jews, though the ellipsis points suggest that they preferred to speak of it euphemistically (whether out of shame, cowardice or fear). On the other hand, a younger audience is assumed to understand both what the 'Aryanization' process involved and the inadequate ways in which older people responded to it, trailing off into silence with the ellipsis points. Communication via ellipsis points, that is, assuming that what is unspoken is nevertheless shared knowledge, would be a good metaphor for many exhibition texts about Germany's and Austria's post-war failings.

The caption at Wolfhagen's version of 'Legalisierter Raub' used the clothes-hangers conventionally as historical documents, evidence of one firm's 'Aryanization' and of another owner's attempt to re-establish his confiscated business after 1945. However, another caption named the two local people who had brought the clothes-hangers forward. Since old wooden clothes-hangers are a familiar domestic object, this information about their transmission invited reflection on the ways in which knowledge of the Jewish past remained within the home, not just as a cognitive memory of two Jewish-owned shops but also as embodied knowledge, activated when clothing was lifted in and out of the wardrobe. It is in the nature of the clothes-hanger as object that while we pay little attention to it, the companies that emboss or imprint their names on it believe that the name will impress itself subliminally on us. The clothes-hanger could therefore be read as a metaphor for a persistent, semi-conscious knowledge of the persecution of the Jews in post-1945 homes. More factually (since such symbolic readings have a tendency to over-generalize the post-war era), the clothes-hangers are material evidence that some people still knew sixty or seventy years later which shop

of ownership during the 'Aryanization' process; and at 'Jüdisches in Bamberg', a permanent exhibition within the Historisches Museum Bamberg. Clothes hangers embossed with the names of elite Nazi schools are shown at the NS-Dokumentation Vogelsang. The museum does not connect them to the post-war family home, but rather to the role played by uniform in the political education of the young men.

had been Jewish. More generally, they show that memory persists in part because objects hang about inconspicuously serving a useful function.

At Wolfhagen, the makers of 'Legalisierter Raub' also showed a child's necklace made of plastic beads. This represented the benign end of the spectrum of property transfer, as represented in the first sentence of the call for objects. A local woman had been given the beads as a young girl by the mother of the Jewish girl they belonged to. The necklace was a thank you for errands that the non-Jewish girl had run for the Jewish family. It had not been brought forward in the context of the exhibition, but donated to a local Jewish museum five years earlier. Accordingly, it was shown alongside a photograph of the now elderly owner of the necklace staging the act of handing it over to the director of the museum. The contrast in scale between the two adults and the necklace in their hands reinforced its child's size. By showing the photograph, the exhibition-makers were able to represent visually both the gap between childhood and old age (which coincides with, and can therefore stand for, the period during which Germans remembered the past privately without facing up to it) and the re-transfer of the property from a non-Jewish context to a Jewish museum, a potentially redemptive moment. However, the real necklace, lying in the vitrine, was rather more disruptive than this suggests. It demonstrated that deterioration is not the single defining property of objects that came through the Holocaust, even if, as many examples in this study show, that is a widespread fact. The coral-coloured beads were in pristine condition: if the necklace were placed in a shop display today, nobody would question it. This meant that although, exceptionally, this object did not speak of violence, fire, neglect or burial, its luminous presence had the power to create a jolt of synchronicity, momentarily making its Jewish owner present and sharpening the appreciation for her absence as an old lady, as a double for the old woman holding the beads in the photograph.

When 'Legalisierter Raub' stopped at Lorsch in 2016, the exhibition-makers allowed visitors to pick up and handle one of the items brought forward by the public. In 1938, a Jewish shop owner had pleaded with long-time customers to buy goods from him because the ongoing anti-Jewish boycott, coupled with the unwillingness of Nazi customers to pay their bills, had almost ruined him. A non-Jewish woman bought four pieces of cloth, one a substantial bolt of fine-quality material from which she intended to make a suit. She held on to the material even in the post-war years when it could have been used

Fig. 5.5 Cloth bought from a Jewish shopkeeper in 1938 and kept in a non-Jewish household, donated to the exhibition 'Legalisierter Raub' in 2017. Photograph: Chloe Paver

for barter, and eventually passed it to her granddaughter, together with its story. While the cloth therefore told a 'Good German' story, the caption's emphasis was on the transmission of knowledge through a non-Jewish family, suggesting once again that the fate of local Jews was talked about in the post-war years, with conversations mediated by the material residue of that time.

There were two stages to the transmission, because a remarkable forty years after the woman's death, her family was still in possession of both the material and the story, and offered it for use in 'Legalisierter Raub', where the cloth was presented in an old cardboard box (Fig. 5.5). Whether or not this was the box in which it was kept in the owner's or the donor's household, it evoked that domestic storage simply by not being a new museum-grade storage box or vitrine. Visitors were free to feel and appreciate the quality of the suit cloth, which hung over the front of the cardboard box. Despite its quality as fabric, the pieces of

cloth together presumably had a fairly low monetary value, which allowed the exhibition-makers to take the risk of displaying the object without protection from greasy hands and from theft. Arguably, it also had a low historical and memorial value, since it could prove little other than the well-known fact that people once bought goods from Jewish shops and since it barely fitted the category, however broadly defined, of a 'Jewish object', having quite possibly come from a non-Jewish manufacturer and simply been traded by a Jewish shopkeeper. Added to this, the pieces of cloth were visually quite blank, marked by the shopkeeper with the date 1938 but otherwise unmarked by emblems or by change. Yet despite all this, the haptic effect of feeling something that was present when Jews and non-Jews last interacted with each other in the town of Lorsch was surprisingly strong, even for someone visiting the town for the first time that day. Indeed, together with the beads described above, this was one of very few objects that have created a strong 'time tunnel' effect for me. The caption encouraged this use of the object as a bridge to the past by visualizing the intervening time: 'der Ballen hat unangetastet den Krieg und nunmehr 80 Jahren in hervorragendem Zustand überlebt' ('the bolt of cloth survived the war and, in the meantime, eighty years in excellent condition'). At the same time, the caption also drew the visitor's attention away from the mere material presence of the cloth to the emotions that had once been attached to it, at the far end of the time tunnel. Asked whether he would welcome its display at the exhibition, the son of the textile merchant told the exhibition-makers: 'Auf jeden Fall, bitte machen Sie den Ballen zum Teil Ihrer Ausstellung. […] Lassen Sie es ein kleines Stück der ganzen Geschichte werden, ein Beispiel dafür, wie erniedrigend diese Zeit für meine Eltern und meinen Großvater war' ('Please go ahead, make the bolt of cloth part of your exhibition. […] Let it become a small part of the whole story, an example of how humiliating that time was for my parents and my grandfather').

Close to the pieces of cloth, the exhibition-makers displayed fragments of the Torah decorations from Lorsch synagogue. A caption explained that the fire-damaged fragments survived the synagogue's burning and subsequent demolition thanks to a local boy, then aged 15, who secretly picked them out of the rubble and took them home. Young lads picking through the remains of Jewish life like magpies appear to have been a phenomenon of the time, since 'Legalisierter Raub' had previously shown a broken pair of spectacles picked up the day after a local family was deported (Groß-Gerau, 2006) and since Loewy discusses a

similar story, to which I will return presently. In the case of the Lorsch Torah decorations, the visitor was told that the salvager, whom I will call G., gave four of the most intact objects to the local Heimat- und Kulturverein in 1978 when it commemorated the 40th anniversary of the November Pogrom. So far, this is a fairly typical story of small fragments of Jewish material culture ghosting about non-Jewish households for decades after majority Germans learned the full details of the Holocaust and only belatedly coming to light in the context of long-overdue (though in this case relatively early) memory initiatives. Whereas the 1978 exhibition presumably used the objects as historical testaments to the existence of the synagogue, in 'Legalisierter Raub' they acted as testaments to post-war memory processes, which could now be viewed at one remove. By shifting the focus in this way, 'Legalisierter Raub' raised but left open the question of whether G. kept the objects for forty years because he still felt the teenage thrill of securing forbidden booty, because he felt active sympathy for the persecuted Jews, because he was at a loss what to do with objects he felt he should not destroy, or a mixture of all these things. Whatever the case, the donation of the objects to a public organization in the cause of Holocaust enlightenment creates a satisfying narrative trajectory that might stand *pars pro toto* for post-war German memory processes.

And there the analysis might conclude, were it not that a fifth object came to light in the context of the call for donations for 'Legalisierter Raub' in 2016. By this time, G. had been dead for twenty-five years, but his family donated a plaque that he had made by hand (at an unknown, or unstated, date) in the shape of a Star of David, with the date '9.11.38' carved in the centre. Around the edge of the star, G. had nailed 75 brass fragments of the Lorsch Torah shield. Presumably out of respect for the donor family, the caption eschewed the use of a normal active finite verb ('G. did x') when it distinguished between damage done by the Nazis during and after the Pogrom, and damage done by G.: 'Die Reste sind unvollständig. Sie zeigen Hieb- und Brandspuren. Die Zerstückelung mit einer Blechschere erfolgte erst nach dem Pogrom' ('The fragments are incomplete. They show traces of having been smashed and burned. It was not until after the Pogrom that they were cut into pieces using a pair of metal snips'). Here, the fragments are made the grammatical agent of the statement and a verbal noun is acted on by a tool, not a person. In fact, the German in the final sentence is closer to: 'The cutting into pieces by a pair of metal snips did not happen until after the Pogrom'.

A different kind of exhibition might reasonably enquire into G.'s motivations, asking for instance: What possessed him to honour the memory of the Jewish community in private using misappropriated Jewish objects whose sanctity he was not in a position to appreciate and which he took it upon himself to further damage? And why did he not offer these fragments up in 1978 but keep them in his home for a further thirteen years? Instead, the exhibition ended by reminding the visitor that what really matters is 1938 (and therefore Jewish experience): 'Das von [G.] verfertigte Objekt mit dem Datum 9.11.1938 ist in seiner Art von eigener historischer Bedeutung – und nachdrückliches Zeugnis der Lorscher Pogromnacht' ('The object made by [G.], inscribed with the date 9.11.1938, has a historical significance all of its own – and is an emphatic testament to the night of the Pogrom in Lorsch'). Respect for the donors, which has been an important principle of 'Legalisierter Raub', helps to explain why the extraordinary Star of David is not picked apart or its maker psychologized. The family may well have felt that they were handing over unproblematic evidence of G.'s respect for the lost Jewish community (which is why I do not name him here, though the exhibition-makers did). The exhibition-makers may also have felt, entirely reasonably, that it would be academically irresponsible to diagnose the mentality of an individual posthumously, on the basis of a single object. At the same time, this book provides many other examples of exhibitions assuming that an educated liberal visitor can be expected to fill in the gaps in a laconic and elliptical written statement. Here, visitors are left to work out what 'eigene historische Bedeutung' the home-made Star of David has. Presumably, they are expected to consider that the post-war era may have brought forth forms of remorse for the Holocaust which, however sincere, would today be classed as insensitive appropriation. Germany, the home-made star might suggest, went through a phase of recalling Jewish suffering without involving living Jews in the act of recollection. A literary text which covers similar ground is discussed in Sect. 5.5, and examples of exhibitions that discuss more openly, in much less personal cases, the failings of earlier eras of 'coming to terms' are discussed in Sect. 5.6.

In an essay already discussed in Sect. 2.3, which considers how emotions determine whether objects find their way into museum collections or remain in the home, Loewy recalls an object brought forward in 2010 for the event and exhibition 'Ein gewisses jüdisches Etwas' ('A Certain Jewish Something'). A non-Jewish man brought forward two small,

brass stars, which turned out to be the last extant remnants of the interior of the Hohenems synagogue. The man had picked them up from the rubble as a small boy. Loewy shows sympathy with the young boy who kept these small, shiny remnants of a community he had once known well. However, in the format of an academic essay, Loewy is able to ask the kinds of question that exhibitions such as 'Legalisierter Raub' are unable to ask:

> He kept the stars, even when, much later, he became a member of the Board of the Jewish Museum. He never told anyone. The meaning of these objects definitely changed for him over time. What did they mean to him over the last twenty years, when the museum was in existence? Did he hesitate to give them back because he was shy about having 'robbed' them? Did he hesitate because he felt that he wanted to control his story himself and not pass it on into other hands?[57]

Loewy does not answer these questions (which stand at the end of a section). Given an absence of scholarship on this aspect of mentalities, it is difficult to see how he can, and given the gradual passing of this generation of non-Jews, it is difficult to imagine that such scholarship will now be carried out. Nonetheless, exhibitions and museum paratexts repeatedly hint at the importance of taking time to understand the complex motivations for hanging on to Jewish objects until the twenty-first century.

A final example of an exhibition that focused on 'submarine' objects and in which carefully specified post-war dates were used to stand for more than just temporal facts was 'InventArisiert'. This Viennese exhibition, which is known to me through its catalogue and discussion with its makers, was discussed in the context of 'Aryanization' in Sect. 3.2. There, I noted that photographer Arno Gisinger made a portrait of each Jewish-owned object that had been accessioned by the state furniture depot, the Hofmobiliendepot, in 1938, substituting the word for the object if the latter was no longer extant. He printed onto each image the object's inventory number and a line about its fate, for instance whether the furniture depot had lent it out after 1945. This focused attention not just on the damage done by the original theft but on the failure of the Austrian Second Republic, for fifty years and more, to right the wrongs of 1938–45. The exhibition asked what it

[57] Loewy, 'Diasporic Home and Homelessness', p. 53.

meant for objects belonging to persecuted and murdered Jews to have hidden in plain sight in private homes and public buildings for so long.

None of the objects in the photographs at 'InventArisiert' had been cleaned up or restored before Gisinger took his photographs: many were covered in dust and many showed signs of wear and tear. In conversation with me, the curators said that at least one member of the public complained about how dirty some of the objects in the photographs were. This indicates that the exhibition succeeded in drawing attention to the stages in the objects' life cycle after their theft and during the half-century after 1945 in which they were not returned to their owners. The lead image for the exhibition, used on its poster, flyers and catalogue, was of a chaise-longue, angled away from the camera so that the characteristic scrolled woodwork and upholstery at its pillow end were clearly visible. Together with the faded brocade fabric and braid trim, the classic shape gave a first impression of a pleasant bourgeois antique. In Vienna, where couches mean Freud, it may also have suggested a measure of intellectual sophistication.[58] However, a closer look revealed how damaged the object was, its fabric worn and faded, the braiding frayed and coming away from the seams. A slat sagged visibly underneath the front edge of the chaise and the foot was scuffed. While this patina might still appeal to a retro taste, few would find the dirty stripe along the front of the cushion appealing, nor the water stain on its seat. The object, which the caption revealed was lent to private individuals after 1939, bore the traces of many bodies that used it since its theft. In this way, it spoke of the 'Wertverfall' and 'Verbrauchtsein' ('slow loss of value' and 'being used up') that Triendl-Zadoff and Wahl evoke as the typical fate of stolen objects, but which it is generally impossible to put on show.

Similarly, while we cannot know what exactly the Bundeskanzleramt did to a 'Rollkastel' (cupboard on wheels) between 1969 and 1990 to cause it to be deleted from the inventory, clearly the cupboard was well and truly consumed in public service.[59] The Gesellschaft Freunde des Burgtheaters (the Friends of the Burgtheater) also appeared from the photographs to have worn away the upholstery of chairs they had on loan from 1985 to 1998. I give the time spans here as in the exhibition

[58] Another object was replaced by the word 'Psyche', presumably denoting a statue of the same, but also a nod to Freud.

[59] Ilsebill Barta-Fliedl and Herbert Posch (eds), *InventArisiert. Enteignung von Möbeln aus jüdischem Besitz* (Vienna: Turia and Kant, 2000), p. 66.

because these lengths of time—characterized by action (consumption) and inaction (failure to remember and restitute)—are what the objects stand for and are, as has been shown, sometimes even encoded in the fabric of the object. The final image in the catalogue was of a worn square of red carpet that was given a new inventory number when it was made by cutting up a larger piece of carpet in 1949.[60] There are few other museum contexts in which it is possible to imagine that the damage done to objects by wearing them out has historical value.[61]

Even when objects in 'InventArisiert' looked well cared for, their consumption as objects of value was still evoked. One oil painting of a young girl had been in a private household as recently as 1998.[62] The ornamental image of girlhood might have had a sentimental effect but for the knotted string holding it in place inside its frame. Whatever the conservatorial reasons for this makeshift arrangement, it distracted attention from the girl's pretty face and reminded the viewer that the object had been disposable (at the disposal of the museum, able to be disposed of as it saw fit over the years). This, in turn, invited the visitor to reflect on how a private individual who was not its owner consumed its value as a decorative, status-giving, conservative and comforting image for the thirteen years between 1985 and 1998.

5.4 Survival Among Objects

The previous section showed that exhibitions about Jewish objects after 1945 are often also about the majority experience of Jewish objects after 1945. It does not follow from my artificial section divisions that history exhibitions about National Socialism are not concerned with the victims, Jewish or otherwise. They are profoundly concerned with them, but objects are arguably not the key way in which the experiences of traumatized survival and mourning are displayed in exhibition spaces.

[60] Barta-Fliedl and Posch, p. 123.

[61] In the catalogue for the later exhibition, 'Recollecting', Barta-Fliedl and Posch report a descendant to whom the Hofmobiliendepot restituted objects from his childhood as saying 'Der Teppich ist ganz schön abgenützt. Da müssen Tausende Leute darüber gegangen sein' ('The carpet is really worn. Thousands of people must have walked across it'). Possibly, this quotation was also in the texts in the vitrines at 'InventArisiert', as his case was shown, but I do not have access to those texts. Reininghaus, p. 124.

[62] Barta-Fliedl and Posch, p. 95.

Over the decade covered by my fieldwork, most professional exhibition-makers have made video interviews with survivors. These often form the final section of an exhibition and are set up to invite contemplation. The penultimate display space at the Erinnerungs- und Gedenkstätte Wewelsburg 1933–1945, which opened in 2010 and is discussed below, is clearly distinguished from the vitrine-and-text displays that precede it. Seating pods invite the visitor to take their time listening to video interviews. On the walls of an otherwise empty space are professional photographic portraits of the *Zeitzeugen* who speak in the interviews. Such talking-heads videos almost never involve objects; rather, they prioritize the verbalization of survivors' experiences and emotions. Besides, survivors' attempts to move on from catastrophic experiences have a special immateriality. Arguably, far less material evidence exists for the after-effects than for the original traumatic events, which had many instruments and accoutrements. Perhaps for this reason, objects from the victims' post-war lives are relatively underrepresented in museums.

One more preliminary point is worth making. However valued the voices of the traumatized and bereaved may be, trauma itself is not much discussed in the exhibition space. Beyond fairly general statements about survivors and descendants living for the rest of their lives with the consequences of their experiences, there is—in my experience, and I will be happy if future studies contradict this claim—little explanation on exhibition boards of how trauma operates in practice. It is perhaps unsurprising, given that public history engages only rarely with theory, that I have yet to see the term 'belatedness' ('Nachträglichkeit') in exhibition texts; but even common clinical terms such as 'flashback', 'estrangement' or 'intrusive thoughts' (and their German equivalents) are absent. This may be because Holocaust trauma is considered a straightforwardly known fact; or it may demonstrate a wish to prioritize the autobiographical voice over the authoritative voice of medicalizing discourses. Whatever the case, the absence of explanations of how trauma survival functions is surprising for two reasons: young people's lack of historical knowledge is generally considered a key pedagogical challenge and their knowledge that Holocaust survivors are trauma victims is not guaranteed; and, in the decades since 1980—when it entered the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*—'post-traumatic stress disorder' (German: 'posttraumatische Belastungsstörung') has passed into general knowledge. PTSD is understood to be one common, though not the only, psychological response to Holocaust experience. The fact that the term

must be imposed retrospectively on Holocaust survivors, for whom it was not initially available, potentially creates a barrier to understanding the history of their suffering after liberation; on the other hand, its wide currency today could serve as a useful bridge from the familiar to the unfamiliar.

I have already noted the sparing but effective use of objects at the Denkort Bunker Valentin. One module is devoted to 'Weiterleben' or 'Life Afterwards'. Without using any clinical terminology, the text enumerates the psychological, emotional and social after-effects of surviving the work camp at the bunker. This includes fear and mourning in the immediate aftermath, difficulties in readjusting to a new life and dealing with the refusal of the authorities to recognize the victims' sufferings. The text also speaks of the intergenerational transmission of effects to children and grandchildren: 'Auch das Schweigen, das Nicht-Sprechen-Können und die Scham, überlebt zu haben, prägen das Familienleben oft bis heute' ('Silence, an inability to speak, and shame at having survived have also affected family life, sometimes down to the present day', *my translation, which corrects the museum's translation*). The object chosen to accompany the text is an Olivetti manual typewriter, together with a set of spare typewriter ribbons and a page of a typescript (Fig. 5.6). The caption explains that a Dutch survivor, Klaus Tauber, whose typewriter this was, was encouraged to write down his experiences by Hans Keilsen, a psychoanalyst and trauma specialist, helping him to cope better with everyday life after liberation. The typewriter and transcript enable the museum to objectify (that is, make static, visible and conveniently small) a vast and messy series of mental processes and social interactions that make up the experience of trauma survival. They also accord agency and voice to the survivor who used a tool to help himself express his experience. The readiness with which typewriters, as a metonym, evoke hands tapping on them intensifies this sense of agency. Hans Keilsen's role as a celebrated writer is not mentioned, to keep the focus on the witness, Tauber. Potentially, the objects could provide a comforting sense of control over trauma: trauma dealt with by means of modern technology and modern medical therapy, then stored away. The caption does not state that the majority of victims—at Valentin as elsewhere—had no such access to support. On the whole, however, the adjacent texts and the surrounding displays—in particular the accounts of forced labour and the inhospitable museum building—make it unlikely that the visitor will find comfort in the typewriter. Indeed, the obsolescence of the technology

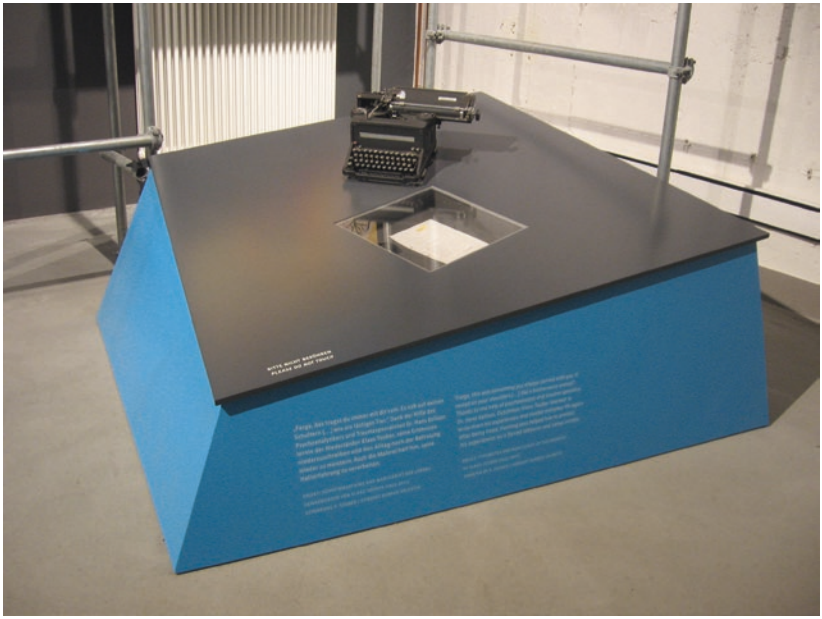

Fig. 5.6 Typewriter used by a survivor to write about his experiences, Denkort Bunker Valentin. Photograph: Chloe Paver

may, however irrationally, evoke a sense that the cure is crude and primitive in relation to the wound. Certainly, the 1940s machine (recognizable as a prop from films of a certain vintage) historicizes psychoanalysis as one stage in an evolving understanding of how to treat victims.

While the typewriter makes psychoanalytic treatment visible and tangible, a slightly different effect is created where objects themselves played a role in post-traumatic responses. The exhibition at the Erinnerungs- und Gedenkstätte Wewelsburg 1933–1945 devotes a vitrine to a tube of glue manufactured in Ukraine in 2000, with its price sticker still attached and product information in Cyrillic script.[63] The caption explains that Nikolai Beltschenko, a Ukrainian forced labourer, became so weak from ill treatment that he was allocated to a work detail gluing cloth together.

[63]Wulff E. Brebeck, Frank Huismann, Kirsten John-Stucke, and Jörg Piron, *Endzeitkämpfer. Ideologie und Terror der SS* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2011), p. 350.

Men in the group chewed pieces of glue or sniffed the glue to quieten their hunger. The caption continues:

> Noch mehr als fünfzig Jahre später war der Geruch des Klebstoffs für ihn präsent. Bei seinem Besuch in der Gedenkstätte im Jahr 2000 brachte er eine Klebstofftube der Marke "Moment" mit, die in der Ukraine verkauft wird und ihn an den Klebstoffgeruch aus dieser Zeit erinnerte. Das ukrainische Produkt entspricht dem deutschen Klebstoff "Pattex".
>
> (More than fifty years later, he could still smell the odour of the glue. When he visited the memorial site in the year 2000 he brought with him a tube of glue sold in Ukraine under the trade name "Moment", which reminded him of the smell of the glue from his time in the camp. The Ukrainian product is the equivalent of the German glue "Pattex".)

A quotation from Beltschenko's testimony, in which he describes the men's hunger, is written on the wall next to the vitrine. The reference to 'Pattex' is presumably an invitation to the German visitor to share in Beltschenko's olfactory memory and to imagine being reduced to such a state of abjection that they would willingly chew the product. It would be easy to argue that the tube of glue is a lucky find for the museum, making concrete fifty years of recurrent sensory symptoms that are otherwise impossible to objectify. I would prefer to argue, however, that the fact that a very well-endowed museum with many hundreds of historic objects on display, some of them beautifully crafted, is willing to show a tube of Ukrainian glue from a half-century after the collapse of National Socialism is indicative of a commitment to follow the victims into their experiences of suffering—in this case a suffering so extreme that normal human-object practices were suspended—as well as a commitment to document how they lived with the after-effects. An unwillingness to listen to survivor testimony when it does not fit pre-formed models is a fault that has been lamented (notably by Ruth Klüger) and that is beginning to be theorized.[64] Accepting the glue into the museum collection

[64] See, for instance, Carolyn J. Dean, 'Erasures: Writing History About Holocaust Trauma', in *Science and Emotions After 1945: A Transatlantic Perspective*, ed. by Frank Biess and Daniel M. Gross (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 2014), pp. 394–413; Nicholas Chare and Dominic Williams, 'Introduction', in *Representing Auschwitz: At the Margins of Testimony*, ed. by Nicholas Chare and Dominic Williams (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 1–10.

works as a form of listening to testimony: if the victim says that this is what the glue inmates had to chew to survive smelled like and that he can still smell it in his mind, we will show the glue he has brought us.

Objects such as the tube of glue can only ever gesture towards trauma and post-traumatic stress in their narrowest theoretical definition. Even the original moments in which Beltschenko, back in Ukraine after liberation, smells 'Moment' glue and remembers his hunger, cannot be equated with the unprompted, literal return of an anguish that could not be known when initially experienced, such as Freud and Caruth propose. On the contrary, the olfactory prompt for the recollection of intense suffering would seem to follow conventional patterns of remembering. It is a reminder, however, that psychological effects of the Holocaust do not fit a single model.

In some cases, exhibition-makers suggest with their displays that the Holocaust did not simply upset, temporarily, the normal material order of things (turning non-food into food, for instance), but effected categorical and long-term alterations in survivors' relations to the material environment. At the 2006 exhibition 'Heimat und Exil' ('Home and Exile', at the Jüdisches Museum Berlin), the exhibition-makers devoted a display to the poet Hilde Domin, who lived in exile from the 1930s to the 1950s.[65] On display was a battered wooden dove, its paint worn away, its wood cracked, one wing broken, leaving an awkward stump. In this state, most people would throw the object away but this study has already shown a good many objects that have escaped the normal logic of the object life cycle. Unlike most of those, the dove was not damaged by Germans, nor by Allied bombs: Domin acquired it in this state at a junk-shop in Madrid in 1960 and kept it in her study in Heidelberg until her death. Domin's cultural value as a poet ensured its preservation in the archive, as her belongings were bequeathed to the city of Heidelberg. Thus, while damaged or broken objects most often play a role in museums' evocations of the years 1933–45, they can also play other roles and may represent the long-term consequences of Holocaust survival. And while the flea market has come to stand for the inadequately suppressed Nazi past, that does not stop it from continuing to play its conventional role as a source of auratic objects for creative individuals.

[65] Stiftung Jüdisches Museum Berlin and Stiftung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik (eds), *Heimat und Exil. Emigration der deutschen Juden nach 1933* (Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag, 2006), p. 239.

The museum hung the bird on wires to imitate its 'flight', just as Domin herself had hung it in a corner of her study.[66] On the floor of the glass case were documents relating to Domin's exile and return to Germany. On the wall behind the dove, the museum displayed the second stanza of a poem that Domin addressed to the object in 1962, 'Versprechen an eine Taube' ('Promise to a Dove'). The absent first stanza tells how the poet found the dove in the junk-shop, lying forlornly on its back. The second stanza is a ten-line, single-sentence address to the dove, in which the poet promises to take the bird with her should she have to escape from catastrophe again because, however worm-eaten it is, its undamaged wing has such a beautiful shape.[67]

The museum's caption read the wooden dove as 'ein Zeichen für die zerbrechliche Existenz des Flüchtlings zwischen Exil und Rückkehr' ('a symbol of the fragile existence of the refugee between exile and return'), implying that the fragile state of the physical bird represents Domin's fragility as a person who, having been uprooted in threatening circumstances, cannot feel secure anywhere. The object and stanza together were, unsurprisingly, more complex than a one-line caption could suggest. In particular, the dove hovered between an insistence on physical reality and a symbolic meaning, both in the glass vitrine, where the poem was literalized by the unconventional physical presence of its subject matter, and in the poem itself. On a symbolic reading, the poem refuses the visitor the comforting happy ending of post-war closure through survival and return. Seventeen years after 1945, the poet voices the haunting fear of a renewal of persecution and lives life in readiness to flee again. The closing 'wegen' ('because') clause, ostensibly positive because it gives the reason for promising to save the bird, is simultaneously negative, since it mentions for the first time that one of its wings has been broken off. In fact, in the final four words of the poem—'deines einzigen ungebrochenen Flügels' ('of your only unbroken wing')—the 'unbroken' wing is constituted, lexically and semantically, by the 'broken' wing, revealing

[66] The dove went on to be displayed, in 2009, together with Domin's writing desk, at the Kurpfälzisches Museum der Stadt Heidelberg. This 'artwork of the month' was interpreted by Domin's biographer Marion Tauschwitz (http://www.museum-heidelberg.de/pb/site/Museum-Heidelberg/get/documents_E561144707/museum-heidelberg/PB5Documents/pdf/KdM%20November%202009%281%29.pdf [accessed 29 May 2018]).

[67] The poem can be viewed at http://www.jmberlin.de/exil/taube.html and in English at http://www.jmberlin.de/exil/en/taube.html [accessed 29 May 2018].

both to the reader simultaneously, so that the healthy wing, with its connotations of freedom, travel, imagination and aspiration, is always, constitutively, shadowed by the past damage to the other wing, which negates those possibilities.

But the poet does not simply use the dove intellectually to give form to feelings. Rather, she makes a commitment to the object that she will physically take its physical form with her should she be forced by catastrophe to move home in the future. The object has no talismanic power since it cannot prevent the disasters that Domin envisions. Domin will save the dove, not the other way around. Domin projects herself into a frightening future where, thanks to her promise to the object, she can accord herself agency and a continuation of her creative processes. Together, the poem and the object suggest an altered relationship to objects as a result of persecution and exile: a will to preserve chosen physical objects in order to retain ownership of a private sphere (including imagination and escape) even under circumstances of persecution. More simplistic, sentimental responses to the object were perfectly possible: like the cliché of the battered teddy bear, the battered dove evokes the comforting notion that human beings respond protectively to weak objects. Nonetheless, the display of the object and poem at a major national museum at least potentially raised questions about changed human-object relations in a post-Holocaust context.

In Sect. 5.6, I will discuss briefly the kinds of souvenir that have been sold at concentration camp memorial sites, now sometimes displayed with a measure of irony to criticize or contextualize earlier phases of remembrance. In some cases, however, exhibition-makers are interested in how survivors and descendants relate to the camps through mementos. The KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme has a particularly thoughtful collection of such items. They suggest that rituals involving taking objects from the camp and bringing objects to the camp have played an important role in grieving and readjusting. One display case contains personal souvenirs from the camp, either made during internment or picked up after liberation. Even though there can be no other explanation for their being in the display case, the caption stresses, in each case, that the survivor kept the object for decades ('standen mehrere Jahrzehnte im Arbeitszimmer', 'lange Zeit aufbewahrt', 'bewahrte … jahrzehntelang auf', 'bewahrte er sie sorgsam auf', 'bewahrte [sie] bis zu seinem Tod 2001 auf', 'bewahrte es als Erinnerung auf' ('stood for several decades in his office', 'kept it for a long time', 'stored for decades',

'he kept it securely', 'kept [them] until his death in 2001', 'kept it as a souvenir'). Often the year in which the survivor or his widow donated the memento is given—in the 1990s or 2000s. The implication is that the steady presence of these material links to the past was important to the process of living on as a survivor, as was the eventual donation to the museum. While one survivor's brother takes away an iron bolt thought to have come from the crematorium in 1965 and returns it to the memorial site in 2002, another survivor makes a stained-glass plaque in 2004, with a Star of David, his inmate number, a striped pattern and a border of barbed wire and brings this object with him to Neuengamme. Even the more commercial objects sold at memorial sites, which may seem to be a symptom of the touristification of sites of suffering, are not treated as trivial by memorial site museums. At Neuengamme, pictorial evidence of *Befreiungsfeier* (celebrations to mark the anniversary of liberation) confirms that material tokens of a link to the sites, such as neckerchiefs of the survivors' associations, are important to the survivors.

Memorial site souvenirs also feature in a display at the Jüdisches Museum München. The domestic containers in which Jewish people kept their memories after 1945 are not necessarily different from the memory chests of their former non-Jewish neighbours, even if the stories contained in them are radically different. I have written elsewhere about one such memory 'trove' which formed the basis for an exhibition.[68] The Munich display, a wall cupboard that belonged to Dr. Simon Snopkowski, is more complex. A Jewish survivor of the camps, Snopkowski filled an alcove in his home in a Munich suburb with objects relating to his Holocaust experiences. These included an extensive library of books about the Holocaust and about memorial sites, interspersed with objects such as his camp cutlery, photographs of family and friends who were murdered, and souvenirs from memorial sites and commemorative ceremonies. Snopkowski stood some of the pictures and books upright, facing outwards, and hung souvenir badges from the glass shelves, so that when the two cupboard doors were open it offered a form of curated display, while the doors gave it a shrine-like quality.

[68] 'Ein ganzes Leben in einer Hutschachtel. Bertha Sander: Eine jüdische Innenarchitektin aus Köln' ('A Whole Life in a Hatbox: Bertha Sander, a Jewish Interior Designer from Cologne', 2103 at the NS-Dokumentationszentrum der Stadt Köln). Paver, 'The Transmission of Household Objects', pp. 247–48.

After Snopkowski's death, his wife offered the material to the museum. As a collection of individual objects, it would have been unlikely to be of use: the museum's library probably has better copies of the dog-eared, yellowed books and the mass-produced concentration camp souvenirs are also likely to be duplicates or at least easily acquired. At most, the family photographs, with stories attached to them, might have merited a place in the collection. Instead, the museum recorded the exact placement of the items in the cupboard and reconstructed it in the museum. A photograph of its original location in Snopkowki's flat attests to its authenticity.[69] In this way, the 'object' acquired and displayed by the museum is the whole cupboard as an example of memory processes, not its contents.

One of only seven objects chosen for the compact 'Sachen / Objects' module of the permanent exhibition, Snopkowski's wall cupboard is curated by Verena Immler.[70] Her short essay reads the cupboard in emotional and psychological terms: she acknowledges that survivors found many different ways of coping with their experience of persecution and presents Snopkowski's cupboard as one such coping mechanism. In a scholarly discussion of the exhibition, Ostow reads the cupboard as 'displaying trauma'.[71] While I do not seriously doubt this, what interests me is that neither Ostow nor the museum (in its caption and in Immler's essay) explains how trauma works and how it works through this object. The display relies on common metaphorical equivalences between collecting and repetitive compulsion, on the one hand, and, on the other, between 'containment' (Ostow) and a fear of loss of control. These lead educated readers of the object to the term 'trauma', which is taken as understood, regardless of whether clinicians would have diagnosed Snopkowski with PTSD.

What the museum might conceivably explore is why Snopkowski felt he benefited from mediating his experiences through the acquisition, handling, display, ordering and re-ordering of objects, and how typical

[69] Fleckenstein and Purin, p. 68.

[70] Fleckenstein and Purin, pp. 68–69.

[71] Robin Ostow, 'Creating a Bavarian Space for Rapprochement: The Jewish Museum Munich', in *Space and Spatiality in Modern German-Jewish History*, ed. by Simone Lässig and Miriam Rürup (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2017), pp. 280–97 (p. 286).

this was.[72] The materiality of the memory process is especially foregrounded because Snopkowki's storage and ordering principles are so obviously an analogue to—and at the same time a contrast with—the museum's own principles. The combination of stacking and showing corresponds to memory's twin processes of storage and retrieval, but the clutter reminds us that a museum archives materials according to scientific taxonomies and with more care for conservation. For Snopkowski, accumulation and prioritization had a personal logic and, it is implied, some kind of therapeutic effect. At the same time, viewed from a distance the cupboard might represent any elderly person's homage to their career or to their past life in another country. Perhaps, then, rather than being a straightforward 'display of trauma', Snopkowski's cupboard acts as a reminder, like the tube of glue, not to 'other' or stereotype post-Holocaust survivor responses, which were many and varied, and which necessarily made use of existing social practices. Acute post-trauma symptoms ('trauma' in its stricter definition) may not have occurred in each case or may have occurred in a realm beyond the material.

Further reflection on the meaning of the material in post-Holocaust lives was provided by 'Von da und dort – Überlebende aus Osteuropa', an exhibition about Jewish DP camps already discussed in Sect. 4.3. The curators invited children of displaced persons, some of whom had been born in or lived in the camps, to respond in short essays—imaginatively or with reminiscences—to individual objects that appeared in the exhibition. As Fischer's work has shown, members of the second generation use objects to try to understand their own place in the family succession so that even though the exhibition made the second generation secondary to the victims (by giving them a voice in the catalogue rather than the exhibition space), it acknowledged their special relationship to objects.[73]

[72] Photographs taken for an exhibition about Henryk Mandelbaum, one of very few survivors of the Sonderkommandos, show him with his various object collections and the text: 'Ich sammle viele Dinge. Warum – ich weiß es nicht. […] Vielleicht – mir ist viel, zu viel verloren gegangen – damals' ('I collect lots of things. Why? I don't know […] Perhaps – I lost a lot, too much – back then'). Bildungswerk Stanislaw Hantz (ed.), *'Nur die Sterne waren wie gestern'. Henryk Mandelbaum: Häftling im Sonderkommando von Auschwitz, April 1944 – Januar 1945* (Kassel: Bildungswerk Stanislaw Hantz, 2006), pp. 84–87.

[73] Fischer, *Memory Work*, pp. 29–68.

While the exhibition as a whole tended to stress the positive role that objects played for survivors, for instance allowing survivors to regain dignity and identity, some of the commissioned essays stress how insignificant material goods were for their parents' generation. Esther Alexander-Ihme points out that while many suitcases have survived from this era, when all Jews expected to leave Germany, they were quite different from the suitcases of non-Jewish refugees and expellees, with their photograph albums and souvenirs of home. Jewish survivors, she writes, cherished children rather than objects, and, deprived of souvenirs, their suitcases pointed only forward, to the new destinations they aspired to.[74] Savyon Liebrecht contemplates a mezuzah from a DP camp, marvelling at its extraordinarily cheap material and modest form, but insists that it had a value simply by existing, reviving a culture the Nazis had attempted to destroy.[75] Rachel Salamander likewise remembers the low-value, second-hand things that the survivors were given to use in the DP camps and which they, in turn, passed on to others. This 'Föhrenwaldkrempel' ('DP camp junk') did not, she insists, comprise treasured heirlooms: 'Wert hatte dieses Zeug keinen. Um Antiquitäten jedenfalls hat es sich nicht gehandelt' ('The stuff had no value. They certainly weren't antiques').[76]

Other essays in the catalogue consider how survivors related to the tools of their trade (usually a new trade they were obliged to take up having lost their old one). By coincidence, Alexander-Ihme's father used a suitcase as his main tool, in his new job as a pedlar. She compares the meaning of luggage for her parents' generation and for her: 'Mir ist es immer ein wenig peinlich, in der Öffentlichkeit mit einem Koffer gesehen zu werden' ('I still find it a bit embarrassing to be seen with a suitcase in public').[77] Though trivial, her comment implies that Holocaust survivors' experience of a radical alteration in status communicates itself to the next generation in the form of altered relations between self and objects. What matters for the argument of this book

[74] Esther Alexander-Ihme, 'Tsi iz a tshemodan oder a valizke a Koffer?', in *Juden 45/90. Von da und dort – Überlebende aus Osteuropa*, ed. by Jutta Fleckenstein and Tamar Lewinsky (Berlin: Hentrich und Hentrich, 2011), pp. 51–52 (p. 52).

[75] Savyon Liebrecht, 'Eine Mesusa', in Fleckenstein and Lewinsky, pp. 91–92.

[76] Rachel Salamander, 'Closed', in Fleckenstein and Lewinsky, pp. 101–2 (p. 102).

[77] Alexander-Ihme, p. 52.

is not whether the anecdotal assertions and generalizations in the catalogue essays of 'Von da und dort'—which are founded on no research and claim no scientific status—could be proved true by scholarly investigation, but rather that a museum has deliberately initiated reflection on how survivors encountered new or changed objects and handled objects in changed ways, some of which communicated themselves to their children. These free-form, associative responses also offer visitors and readers a model for responding to objects on display.

While keen to show the few objects that have been recovered or restituted to their owners or the descendants, Jewish museums are also concerned to show that Jewish culture is alive today. Scholars and museum professionals have pointed to the danger of giving the impression that because Jewish objects are in the museum, Judaism belongs in the museum. As Bertz argues: 'The exhibiting of unfamiliar and foreign-looking objects from old times (and often from faraway places) may result in their being regarded as "exotic", and may strengthen the impression of Judaism as an ossified religion'.[78] Possibly, Bertz does not mean 'ossified' here so much as 'obsolete', given that Christian ritual practice is also to a degree necessarily 'ossified' in the sense of being unchanged down the centuries. In the section devoted to 'Rituale/Rituals', which shows Jewish devotional objects, the Jüdisches Museum München mostly shows antiques in the conventional way. However, its example of a Hanukkah lamp was made in 1990 by artist Rachel Kohn. Alongside it, the museum shows three contemporary objects that are used on the occasion of the three new feast days instituted by Israel. The information board informs the visitor that while the pre-1933 objects speak of the Shoah, all these categories of object are still used today, which is why visitors are allowed to handle modern (low-value and replaceable) versions of the antiques, which are placed along a bench opposite the vitrine.

The Jüdisches Museum Fürth has gradually built on its 1997 temporary exhibition, 'Dort und jetzt. Zeitgenössische Judaica in Israel' ('There and Now: Contemporary Judaica in Israel') which juxtaposed antique religious objects from its collection with newly made ones.[79]

[78] Inka Bertz, 'Jewish Museums in the Federal Republic of Germany', in *Visualizing and Exhibiting Jewish Space and History: Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, ed. by Richard I. Cohen (Oxford: OUP, 2012), pp. 80–112 (p. 105).

[79] Bernhard Purin (ed.), *Dort und jetzt. Zeitgenössische Judaica in Israel* (Fürth: Jüdisches Museum Franken—Fürth und Schnaittach, 1997).

Some of these found their way into the permanent exhibition and further modern objects have since been acquired. At my last visit in 2017, the display of Hanukkah lamps included antique lamps, a lamp made by an Israeli silversmith in 1995 and a lamp in the shape of fire engine, made in China from bright red plastic-coated wire. The section on kosher rules for preparing and eating food juxtaposes a nineteenth-century stamp confirming food to be kosher, which was made locally in Fürth, with a plastic tray for an El Al airline meal. Finally, by placing an object first shown in 'Dort und jetzt' outside the museum display, in the museum's public spaces, the museum is able to reinforce the currency of Jewish religious practice. On the sink in the ladies lavatory (I cannot vouch for the gents) sits a two-handled cup for the performance of ritual hand washing or *netilat yadayim*.[80] A caption explains the ritual to non-Jews. The fact that the cup, manufactured by Starplast Industries of Haifa as the caption tells us, is made of bright red plastic makes its post-Holocaust origins clear while its placing at the side of the sink embeds it in day-to-day use.

5.5 Michael Köhlmeier's Story 'Der Silberlöffel': 'Aryanized' Objects in the Liberal Imagination

This section departs temporarily from the methods applied so far to analyse a literary text, though it returns to museum displays by and by. Michael Köhlmeier's anecdote 'Der Silberlöffel' ('The Silver Spoon') was commissioned for *Heimat. Diaspora*, the catalogue of the permanent exhibition at the Jüdisches Museum Hohenems.[81] What follows here is, to my knowledge, the first analysis of Köhlmeier's text, and it pays due respect to a significant precedent. In her seminal monograph about German and Austrian Jewish museums, published in 2000, Sabine Offe digressed from *her* museum analysis to examine a short story, 'Ergezwu', by Austrian author Ulrike Längle.[82] In that story, Längle, like Köhlmeier,

[80] Purin, *Dort und jetzt*, p. 18.

[81] Michael Köhlmeier, 'Der Silberlöffel', in *Heimat, Diaspora. Das Jüdische Museum Hohenems*, ed. by Hanno Loewy (Hohenems: Bucher, 2008), pp. 252–55.

[82] Sabine Offe, *Ausstellungen, Einstellungen, Entstellungen. Jüdische Museen in Deutschland und Österreich* (Berlin and Vienna: Philo, 2000), pp. 250–85.

explored some of the emotions involved in setting up a Jewish museum, a museum which, though unnamed, is transparently the Jüdisches Museum Hohenems, the same museum about which—and for which—Köhlmeier writes.

While the parallels are undoubtedly neat, my analysis attempts something new. Offe used Längle's story to help build her psychological profile of certain non-Jewish Germans and Austrians who invest emotionally in the Jewish past out of an unacknowledged desire for healing and restoration. My analysis explores how Jewish museums—with Hohenems in the vanguard—are beginning to analyse and historicize such emotional conflicts in their presentation of the decades since 1945. In other words, where Offe asks: 'What can a literary story reveal about the motivations of non-Jews who establish Jewish museums?' I ask: 'What is such a story *doing* (in both senses of that question) in a Jewish museum catalogue today?' The analysis follows on from the previous section, exploring further museums' concern with the whereabouts of stolen goods between the late 1930s and the 1990s; it also anticipates the next section, showing how the post-war period of 'coming to terms' in Germany and Austria, though in some senses ongoing, is sufficiently complete and indeed, strange, to be put behind glass in the history museum.

Unusually for the catalogue of a museum's permanent collection, *Heimat. Diaspora* is largely made up of reflective responses to the museum and its themes, commissioned from writers and historians and, in one case, from a photo-journalist. This multimedia, multi-genre approach considerably enriches the experience of the permanent exhibition. In particular, since most of the contributions relate in one way or another to questions of place, rootedness and displacement, the catalogue both situates and dislocates the permanent exhibition. It contextualizes the museum as part of the topographies of the town—the now erased Jewish topography and its palimpsestic traces in today's topography—while showing how the place 'Hohenems' shifts in relation to the people who make it their home, leave it, pass through it or observe it as outsiders.

Köhlmeier, an Austrian writer and Hohenems resident, contributed a 1000-word anecdote about his attendance at the first public meeting to discuss the possibility of founding a Jewish museum in the town. Though the meeting is undated in the anecdote, other information in the catalogue dates it to the 1980s, meaning that the narrator is recalling events at a distance of twenty years. Given that the anecdote hinges on

whether a particular story is invented or true, it is reasonable to assume that we are to read it as a literary text, not as a documentary reminiscence; its form, as will become clear, is self-consciously literary.

The three-part 'plot' is straightforward enough. In Part One, the narrator leaves the public meeting with a former schoolmate, a non-Jew like him. In the years since their last encounter, explains the school friend, he has developed an interest in Jewish history and literature. To the narrator's surprise, the school friend complains that the audience at the public meeting had reacted in an anti-Semitic manner to his proposal for kick-starting the museum project: namely, that local people should be invited to deposit anonymously, at the Town Hall, objects in their possession formerly belonging to Jews.

Part Two (separated off from Part One by a simple asterisk) returns in time to the beginning of the public meeting. The narrator accompanies a female acquaintance who is anxious about attending alone, only to find that she leaves the meeting room on a flimsy pretext, leading her to miss the school friend's suggestion about an amnesty for former Jewish property now in non-Jewish hands.

Part Three of the story picks up where Part One left off, with the two men continuing their walk home. Asked by his school friend what his own household contains that used to belong to Jews, the narrator claims that his mother used a silver spoon to measure out washing powder in the laundry room. Challenged by the school friend, who suspects him of making the story up, the narrator admits that no such spoon exists. On returning home, however, he searches for the spoon, convinced that he has recently seen it. His wife has neither seen it nor remembers it. The anecdote ends with the puzzle unresolved: the existence of the eponymous spoon, which the narrator claims as a part of his family history, then disavows, then searches for, cannot be corroborated.

What this summary of the facts omits is the unusual level of emotional tension stirred up by the ostensibly trivial events. Attending a meeting in a worthy cause and discussing it briefly with two like-minded participants ought to be an emotionally undemanding affair, yet the anecdote, in its sparing thousand words, conveys a strong impression that the liberal intelligentsia of western Austria is ripe for the couch. Given that the Jüdisches Museum Hohenems was, by the time of the story's publication in 2008, undisputedly a proud success story, accounts of its genesis might very easily adopt the tropes of the success narrative. The heroes of such a story would be the right-thinking citizens who bravely espouse

an unpopular minority view (that local complicity in National Socialism needs to be faced); the villains of the piece would be the benighted conservative populace that prefers, for reasons of misguided family loyalty or preservation of an acceptable self-image, to sweep the Nazi past under the carpet. Instead, in his little story Köhlmeier opens a can of unusually liberal worms, evoking, with wry humour, the complex anxieties and emotional blockages of those who strive to confront the National Socialist past honestly.

Despite the fact that all three main characters are committed to telling the truth about the Nazi past—and are ultimately successful, as the museum and its catalogue eloquently testify—not communicating, a failing that is usually attributed to the truth-deniers in German and Austrian society, is a running theme. As the two former school friends walk through the town, the narrator notes that his friend speaks about his new-found interest in all things Jewish 'zu laut, und wie mir schien, absichtlich zu laut' ('too loudly and, I had the impression, deliberately so').[83] The narrator's fear of too-loud public speech about Jewish local history is an expression of bad faith given that he has just emerged from a meeting whose express intention is the founding of a public institution devoted to speaking of that very history. It suggests a division, in the liberal camp, between those who seek confrontation and those who avoid it. The narrator's fear of open communication is compounded by a laconic literary style: he does not articulate the nature or source of his anxiety to the reader, despite having the freedom to do so and despite the fact that, at other moments, he and the other characters display ample analytical skills. Nor does he point out—though he surely wants us to see it—the moral contradiction between the friend's brave disavowal of the theft of Jewish goods in the town after 1938 and his current eager acquisition of printed Judaica, for, however honest the modern-day transactions, the friend's 'stattliche Judaica-Bibliothek' ('fine library of Judaica')[84] suggests a presumption of cultural ownership. When the school friend comments that the attendees at the public meeting behaved as if they were anti-Semitic, the narrator fearfully shushes him ('Ich ershrak. Ich bat ihn, doch bitte nicht zu laut zu sein' / 'I was shocked.

[83] Köhlmeier, p. 253.

[84] Ibid.

I asked him to please keep his voice down').[85] Since he wants to shock neither the local majority with the word 'Jewish', nor the local minority with the insult 'anti-Semitic', the narrator has evidently tied himself in knots of anxiety about what words, spoken aloud, might affront whom, making all articulation a minefield.

Asked for evidence of the supposed anti-Semitism, the school friend lists the bodily symptoms of unarticulated shame and embarrassment that manifested themselves in the room when he suggested local people might have Jewish objects in their houses: 'Ob ich nicht bemerkt hätte, wie alle Anwesenden – alle! – zur Seite oder zur Decke oder auf den Boden gestarrt und die Luft aus den Backen geblasen hätten' ('Hadn't I noticed how all those present – every one of them! – had looked sideways or up at the ceiling or down at the floor and expelled the air from their cheeks').[86] Here, too, there are cross-currents between the intradiegetic reticence described by the school friend and the reticence in author–reader communication. In his words to the meeting, as reported by the narrator, the school friend does not explicitly say that during the Nazi era local people immorally acquired Jewish possessions that were confiscated by the Nazi state from Jewish citizens in the context of their forced exile or deportation: he uses only the phrase 'Gegenstände … aus jüdischem Besitz' ('goods from Jewish ownership'). The fact that this euphemistic expression, which was used during the Nazi era itself, is sufficiently clearly understood by the public audience to cause a wave of embarrassment is an indication that the 'Aryanization' process was common knowledge even two generations after 1945. Moreover, the author expects his German-speaking reader to share in this knowledge and to be able to pair the expression up, in Part Two, with its more explicit synonym 'gestohlenes jüdisches Eigentum' ('stolen Jewish property').[87] (The translator of the English version does not help a non-German speaker to understand the equivalence.)

The narrator defends the other participants at the meeting on the grounds that he had reacted bodily in the same evasive way. Indeed, he uses exactly the same words for his bodily reactions as the school friend had for theirs, thereby setting up a leitmotif which will fulfil its purpose

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Köhlmeier, p. 254.

in Part Three. When the school friend asks the narrator what reason he has to be embarrassed, the text momentarily holds out the prospect of insight and enlightenment, only to disappoint us. Instead, Part One ends in a positive knot of non-communication and mis-communication:

> Ich sagte, *er* solle diese Frage für mich beantworten.
> 'Das werde ich gern tun', sagte er, er müsse nur erst die richtigen Worte zusammensuchen.
> Wir gingen schweigend weiter. Es gab keinen Grund für mich, beleidigt zu sein; aber ich verhielt mich so, als wäre ich es.[88]
>
> (I said, *he* should answer that question for me.
> 'I'll be glad to', he said. He just needed to find the right words first.
> We walked on in silence. There was no reason for me to be offended; but I acted as if I were.)

Whereas generally it is the denier of the Nazi past who is pathologized in German and Austrian culture—as a person who buries the past in memory while simultaneously gagging those who would proclaim it, who lacks self-knowledge and has unresolved issues of grief for the loss of German greatness—here we witness symptoms of a counterproductive anxious repression in two men who share a strong belief in democratic transparency and contrition. One avoids communication by childishly passing that responsibility to the other and then pretends to an emotion which, though he does not feel it, is likely to block further verbal exchange; the other promises to communicate but defers it to a later moment. The result is that the section ends in stubborn reciprocal silence—a walking on without speaking—in which the reader is obliged to share.

The running theme continues in Part Two. Despite privately agreeing with his female companion that the back room of a pub is not a suitable setting for the public meeting, the narrator does not tell her so, nor why he thinks so. In this case, however, he does tell the reader. When he was sixteen, the landlord of the pub had beaten him up in a fit of unmotivated violence, and when the narrator had attempted to press charges, the police had bullied and threatened him. The narrator justifies not telling his female friend this story in the following terms: 'Sie hätte die

[88] Köhlmeier, p. 253.

Geschichte als symbolhaft gedeutet und in einen Zusammenhang gestellt, der sie zu einem Anklagepunkt hätte werden lassen. Sie wäre begeistert gewesen von der Geschichte, darum erzählte ich sie ihr nicht' ('She would have interpreted the story as symbolic and construed it in such a way that it became an accusation. She would have enjoyed the story, that's why I didn't tell it to her').[89] Evidently, the left-leaning middle classes can second-guess one another's reactions to evidence of post-fascist violence and unreconstructed networks of corrupt local power. At the same time, one liberal can find another's satisfaction at having their prejudices confirmed an irritation and suppress evidence of blameworthy behaviour. After another comment about an idea that he formulates in his head but keeps to himself, the author reports that his friend leaves the room just as the meeting is called to order. In doing so, she closes her ears, not, as might be understandable, to some kind of threatening post-fascist discourse, but to what her like-minded brethren have to say.

Finally, in Part Three, the narrator evokes the silences of his parents' generation. Asked by his friend how he can possibly know that a silver spoon with initials engraved on it was ever owned by Jews, the narrator claims to have asked his parents where it came from. The school friend's prompt to go on—'Und?' ('And what did they say?')—sets up the pay-off: 'Sie haben zur Seite und auf die Decke und auf den Boden geschaut und die Luft aus den Backen geblasen' ('They looked sideways and up at the ceiling and down at the floor and expelled the air from their cheeks').[90] This self-consciously literary use of leitmotif (which is very far from real habits of speech) serves to restate the main emotional components of local memory of 'Aryanization'—shame, looking away and a refusal to speak—and to present them as behaviour learned from an older generation. The blockages in the dialogue then continue, as indicated in my plot summary, because the author admits to lying before starting a pointless discussion with his wife about a spoon that is not real.

Köhlmeier's symptomatology of the confused liberal could perfectly well have functioned without reference to an object. That he crystallizes the anecdote around a silver spoon, made to serve as a representative of all objects stolen from Jews after 1938, might be read as a response to the brief given him by the museum, since the museum has been shaped

[89] Köhlmeier, p. 254.

[90] Ibid.

in part by the readiness of locals to come forward with such 'Aryanized' belongings. At the same time, the focus on a stolen object also reminds us that some German and Austrian families experienced the legacy of the Holocaust materially, through the presence of real fragments of Jewish life and culture within the home or community. It reinforces the idea—evoked by many museums, as we have seen—that post-war culture was not a blanket state of 'forgetting', since material evidence of anti-Jewish discrimination survived within households and was capable of provoking, however intermittently, shamed silences and diversions. The fact that the silver spoon of the story merely ghosts through the narrator's home and imagination only serves to confirm the cultural currency of the phenomenon: in the Austria of 2008, if you want to imagine feelings of shame you imagine a piece of stolen Jewish property, and if you want to imagine a piece of stolen Jewish property you imagine an insignificant object that has become so much of a domestic fixture that you are not quite sure when you last saw it.

Köhlmeier might have chosen any household object—a chair, a lamp, a picture—for his Jewish ghost object. As a luxury item, the silver spoon speaks of the social confidence and self-assertion of its original owners, of which the Nazi state fully intends to dispossess them at the moment of its confiscation. The engraved initials are a stamp of ownership traduced by the arbitrary transfer of proprietary rights to unrelated third parties. Moreover, having been separated from the set to which it belonged the spoon is then misused as a minor implement in the laundry process. It is reduced from its bourgeois purpose, to serve food in the home's main entertaining room, to a utilitarian 'shovelling' ('schaufeln') in a room at the bottom of the domestic hierarchy. This evokes ideas of dislocation, dispersal, orphaning and degrading labour that are an echo, however faint, of the experiences of the spoon's owners. Significantly, the spoon has been downgraded to use in the laundry during the author's post-war childhood. Regardless of whether real, non-fictional post-war Austrians and Germans really did neglect and misuse the looted goods that a minority of them had acquired (or whether, as is equally possible, they valued them and gave them pride of place in the same ways that their original owners did), a story of wilful neglect evokes the 'second shame' of post-war attitudes to the past which traduce the victims a second time. In the imagined scenario, the narrator's parents not only deny involvement in past wrongs; they perpetuate the wrongdoing through their selfish consumption of the value of the object.

How does this ultra-short story, contained in an exhibition catalogue, link to the main argument of the current book? It reinforces the point that museums dealing with National Socialism increasingly devote critical attention to the failures of conscience (or, put less critically, to the conflicted emotions of memory) in the post-war period in Germany and Austria. Objects are central to this examination, both because they survived materially within at least some family homes (and so undermine the idea of an era of forgetting) and because the effect that human beings can have on objects—changing their value and altering their state—makes them powerful symbols of damaging agency and culpability. Rather than simply implicating the parents' generation (a constructed generation of those who came of age and had children after 1945), the text explores the effects for the following generation, for whom the objects of the Nazi era are experienced at one remove (indeed, not necessarily physically at all) but who continue to invest those objects with emotions, making psychological use of them to position themselves vis-à-vis the Nazi past. As always in this book, objects hover between their material facticity (since some Germans and Austrians really did benefit from stolen Jewish objects and actual examples of such objects are preserved in museums) and their immaterial symbolic power.

Of course, Köhlmeier's anecdote is written from a fairly comfortable standpoint. Now that the museum is flourishing—now that sufficient 'silver spoons' have come forward to fill it with evidence of local Jewish life—Köhlmeier can well afford to write self-mockingly of the timidity, group tensions and conflicted emotions that once characterized his generation of do-gooders. Nevertheless, it is significant that these are not emotions that lend themselves readily to inclusion in the exhibition space. Nor are most museums (with one or two exceptions, discussed in the next section) interested in placing them there. What is more common in the exhibition space is a critical story of the continuation of fascist ideas or careers after 1945 and a celebratory story of the uncovering of the truth from the 1980s onwards. The lack of resolution at the end of 'Der Silberlöffel' (the niggling suspicion that its narrator may *want* to have parents who acquired Jewish goods in the Nazi era) and its publication in the catalogue imply that the Jüdisches Museum Hohenems wants not only to inform through objects but to use its material base to probe difficult emotions.

I mentioned at the outset that Köhlmeier's story of the silver spoon echoes an earlier literary response to objects in the orbit of the Jüdisches

Museum Hohenems, Längle's 1994 story 'Ergezwu', and also that, in a monograph from the year 2000, Offe interprets this story as symptomatic of some of the unacknowledged and not entirely rational impulses that lead non-Jews to engage with the lost Jewish culture of their neighbourhoods. Where Offe diagnoses a malaise underlying the first generation of Jewish museums in Germany and Austria, the Jüdisches Museum Hohenems, now managed by a second-generation director, puts that malaise under the microscope in its catalogue in 2008, with Köhlmeier's anecdote. Eight years later, in 2016, Längle and her story, together with Offe and her scholarly analysis of it, were themselves put under glass at the Jüdisches Museum Hohenems, in the exhibition 'Übrig' ('Left Over'), which celebrated the first 25 years of the museum's work.[91]

Längle's story and Offe's analysis were brought into dialogue with the object that inspired both and that was being displayed publicly for the first time: a circular stained-glass window with a six-pointed star design.[92] The window is a motif in Längle's story and a photograph of it is reproduced by Offe.[93] The curators presented the window as standing for the rather confused beginnings of the museum, when even the museum's supporters (as we see also in Köhlmeier's story) were unsure what a Jewish museum should do and be, and what constituted a Jewish object. The museum's buyers took at face value an antique dealer's claim that the window was Jewish, even though the star symbol was also used by the brewers' guilds. Some supporters of the museum project felt that it should be built into the museum building, despite the fact that—assuming it was indeed Jewish—it was a religious architectural detail and the museum building a secular bourgeois home.

Though intriguing, the details of this muddy thinking are not the key point here, which is rather the self-reflexivity of a museum analysing its own foundation phase and acknowledging the less than perfectly noble attitudes and emotions involved. For each key object in the exhibition, a member of the curation team had written a short reflective text, which could be read in a folder alongside the displayed object. Writing about

[91] The museum itself titled the exhibition 'Odd' in its English-language publicity, though it is unclear in what sense that was meant. The objects are 'left over' in the sense of remnants in the town, but also objects that are not needed for the permanent exhibition and so live in the store.

[92] Loewy and Reichwald, pp. 33–35.

[93] Offe, p. 238.

the round window, Martina Häfele noted the desire of Längle's narrator to see the hexagram window built into the attic of the museum in order to fill the room with a 'mystisches Licht' ('mystical light'). This literary image, wrote Häfele, becomes the object of Offe's 'Analyse der Wünsche und Sehnsüchte, die mit jüdischen Museen in Verbindung stehen, sowie der Erwartungen an eine Heilung der Wunden und Katastrophen der Geschichte' ('analysis of the wishes and desires connected to Jewish museums, as well as the expectations that the wounds and catastrophes of history will be healed').[94] The folder also contained the relevant extracts from Längle's and Offe's work. Though Häfele did no more than broadly—and correctly—summarize Offe's work, she helped the museum to periodize an earlier, conflicted stage of concern with Jewish material culture which it can now see clearly in retrospect, through a literary and a scholarly lens. Indeed, the hexagram window—which has no potential for display since its origins are unprovable—had been brought out of storage only to speak of this overcoming.

Hohenems is a pioneer: other museums have not yet reached this stage of reflecting quite so critically on the motivations and emotions of their own personnel. However, the following section will demonstrate that museums dealing with the majority culture under National Socialism do sometimes incorporate an account of earlier struggles for the acknowledgement of their particular narrative or for the preservation of their premises, thereby giving the impression—now that this phase is behind glass—that 'coming to terms' is considered to be part of history. Moreover, as the final section in this chapter will show, objects entering museums of National Socialist history or museums of Jewish life and culture cannot be considered to have taken a final, definitive step into a place of safety in which their cultural value is assured.

[94] Martina Häfele, 'Fenster mit Hexagramm', in Loewy and Reichwald, p. 35. For a related story, in which the psychology of philo-semitism is embodied in a museum object, see Jüdisches Museum Frankfurt am Main (ed.), *Geschenkte Geschichten. Zum 20-Jahres-Jubiläum des jüdischen Museums Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt am Main: Societätsverlag, 2009), pp. 108–9. The torch that Katarina Holländer, one of the originators of the exhibition format, brings to the exhibition as her 'certain Jewish something', is a rather flimsy hook on which to hang the story of a former, non-Jewish friend and suitor who claimed that his body had absorbed the soul of a Holocaust victim.

5.6 Coming to Terms with the Coming to Terms

A feature of recent history exhibitions about National Socialism and the Holocaust is that they look back not only on the period of 'forgetting' by the non-persecuted majority (in reality a more complex combination of putting the past out of mind while continuing to live with it), but also on the period of coming to terms with the past. This period, roughly from the 1970s onwards (later in Austria), was characterized by tensions between institutions that favoured the status quo of silence and amnesty, and citizens groups, artists or engaged individuals who fought for an honest appraisal of the Nazi past that named wrongdoers and honoured victims. These disputes are now considered sufficiently historical to be thematized by curators in an exhibition's final chapter. In such post-war timelines, the current exhibition is the unspoken endpoint of the journey towards enlightened thinking about the Nazi past. While that is often a perfectly reasonable self-appraisal, it is reasonable, too, to acknowledge an element of self-congratulation in this configuration of past and present. This is sometimes mitigated by honesty about a museum's own shortcomings in the past, which relativize the museum's current claim to authority, or by engagement with more recent, less resolved debates about the past which acknowledge that an exhibition is not necessarily a resolution.

Unlike the earlier periods already dealt with, this later period was not experienced materially by broad groups of people. Whereas the period 1933–45 was widely experienced through the loss, destruction, acquisition, imposition or recycling of objects, and the period after 1945 through the disposal, storage and occasional retrieval of objects laden with memories, the work of facing up to the Nazi past was, at least initially, a minority experience. Nor was it associated with object use or with a market for commodities, but rather with access to the public sphere, with debates and campaigns. The key locus of this phase was not the family home but the streets and the media. Accordingly, museums rely heavily on photographs and documents for this period, presented conventionally as *Flachware* to be scanned for information. Where objects *are* used in connection with this aspect of the after-story of Nazism, they often serve as conventional illustration. Nevertheless, there are ways in which the materiality of the period associated with *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* comes to the fore in museums and critical appraisals of earlier phases of remembering are, as we shall

see, sometimes also engagements with obsolete memorial technologies. Perhaps surprisingly, this period once again requires museums to engage with low-value items which, in any other context, would be considered trivial or overdue for disposal, as well as with discarded items and items damaged or destroyed by violence. Even as this rough chronology of exhibition topics moves into the mature democracy of the Federal Republic, we are not done with rubbish and rubble yet.

The pioneers of local memory work were generally amateurs, often middle-class professionals in their working life, but operating outside of public institutions. As a result, their communication media had a samizdat quality. The acceleration of changes in communication technology since the 1970s means that even where examples of protest literature or placards are still extant and whole, their visual value has plummeted in the meantime. This great gulf between the technologies of fifty years ago and the technologies of today has its uses in the museum, since the shabbiness of protest material evokes the little man (or woman) speaking truth to power in a way that today's slick social media campaigns might not.

Though it uses objects sparingly, the NS-Dokumentationszentrum der Stadt Köln gives pride of place to a scruffy old cardboard box, the only object in the opening room of the permanent exhibition (Fig. 5.7). The box is not even intact: its flaps have been undone in order to flatten the cardboard. On this surface have been pasted handwritten and typewritten text and xeroxed photographs, spaced about the cardboard in no very orderly manner. Not only are the sheets of paper yellowed with age, but the print technology clearly belongs to an earlier generation. Its protection behind perspex, however, indicates its value to the museum.

This makeshift information board was used in the 1960s by a local man, Sammy Maedge, to draw the attention of passers-by in Cologne city centre to the fact that the building known as the 'El-De Haus' had been the Gestapo headquarters and that victims had been tortured there, 'worüber keiner berichten will' ('something nobody wants to talk about') as Maedge wrote in one of the texts pasted to the cardboard. Whereas in some museums the contrast between the slick presentation of the museum and the low production values of the protesters' materials would add to the object's 'otherness', in the Cologne documentation centre, which has chosen bare, dirt-washed walls as its aesthetic, the cardboard has an affinity with the institutional aesthetic, suggesting that the institution is heir to some of Maedge's civic courage, even though it

Fig. 5.7 Cardboard box used by Sammy Maedge to protest at the lack of commemoration at the former Gestapo headquarters, on show at the NS-Dokumentationszentrum der Stadt Köln. Photograph: Chloe Paver

is no longer speaking truth to power so much as speaking truth on behalf of the democratic establishment.[95]

The KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme shows a square of plastic-coated chipboard with handwritten capital letters on it. The message is only partially legible because the chipboard has been cut down to size with

[95] It remains to be seen whether this aesthetic will survive the extension of the museum to include a 'Haus für Erinnerung und Demokratie' ('House for Remembrance and Democracy'), announced in July 2017.

no concern for the text. The caption explains—and a photograph documents—that this is what remains of a protest board used by a *Bürgerinitiative* to usurp the power of the local authority, unilaterally awarding protected status to the site of the former concentration camp because the city of Hamburg had long neglected to do so. The caption goes on to say that the board was recycled by the prison housed on the site, to make a functional object, hence its current shape. It is unclear whether the museum intends the visitor to consider that the prison authorities—as a conservative rearguard—expressed their disdain for the protest by dismembering its board: possibly, since the prison continued to operate for a further twenty years despite the success of the protest. More factually, the board shows that protestors create (or used to create) makeshift objects in the service of short-term goals and that they survive only by chance, at which point they become valuable far beyond their material worth. By contrast, protest graffiti ('Und hier war einst ein KZ' / 'And there was once a concentration camp here') can be recorded only in the form of photographic evidence.

Though museums celebrate such pioneering efforts to deal with the past where this is possible, sometimes the attitude towards earlier forms of remembering is critical. This is most obvious at memorial sites that were sites of memory in the GDR; these include at least an exhibition chapter (if not a whole exhibition) on how the GDR commemorated and instrumentalized the Nazi past. Scholars have studied these transformations in some detail, but I focus here on the question of materiality. In these cases, there tends to be an available stock of three-dimensional objects because the new memorial site was the legal successor to the earlier one. What is available and what is shown therefore depend largely on how vigorously the new broom was wielded when new management took over. The Deutsch-Russisches Museum has retained a part graphic, part three-dimensional diorama of the storming of the Reichstag, produced in 1967 for its predecessor museum, a Soviet museum of the German capitulation. Here (at a museum which is still run in cooperation with Russian historians), the presentation is respectful, focussing on the quality of this museum technology in its own era, even as the diorama supplies its own self-critique through its outdated heroic stylization. The Gedenkstätte und Museum Sachsenhausen devotes a lengthy section of its museum to the GDR memorial between 1950 and 1990. Exhibition boards from the GDR-era museum are corralled together in a slightly darkened room-within-a-room, to differentiate them from the

new display outside. The profusion of unrelated display fragments further devalues the material. Four busts of a GDR hero are set on improbably high plinths, far above head height, to mock his sanctification. Around the outside of this internal room, display shelves show souvenirs that could be bought at the GDR museum. In what are by now familiar techniques of devaluation, the memorial site displays the objects as serially manufactured products, some stacked up or loosely arranged in large piles and some still wrapped up as if in the museum shop's stockroom.

While the GDR represents an easy target, museums are also ready to criticize Germany's and Austria's post-war democracies for earlier phases of memory work. The exhibition 'Übrig' at the Jüdisches Museum Hohenems, already discussed in connection with Köhlmeier's silver spoon story, displayed an object that had disqualified itself from general display because it now represents an 'overcome' stage of the overcoming of the Nazi past. Under the heading 'Was gehört ins Museum?' ('What Belongs in the Museum?'), the museum presented a large writing desk. It told a story of panic-buying Jewish objects in the 1990s to fill a void left by the destruction of the Jewish community but with no consideration of moral issues. The desk was bought with public money from an antiques dealer for more than its worth because the dealer claimed that it had been owned by a local Jewish woman, although this has never been proved. In her commentary on the object, Martina Häfele noted that at the time nobody reflected on what it meant to adjust material value on the basis of a connection to the Holocaust, adding that since it was no longer the museum's policy to acquire goods with no clear provenance, the museum was stuck with an object it could not use, but could not give away.[96] In token of this, the object was displayed inside an outsized cardboard box, with packing paper around its lower half. Cardboard boxes in different sizes were the main component of the exhibition architecture and were intended to evoke the museum store.[97] In this case, the refusal to make the desk completely visible, with the conventional blank space around it, made clear that the obscurity of the museum store was the best place

[96] Loewy and Reichwald, pp. 39–42.

[97] As the director explained to me, it mattered little that the packing boxes were not those that are used in the museum store (which were too expensive and came in a more limited range of sizes): the brown boxes formed a bridge between the familiar experience of moving house and the unfamiliar world of museum storage.

for it. The museum's contempt for it was reinforced by a quotation from Peter Sloterdijk on the wall behind: 'Museen sind Einrichtungen zur Verarbeitung kultureller Entsorgungsprobleme – Deponien zur exemplarischen Aufbewarhung von zivilisatorischem Sondermüll' ('Museums are institutions for working through cultural problems of disposal – stores where civilisation's special waste can be preserved in an exemplary fashion').

Just such 'zivilisatorischer Sondermüll' was shown at an exhibition about Albert Speer's post-war self-mythologizing: 'Albert Speer in der Bundesrepublik. Vom Umgang mit deutscher Vergangenheit' ('Albert Speer in West Germany: Dealing with the German Past', 2017 at the Dokumentationszentrum Reichsparteitagsgelände). This example is useful for drawing an arc from the public sphere of debate and contestation back to the family home, more specifically the family bookshelf. As is generally the case with exhibitions at this documentation centre (but also with other exhibitions about the abstract processes of dealing with the past), the exhibition was largely made up of audiovisual material and *Flachware*. The first module, whose soaring oversized walls spelled out 'SPEER', to represent Speer's marketizing of his name,[98] deconstructed Speer's view of himself. Speer's lies about his non-involvement in Nazi crimes were even more comprehensively demolished in the exhibition's third module, in which an individual desk and screen were devoted to each of eight academics and one film director who have, in various ways, exposed Speer's real story.

Between these two modules, another displayed the only objects in the space, most of them a single category of object in series: multiple copies of the books that Speer wrote to promote his own view of the past (Fig. 5.8). As a caption explained, the documentation centre had put out a call asking members of the public to donate these books, so that it could convey a sense of the massive numbers in which they were sold.[99] Accordingly, some four dozen books, mostly copies of the *Erinnerungen* or *Spandauer Tagebücher*, were set out around

[98] Martina Christmeier and Alexander Schmidt (eds), *Albert Speer in der Bundesrepublik. Vom Umgang mit deutscher Vergangenheit* (Petersberg: Imhof, 2017), p. 10.

[99] [No author], 'Dokumentationszentrum sucht Bücher von Albert Speer', *Focus Online*, 25 January 2017, http://www.focus.de/regional/bayern/stadt-nuernberg-dokumentationszentrum-sucht-buecher-von-albert-speer_id_6546453.html [accessed 29 May 2018].

Fig. 5.8 Books by Albert Speer, donated to the Dokumentationszentrum Reichsparteitagsgelände for an exhibition on Speer's self-mythologizing (2017). Photograph: Chloe Paver

a boardroom-style table.[100] At one corner (where it was particularly visible), a single book had been left in the parcel in which it had been sent to the documentation centre, another example of a museum

[100]The catalogue shows images of the exhibition in preparation, with the books represented by placeholders (Christmeier and Schmidt, pp. 2, 8, 16, 36, and 44). One photograph (p. 24) shows the actual books in place.

displaying a transportation container that would normally disappear at the accessions stage. An accompanying caption noted that many members of the public had written notes with their donations, and that this donor had written on the envelope 'Schön, dass ich es los bin!' ('Good to be rid of it!').

In one line of the address, the donor had written that the book was a '"Speer"-Spende für den Haufen' ('A "Speer" donation for the pile'). This evidently related to a radio interview, in which a curator announced their intention to make a heap out of the donated books, because that was all they were now good for.[101] Both his interview and the press releases published by various media outlets presented the documentation centre's request for donations as a helpful disposal service ('um Platz im heimischen Bücherregal zu schaffen' ('to make room on your bookshelves at home')), stressing that Speer's memoirs and diaries were so demonstrably false that they no longer had any historical worth. Had it been carried out, the heap of books would have followed conventions for dishonouring Nazi (in this case post-Nazi) objects by showing them *en masse*, placing them in contact with the floor and depriving individual examples of visibility. The decision instead to lay them out on tables produced a different effect. Superficially, the blank space between each book, together with their careful alignment, appeared to be an honouring gesture. However, once the visitor stepped closer and saw that all the books had the same name on them in large lettering and that the same text was repeated many times, it became clear that the objects were being cheapened by drawing attention to their mass production—and therefore to the gullibility of the German public and Speer's unjust self-enrichment. In as much as the book tables looked rather like the recommended reading in a bookshop or library, they presented, on closer inspection, the most boring book recommendations imaginable. The writing on the parcel confirmed that these were books from ordinary German homes and that the owners had ambivalent feelings about them: they must once willingly have paid the retail price for them but were now happy to

[101] Michael Franz, 'Bücher sollen auf einem Haufen landen', website of the Bayerischer Rundfunk, 11 January 2017, http://www.br.de/nachrichten/mittelfranken/inhalt/dokuzentrum-sammelaktion-albert-speer-100.html [accessed 31 October 2017].

dispose of them. In this way, German visitors were not allowed to consider Germany's flawed responses to the Nazi years as something that—precisely because it has been put into the museum—no longer concerned them. The display required visitors to acknowledge that the German public was fully involved in absolving Speer of guilt.

We have seen rubbish used in the museum in various ways and have noted that every display of rubbish in a museum is staged and its status ambiguous, since every object in a museum is by definition preserved and valued, if only for its ability to evoke debris and disposal. The Erinnerungsort Topf & Söhne stages a display of rubbish to evoke the period of forgetting that preceded the museum's foundation. As noted earlier, the museum is on the site of the factory that produced crematorium ovens and air-filtration systems for the gas chambers at Auschwitz. In the final section of the exhibition, devoted to the after-life of the factory after 1945, the museum has closed off an unneeded doorway and placed a sheet of perspex in front of it, to form a rudimentary vitrine. This has been stuffed with yellowing documents and battered ring binders. A first glance indicates that they are commercial: a mixture of plans, correspondence and statistics. Some binders have been stood upright at the bottom of the vitrine, as if on a shelf, but the documents appear to have been poured into the vitrine on top of them, allowing gravity to create a disordered mass. Whether any of the visible documents at the front were selected and arranged is unclear.

Because the museum's main narrative is about the industrial processes of the Holocaust, viewers may assume that these documents have a Holocaust connection. Closer inspection shows that they come from the post-war, East German incarnation of the factory: some are dated in the 1970s and 1980s, and some are labelled with East German vocabulary, such as 'VEB' (state-owned company) or 'Kombinat' (factory complex). The display is captioned as 'Aktenmüll' ('file rubbish') present in the building when it was cleared in 2005. It therefore represents how the derelict administration building looked when local history groups realized its significance and began to campaign for its preservation: vandalized by trespassers to such a degree that it could only be accessed by wading through the mountains of paperwork that had been pulled out of cupboards and filing cabinets.

The staged rubbish at the Erinnerungsort Topf & Söhne thus represents the period of forgetting in a rather roundabout way, standing for the now discredited belief that it was appropriate to leave the empty

administration building to be ransacked by vandals. Those in charge lacked the will to identify this building as part of Holocaust history, to preserve it as a document of industry's complicity in the Holocaust and to consecrate it to education. Since the visitor standing in front of the rubbish vitrine is standing in the same space a decade or so later, by which time all these steps have, belatedly, been taken, the rubbish is simultaneously an acknowledgement of post-war (and post-*Wende*) failings and a pat on the back. The neglect phase in this particular story of a historic site has been well and truly overcome in the neat and orderly museum space.

However, the meaning of the rubbish may not be quite so stable. Alongside the vitrine, the museum acknowledges the role played by local citizens' groups, from 1999 onwards, in bringing the site to the attention of the wider public and campaigning for the city of Erfurt and the region of Thüringen to take responsibility for it. This included a group of squatters at the Topf & Söhne site who organized themselves under the title 'Das Besetzte Haus' ('The Squat') and put on cultural activities including guided tours of the site and exhibitions. The members of the squat were forcibly evicted in 2009 so that the factory site could be developed and the museum building restored. On the day I visited the Erinnerungsort in 2011 a note on the otherwise positive board for visitors' comments read: 'Die Ausstellung ist gut, aber das Gedenken hätte mit Zusammenarbeit des Besetzten Hauses besser gestaltet werden können. Es ist schade, dass sich eine Gedenkstätte, die sich dem Ausschluss Unterdrückter während der NS-Zeit widmet, gleichzeitig Ausschluss reproduziert. Gemeint ist die Räumung des Besetzten Hauses' ('The exhibition is good, but the commemoration could have been better designed in co-operation with The Squat. It's a shame that a memorial that is devoted to those who were excluded during the Nazi era also reproduces exclusion. I'm talking about the eviction of the members of The Squat'). Another read: 'Das Besetzte Haus hat *keine* Erinnerungsarbeit geleistet?! Wo wird DAS bitte thematisiert?' ('Did The Squat not do any memory work?! Where, if you please, is THAT thematised?'). This last comment is not entirely fair—the role of the Besetztes Haus is recorded, albeit briefly, on the exhibition boards—but it indicates that what the museum presents as a closed-off chapter is still experienced by some visitors as open to debate and interpretation. This is not the classic dispute between the forces of conservatism and the forces of liberal transparency, but rather a dispute between an amateur,

fringe cultural organization on the Left and a professional organization who share the aim of being open about the Nazi past but do not share cultural practices or social positions. By connecting the Besetztes Haus to the rubbish (through proximity in the same small display space), the museum means to associate the organization with the fight to clear that rubbish away and make positive, commemorative use of the building, but this juxtaposition, together with a photograph of the scruffy squat, might just as well seem to associate the Besetztes Haus with disorder and an amateurish treatment of artefacts, in contrast to its own order and professional practice. Since the Besetztes Haus has evidently disbanded itself, professionalism has very definitely won out, but possibly a more open discussion of the tensions between the museum and the Besetztes Haus would historicize that chapter more successfully than the current display.

If the example of Erinnergsort Topf & Söhne seems to draw a line prematurely under tensions about the past (albeit the relatively benign tension between the Centre and the 'autonomous' Left), then exhibition-makers have sometimes found ways of suggesting that the mere establishment of a museum exhibition is not necessarily the end of the story of coming to terms. At the permanent exhibition of the Gedenkstätte Buchenwald which stood from 1995 to 2015,[102] the parcours ended with a display of columns lit from within and entitled 'Aus Besucherbüchern der Gedenkstätte Buchenwald / Excerpts from guest book [sic] of the Buchenwald memorial'. The handwritten views of the public were reproduced in enlarged form. Among the predictably worthy comments about the importance of education and of not repeating history were views that diverged from the memorial's pedagogical messages. A logo of the far-right Deutsche Volksunion had been stamped into the guest book, with the slogan 'Ich bin stolz, Deutscher zu sein' ('I am proud to be German'). Another visitor had crossed the logo out. One visitor had written above it: 'Du bist ja krank!' ('You're sick') and another: 'Sehr krank sogar' ('Very sick, I'd say'). Another asked 'Warum hast du diese Gedenkstätte besucht'?' ('Why did you visit this memorial?') and another scrawled 'Nazis raus!' ('Nazis Out!'). On another part of the display was an entry typical of many I have seen written by bored teenagers: 'Wir hatten viel Spaß hier! Danke, Hitler!' ('We had a great time

[102] This old exhibition is documented in its broad outlines at: https://www.buchenwald.de/de/517/ [accessed 29 May 2018].

here! Thanks, Hitler!'), to which a response had been added 'Wer so etwas schreibt, ist wirklich nicht mehr normal' ('If you write something like that there's something wrong with you'). Finally, a comment 'Richtig, was die gemacht haben' ('What they did was right') had also been crossed out, and a signed comment added: 'So etwas heute von einem offenbar jungen Menschen zu lesen, ist kaum auszuhalten' ('It's unbearable to read something like this today, evidently written by a young person'). By showing that not all visitors absorb the messages of the memorial site, the display worked to counter the complacent view that a museum is the satisfactory end point of coming to terms. On the other hand, by choosing examples where visitors policed aberrant views in the visitors' books (a practice I have seen elsewhere), the memorial site arguably made the divergent views safe even as it put them on show, celebrating democratic self-correction of extremes. This installation has not been rebuilt or replaced with an equivalent in the new permanent exhibition which opened in 2016. Combined with the updated aesthetic of the new exhibition (which for the time being appears state of the art), this may give the impression that such uncertainty about how to view the past really is in the past.

Sometimes exhibitions show examples of far-right violence and vandalism directed at efforts to remember the past. While such stories could just as well be told through newspaper reports, exhibition-makers place a value on showing what the vandals broke or defaced, to bring the visitor closer—through figures of synecdoche and metonymy—to the act of damage. Broken objects are not only suggestive of their former whole (creating a double impression of before and after); they conjure up the human will and action that broke them, as well as the emotions that either caused or resulted from the breakage. One such object was shown at the end of the Tübingen exhibition 'Forschung, Lehre, Unrecht'. A final vitrine contained broken pieces of stone. These had—like all rubbish in museums—been arranged. The pile of fragments was sufficiently loose and ragged (with no straight edges) to make clear that a stone had been violently shattered (an impression heightened by their placement at floor level), but the fragments had been partly fitted back together so that a few words could be read or guessed at. The catalogue made even more visual capital from the fragments, with artful professional photographs of some of the puzzle pieces spread over four pages.[103]

[103] Seidl, pp. 268–69.

In the exhibition space, the caption revealed that the fragments came from a memorial at the burial site of bodies used to make medical specimens, which included victims of Nazi murder. The memorial was smashed in 1990 by neo-Nazis. A photograph on the shelf above showed the fragments dumped in front of the offices of the local newspaper, presumably to ensure publicity and shock the middle classes. A contribution to the catalogue explains the attraction of the fragments for the exhibition-makers beyond their mere factual existence: 'Die Bruchstücke der Mahntafel des Grabes stehen beinahe symbolisch nicht nur für die schleppende und "bruchstückhafte" Aufklärung der historischen Zusammenhänge, unter denen hunderte von NS-Opfern als Leichen an das Anatomische Institut kamen, sondern auch für die Erinnerungskultur der Nachkriegszeit, die sich zwischen Erinnern und Vergessen, zwischen Leugnung und neuer rechter Gewalt bewegte. Diese Bruchstücke sind wahrlich Zeugen ihrer Zeit' ('These fragments of the grave memorial are almost symbolic, not just of the slow and "fragmentary" clarification of the history behind hundreds of victims of the Nazis arriving as corpses at the Anatomical Institute, but also of post-war memory culture, which wavered between remembering and forgetting, between denial and new far-right violence. These fragments are true witnesses to their era').[104] The use of 'beinahe' ('almost') is odd here, given that the fragments are most definitely symbolic, but the hesitation may reflect the fact that the symbolic relationship chosen (one of metaphorical equivalence, where piecing together the past is like piecing together these stones) is something of a logical stretch, given that historians pieced together the history of the anatomical institute before they erected the stone and therefore before the stones were broken by others. The second reading—that the stones embody an oscillation between remembering (making the memorial) and denial (breaking it) and that this is typical of Germany as a whole—is easier to follow. The idea that the stones 'witnessed' far-right violence is a fact that does not need the intensifier 'wahrlich' (since all objects are witnesses to their times), but the author may be struggling to explain why the rubble created by violence is a strong object for display.

Two more straightforward examples of vandalism could be seen at 'Übrig', an exhibition at the Jüdisches Museum Hohenems,

[104] Christian Bornefeld, 'Bruchstücke der Mahntafel des Tübinger Gräberfeldes X', in Seidl, pp. 257–60 (p. 260).

which I have already discussed, and another at the Gedenkstätte und Museum Sachsenhausen. For 'Übrig', two signposts were set up in the hallway of the museum, one pointing towards 'Damaskus' and the other towards 'Erinnerung' ('Memory').[105] These belonged to an art installation set up along the Rhine in 2015 to mark the route along which thousands of Jews were able to flee the Nazi dictatorship. The signpost marked 'Erinnerung' was bent out of shape, having been vandalized. Unlike in the Tübingen case, where neo-Nazis left behind graffiti to identify themselves, there is no way of knowing whether the motivation was to attack the liberal orthodoxy about the past or just to damage something that looked like it was valued by others, but clearly a vandalized 'memory' sign in the Austrian provinces is a symbolic gift.[106] That the vandalism may indeed have been politically motivated was suggested by another damaged object in the exhibition, a grave marker with a Star of David that had been ripped out of its place in a cemetery and thrown into the local river.[107] At Sachsenhausen, the prisoners' hut devoted to Jewish prisoners, Barrack 38, was set alight by neo-Nazis in 1992. When the improved and expanded exhibition about Jewish inmates reopened in 1997, one charred wall had been placed behind glass to document the attack.

If the phase during which the Nazi past came to light—and during which some on the Right resisted that process—has now been put behind glass, this is not necessarily true for what scholars often see as the next phase: the phase, from the 1990s onwards, when majority experiences of wartime suffering were allowed to be articulated and when the decades in which the majority had focused on such memories were treated with less automatic condemnation. As the example of the Mahnmal St Nikolai in Hamburg showed, in Sect. 3.5, museums may show evidence of majority suffering from the years 1939–45, and even discuss its traumatic after-effects, without necessarily thematizing the change in thinking in the 1990s. Other than general mention of the 'die Debatte um das "richtige" Erinnern' ('the debate about the "right way" to remember'), there is no mention of this turning point.

[105] Loewy and Reichwald, pp. 16–18.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Loewy and Reichwald, pp. 52–54.

A similarly general hint of a change in mood was given in the exhibition 'Schlachthof 5. Dresdens Zerstörung in literarischen Zeugnissen' ('Slaughterhouse Five: Dresden's Destruction in Literary Accounts', 2015 at the Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr, Dresden).[108] This featured the work of Walter Kempowski, in particular his collection and archiving of private materials (letters, photographs, diaries), many solicited through newspaper advertisements. Together, these allowed him to tell the story of the war from a kaleidoscope of individual perspectives, and particularly from the perspective of ordinary Germans, first in his magnum opus, *Das Echolot*, and then in a volume devoted specifically to the Dresden bombing, *Der rote Hahn*. Kempowski's work, though not without its detractors, was an important element in the late-century drive to let majority Germans speak openly of their experiences of war. Though the captions did not explain this context they assumed an understanding of it when they said that some of the donors to Kempowski's archive felt that they were being listened to for the first time. The display was perhaps more interesting for contributing to the history of memorial technologies. Its main exhibit was an Olivetti computer with an old-fashioned cathode ray tube monitor. The caption explained that the Olivetti allowed Kempowski to amass, catalogue and arrange his archive, suggesting that the step change in thinking about the past was facilitated by technology.

In some cases, exhibition-makers acknowledge that the most recent phase of 'coming to terms' (the one in which we are now living) is characterized by a commodification of the past or its remediation in contemporary media formats. Both on the far right and on the left, this can take the form of kitsch. The Erinnerungs- und Gedenkstätte Wewelsburg 1933–1945 shows its disdain for kitsch objects related to the various myths that swarm around the Wewelsburg by displaying them on the ceiling instead of in vitrines. The motley collection includes T-shirts, DVDs and various objects bearing the far-right 'black sun' motif, copied from a design at the Wewelsburg, including a crocheted tablecloth and a pair of ladies knickers, both available from far-right mail-order companies.[109] These are juxtaposed with a normal, vertical vitrine displaying serious literature that debunks the Wewelsburg myths. At other sites,

[108] Gorch Pieken, Matthias Rogg, and Ansgar Snethlage (eds), *Schlachthof 5. Dresdens Zerstörung in literarischen Zeugnissen* (Dresden: Sandstein, 2015), p. 284.

[109] Brebeck et al., pp. 424–25.

kitsch items are used to show how a younger generation approaches the past through its own media and with a measure of humour. Examples include a lego reconstruction of Stauffenberg's attempt to assassinate Hitler (shown at 'Anständig gehandelt')[110] and, at 'Hitler und die Volksgemeinschaft', Walter Moers's comic book *Hitler. Der Bonker* and a YouTube parody of a Hitler speech in which the soundtrack has been overwritten.[111] 'Graben für Germanien. Archäologie unterm Hakenkreuz' ('Digging for Germania: Archaeology Under the Swastika', 2013 at the Focke-Museum) showed commercial objects (including yoghurt pots and magazine covers) that continue to trade on clichéd and intellectually discredited notions of the ancient Germans and Vikings propagated by the Nazis. Since all such objects appear just before the visitor leaves the exhibition space, they may have the effect of allowing the visitor to transition back to the normal world, though they may equally be considered to trivialize the subject at the last moment.

As Sect. 5.2 suggested, postmemorial creative practice represents a stage of 'coming to terms' beyond the stages identified above. While postmemorial artwork is sometimes commissioned by museums for installation in the museum setting, postmemory is not a topic that is typically discussed at the end of a museum's narratives about post-war neglect of the past and belated engagement with the past. Not only is the abstraction 'postmemory' absent, but also (beyond occasional artworks such as were shown in the final space of 'Hitler und die Deutschen') any analysis of the objects that might illustrate its workings. Doubtless the term and the understanding of it are too new; besides, so long as museums are using postmemorial installations as a communicative tool, it is difficult to simultaneously put them behind glass as the latest response to the past. It remains to be seen whether, in the post-witness era, postmemory will still be too abstract a notion for the museum. It is easier to show grass (literally) growing over Munich's past, Munich citizens protesting and plans for a documentation centre than it is to engage

[110] Haus der Geschichte Baden-Württemberg (ed.), *'Anständig Gehandelt.' Widerstand und Volksgemeinschaft 1933–1945* (Stuttgart: Haus der Geschichte Baden-Württemberg, 2012), p. 188.

[111] Thamer and Erpel, p. 292.

with the necessary but flawed creative processes of postmemory.[112] One day, however, a flea-market photograph from Naomi Tereza Salmon's 'Asservate / Exhibits' exhibition catalogue and a box of random flea-market finds might illustrate the final chapter of an exhibition.

5.7 Life Goes on in the Museum: The Continuation of the Object Life Cycle

In Sect. 2.4, I cited Charles Saumarez Smith, who contested the assumption that 'in a museum, artefacts are somehow static, safe, and out of the territory in which their meaning and use can be transformed'.[113] Saumarez Smith was writing at the end of the 1980s about the Victoria and Albert Museum, which had by then had more than a 100 years in which to acquire, restore, lose interest in, neglect and radically repurpose objects in its collection. For museums of much more recent foundation such as those studied here, Saumarez Smith's approach might seem less fruitful, not least because, since the end of the Cold War, the ways in which objects from the years 1933–45 can be publicly interpreted have narrowed. Add to this the fact that many thousands of objects have been donated to museums and memorial sites by victims or their descendants, accompanied by personal testimony which cannot (beyond obvious cases of misremembering) be quibbled with, and the objects studied here may seem peculiarly 'safe'—whether in the museum depot or in their vitrine—from revaluation or reinterpretation. Still, it must be important, at least in the abstract, to work with this conceptual model, so as to remain alert, in the decades to come, to the ways in which objects dating from the years 1933–45 continue to evolve within museum collections—or, to use the life cycle metaphor, to write new chapters of their biography. Indeed, in practice, as I show below, it is already possible to isolate examples of objects that have continued in movement and in process even after apparently reaching a final resting place in the museum collection.

We saw in Sect. 5.6 that many museums that deal with the history of National Socialism are by now old enough to have been through

[112] All at the NS-Dokumentationszentrum München, which has a fairly typical art installation in the courtyard in front of the building that combines fragments of images and words.

[113] Charles Saumarez Smith, 'Museums, Artefacts, and Meanings', in *The New Museology*, ed. by Peter Vergo (London: Reaktion, 1989), pp. 6–21 (p. 9).

one, two or, in the case of the camp museums, three re-imaginings. The Deutsch-Russisches Museum's 2017 exhibition celebrating 'Unsere drei Leben' ('Our Three Lives') sums up this phenomenon. This final section deals with something different, however: changes in object status behind the scenes at the museum: in the collections and in decisions about display practices. While these changes may result in objects going on show, or being shown differently, they are not, as in the previous section, made to speak of their own role in a narrative about dealing with the Nazi past. Indeed, museum personnel may not themselves always be aware of the mutability of objects within their collections.

The Gedenkstätte Buchenwald offers the opportunity to study in some detail an institutional revaluation and reinterpretation of its collection, having recently redesigned its permanent exhibition. In such a case, where a first post-Cold War exhibition (1995–2015) has been replaced by a second (from 2016), curatorial changes in emphasis cannot be used in the service of an educative narrative of increasing democratic maturity about the Nazi past, with the message: 'Our predecessors displayed things in that way but we have moved on'. At Buchenwald today, the 1995–2015 exhibition simply goes unmentioned. Though all elements of that exhibition were reorganized, I will focus on the fate of a set of objects that were discussed in Sect. 3.4: objects recovered from the Buchenwald site and in particular from the camp's rubbish dump at Halde II ('Dump II'), which was excavated in 1996 and was thought to contain belongings of men and women evacuated from other camps in the final months of the War.

Section 3.4 described the use of these objects across many vitrines in the 1995–2015 exhibition, partly as background illustration, partly to illustrate 'Selbstbehauptung' ('self-assertion') in the camp and, in the button vitrine, to invite contemplation of fractured and lost lives. Since the Halde II finds had been disposed of when the camp was in operation, many had reached the end of their useful life even before 1945; they had suffered further organic decay in the landfill site in the half-century before 1996. As I argued in Sect. 3.4, the texts of the 1995–2015 exhibition—quite understandably—did not pick apart these life stages of the objects; rather, their worn and damaged forms spoke suggestively of the damage done to their owners and the museum's symbolic reversal of the Nazis' acts of disposal.

The finds from Halde II were not simply distributed across the permanent exhibition before 2015, but also exploited intellectually and

creatively. An exhibition about the archaeological digs was shown at the Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland in 1997 and was subsequently loaned out over a period of years[114]; in the same year, an artist was allowed to use identification tags and pendants that had been shaped into hearts for an installation on the theme of the heart.[115] In 1999, the memorial site published the master's thesis of one of its educational interpreters, archaeologist Ronald Hirte, with a foreword by the director, Volkhard Knigge.[116] After analysing the archaeology, Hirte discusses the challenges of engaging young people by involving them in digs at Buchenwald and proposes reading the finds in the context of the trend in fine art for using 'found objects', including work by Christian Boltanski and by artists working specifically with degraded objects from Buchenwald.[117] Hirte includes Naomi Tereza Salmon, whose work on the exhibition 'Asservate / Exhibits' had preceded the Halde II dig but used similarly degraded site-specific finds from the Buchenwald collection. In 2005, some of the shoe leather from Halde II was used in an installation in the exhibition 'Techniker der "Endlösung". Topf & Söhne. Die Ofenbauer von Auschwitz' ('Engineers of the "Final Solution": Topf & Sons, Builders of the Auschwitz Ovens', 2005 at the Jüdisches Museum Berlin), which subsequently became a permanent exhibit at the Erinnerungsort Topf & Söhne.[118]

In a further layer of intellectual reflection and introspection, Hirte and Salmon were two of five interviewees (and Salmon also the curator) of 'MenschenDinge / The Human Aspect of Things', a video installation commissioned by the Gedenkstätte Buchenwald from artist Esther

[114] 'Buchenwald. Archäologie gegen das Vergessen' ('Buchenwald: Archaeology as a Force Against Forgetting', 1997 at the Gedenkstätte Buchenwald).

[115] Pia Janssen, 'Archäologie des Herzens' ('Archaeology of the Heart', 1997 at the Orangerie, Cologne).

[116] Ronald Hirte, *Offene Befunde. Ausgrabungen in Buchenwald. Zeitgeschichtliche Archäologie und Erinnerungskultur* (Braunschweig: Hinz und Kunst, 1999).

[117] Hirte, pp. 54–75.

[118] I discuss this installation in Chloe Paver, 'From Monuments to Installations: Aspects of Memorialization in Historical Exhibitions About the National Socialist Era', in *Memorialization in Germany Since 1945*, ed. by Bill Niven and Chloe Paver (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 253–64 (pp. 255–57).

Shalev-Gerz and shown in 2006.[119] In a series of five video films and twenty-five video stills, Shalev-Gerz recorded professionals from the memorial site handling and discussing archaeological finds. The interviews serve to remind us that for museum professionals objects exist to a large extent outside of exhibitions: historian Harry Stein recalls a time when he kept finds from the camp grounds in his office because his colleagues were still unsure whether dirty and broken rubbish belonged in a museum at all; Knigge regrets the existence of a commercial market in remains from the concentration camps, in which professional museums participate; Hirte speaks more particularly of the market for stolen finds from the Buchenwald grounds, which are sold at flea markets or brought back to the memorial site when a bad conscience sets in; Salmon appraises the different attitudes to objects in the archives at Yad Vashem, Buchenwald and Auschwitz; and conservator Rosemarie Garcia-Martinez talks about working with school students to clean and catalogue archaeological finds. In the catalogue, philosopher Jacques Rancière also discusses the meaning of the Halde II objects and of Shalev-Gerz's approach to them.[120]

What is interesting for the current argument is that 'MenschenDinge' validated the museum's use of archaeology as a key component of its work. This validation was both external, from Rancière, and internal and mutual, among long-time collaborators. Filmed standing by the button display, Salmon interpreted it while talking about her earlier work on 'Asservate'. Stein spoke about finding kindred spirits in Garcia-Martinez and Hirte and feeling validated by Salmon: 'Also, ich saß auf meinem Müllhaufen, und plötzlich kommt jemand und sagt: Das sind aber spannende, interessante Objekte' ('There I was, sitting on my rubbish heap, and suddenly someone comes along and says: But those are exciting, interesting objects').[121]

I stress this mutual validation not to criticize but to bring the contrast between the old and the new exhibition into clearer focus. Even with the same personnel, a museum can re-evaluate its collections and reinterpret its objects over time. The degraded objects found at Buchenwald in the

[119] Esther Shalev-Gerz, *MenschenDinge/The Human Aspect of Objects* (Weimar: Stiftung Gedenkstätte Buchenwald und Mittelbau-Dora, 2006).

[120] Jacques Rancière, 'Die Arbeit des Bildes', trans. by Stephanie Baumann, in Shalev-Gerz, pp. 8–25.

[121] Shalev-Gerz, p. 75.

1990s were evidently enormously motivating and productive, but having supplied both a wealth of exhibition material and interesting intellectual challenges, the archaeological finds have been somewhat demoted in the new exhibition, used more sparingly and with more careful contextualization. Since 1995, Buchenwald has solicited and received many more donations from survivors and descendants, and these have arguably moved to the forefront.

Objects appear throughout the new exhibition, but three display modules labelled 'Dinge – Geschichten' ('Objects – Stories') explicitly invite reflection on the meaning of material remains. Each has the same introductory text which points out that the objects on display often survived because former inmates took them home as mementos. This is followed by routine self-criticism about post-war failures of memory work: 'Es dauert in der Bundesrepublik Jahrzehnte' ('In the Federal Republic of Germany, decades passed') before museums started to collect the objects and tell the stories attached to them. The text does not mention that each of the modules contains some archaeological finds from the Buchenwald site, such as had been displayed in the previous exhibition (indeed, in some cases, recognizably the same objects). Those objects relied for their discovery on people who were not inmates; the new exhibition text moves the inmates centre stage and stresses the importance of listening to the survivors.[122]

The three 'Dinge' modules deal respectively with uniforms, 'Selbstbehauptung', and the camp's hunger regime. Of these, the last relies most heavily on archaeological finds (eating and cooking utensils made of tin), though these are now separated out rather than piled up. Each of the three 'Dinge' modules combines an ethnological approach, which explains the objects in terms of the camp's internal systems, with individual life stories that are attached to particular objects. Whereas in the previous exhibition one or two striped uniforms confirmed stereotypical expectations, in the new exhibition (as discussed in Sect. 3.4) a variety of clothing serves to show the varying conditions at different times and for different groups of inmates. While the module on 'Selbstbehauptung' does show some archaeological finds—including the home-made clothes iron that had featured in 'MenschenDinge'—the

[122] A selection of the objects in the 'Dinge' modules appears, with the same text, in the catalogue: Volkhard Knigge (ed.), *Buchenwald. Ausgrenzung und Gewalt. 1937 bis 1945* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2016), pp. 74–91.

majority of objects are not archaeological finds, and two of those that are have been traced to individual owners. It may in part be due to the updated display cases and a thorough clean that some objects look brighter, less grey, than in my photographs from the earlier exhibition, but most objects in 'Selbstbehauptung' are in good condition or in a normal condition for old objects. In particular, two carved bone fish, a collection of toy farmyard animals, a concert programme and a leather elephant all present a visual impression that was produced by their makers and not (as is the case with discarded and recovered objects) by the ravages of time. They connote creativity, imagination and care for other humans. No objects in the 'Selbstbehauptung' module are set out in series or in piles. Stages in disintegration are disaggregated: where two toothbrushes without bristles are shown the caption records that toothbrushes had to be used until the bristles were worn down because they were in such short supply. In this way, degraded materials (rotted and broken leather, snapped bristles, battered and scratched metal, dirty and yellowed paper and card) no longer stand metaphorically for the harm done to human beings and piles or accumulations no longer stand for anonymization and dehumanization. Instead, those who survived speak more clearly in their own voice through objects of some quality that they made and/or preserved.

The decision was evidently taken that the button display was worth retaining in some form in the 2016 exhibition, but it has been visually demoted. Instead of occupying a long table vitrine which invited slow contemplation, a smaller version of the display sits atop table displays of other objects. I could find no caption for it, so that it appears only as an atmospheric display of damaged objects. The effect is aesthetic rather than moral. My point here is not to favour one kind of display over the other but rather to argue that because this kind of generational shift in museum work is not part of the 'coming to terms' narrative, unlike, say, the shift from GDR memory to democratic memory or the shift from protest memory to mainstream memory, it is enacted silently, without becoming a subject for display. Objects move up and down museum hierarchies over time and their position shifts as more objects are acquired.

In a discussion inspired by photographs she took of relics that have been left to degrade in the grounds of Auschwitz, philosopher Ulrike Kistner criticizes the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum for ignoring these objects and instead selecting for display 'objects that can singularly demonstrate a synecdochal relation to an implied overarching

whole and thus fulfil an integrative function', in particular, objects that can be related to individuals and encourage identification.[123] Citing Benjamin, Kistner proposes the 'gaze of the fragment-picking collector', which feeds intellectually on broken, dispersed and discarded objects, as a more productive mode of enquiry.[124] Kistner's generalized criticism of 'commemorative culture' unhelpfully obscures the cultural specificity of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, which is the product of a quite different cultural environment from German and Austrian memorial sites. There, as we have seen, exhibition-makers have indeed pondered the meaning of the objects that remain rotting outside the museum, not merely rescuing them for use in an 'integrative' display (which would only prove Kistner's point), but allowing them to retain their visible status as rubbish and considering what is meant by their not having been dug up for many decades. They accept that nothing can stop members of the public, like Kistner, picking up more objects from the grounds. Public historians are not philosophers, however, and while intellectuals in other branches may be disdainful of synecdoche's promise of wholeness, exhibition-makers rely on evoking part-whole relations and on using individuals as recognizably 'whole' counterparts to the visitor. In fact, the main part of Kistner's article, which is a vivid summary of what we know about how the object economy of the camps functioned (or rather, failed to function according to any known laws), is arguably only a more ambitious version of the narrative now on show at Buchenwald and elsewhere.

The well-known case of the holograms at the Jüdisches Museum Wien also fits into the model of the object life cycle continuing within the museum, though in this case change was characterized by public noise rather than professional discretion. The permanent exhibition set up in 1996 consisted of conceptual installations rather than a conventional object-and-narrative display. One of these modules was a set of glass boards, arranged in a square on the main exhibition floor. Because they were semi-transparent, the boards gave the impression of emptiness rather than the fullness and presence created by vitrines and objects, but once the viewer walked about inside the square, holograms became

[123] Ulrike Kistner, 'What Remains: Genocide and Things', in *Representing Auschwitz: At the Margins of Testimony*, ed. by Nicolas Chare and Dominic Williams (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 104–29 (p. 121).

[124] Kistner, p. 122.

visible on the glass, showing fragments of Jewish life in Vienna. These included objects in the possession of the museum, which were three-dimensional in their hologrammic recreation but also, because of the distorting effects and rainbow colours of the medium, very obviously not present in the room. The holograms became the subject of academic analysis and were praised as 'anti-exhibits' which 'resist[ed] object-bound museology' and 'refus[ed] the expositional logic of conventional displays'.[125]

In 2011, in the course of renovations undertaken by the new director of the museum, Danielle Spera, the twenty-one holograms on the second floor were smashed, there being apparently no other way of removing them from the space because some of their component materials had degraded. A smaller duplicate set was still extant, but considerable media and social-media fury erupted nonetheless. Twenty-six notable museum directors and academics protested in an open letter, arguing not only that the holograms themselves should be classed as a museum object and treated according to ICOM standards, but also that Jewish museums are characterized by a special self-reflexivity which means that their history as institutions is a part of Jewish history: 'Jüdische Museen sind gleichzeitig ein Teil jener Geschichte, die sie erzählen und sollten sich auch mit Achtung und Respekt gegenüber dieser, ihrer eigenen Geschichte als Institution verhalten' ('Jewish Museums are simultaneously a component part of the history they relate, and should behave with respect towards their own history as an institution').[126] Thus, while the previous head curator, Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, had insisted, at the time of the holograms' installation, that all history museums, regardless of the culture they display, should be honest with their visitors about the impossibility of conserving or reconstructing history on the basis of objects, which are empty shells, not containers of some essence of the past, the fact that she made that bold universalizing statement within a Jewish museum is part of the history of Austrian-Jewish culture at the turn of the

[125] Matti Bunzl, 'Of Holograms and Storage Areas: Modernity and Postmodernity at Vienna's Jewish Museum', *Cultural Anthropology*, 18 (2003), 435–68 (p. 436).

[126] Fritz Backhaus and twenty-five other signatories, open letter to Danielle Spera, 9 February 2011. Available at http://museologien.blogspot.co.uk/2011/02/zerstorung-ist-selbst-thema-unserer.html [accessed 29 May 2018].

millennium.[127] The Jüdisches Museum Wien moved to restore confidence by swiftly historicizing the outcry, displaying the smaller duplicates under the title 'Die Geschichte einer österreichischen Aufregung' ('The Story of an Austrian Furore') in February 2012. Evidently, historicizing disagreements about the past (even as soon as twelve months later) is one way in which museums can attempt to control them.

In future, digital technology will simplify the archiving of earlier exhibition formats but may also complicate the archiving of multimedia installations. Sharone Lifschitz's project 'Speaking Germany', which accompanied the opening of the Jüdisches Museum München, was a performance over several months, involving interventions in the streetscape, a website with updates on the project and extracts from interviews with participants.[128] The archiving of this material is dispersed and in parts messy: traces of the dialogues have been pasted to the outside of the Jüdisches Museum München, becoming, for the medium term at least, a part of its fabric. While the website is now closed to updates, it continues to offer a rich photographic and textual record of the project. However, the data from an interactive guest book was lost in some kind of cyber accident just before it was closed to new entries, causing one contributor to suggest that the data had been taken down because the artist was having difficulty controlling negative comments.[129] While there is no evidence for this, it is interesting to contrast the openness of the project's distributed archiving—including its openness to criticism—with its representation as one of seven objects in the 'Sachen/Objects' module at the Jüdisches Museum München.[130] There, Lifschitz's project is represented by some of her equipment and a video loop, a way of bringing her sprawling project back into the museum space and back into the order of objects. The text by curator Emily D. Bilski notes: '*Speaking Germany* ist keine dauerhafte Intervention – das Projekt ist genauso flüchtig wie die Gespräche, die ihm zu Grunde liegen. Es wird nur im Gedächtnis der Künstlerin, ihrer Gesprächspartner und der Personen, die der Intervention im Stadtraum begegnet sind, weiterleben.

[127] Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, 'On the Historical Exhibition at the Jewish Museum of the City of Vienna', in *Jewish Museum Vienna*, ed. by Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek and Hannes Sulzenbacher (Vienna: Jüdisches Museum Wien, 1996), pp. 61–62.

[128] http://www.speaking-germany.de/news/ [accessed 29 May 2018].

[129] http://www.speaking-germany.de/guestbook/ [accessed 29 May 2018].

[130] Fleckenstein and Purin, pp. 70–71.

Die Videosequenz, die Teil des Projekts ist, wird der einzige bleibende Verweis sein' ('*Speaking Germany* will not be a permanent fixture in Munich – it is as ephemeral as the conversations that inspired it and will endure only in the memory of the artist, of her conversation partners, and of the people who encountered Lifschitz's Munich installations. The video, a component of this project, will be its only lasting record').[131] By remediating Lifschitz's project as museum object, the museum squeezes some extra value out of it, extending its short shelf life while also speaking about the shortness of its shelf life. At the same time, Bilski's commentary does not simply reify the project; it points to the impossibility of containing and conserving it in all its complexity. The idea that the video is all that remains arguably simplifies the notion of the project's 'trace', since it does not take account of remediation through the website, whose continued existence is presumably outside the museum's control.

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Taking issue with Aleida Assmann's and Jan Assmann's notion that 'communicative' (personal, intergenerational) memory will be followed after a delay by 'cultural' memory, Steffi de Jong argues that in the case of video testimony, it is 'communicative memory' itself that is put into the museum.[132] In this chapter, we have seen many examples of material (i.e. non-digital) objects that fulfil the same role. Whereas with video testimony, as de Jong notes, putting acts of remembering into the museum is largely a gesture of respect towards victims who were first traumatized and then not listened to, in the German and Austrian context many objects from the post-war years are on display to communicate a critical view of the perceived post-war failings of the non-persecuted majority. The move in academic German Studies towards a more differentiated view of post-war 'silence' among the majority can be glimpsed in some objects, particularly where wartime suffering of the majority is a focus: in the tin cup at the Deutsches Historisches Museum, for instance, or in the letter from the grieving mother of a soldier at the Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr. However, museums generally hold more

[131] Emily D. Bilski, 'Wie können Deutsche und Juden miteinander über Deutschland sprechen? Wie können wir uns *nicht* über Deutschland unterhalten?', in Fleckenstein and Purin, p. 71.

[132] Steffi de Jong, *The Witness as Object: Video Testimony in Memorial Museums* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2018), pp. 15–16.

firmly than university scholarship to a critical view of post-war Germany and Austria. Indeed, visitors are assumed to bring this critical viewpoint with them and not to need the implications of keeping, hiding or finding an object spelling out, a risky communication strategy that may overestimate public consensus and that may begin to fail as the generations most affected by post-war attitudes pass on. Nonetheless, if one considers the practical difficulty of putting memory processes into the history museum, the consistency with which German and Austrian history museums understand and communicate their part in an ongoing process of finding an appropriate relationship to a murderous past is impressive.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

A book that draws examples of objects from very many exhibitions can easily become an exhibition itself: an exhibition in which a Ukrainian tube of glue is juxtaposed with a battered wooden dove, even though we must travel to Nordrhein-Westfalen to see one while the other was only temporarily on view in Berlin, and in which a honey centrifuge sits alongside a man's belt with five extra, hand-pierced holes, even though one relates to the elusive mentalities of the majority culture and the other to the physical suffering of Jewish victims. While the fieldwork for this book has unearthed a fascinating trove of objects, I have tried to emphasize the importance of context for the display of each object and to maintain a focus on objects as signs in the communication process about National Socialism in Germany and Austria today.

The fact that this study covers a large number of exhibitions documenting Germany's role in the events of 1933–45 may also give the impression that Germany has, at least in the realm of museum work, definitively come to terms with its past. The largely positive methodology in this book is an attempt to move beyond the presentation of German memory culture as a series of quarrels and debates about the past, in which the reluctance of groups and individuals to acknowledge past misdeeds and traumas has to be overcome. Such instances of overcoming generate valuable scholarship but are only one aspect of exhibition-making, which is now largely characterized by consensus and routine. Having made that point clearly in the body of the book, it makes sense to qualify it here.

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Not every attempt to found a new museum is a success and not every existing museum follows the same liberal narrative. In 2012, the town of Celle abandoned plans for a documentation centre about National Socialism because of the cost of building works and of employing professional historians; a proposal to employ cheaper Ph.D. labour was rejected.[1] The media cited the proximity of the Gedenkstätte Bergen-Belsen as one reason for not needing another museum in Celle.[2] This view prevailed despite the fact that Celle has its own story to tell, not least as the site of the Celler Hasenjagd, a massacre of escaped concentration camp prisoners. Celle is also the site of the Celler Garnison-Museum, an amateur military museum which, leaving aside some professional information boards about the Second World War that appear to have been borrowed from elsewhere, mostly shows an uncontextualized mass of objects. Many objects have been donated by families of Wehrmacht soldiers who have been allowed to tell their stories without any apparent editorial control. Their stories focus on bravery and suffering but say nothing of the political context. Many such museums continue to exist, untouched by the professional practices studied in this book.

This was especially clear when the police exhibition 'Ordnung und Vernichtung' travelled to the Polizeimuseum Niedersachsen in Nienburg, allowing a state-of-the-art temporary exhibition to be viewed alongside a rather outmoded permanent exhibition. Where the Polizeimuseum's permanent exhibition offers a broad-brush condemnation of National Socialism but little sense of police involvement in harassment or persecution, the temporary exhibition, produced by police historians at the Deutsche Hochschule der Polizei, offered a fine-grained examination of individual agency and demonstrated the full range of politically tainted activities in the police force. Like the Celler Garnison-Museum, the Polizeimuseum has donated items on show, including a uniform and cape, mounted on a tailor's dummy. This belonged to a policeman who was deployed in the Soviet Union and died in a Soviet internment camp in 1950. His family were allowed to take the uniform

[1] Gunther Meinrenken, 'NS Doku-zentrum: Mittel weiter reduziert', *Cellesche Zeitung*, 17 July 2012; http://www.cellesche-zeitung.de/website.php/website/story/297117/ [accessed 29 May 2018].

[2] Gernot Knödler, 'Eine Nummer kleiner, bitte', *taz*, 5 March 2012; http://www.taz.de/!5099109/ [accessed 29 May 2018].

with them across the border from the GDR to the FRG provided that they removed the Nazi emblems. The Polizeimuseum evidently prefers to respect the family's grief for a lost relative (for which the Soviets are implicitly held responsible) rather than interrogate what the policeman did between 1933 and 1945, particularly during his armed deployment, and why the Soviets interned him. Even as the professional practices demonstrated in this study are consolidated, parallel narratives about National Socialism and parallel treatment of the same categories of object can be expected to persist.

Finally, it has not been my intention to write a material history of the years 1933–45, even if one can perhaps see the outlines of such a history. As the example of the cartoon discussed in Sect. 3.4 showed, exhibitions are not resource books for scholars of Holocaust materiality but rather public acts of communication with clear and direct messages. This means that, even while exhibition-makers conduct all kinds of interesting enquiries into how objects circulate, are exchanged and stay stored or hidden, no exhibition-maker would approach the topic purely with an anthropological interest in human–object relations. The travelling exhibition 'Glanz und Grauen' was put together by academic experts in fashion and textiles, who drew on a vast museum collection in order to study, among other things, autarky and rationing, and the culture of sewing among women. Yet even this exhibition, which could have been forgiven for taking a material view, went out of its way to frame its narrative in terms of the ideology and crimes of Nazism. By the end of its first paragraph of text, the exhibition's discourse had moved from fashion to 'Rassismus, Terror und Gewalt, Krieg und Vernichtung' ('racism, terror and violence, war and extermination'). Similarly, the exhibition 'Volk – Heimat – Dorf', host of the honey centrifuge, showed a keen interest in the material culture with which Bavarian farmers engaged in the 1930s, displaying, for instance, a new kind of cattle yoke designed to allow cows to draw with their shoulders rather than their head and neck. Yet, in the same display the exhibition showed an undated abattoir stun gun in order to make the point that Nazi propaganda disparaged Jewish slaughtering techniques and, furthermore, that a superficial concern for animal welfare did not prevent the Nazis from testing out biological weapons on animals and concentration camp inmates. It is hard to imagine, at least in the foreseeable future, that history exhibitions in either Germany or Austria will exchange a moral and social lens for a purely anthropological one, through which changes in human–object relations or the

signifying systems of objects are viewed as interesting for their own sake. Nonetheless, as the section on the camps showed, the moral imperative to give a voice to the victims may require exhibition-makers to explain alien object systems (to explain that lipstick inside the camp is not like lipstick in our world), so that materiality and morality can be two sides of the same coin. In the course of the book, I have suggested other fields of enquiry—testimony, generations, postmemory and trauma—which generate impressive volumes of scholarship within memory studies but which, for the moment, remain secondary in German and Austrian history exhibitions that prioritize honouring victims and providing democratic education. Time will tell whether these underlying categories will themselves ever be put under glass in the museum.

In the meantime, more work remains to be done. In particular, the way is open for a study of the transition to a second democratic generation of exhibitions about National Socialism and the Holocaust. In this, I include those former GDR museums which, having made the transition to democratic display practices in the 1990s, have renewed their permanent exhibitions in the 2010s (Buchenwald, Ravensbrück), as well as museums founded since 1990 that have revised their permanent exhibitions. As I write, the permanent exhibition at the Jüdisches Museum Berlin, opened in 2001, is closed for a redesign, while the NS-Dokumentationszentrum der Stadt Köln is in the process of designing a major extension, the 'Haus für Erinnern und Demokratie'. Both are due to open in 2019. Because they involve a transition from one advanced democratic phase to another—rather than from communism to democracy or from democratic forgetting to democratic remembering—these developments will require more differentiated analysis than the earlier transitions.

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