Strengthening Narrative Competence by Diversification of (Hi)stories

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In this article I will present a teaching tool aiming at the improvement of narrative competence in the context of historical learning – and more specific: historical learning in museums or at memorial sites. The concept is based on the technique of re- and deconstruction of historical narratives at museums and/or memorials. The example presented here is taken from a teacher training seminar entitled "One past – many narratives", attended by teachers from different parts of Norway. But as will be argued, the tool has the potential to strengthen intercultural sensibility, also in "multi-cultural classrooms" and international teaching settings. The reasons for this potential are partly linked to the changes which memory cultures connected to World War II have undergone in all European countries in recent years. While in the first decades after 1945 memory cultures were dominated by national interpretations (Flacke 2004), the decades after 1968 brought a shift towards self-critical and more cosmopolite and universal interpretations. This has been reinforced by the special dynamic of international Holocaust commemoration (Levy/Sznaider 2005). (See the contribution by StokholmBanke in this volume.) Today, both the national and the cosmopolitan interpretative framework inform individual and collective/group specific interpretations and uses of the past, alongside with other narratives, originating in stories being told in families or narratives related to local identities (see the contribution of Bjerg in this volume).

The teaching concept presented here aims to foster the learner's competence to relate in a reflected and critical way to representations of

the past as they are displayed in historical museums. The concept is linked to the following aspects of historical competence:

- The ability to identify and reconstruct musealized historical narratives.
- The ability to re-arrange and re-contextualize these representations of the past for the production of personal, diverging and even multi-layered narratives.

In order to contextualize this empirical example, I will first present some basic features of Norwegian history culture and its underlying narrative and subsequently discuss some theoretical assumptions pertaining to the didactical concept.

Sub-layers in the dominant Norwegian narrative

The Norwegian memory culture requires a brief introduction since the empirical data originate from the Norwegian context.

The dominant narrative about the time of the German occupation of Norway emerged quickly after 1945. It was structured by a dualistic pattern of "German occupiers" versus "a nation in resistance" on the one hand, and "patriots" versus "collaborators"/"traitors" on the other. This interpretative pattern informed historical research, public memory culture and history teaching for decades. Within this framework, by far the most interest was directed towards the resistance movement on the one hand and the general population's rejection against attempts to Nazify Norwegian society, the so called "Holdningskampen" (the fight to "keep" the country, in a symbolic sense) on the other. It is evident that this interpretative framework gave the majority of the population the possibility to identify with the position of good Norwegians/patriots (Eriksen 1995). The flip site of the coin, though, was the social stigmatization of those branded as traitors – party members of the Norwegian collaborationist party "Nasjonal Samling", SS-volunteers and women, who had sexual and/or love relationships with German soldiers. The consequences of this stigmatization were also "inherited" by the children of those who ended up on "the wrong side". Therefore, to this very day, the memories of the time of the German occupation, have remained an emotionally charged topic in many Norwegian families (Lenz 2007, 2008). The Norwegian Resistance Museum, created in the early 1970s by resistance veterans, can be regarded as a materialization of what could be called a "national master narrative" – a version of history becoming so dominant as to regulate every kind of interpretation of this

specific period. Moreover, power relations in a contemporary society are shaped by the positions that this narrative ascribes to individuals and groups.

From the beginning of the 1970s onwards, a whole range of aspects of war history came into the focus of both professional historians and the broader public interest, notably the collaboration, the treatment of Norwegian women having love relationships with German soldiers before and after 1945 and the fate of the children born out of these relationships. The persecution of the Norwegian Jews, leading to the murder of more than 700 of them, became a topic of public memory culture and memory politics as late as in the mid-1990s. Whereas the investigation of the history of the political collaborators was for the most part fueled by the interest of a young generation of historians in the 1970s (who did not belong to the "resistance veterans" as most of the leading war historians after 1945 did), the attention for the other two subjects did not spring from professional historians' work but was generated by the activities of groups and organizations from civil society and, in the case of the Holocaust, from abroad. The most striking examples of this development within Norwegian memory culture is the growing awareness of the fate of the children born out of relationships between Norwegian women and German soldiers during the war. Many of these "war children" (in Norwegian, they were called "Tyskerbarn"/ Germans' children) had been stigmatized after the war. They and their mothers were branded as mentally retarded and there were even official political deliberations of how to get rid of them. In the 1980s, an organization of these "war children" was founded, claiming official acknowledgement for their sufferings after 1945 and even suing the state for financial compensation. The developments leading up to the compensation lawsuit and the lawsuit itself received broad media attention, and eventually even a research project was launched, investigating the postwar life conditions of these children (Ericsson/Simonsen 2005). One can say that this complex process of public lobbyism, media attention and historical research has left a deep change in public attitudes – as well as private narratives – related to these phenomena (Lenz/Moller 2006; Lenz/Welzer 2007).

The way by which the history of the persecution of the Norwegian Jews became integrated in history writing and public history culture was quite a different one. Here, the interest and awareness for the subject had been increasing in limited artistic and intellectual circles since the early 1990s. But the breakthrough in the public at large was achieved due to the work of an official commission, established in 1996 and reporting in 1997, which investigated the reparations the surviving Norwegian Jews had been awarded after having been dispossessed by the Nazi regime in

1942. This commission's findings led to both historical research and public awareness for this part of occupation history, which had been a blind spot until then (Maerz 2007).

An investigation into the historical consciousness about the time of the German occupation cannot rely exclusively on public history culture (with historical research being a part of it). People's knowledge, their perception of representations of reality and their interpretations relating to the wartime period are informed by many different sources: family narratives and stories told in the personal sphere, school lessons, media representations (TV, cinema, literature etc.) as well as local and national memory culture (monuments, commemoration days, ceremonies etc.).

The didactical tool to be presented here takes its starting-point in the idea that the historical consciousness of most Western Europeans belonging to the postwar generation is organized by different layers of cultural influences and narrative patterns (See also the contribution by Bjerg). This means that the narratives and interpretations related to this aspect of history are adaptable to different, even contradictory "uses of the past" and can embrace different interpretative options. In order to create the competence of being able to relate actively to the different narratives and interpretations existing in the public (and the private) realm(s), both within history teaching and in a wider sense, it is decisive that all processes of historical learning focus on "critical judgment" with regard to historical narratives.

Theoretical assumptions

Some of the basic assumptions shaping the concept of using museum exhibitions in order to develop the narrative aspects of historical competence have been extensively presented in the articles of Körber and Karlsson in this volume. Notably, the concepts of "(self-)reflective historical consciousness" and "uses of the past" materialized in historical culture have been elaborated there. I will build on these theoretical premises, focusing on the relevance of narrativity for any construction of "meaning" related to timeliness and, resulting from this, the notion of "narrative competence".

Taking the concept of historical consciousness into consideration when designing tools for historical learning first of all means starting from the idea of "being in time" as an existential feature. This includes the understanding that subjects cannot build any relation to reality nor can they gain agency without the mental operations linking past, present and future together. Without references to experienced or represented

past and without the mechanisms of selecting and organizing information derived from the past, the flood of impressions constituting every moment of present reality cannot be organized into a meaningful whole. Without references to the past, reality would literally "make no sense". Though the patterns of selection and interpretation derived from past experiences are constantly re-organized within social and cultural frameworks, they represent the basis of subjectivity and agency – which means: the ability to act based on intentions and prospects for the future.

Still, this existential dimension of our relation to the past as subjects and social beings, and hereby the absolute dependence on the relation to the past when it comes to the question of identity (who we are and how we became what we are), cannot change the fact that relating to the past is only possible in indirect ways, via *representations*. To be existentially related to something absent means being dependent on symbolic reconstructions and communicative practices "verifying" the notions of the past. This creates a tension, which is often solved by cultural techniques of "ensuring" one's own history. The idea of (self-)reflective historical consciousness – as it is also presented in Körber's contribution in this volume and as it informs the teaching approach presented here – is therefore not only linked to the idea of cognitive or intellectual skills. It also refers to the capacity of coexisting with diverse cultures and taking actively part in democratic, pluralist societies.

What is the focus of an approach in which historical learning is based on (self-)reflective historical consciousness and how does narrativity come into play? As indicated in the contribution by Karlsson in this volume, the mental operations of "processing time" are linked to the experience of recognizing oneself and others in the dynamic of past, present and future. We are able to imagine elderly people as the youngsters they once were and the hopes (future prospects) they once had, as well as we are able to imagine small kids being adults in the future *remembering* us as good or less good parents. This means, we constantly relate to *stories* placing subjects and their actions in time. And the present needs for orientation, as well as the future prospects, influence the way the past is constructed. In order to do so, several interrelated mental operations are processed:

- **identifying** and **selecting** "meaningful events" in the past;
- **compounding** events within coherent **narrative patterns** (the formation of "history");
- **relating** the **past** to **present** and **future** in meaningful ways.

Narrative psychology (Straub 2005) suggests that the individual's capacity to cope with reality is based on these narrative operations; patterns of orientation are gained from selected and "useful" former experiences –

which might be one's own experiences or cultural representations of other people's experiences.

The capacity to organize reality in this selective and structuring way serves, according to Straub, the existential need of coping with contingency. The existence of (narrative) patterns which can be applied in the encounter with new, unforeseen situations is a precondition for agency – since this enables us to see meaningfulness and even causality, which we can master, rather than chaos. But it is evident that the stabilizing function of narrative patterns is but one side of the coin of subjectivity and agency. It is equally crucial to adapt and "update" the narrative order of things constantly in order to be able to integrate changes and to react adequately in varying situative frameworks.

Here, the idea of two main features of narrative operations - *reconstructive and deconstructive* – becomes manifest, since they represent the two complementary functions of narrativity for a subject's coping with a constantly changing reality: The *reconstructive* operations represent the capacity to construct stabilizing frameworks and patterns, which help to stabilize existence "in time", whereas the *deconstructive* operations represent the capacity to re-organize and adapt these patterns – similar to "reflexive distance" according to Straub's terminology. Reconstruction and deconstruction both apply when it comes to the identification and selection of relevant aspects of the past, when it comes to historical narratives and when it comes to the ways the past is linked to present and future. This is mirrored in the 6-field matrix of historical consciousness by Hasberg and Körber:

Table 1. The 6-field matrix of historical consciousness.

	I	II	III
	Focus "past" (hypothetical) "ex func" ascertain features of the past	Focus "history" "ex post" transforming past things to history	Focus "Present/Future" "ex nunc, pro nunc" connecting things past and history to the present and the future
Re-Construction	Reconstructing "occurences" and "facts" from original sources	Contextualizing "particles of the past" • synchron: structures • diachron: developments	Constructing connections of causality and of meaning between past facts and incidents to present and future
	Synthetical (re-)construction of chronological meaning (a narrative story) from material ⇨		
	OPERATIONS OF HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS		
De-Construction	Analysis of the narrative construction of a narration, determine its way of constructing historical meaning ⇦		
	Detecting "facts" and incidents of the past from narrations	Analyzing contextualisations inherent in a narration (synchron and diachron)	Analyzing narratives regarding to their offers for orientation in present and future

(Hasberg/Körber 2003. See also the contribution by Körber in this volume for an elaboration of the matrix of historical consciousness)

Thus, the idea of *narrative competence* combines the ability to reconstruct "events in the past", historical narratives and interpretations linking the past to the present and future **and** the ability to "read"/ understand the inner logic of historical narratives and interpretations established by others, as well as to identify the elements of "past events" they consist of and the ways these events are represented (Schreiber et al. 2008).

How to operationalize these theoretical thoughts?

The didactical concept "One history – many stories" was developed at the Center for Studies of Holocaust and Religious Minorities in 2007 as an element of a course for school teachers. Since then the concept has been re-used in the context of a bi-national (German/Norwegian) seminar with pupils between 18 and 20 years of age. In this presentation, I will focus on the outcome produced by the use of the concept within the teacher course.

The concept of the course is based on the assumption that the national master narrative about the German occupation of Norway constitutes an important point of reference in the historical consciousness and, not least, in the teaching practice of all participants of the course (due to its continuing predominant presence in history textbooks). At the same time, we assumed that this narrative would be interwoven with – or interfered by – other narratives about the period. The aims of the course were as follows:

- to make the participants aware of the different narratives they were carrying;
- to give them tools to identify and reproduce (reconstruct) as well as "read" (deconstruct) different narratives in a public exhibition;
- to operationalize these tools into elements of history teaching.

The teacher course

The participants of the course were 25 teachers, mostly teaching at an upper secondary school level. The presentation of the participants showed that most of them currently live and teach in the southern part of Norway, but that more than half of them grew up in other parts of Norway. One participant had a German background. In order to create an "opener" to the subject of the course and an awareness of the different personal narratives which the participants relate to regarding the history of WW II, they were asked to present themselves in the following way: "Tell about your first encounter with the history of World War II."

The stories told in this first presentation showed a great deal of diversity, not only according to the participants' regional and local background, but also in relation to their age and gender. None of the participants was, of course an "eye witness" of the war in terms of having experienced it consciously. But several members of the group had grown up in the immediate postwar years, and these persons tended to tell stories from their own family's war experiences and the traces the war had left on their childhood. The younger participants, though, retold stories

from the war which they had heard via the media, school or older family members. And some of them commented on the impressions these stories made on them as youngsters – a de-constructive operation, showing some cognitive and emotional distance to the topic of war. There was an interesting, though typical gendered difference in the stories presented by the participants. Quite a few of the male participants with different generational and regional backgrounds told stories reflecting the fascination of military events and material remains, such as bunkers that boys would use for war games after the war, while none of the women contributed stories of this kind.

After the presentation, a lecture was held, introducing the changing scientific and public focus regarding the history of the German occupation of Norway. It was also shown how the ongoing investigation of phenomena related to the years 1940-45 coincided with a growing attention for the question of how this past has been dealt with and remembered after 1945. This tendency to "historicize" postwar memory culture was related to the concept of historical consciousness and its basic assumption that any reference to the past emerges from contemporary needs for orientation. The question was raised, which consequences this would have for history teaching concepts. Could the awareness that the history of WWII has been perceived and interpreted differently in different periods of the postwar era, and by different groups, contribute to the competence of critical and (self-)reflective evaluation of historical accounts and cultural representations of the past? Some of the participating teachers remarked that these ideas corresponded very well with Norwegian history curricula, which focus more on critical judgment and the competence to relate past and present than on canonized factual knowledge.

After this introduction, the whole group was taken to the Norwegian Resistance Museum, where they worked in the exhibition in smaller groups. This exhibition, created in the early 1970s by resistance veterans, can be regarded as a materialization of the dominating national narrative about WWII (as presented in the beginning of this article). On the one hand, the exhibition has a chronological structure which seems to tell the "whole story" of the five years of occupation. On the other hand, it breaks with chronology and focuses on the different forms of civil and military resistance and the German repression against it. By leaving out or at least not focusing on the "grey zones" between patriotic struggle and collaboration/ treason, the exhibition creates the impression of a "nation-in-resistance", created by the occupation, where coping with rationed food, wearing forbidden national symbols and fighting against the German occupiers were just different points on a scale of a "good Nor-

wegian's" behavior.[1] In this way, the exhibition displays a straightforward national narrative, reflecting a certain perspective, namely, the perspective of the veterans as it emerged in the 1970s. It is this narrative which has been extremely modified by scientific and public debates since then, as presented earlier. The question follows how visitors whose historical consciousness is informed by contemporary history culture and different personal backgrounds will read and interpret the exhibition? It may well be that it displays so many aspects and such a multitude of material (written sources, pictures, objects from wartime, models, and commenting texts) that the visitors have the opportunity to select aspects and re-arrange them according to their personal experiences, imaginations and meanings, this past carries for them.

In order to facilitate an approach allowing the participants to use their own background in reconstructing the history of The Second World War, we divided the seminar group in sub-groups of three or four, handed out a digital camera to each group and gave them the task to create a mini-exhibition consisting of four images taken in the exhibition.[2] These mini-exhibitions were required to address one of the following propositions:

1. Tell the story of the years of occupation as it is told in the exhibition.
2. Tell the story of the occupation as it is best known to you.
3. Tell the story of the occupation as you think it should be told.

In terms of narrative competence, the three tasks aimed at the identification and reproduction of the exhibition's narrative, at production/construction of personal narratives and, last but not least, at the reflection and deconstruction of both the exhibition's narrative and their own.

After the visit to the Norwegian Resistance Museum the whole group returned to the HL-center where each of the groups presented their "mini exhibition" (the text below is the transcript of the three presentations given). Each presentation was followed by questions and comments from the other participants. This presentation and the subsequent discussion was an important part of the learning process regarding a focus on the de- and reconstruction of historical narratives. Confronted with the ways the other participants had solved the task in the museum and the multitude of "war narratives" generated, the participants became more aware of the choices they had taken. This self-reflexivity relating

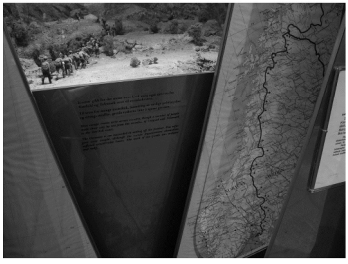
1 For the exhibition's contents see: http://www.mil.no/felles/nhm/start/eng/.

2 All photos in this article are the property of HL-senteret and the Norwegian Resistance Museum and were kindly made available for use in this publication by Samantha Maurer Fox.

to the multi-layered character of possible historical narratives is an important starting-point for an active participation in the permanent negotiations about the ways the past can be told, interpreted and used – regardless of whether it applies to family, local or national histories.

These are the results of three of the groups which chose one of the respective tasks:

1. The national narrative



"K1: 'Yeah, this is picture no. 1, King Haakon leaving Norway on June 7th, 1940 to continue the fight from England. [He] was the head of the Norwegian resistance struggle for two months, and we thought this was a fitting image [...]
Yeah, resistance struggle. This is a picture of a concealed radio transmitter. One of the most important tasks of the Norwegian resistance struggle was to collect information about German positions, German ships etc., and to send the information to England.
This image may be of poor quality, but [telling] about the resistance struggle without mentioning Quisling is not an option. Quisling was the very symbol of Nazism in Norway.
[...] There were many who fled from Norway, some to Sweden, as the arrows at the border show, and many others who travelled westward. And below in the picture there is a long red stripe [...] in that direction. Those were the ones who went to the Shetlands, to Scotland, to England, or in that direction. And there were different reasons why people left for either Sweden or the West. It could be in order to join the resistance struggle, or it could be because they had to escape from the Germans, because they perhaps had participated in something.'"

In this group, the reconstructive mode of dealing with the material is predominant. Not altogether surprising since the group explicitly chose the task to *reproduce* the story about the war *as it is told* in the exhibition.

The participants selected four images which represent events, agents or, in a broader sense, *phenomena* from the war which they regard as elementary and they arranged them in a way which creates a linear story. In this way, the "focus past" and "focus history" – meaning, the focus on single aspects/events of the past and the focus on the narrated and interpreted past as shown in the figure above – are combined. The reconstructive way of dealing with the focus past is evident, when each picture is explained by giving an outline of the historical event it represents, or in the case of Quisling, explaining, that he symbolized betrayal *then*, which also is a way of reconstructing the past. The arrangement of the four pictures has no chronological, but a *logical* order following the pattern of public memory and history writing in the postwar era. The framework is the notion of "national resistance", which is first and foremost represented by the king, who, before leaving the country in order to continue the struggle abroad, fought together with his countrymen. There is no deconstructive element which might consider other interpretations of the king's decision – e.g. that he abandoned his countrymen, leaving them to their fate, while getting himself to safety.

The logic of the narrative of the king and "the people" fighting for the same cause is continued with the second and fourth image, which represent one branch of resistance activities, namely the transmission of sensitive military information to England and the consequences resistance activities had for many Norwegians, namely, being forced to leave the country. Both images are connected to the first one by taking up the notion of "England", and by doing so combining not only the struggle at home and abroad, but also, again, the king and "his people". The second image exemplifies the antipode to the national unity which is represented by the other images. There is no further information, no narrative elaboration of Quisling as a historical agent. This image has, thus, no function related to the "focus past" (which means, the focus on single events in the past) but only to the "focus history" (which means the focus on an overall narrative, structured by a certain pattern of historical meaning).[3] It serves as a marker for "the other side", which constitutes (alongside with the Germans which are mentioned in the second and fourth image) the unity of the people, with the king as its "the head".

As mentioned before, we do not find any deconstructive elements in this presentation, neither related to the "focus past", the single events

3 Jörn Rüsen (1983) suggests four "ideal" types which structure historical meaning – a traditional, a genetical, an exemplaric and a critical mode – which differ in the way past, present and future are linked together. Narrative patterns, such as e.g. "everything used to be better" or "we learn from the mistakes of the past" reflect the different types of historical meaning.

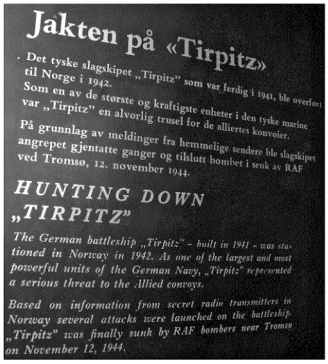
which are reported (could there be alternative stories, interpretations?) and represented in the images (who has produced them and when, which might have been the intention, what do they tell, what not etc.?) nor related to the "focus history". The story which is being told here can be described as a "royalist" version of the national narrative. There were many different motivations to participate in resistance activities, and enquiring into them and the alternative narratives they would constitute, would have been one possibility of integrating a deconstructive perspective in the presentation.

Another dimension of narrativity left out in this presentation is the "focus present/future". Nothing is said about the meaning this story about national unification in and through resistance could have today, neither in a re- or deconstructive way.

So, one could ask whether the task for the group should have been formulated in such a way as to not only encourage them to reconstruct the museum's narrative, but also to reflect on the premises of this narrative. Nevertheless, when thinking about using the teaching concept in a school context, this task seemed to show that narrative competence can be fostered on a basic level.

The second example I would like to present is far more complex, when it comes to the different foci and narrative operations.

2. Deconstructing the national …


Jakten på «Tirpitz»

Det tyske slagskipet „Tirpitz" som var ferdig i 1941, ble overført til Norge i 1942.
Som en av de største og kraftigste enheter i den tyske marine var „Tirpitz" en alvorlig trusel for de alliertes konvoier.
På grunnlag av meldinger fra hemmelige sendere ble slagskipet angrepet gjentatte ganger og tilslutt bombet i senk av RAF ved Tromsø, 12. november 1944.

HUNTING DOWN „TIRPITZ"

The German battleship „Tirpitz" – built in 1941 – was stationed in Norway in 1942. As one of the largest and most powerful units of the German Navy, „Tirpitz" represented a serious threat to the Allied convoys.

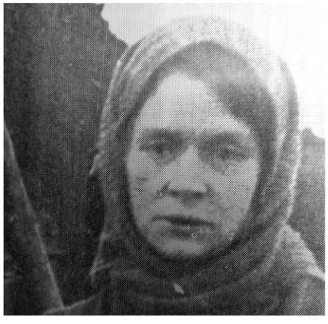
Based on information from secret radio transmitters in Norway several attacks were launched on the battleship „Tirpitz" was finally sunk by RAF bombers near Tromsø on November 12, 1944.


Evakuerte.

Anna Andersen, adr. Kalle, Evensen, Fuglenes, Hammerfest, søker å komme i forbindelse med slektninger og kjente. Kan noen si meg hvor kjøpmann Ole Nilsen. Hammerfest, er evakuert?
Laberget, Foldvik.

Evakuerte.

Bygningstegning utføres hurtig og billig. Hen.
byggmester Sverre Dybvik,



"P1: 'We've found out that we pretty much come from the same background [...] We're the 'Finnmark bunch'. So, we chose that as an approach, this was the idea in the beginning. Just tell about the four pictures. The first image is named 'Hunting down Tirpitz', the other 'Finnmark in flames'. For the third we took a picture of a notice in a newspaper, in which an evacuated woman from northern Norway is searching for people she knows. And the fourth image is a woman from the coast some place in Finnmark or North-Troms, with a scarf and somewhat vacant eyes. What did we think? Well, we thought we would take this perspective, this Northern Norwegian perspective, and try to look at it starting with what we were told when we grew up.'

[...]

P2: 'Ok. A little bit about what we talked about while we walked around there. I remembered having a teacher when I studied history [...] who worked at the Institute for Defense Studies at that time. I can just remember that as a very young student I was embarrassed when he said: 'Norway felt it was raped, Norway had no experiences with the cruelties so familiar out there in Europe through the centuries.' And when we focus too much on the burning of Finnmark and North-Troms, and say that it was so terrible, that just shows how we look upon WWII, that we make such a big thing of it. In no other country were there so many books written about WWII as in Norway, he said. I was somewhat embarrassed, but not too much. But I said the same to my mother later, that the focus on the burning of the

North had become so big in our eyes. Then, she got very angry and left the kitchen table. But what [this teacher] meant, was probably that you cannot compare suffering, or what people have experienced, or personal pain. But he meant that seen from Europe's experiences with the madness, the madness of war in Eastern Europe, Flanders and the North of France, the refugees from the east who came in the days of January 45, the German refugees, and all the personal tragedies and experiences [...]. Well, if I, as a teacher, would present the burning of Finnmark and my family's personal histories in that broader perspective, then that would certainly have an impact on my pupil's views. They would encounter a history narrative which now maybe has a somewhat different perspective.'"

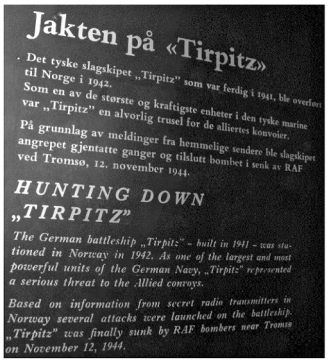
This group had chosen the task to represent the story about the war as they know it best. They introduce their perspective and their narrative angle as being framed by their personal background, which means, coming from Finnmark in Northern Norway. This is the obvious selection criterion for the four images which are presented. All of them represent events which had happened in this region and so the choice combines a narrative reconstruction of events in the past as well as the reconstruction of a chronological historical narrative: The military confrontation between German and allied troops represented by the "Tirpitz", followed by the "scorched-earth" policy the Germans carried out when retreating from the North and the traumatic consequences that forced evacuation had for the civilian population. The group makes a clear statement about their deconstructive aspiration when saying that they wanted to find out what was told about the North at all in the Resistance Museum. Indirectly, this is a statement about the predominance of another, the dominant national narrative in the museum and the attempt to construct a "counter-narrative".

The sequence where P2 tells about her experience of meeting a university teacher who embarrassed her at first and then seemed to have broadened her scope of historical thinking is a very interesting mixture of re- and deconstructing operations. Here we have a personal narrative which points to the speaker's personal background and the way memories about the war were transmitted in her family. The teacher's comparison of Norwegian suffering during the war with the far more traumatizing experiences of other countries first embarrasses her, but is then described as some kind of eye-opener due to the fact that war history may have become "oversized" in the national – and regional - memory culture. Here, we find a deconstructive attitude related to the "focus history". When telling about her mother – who probably has experienced the traumatic events herself and who reacts angrily – the speaker also introduces the notion of generation-specific attitudes towards history. She

ends her statement with a call for multi-perspective approaches towards history, in which her familiar and local background would inform one of different voices (another would be the "European perspective") when teaching about the war.

Afterwards, the next speaker turns back to the images the group has chosen and starts to reconstruct the story of the events relating to them:

… and reconstructing the local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HUNTING DOWN „TIRPITZ"

The German battleship „Tirpitz" - built in 1941 - was stationed in Norway in 1942. As one of the largest and most powerful units of the German Navy, „Tirpitz" represented a serious threat to the Allied convoys.

Based on information from secret radio transmitters in Norway several attacks were launched on the battleship „Tirpitz" was finally sunk by RAF bombers near Tromsø on November 12, 1944.


Evakuerte.

Anna Andersen, adr. Kalle, Evensen, Fuglenes, Hammerfest, søker å komme i forbindelse med slektninger og kjente. Kan noen si meg hvor kjøpmann Ole Nilsen, Hammerfest, er evakuert?
Laberget, Foldvik.

Evakuerte.

Bygningstegning utføres hurtig og billig. Hen.
byggmester Sverre Dybvik,
Andenes

"P1: 'I want to say something concrete about the four different pictures. This one about the 'Tirpitz' is a side of the war, of the occupation, which had a very strong impact on the people from the coast in Finnmark. The 'Tirpitz' had a vital function for the Germans in connection with the convoy traffic in the North, and staying in contact with the maritime areas in the North was very important. What you also mentioned is that the 'Tirpitz' and the remains of the 'Tirpitz' up there have a crucial meaning in people's ideas about the war [...] yeah, even the popular description of the war. In textbooks, this perspective is not integrated at all. And what we needed was also [...] we should try to use our background to [...] highlight [...] what the Resistance Museum has focused on. Find out how much of Finnmark's history is mentioned. And we almost had to go through the whole museum before we found anything about Finnmark [...].'

P3: 'I heard somewhere that there was a place [...] which a German soldier refused to set fire to, and it was not destroyed. And he came back after the war and was a very respected man there. Do you know something about this? This is an example for, for [...] what shall I say, for resistance that existed also on the German side. There really was something like that, in fact.'

P2: 'There were quite a few churches that were spared. They were not burnt down.'

P4: 'When it comes to East-Finnmark, very little was destroyed there, because they came in a hurry. So, one will find a lot left there. Because East-Finnmark was occupied by the Russians. [...] In the West, the Germans had more time, and there more or less everything [was burnt] apart from churches which stood on graveyards. They were spared. But nothing else [...].
In some way [all this] is very essential for us who have relatives, parents, uncles, aunts who were affected by this history of the evacuation. This was the war, because it happened under totally extraordinary [...] conditions. Especially regarding hygiene and health. Babies born [...] on a little fisherman's boat with 50 people where the sanitary conditions were really bad. Such things are part of the whole story.'"

Interesting in this sequence is how we do not get a "complete" narrative about what happened with the "Tirpitz". Instead, the speaker makes many allusions and he seems to take for granted that the audience *knows.* In memory research, this way of introducing a story without telling and instead dropping some "key words" is called *narrative abbreviation.* Obviously, the "codes" of common local memories worked for the members of the group and they stuck to them when presenting their work to the rest of the seminar group. This differs from the way the stories about the burning of the Finnmark are told. Here we even get a chronological description (first, the Germans' haste in the Eastern part, then the complete destruction of the Western part) and even a detailed story about an individual German's refusal to follow his orders to burn down a town. We are not told which sources these narrative reconstructions are based on, only in one case is the speaker open about the fact that he is not sure about the details and asks the group for support ("Do you know something about this?"). Still, in the last sequence it is made clear, that family stories and, thus, memories transmitted in the group members' own families represent an essential source for their knowledge about and views upon war history.

This leads again to the deconstructive attitude the group has towards the exhibition of the Resistance Museum. It is obvious that this exhibition is regarded as representing a dominant, national narrative, which the speakers think is also transmitted in textbooks, where "this [the Finnmark] perspective is not integrated at all." The confrontation of this narrative with the group members own, Northern Norwegian narrative is interpreted as an avenue to "read" the exhibition in a different way:

"And what we needed was also [...] we should try to use our background to [...] highlight [...] what the Resistance Museum has focused on. Find out how much of Finnmark's history is mentioned. And we almost had to go through the whole museum before we found anything about Finnmark."

Reconstructing one's own and deconstructing a dominant narrative go hand in hand here, but the exhibition still provides the material (images, texts) which can trigger the alternative narrative. Only speaker P2 directs a deconstructive attitude towards this "own", regional narrative and she is also the only one who touches upon the focus "present/future" when talking about how to teach war history today.

The last example I would like to present here shows a completely different dynamic than the other two. The group chose the task to "Tell the story of the occupation as you think it should be told" and it solves the task almost without resorting to operations of reconstruction – be it related to "events" or "history".

3. An "ideal" way of teaching history

"We first chose the red cap [nisselua], of which there is a picture, which was in a display case about everyday life. And there we thought about this with empathy, that both things and images can be a starting-point for getting interested into how everyday life was in Norway during the occupation. Anyway, I personally think that one should devote more time to this Norwegian perspective, and then build up empathy to get pupils interested in what happened.

And then we had a poster, a propaganda poster. It was that one about the Bolsheviks, with a Viking boat, a Norwegian and a German who were going to fight Bolshevism. And we chose it for the critical perspective it offers, to understand propaganda, which means: history being instrumentalized for persuasion, and that pupils become aware of this in different contexts, not only directly related to propaganda posters, but also when one reads textbooks, sees films [...]. So we learn to use our critical mind which you acquire when you work in that way. So, related to all media they are confronted with. We spent a lot of time with [teaching] this, and we were successful. I see they have become more critical now, also in other subjects than history. Who wrote this, and how did he get such an idea and so on.

And then we chose a picture of [...] yeah, there were Jews and it must have been from the Warsaw ghetto. We had a question mark concerning images of Norwegian Jews, and exact numbers. There was something written there, but we thought there was something missing there, that this is also important for the pupils. They have a tendency to [...] that it is something which happened far away, even if they have information and read stuff about events which happened here at home. But still they don't manage to relate to it, in a Norwegian perspective. This is also very important. This starting-point. They could, for instance, follow a Norwegian Jew on a path where many others went. How

Norwegians in general reacted when the Jews were deported [...] They didn't say much about that here.

So we had our fourth image, which was taken from [the newspaper] *Aftenposten*. There was a headline "Hitler attacks", it must have been about Poland in 1939. We chose this image because of its usefulness for source criticism. [We try] all the time to get original newspaper clips, authentic objects and so on and use them in history teaching. When they get something concrete and physical, things become more meaningful for them. I thought about the issue of facts [...] living together with facts all the time, this is a challenge, something you must have in the back of your mind all the time, regardless which methods you use. And pupils can use this also in relation to other subjects."

It is obvious, that the group does not tell "the story of the occupation" but, instead, starts a meta-discourse on how to teach history, which media to use and how. But the group definitely is also concerned with the *contents* of history teaching and, in this way they cannot do completely without narrative elements. I would like to illustrate this with two examples:

1. When talking about how propaganda material from WWII can be used to strengthen a critical perspective on manipulative techniques, the speaker sums up very quickly what is shown on the poster: "[...] a Viking boat, a Norwegian and a German who were going to fight Bolshevism." This is, again, a narrative abbreviation. It alludes to the whole narrative which motivated and legitimized Norwegian young men's voluntary participation in the German warfare. It links the pan-Germanic project of the Nazis back to the "heritage" of the Vikings, making the fight against Bolshevism (and, implicitly, the planned "Germanic colonization" of the east) appear as a logical continuation of the Vikings' expeditions to the Black sea. The "critical" approach to the means of propaganda which the group claims here, points to re- and deconstructive competences, namely the competence to identify the propagandistic choice of highlighted elements in the past, the constructions of historical narratives of tradition and heritage and their exploitation for the interested party's own ideological purpose.

2. The second example is the presentation of the part in the exhibition dealing with the Holocaust. Here, the approach is deconstructive: What is told, what is missing? The speaker sees the Norwegian perspective lacking in the presentation of the situation of the Jews– which is arranged around a very popular image from the Warsaw ghetto uprising (an icon of Holocaust memory). The speaker states "They have a tendency to […] that it is something which happened far away, even if they have information and read stuff about events which happened here at

home. But still they don't manage to relate to it, in a Norwegian perspective." This, again, alludes to the question of narrative competence. What the speaker is saying is that historical consciousness about the Holocaust is disconnected from historical consciousness about Norwegian occupation history – it is not integrated into the *national narrative* about the war. Interestingly, he stresses that this is not only caused by lack of knowledge. So, the didactical challenge he describes here lies in the competence to integrate the different narratives.

Conclusion

The presentation of the ways in which the participants of the teacher training used the exhibition of the Norwegian Resistance Museum in order to create narratives of their own has shown that various aspects of narrative competence can be triggered by the method of letting learners create narratives which take a starting-point in, are inspired by or just take their material from a historical exhibition. The examples above have shown that the participant's capacity to relate to the museum's exhibition *as a narrative* has been fostered, which includes the awareness of the fact that the exhibition represents *one of many possible narratives* about the time of the German occupation. This creates a distance necessary to address questions of history culture, historical culture and hegemony, and perhaps an increased open-mindedness to marginalized versions of this particular history.

Related to this open-mindedness, and maybe even more important than the reflection about the exhibition in the light of the concept of narrativity, is the participants' deepened awareness about *their own ways* of dealing with the history and memories of World War II. They have been challenged to become aware of their individual ways of addressing this aspect of the past and how these individual narratives are related to other, local, national and even universal interpretative frameworks. It is here, that the effect of self-reflexivity is reached, the capacity to address one's own historical interpretations as something which also *could be different*, which would be different under different conditions.

The different tasks related to the exhibition offered possibilities to either work with the exhibition in a reconstructive way – creating own narratives – or in a deconstructive way – investigating existing narratives, both one's own, those of the other participants and public/official ones. It seems that the presentation and discussion of the results of the group assignments for the entire seminar group contributed to the participants' readiness to handle these different modes of creating and critical-

ly investigating the narrative ways in which meaning is attached to the past.

As a last thought, I would like to highlight the potential of using this teaching tool in the context of intercultural learning. One could provokingly argue that already the effect of discovering the local sub-layers of the national master narrative and the identity of "good Norwegians" related to it had the character of an intercultural encounter. Here, definitely, quite diverging memory cultures related to World War II emerged. Not to speak of the perspective of the participant with a German background and the German memory culture and coming-to-terms with the history of the Nazi era as an informing background. One can imagine that this kind of work with the exhibition of the Norwegian Resistance Museum would have been quite interesting with more participants with immigrant background, European and non-European. In which ways would Pakistani-Norwegian working immigrants or refugees from war and genocide have used the material from the museum exhibition in order to create "their" narrative? Since the concept has a potential to create, or enforce awareness and critical self-reflection of historical narratives it could be used to trigger a dialogue about the ways in which public narratives contribute to group identities, creating the feeling of belonging or exclusion. It could be the starting point of a dialogue about how an inclusive history culture could look like, inviting all members of society to create and articulate their own ways of "making (narrative) sense" of the past.

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