Hashtag Holocaust: Negotiating Memory in the Age of Social Media

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Hashtag Holocaust: Negotiating Memory in the Age of Social Media

A Dissertation Presented
By
ERIC A RACHEL FAGEN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2019

Department of History
Hashtag Holocaust:
Negotiating Memory in the Age of Social Media

A Dissertation Presented
by
ERICA RACHEL FAGEN

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To Opapa, whose love of learning inspired me to pursue my doctorate, and to Grandma, a role model for perseverance
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This study examines the representation of Holocaust memory through photographs on the social media platforms of Flickr and Instagram. It looks at how visitors – armed with digital cameras and smartphones – depicted their experiences at the former concentration camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dachau, Sachsenhausen, and Neuengamme. The study’s arguments are twofold: firstly, social media posts about visits to former concentration camps are a form of Holocaust memory, and secondly, social media allows people from all backgrounds the opportunity to share their memories online. Holocaust memory on social media introduces a new, digital kind of memory called “filtered memory.”

This study demonstrates that social media was a form of memory. The photo-based platforms of Flickr and Instagram helped better visualize it: the photographs on these sites were literally and figuratively “filtered.” Users had the ability to select a black and white filter, or ones that lightened or darkened the photographs. Digital
cameras and smartphones allowed users to take as many photos as they liked and upload the photo(s) they wished. Figuratively speaking, people chose to present certain parts of their visits on social media platforms. They filtered their experiences and chose the part of their story they wanted to tell.

Building from the varied fields of memory studies, history of the Holocaust, visual culture, dark tourism, and public history, this study demonstrates that social media is a digital archive that historians must consider when writing about historical memory in the twenty-first century.
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CHAPTER 1
BUILDING DIGITAL MEMORY

In April 2004, I participated in the March of the Living, an organized trip to Poland and Israel for high school students.\(^1\) I spent years before going on the trip reading about the Holocaust, from works of non-fiction to Young Adult novels about different ghettos and concentration camps. At sixteen years old, I did not know what to expect from my visits to Auschwitz-Birkenau, Plaszow, Majdanek, or Treblinka. I was also unsure what I would think of the Jewish Quarter in Krakow, then almost devoid of Jews. Using my Pentax film camera, I took photos of the Arbeit macht frei gate at Auschwitz, the empty fields at Treblinka, and the massive pit of ashes at Majdanek. For much of the trip, I did not know “how” to react or how I “should” react. My experiences as teenager going to these places made me realize one important fact: there is no “right way” to experience sites of mass murder and genocide. I dealt with it by taking photos, others gossiped with friends, and some walked in solitude and cried. How does social media, something millions of people use everyday, impact their visits to former concentration camps?\(^2\)

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\(^2\) Other historians have also discussed their personal experiences as young Jews visiting former concentration camps. Harold Marcuse wrote about his experiences visiting Dachau, and also included an interview with Belinda Davis about her experiences visiting Dachau. He conducted the interview while they were both in graduate school. Harold Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau: The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933-2001* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
Arguments

Youth visits to concentration camps existed before the March of the Living started bringing teenagers to Poland in 1988. East German teenagers participated on trips to Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen, and West Germans to Dachau. The surge of Jewish youth going to Poland began in the late 1980s, and as scholars noted, going on these trips became a rite of passage for young people. Social media later became a way in which teenagers shared these experiences of visiting sites of mass violence and death, as the documentary film #uploading_holocaust demonstrated. Released in 2016, the film solely comprised of YouTube clips uploaded by Israeli youth visiting different concentration camp memorials, mass graves, and ghettos in Poland. With 25,000 Israeli teenagers visiting Poland every year, the filmmakers wanted to show how the Holocaust was part of Israeli national identity, but also showed that social media became a platform where these teenagers could share their experiences and memories. Social media allowed these teenagers to share their experiences with the world.

This dissertation’s argument is in two parts: firstly, social media posts about visits to former concentration camps are a form of Holocaust memory, and secondly, social media allows people from all backgrounds the opportunity to share their memories online. Holocaust memory on social media introduces a new kind of memory called “filtered memory.”

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Memory on social media is different from previous forms of print and visual media due to the scope of its audience, and as such the argument of filtered memory builds on the works of historians, literature, and media scholars. The work of memory studies historian Alison Landsberg, specifically her theory of prosthetic memory, was instrumental in defining and differentiating filtered memory from previous forms of Holocaust memory. She defined prosthetic memory as the technologies of mass culture allowing anyone regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender to share collective memories. Filtered memory goes even further; not only could anyone regardless of background partake in technologies of mass culture, but social media allowed them to present their filtered versions of historical memory online.

Social media acted as a virtual exhibit of individual experiences relating to the interaction with Holocaust sites. Michael Rothberg, a literature scholar, and Andrew Hoskins, a media scholar, both addressed memory in their respective


works. Rothberg framed Holocaust memory through his argument of multidirectional memory and did so through the lens of decolonization; he argued that the uniqueness of the Holocaust (in terms of genocide) enabled the sharing of other stories of victimization from around the world. In his discussion on digital media and its link to memory, Andrew Hoskins put toward the term of “connective memory.” He argued that “we connect to our web memory,” which he defined as digital platforms such as Google and Flickr. His term “connective memory” describes real-time and instantaneous messaging between peer-to-peer, groups, and social media networks. Although Rothberg’s and Hoskins’ memory frameworks are useful in assessing Holocaust memory in the twenty-first century, filtered memory takes their arguments a step further.

Social media is a form of memory, and photo-based platforms helped better visualize it: the photographs on these sites were and continue to be literally and figuratively “filtered.” Users had the ability to select a black and white filter, or ones that lightened or darkened the photographs. Digital cameras and smartphones allowed users to take as many photos as they liked and upload the photo(s) they wished. Figuratively speaking, people chose to present certain parts of their visits on social media platforms. They filtered their experiences and chose the part of their story they wanted to tell. Like Holocaust memoirs such as Night and graphic novels like Maus, Holocaust survivors and their descendants chose to depict certain parts of

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8 Hoskins, "Media, Memory, Metaphor."
the story and made a choice on how to tell it. Visitor photographs also reproduced imagery and symbols seen in atrocity photography, or the photographs of concentration camps liberated by Allied soldiers. The images of barbed wire, barracks, and crematoria became ingrained in the global, collective memory of the Holocaust.

Due to the size and scope of social media, this study will focus on the two largest photo-based platforms: Flickr and Instagram. There were a few reasons for this decision; the first and most practical reason was the sheer scope of data across social media sites, adding sites like Facebook and YouTube would not leave room for a more in-depth analysis. Another reason was due to the choice of focusing on photography: while Facebook and Twitter were both platforms where users shared photographs, the creators of Flickr and Instagram specifically created them for photo-sharing purposes. Finally, Flickr and Instagram represented two different phases of camera phones. Flickr users took their photos on their smartphones (or digital cameras), downloaded them on their computers, and finally uploaded them on the Flickr site. Instagram users took their photographs and directly posted them on Instagram. Instagram creators built the platform for a smartphone application

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(or app), while Flickr developers built the platform for a web browser. Looking at social media platforms from two different phases helps the researcher see if and how photography practices changed over a period of a few years.

This dissertation will use four cases studies in Germany and Poland in order to examine filtered memory: the Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dachau, Sachsenhausen, and Neuengamme memorial sites. The selection of these former concentration camps reflected various factors in Holocaust memory culture: Auschwitz-Birkenau and Dachau became central memorial sites in the Western world, Sachsenhausen became well-known within the confines of East Germany, and people largely forgot about Neuengamme. Auschwitz-Birkenau became a site of clashing memory cultures in postwar Poland, with Polish-Catholic memory and Jewish memory claiming the site as a focal point of their respective suffering. Dachau, one of the largest concentration camps in Nazi Germany, later became the largest Holocaust-related memorial site in West Germany with various religious groups setting up their own monuments on the site. Sachsenhausen (along with Buchenwald) was a product of the East German anti-fascist narrative with only socialist and communist prisoners of the camp acknowledged as victims of the Nazis. Neuengamme, located in West Germany, became a prison in the postwar years and largely forgotten as a site of Nazi crimes. The prison closed in the late 1990s and formally opened as a memorial site in 2005.

The secondary argument is that Holocaust memory became increasingly connected with the use of social media. With the easing of international travel starting in the 1990s people from all over the world not only traveled to Dachau, but to Auschwitz-Birkenau and Sachsenhausen as well. Dachau, Auschwitz-Birkenau, and Sachsenhausen were accessible by public transit due to their proximity to city centers, thus making it easier for tourists to visit. Neuengamme also became a tourist destination following its formal opening in 2005. Visitors toured these sites and many uploaded images and videos of their experiences on social media sites such as Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. In addition to physically touring these sites, people also visited them online. Users could interact with the digital presence of the four memorial sites through their websites and social media accounts. They could also interact with the Flickr and Instagram posts of visitors to the sites by “liking” or commenting on their photos. This connected, online memory of the Holocaust marked a departure from previous forms of Holocaust memory.

In terms of methodology, social media was a difficult medium for historians to navigate due to digital archival depositories that were constantly in flux. The amount of data not only changed at a rapid rate, but finding all the data one needs was difficult because it was not a traditional archive. There were no call numbers and hashtags did not necessarily reflect the type of photos the researcher looked for.

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Sharing life experiences digitally – from birthdays, travel, and food – defined Internet culture in the early twenty-first century. People also filtered their travel experiences through social media. They documented which parts of their travels they wanted to share with their followers. More importantly, they chose what they wanted to share. Visitors to concentration camp memorial sites were no exception; they carefully chose which parts of the memorial sites they wanted to share.

Social media demonstrated that it was a digital venue for Holocaust memory, one that produced filtered memory. People had the opportunity to share their experiences with fellow social media users. Flickr and Instagram are the focus of this dissertation due to their functions as photo-based platforms. Their methods of sharing as well as user interaction made them quite different and therefore useful to compare and contrast. Before social media, however, collective memory on the Holocaust existed in films, CD-ROMs, and blogs. The following sections will trace the history of mass media from the 1990s to the early twenty-first century with the introduction of social media sites such as Flickr in 2004.

**Films, CD-ROMs, and Video Conferencing: Digital Media in the 1990s**

The 1990s saw a shift in the discussion of Holocaust memory due to three factors: popular culture, advances in technology, and the end of the Cold War. The increase of mass media through films and digital media made learning about the Holocaust more accessible. The Web would led to the creation of the world’s largest archive on how individual people perceived and discussed their knowledge about the Holocaust. The release of Steven Spielberg’s *Schindler’s List* had the potential for
positive impact on debates surrounding Holocaust memorialization.\textsuperscript{12} The advances in technology, from the creation of CD-ROMs to GeoCities, gave people the opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences visiting former Nazi sites on a much wider global scale. Finally, the end of the Cold War opened up Eastern Europe to Western visitors, allowing people to visit sites like Auschwitz-Birkenau and Sachsenhausen. Visitor statistics to these camps demonstrate a sharp spike in attendance from people worldwide.\textsuperscript{13} The combination of these three factors led to filtered memory on social media; the increase of mass media, films such as \textit{Schindler's List}, and the increased visitor statistics shaped the way individuals viewed and portrayed their interpretations of Holocaust memory online. The ease of technology and the popularity of going to former Nazi camps and their surrounding cities paved the way for participatory yet selective documented experiences on the Internet.

International media praised and scrutinized \textit{Schindler's List} when it was released in 1994. Its director Steven Spielberg received accolades in the United States and Germany for portraying the story of Oskar Schindler so vividly, and Spielberg won numerous Academy Awards for his film including Best Picture. Terrence Rafferty, a film critic writing for \textit{The New Yorker} praised the film by saying that it was “by far the finest, fullest dramatic (i.e. non-documentary) film ever made


\textsuperscript{13} The Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum and Memorial receives visitors from around the world, as demonstrated by their data. Sachsenhausen receives more and more visitors every year due to its proximity to Berlin, a top tourist destination in Europe.
about the Holocaust. And few American movies since the silent era have had anything approaching this picture's narrative boldness, visual audacity, and emotional directness.”¹⁴ Others, like John Gross writing for The New York Review of Books, recognized its value in reaching out to the mass public and that “it can only do good” as a contribution to popular culture.¹⁵ The film was also well-received in Germany; film critic Andreas Kilb and historian Wolfgang Benz argued in the newspaper Die Zeit that despite its demerits in historical accuracy, the film made viewers emotionally connected to the Holocaust. It sensitized people to the past due to its dramatized and personalized narrative of the historical events at hand, thus making empathy possible.¹⁶ The film spurred discussion among young people, themselves the third generation removed from the Holocaust. It sparked questions on why the efforts of Oskar Schindler were unknown and challenged the belief that Germans did nothing to stop the Holocaust because they did not know anything about it.¹⁷ It also started debates about accessibility. Teenagers went to the cinema to see Schindler’s List because it was presented in a medium that they could

understand and therefore added to the school curriculum. The film became so popular that in March 1994, the Conference of the Ministers of Culture of the various German states recommended the film to schools and teachers.

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw the birth of a new genre of storytelling and documenting survivor testimonies, namely Art Spiegelman's *Maus*. Spiegelman began interviewing his father Vladek about his experiences during pre-war Poland and the Holocaust when he was twenty-one, and by the age of thirty he began documenting his father's story through the medium of a graphic novel. Using mice to depict Jews and cats as Nazis (with a slew of other animals to represent other actors, such as Poles as pigs and the French as frogs), Spiegelman struggled to find a publisher to distribute his work. Most publishers refused to do so and deemed it as “just not publishable.” Pantheon eventually published *Maus I*, Spigelman’s first volume in 1986 after much persuasion. The book became a bestseller and sold 150,000 copies in its first edition. It was translated into sixteen languages.

Christopher Lehman-Haupt, a journalist and critic writing for *The New York Times* praised the book and recognized the importance of Spiegelman’s method of telling his father’s story. Explaining that “the medium is the message,” the reviewer explained that “[b]y claiming the Holocaust as a subject fit for comic-book art, Mr.

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21 Fein, "Holocaust as a Cartoonists's Way of Getting to Know His Father."
Spiegelman is saying that the children of the survivors have a right to the subject too and have their own unique problems, which are comic as well as tragic.”

*Maus II*, released in 1991, also went on several bestseller lists in the United States including *The New York Times* and *Publisher’s Weekly*, but the editors had to think about whether to put it on a fiction or non-fiction list due to its nature as a graphic novel. Spiegelman had to reflect about what kind of book he wrote, and had to think about whether he was an author, artist, cartoonist, or a combination of all three. When asked why he chose the medium of comics to tell the story of his father, he explained that it was the only way he knew how to tell his father’s story. Critics recognized Spiegelman’s importance in the wider cannon of Holocaust literature, and *Maus*’ popularity continued into the twenty-first century. In 2011 Spiegelman released *MetaMaus*, a combination of the original graphic novels as well as DVDs that explained his artistic process. In 2011, one reviewer remarked that Spiegelman did more than any other author “to change our understanding of the way stories about the Holocaust can be written.” Spiegelman’s influence, however, was much more than recounting Holocaust testimony. Ruth Franklin of *The New Republic*

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23 Fein, “Holocaust as a Cartoonist’s Way of Getting to Know His Father”
explained in her review of *MetaMaus* that “[b]y finding a new medium for an old story, *Maus* became also a story about its medium.”

The publication and success of *Maus* is important to this dissertation as it showed that the artistic medium itself was a form of memory. Art Spiegelman used the format of a graphic novel to translate his father’s story in a storybook form. He filled his graphic novels with his own experiences learning about his father’s stories, as well as his own experiences growing up as a child of Holocaust survivors. Spiegelman showed that by using a different medium to tell a story, one could see it in a different light. He influenced other writers to use the medium of the graphic novel to their stories of other historical events, making graphic novels a viable method of telling difficult stories. *Maus* was an early form of filtered memory with the artwork both literally and figuratively representing Art Spiegelman’s interpretations of his father’s story. He explained the events as they happened, but by representing Jews as mice, Nazis as cats, Poles as pigs, the French as frogs, and Americans as dogs, Spiegelman used the characteristics of these different animals to represent the actions and experiences of each group. Spiegelman challenged his readers to think differently about Holocaust representation, something that digital media would continue and challenge further.

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26 Franklin, “Art Spiegelman’s Genre-Defying Holocaust Work Revisited”
**Digital Media**

Memorial sites and educational foundations such as the Shoah Visual History Foundation adapted to new digital technologies prior to the social media era. The emerging popularity of newer technologies such as CD-ROMs provided organizations the opportunity for organizations to make knowledge about the Holocaust more accessible than before. CD-ROMs had several functions: some were used as digital reference guides and organized like encyclopedias, and others used narrative history and oral history testimonies from Holocaust survivors. Museums such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and Yad Vashem produced CD-ROMs that served as digital encyclopedias. The German government teamed up with cultural and philanthropic institutions the Goethe Institut and the Robert Bosch Foundation to create a CD-ROM that contained projects on how to teach the Holocaust to high school-aged children. In the early 2000s, the content from the CD-ROM was put online. The Shoah Visual History Foundation (later the USC Shoah Foundation), in its efforts to promote Holocaust education, produced CD-ROMs for middle school and high school aged children in the United States.


The usefulness of CD-ROMs was twofold: they acted as knowledge tools before the Web became widely available and made learning interactive. Roy Rosenzweig, a digital media scholar, explained that CD-ROMs were popular methods of education in the 1990s, and that they took the roles of encyclopedias, interactive learning, and gaming. It also signaled an interactive way of learning: users could choose which story they wanted to listen to and look at photographs and maps. CD-ROMs used mixed media to make learning more accessible and interactive. Before the age of the smartphone, organizations such as the Shoah Visual History Foundation contributed their own creative means of sharing history.

CD-ROMs later presented problems when it came to how memory formed and circulated, as well as how to archive this kind of digital media. Organizations such as the Shoah Visual History Foundation largely dictated Holocaust memory on CD-ROMs; in other words, it was producers and educators that decided on the narrative, rather than the public as a whole. Furthermore, the medium of the CD-ROM itself limited how Holocaust memory formed and circulated. CD-ROMs such as Survivors: Testimonies of the Holocaust, intended as educational materials for students in elementary, middle school, and high school, cut out a large portion of the population. Its English-only content and young demographic only reached a certain audience. Those who did not speak English, for example, could not benefit from its educational value. Finally, the CD-ROM is a difficult medium for archivists and historians to study: with the CD-ROM reaching obsolete status at the time of this

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dissertation’s writing, it is difficult to even access the material on CD-ROMs. Computer operating systems no longer support old technology, nor do they have CD-ROM drives. Those who want to look at the content need to find old computers or go to libraries or archives. The CD-ROM, created to make information more accessible, ironically became almost inaccessible as the twenty-first century progressed.

Like the CD-ROMs, Web 1.0 would be met with its own challenges in the 2000s. In 2009, Yahoo closed GeoCities as people were leaving Web pages and moving to social networks such as Facebook, Flickr, Twitter and YouTube as a way to express themselves.” GeoCities provides important insight into filtered memory, as its users uploaded texts and images they thought were representative of Holocaust history. Although GeoCities ultimately shut down, it is a good example of how and what people chose to remember in the period of the early Web. Blogging platforms such as GeoCities were a form of filtered memory on Web 1.0. People filtered their experiences visiting former concentration camps through a literal lens with their film and digital cameras, with some of the resulting images uploaded

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33 After Yahoo announced that it was closing GeoCities, it gave its users two options to save their information: move it to Yahoo! Web Hosting, or download all their information on to their computers. They explained that after October 26, 2009 GeoCities files would be permanently deleted from its servers. Online projects such as Archive Team worked quickly to preserve as many GeoCities pages as it could, “meaning that selected pieces of Internet history will be preserved.” Other projects such as Reocities, Oocities, geocities.ws, and the Internet Archive worked to mirror GeoCities’ collection and preserve the data on their sites. The Internet Archive, one of main hosts of the GeoCities archive, called Yahoo’s closure of GeoCities “as destroying ‘the most mount of history in the shortest amount of time, certainly on purpose, in known memory.’” However, teams of archivists from The Internet Archive, Archive Team, geocities.ws, and Oocities saved many of these GeoCities pages. Due to GeoCities’ vast cultural importance during the late 1990s and early 2000s, it is useful to look at how information about the Holocaust was disseminated through this medium.
They filtered their visits through a figurative lens as well, as they highlighted images and symbols associated with the liberation of concentration camps: barracks, crematoria, and barbed wire.

Launched in 1995, GeoCities acted as a social network service for its users. It served as a type of forum where people created pages on topical themes such as sports, entertainment, and technology. It interested people during the period when the Web was in its early stages, and within two years it accumulated one million “homesteaders,” GeoCities’ term for page owners. Users put their webpages in different communities, such as EnchantedForest, sites created by and for children, and HollywoodHills, which included webpages on celebrities, and Athens, sites dedicated for education. By 1998, GeoCities was one of the most visited sites online. The following year, Yahoo acquired GeoCities and kept it until it closed in 2009.34 GeoCities served as a center for self-expression online from the late 1990s to early 2000s, with thirty-eight million pages produced between 1996 and 2009. As historian Ian Milligan argued, GeoCities “will be one of the largest records of the lives of non-elite people ever.”35 For the sake of scope, Milligan argued that the Old Bailey Online could rightly explain that their site contains the largest body of texts by non-elite people numbering at 197,000 trials. However, GeoCities easily surpassed that.36

GeoCities homesteader jbhuggins documented his visit to Dachau with eight photographs on his page “Dachau Concentration Camp,” images that featured themes prevalent in popular culture representations of the Holocaust. Most of the photographs included of the camp's monuments, along with photographs of barbed wire fences, barracks, and the Arbeit macht frei gate. The monuments, erected in postwar West Germany, were among the largest and most imposing of the structures at the memorial site. Accompanying jbhuggins’ photographs was some incorrect historical information. His blog contained factual errors concerning the prisoner demographics. The Internet in its early days foreshadowed a problem for Web 2.0: that false or incomplete information accompanied photographs of visitor experiences. However, the choice and presentation of images was an example of an early form of filtered memory. Jbhuggins chose how to memorialize the site by uploading color photographs and presenting certain areas of Dachau. As the Internet was not yet available to mass audiences during the 1990s, GeoCities did not have the benefit of instantaneous sharing or phones equipped with Internet access. However, it did show that GeoCities was a chosen medium for sharing travel experiences online.

Different publics contributed to Holocaust memory through Web 1.0, using GeoCities as one of the software platforms. However, it was still limiting in how memories formed and circulated. Other web users could not interact with users such as jbhuggins. They could not ask questions or leave comments about his experiences online.

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writing or photographs on his visit to Dachau. The aspect of interactivity, which dominated Web 2.0, was virtually absent in Web 1.0. Moreover, Internet access on mobile devices was still limited at the time – instantaneous memory-making, characteristic of Instagram – was not possible on these blogging sites. Furthermore, accessing these blogging sites such as GeoCities became impossible after Yahoo shut it down. In order to preserve this archive of the early web, digital archivists had to rescue the material from disappearing completely. This ephemerality makes it difficult for historians (and archivists) in understanding the formation and circulation of Holocaust memory during that time.

**Web 2.0 and Social Media**

Flickr was a collection of photographs made into an album, and the platform gives people time to reflect and choose which photos they want to share with the world. The company Ludicorp created Flickr in 2004 and was bought by Yahoo in 2005, and it quickly became a popular site for people to upload and share personal photographs. As media scholar José van Dijck stressed, the early days of Flickr were community-based, and people worked together to filter out content dealing with pornography and racism. When the platform grew bigger, however, it became difficult to maintain. After Yahoo bought it, it could not compete with platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, and experienced a big setback in user registration.

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That said, Flickr still boasted 51 million registered users, 80 million unique visitors per month, and more than six billion photos on its site as of 2013.\(^{39}\)

Instagram is a visceral reaction to what people see – the app is designed to share feelings and thoughts immediately, and that is what people do. Instagram shows how people feel about their visit of the camp while they’re at the camp – and those reactions are in a massive, online (albeit messy) archive. Introduced in 2010 and released by creators Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, Facebook bought Instagram in 2012 for one billion dollars. Instagram reported in December 2014 that it reached 300 million users, which meant it surpassed Twitter, which claimed to have 284 million users.\(^{40}\) Other than its sheer number of users, Instagram is unique because of its two geotagging services, as demonstrated by Lev Manovich and Nadav Hochman.\(^{41}\) When a person takes a photo, they can choose to “name your location” in the edit page, and they can either choose from a list of previous locations or create their own location. The second geo-spatial feature is that the image, regardless of whether the user selected the “name your location” is put on a world map. A person can click on your world map of photos and see where the user took and uploaded each image.

Geotagging is not the only way Instagram is interactive; the platform was also characterized by its use of hashtags. Like Twitter, a user can include hashtags

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that speak to the subject matter of the user's post (or not), as sometimes hashtags have little to do with the actual content of the photo. Hashtags serve as the main way to find different types of content on Instagram, and that can range from celebrity photos, health blogs, and photos of concentration camps and other sites of mass violence and genocide. These features separate Instagram from Flickr and other social media giants such as Facebook and Twitter; its use of geo-tagging and hashtags make it a unique online sharing experience for its users.

Because Flickr and Instagram utilize photography in these different ways, this dissertation will analyze the photographs according to the organization and presentation of them on their respective sites. The Flickr images will be analyzed by album instead of individual snapshots – this will reflect Flickr’s emphasis on albums. Flickr attracted and continues to attract professional or semi-professional photographers, as well as hobby photographers. Their photographs as a result are usually better quality and cover various aspects of a site, thus giving the viewer more well rounded understanding of the site as a whole. Instagram, by contrast, is more instantaneous and more social than Flickr as its creators built it as an app for smartphones. Furthermore, Instagram users included hashtags with their uploaded photos. Instagram was not only about the photo, but the expectation of a hashtag; doing this was part of the Instagram experience.

Flickr and Instagram were parts of social media that illustrated filtered memory of the Holocaust. The argument of filtered memory builds upon research in the fields of history of memory and mass violence in Europe, dark tourism, visual culture, and digital public history. The combination of these fields allows the
historian to see how and why Holocaust memory on social media is a relevant area of study in the twenty-first century.

**Historiography**

**Memory Studies**

This idea of filtered memory builds from the work of memory scholars, historians, and media scholars. Each group has a distinct way of dealing with the issue of memory, which enables filtered memory to have a nuanced and complex definition. One of the foundational stems from the work of Maurice Halbwachs, as his theory of collective memory demonstrated how memory functioned in larger society. Halbwachs explained that “there exists a collective memory and social frameworks for memory; it is to the degree that our individual thought places itself in these frameworks and participates in this memory that is capable of the act of recollection.”

Halbwachs’ definition of collective memory serves as a useful basis for filtered memory; concentration camps, sites of mass violence, were part of a collective memory of the Holocaust.

Historians of memory contributed to a deeper understanding of mass violence and remembrance in Europe. The idea of memory as a living phenomenon was apparent in postwar Germany. Jeffrey Herf explained that his book *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* “is a study of how anti-Nazi German

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political leaders interpreted the Nazi past during the Nazi era, and then remembered it as they emerged as national political leaders in the postwar occupation in the two successor German states and in a unified Germany. The questions that are of particular concern to Herf is the Jewish question in both Germanys, as well as the Holocaust in German memory and the various German interpretations of World War II. Herf questions why Holocaust memory was divided among party lines, and specifically why public memory of the Holocaust and the recognition of Jewish victims occurred in West Germany, while in East Germany the Jewish question was more or less covered up. Alessandro Portelli’s work on oral history and the different memory narratives also informed this study on filtered memory. In his monograph The Order Has Been Carried Out, Portelli used over 200 interviews to relay the events of the Fosse Ardeatine massacre, which saw the murder of over 300 Italians on March 23, 1944 just outside of Rome. This book succeeded in demonstrating the different viewpoints of this event, and also showed how memory can be complicated. Some things people “remember” did not happen at all, but they chose to remember the events in that way. Flickr and Instagram users chose to remember their visits in the way they wanted, and focused on imagery of the Holocaust that felt most authentic to them, such as the barbed wire fences.

There is a substantial amount of interdisciplinary literature on Holocaust memory specifically at places of remembrance, and this helped frame my case.

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studies on the Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dachau, Sachsenhausen, and Neuengamme memorial sites. James Young explored the idea of “collected memory” at Holocaust memorial sites. By looking at the various interpretations of Holocaust memorials, he argued that these memorials enable people to create their own spaces where they can create their personal memories. Harold Marcuse’s work on memorialization at Dachau from the 1950s to the early 2000s showed how former concentration camp sites became contested sites of memory. Although Jackie Feldman’s work on Israeli teenagers visiting Auschwitz shows that Holocaust memory is tied to national identity, Jonathan Huener’s work on the “real” versus “imagined” ideas of Auschwitz provides a more nuanced look at the relationship between national identity and the Holocaust. His work on West German youth groups Sozialistische Jugend (Socialist Youth) and Aktion Sühnezeichen (Action Reconciliation Service for Peace) and their trips to concentration camps in East Germany and Poland during the 1980s informed historians how young people remembered the Holocaust before the age of mass media.

This dissertation builds upon this work of these Holocaust scholars, as it discusses how people experience their visits to former concentration camps and memorial sites. It departs from the work of these scholars as it looks at memory on a global, mass media scale.

The work of historians and sociologists proved to be central to the analysis of Holocaust memory on a global and mass media scale. Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, in their book *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*, argued that Holocaust memory in the early twenty-first century was transnational, meaning that people from Europe and North America interact with Holocaust history whether it is through museums, memorial sites, or films.⁴⁹ Alison Landsberg’s theory of prosthetic memory proved crucial to this dissertation’s argument of filtered memory.⁵⁰ Landsberg defined prosthetic memory as mass media engaging audiences regardless of their gender, socio-economic, or cultural background. Filtered memory takes her arguments a step further: social media allowed these groups of people to only express their opinions on mass media platforms, but also share them with extensive web-based communities.

Sharing opinions on mass media platforms also included aspects of Internet culture; memes (cartoons, drawings, or paintings with a funny punch line) brought humor to representations of the Holocaust and the Third Reich online. Gavriel Rosenberg’s book *Hi Hitler!: How the Nazi Past is Being Normalized in Contemporary Culture* addressed popular culture and the normalization and prevalence of Adolf Hitler on sites such as YouTube and websites like *Cats that Look Like Hitler* and *Hipster Hitler*.⁵¹ Despite his careful analysis, however, Rosenberg did not grasp the

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nuances of Internet culture. He argued that the "Internet weakens our attention span and powers of concentration, it makes us susceptible to information that is simplistic, superficial, and sensational."\(^{52}\) Rosenfeld dismissed the Internet as superfluous and assumed that people who look at cat memes of Hitler learned nothing about the history of the Third Reich or the Holocaust.

Other recent scholarship tackled the question of Holocaust memory online in a more introspective analysis, focusing on Holocaust survivor testimonies and online archival collections. Jeffrey Shandler’s book *Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age: Survivors’ Stories and New Media Practices* analyzed the USC Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive (VHA), which contains thousands of oral history interviews with Holocaust survivors from around the world.\(^{53}\) One of Shandler’s driving questions for his book was how each video is “simultaneously a singular account of an individual’s personal history and part of a large-scale effort to preserve Holocaust memory.” By analyzing the collection, Shandler asked how Holocaust survivors influenced their fellow survivors’ testimonies, and how big-budget Holocaust films like *Schindler’s List* influenced how survivors presented their testimonies.\(^{54}\)

This dissertation’s key argument of filtered memory asks how digital media and the Web influences Holocaust memory, and Rosenfeld and Shandler’s works helps situate this dissertation in the field of online Holocaust memory. Unlike *Hi

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\(^{54}\) Shandler, *Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age*. 
*Hitler!, Hashtag Holocaust* does not dismiss the actions of people that seem superficial, such as the practice of selfies. Rather, this study encourages the reader to think about selfies as a large part of social media culture and a way to deal with difficult subjects such as the Holocaust. Cat memes and silly hashtags did not denigrate Holocaust memory but added another layer of memory in twenty-first century memory culture. This scholarship takes all forms of memory culture seriously, including forms dismissed by other historians. *Hashtag Holocaust* follows *Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age* by asking complex questions such as the ephemeral nature of the Web and what it means for the preservation of visual media online. Shandler’s analysis on Holocaust survivors inserting other narratives into their stories also proves useful to this dissertation. Although the testimonies are complicated due to some historical inaccuracies, they are still significant as works of remembrance. *Hashtag Holocaust* argues a similar point: the photographs on Flickr and Instagram, although sometimes problematic, are also significant works of remembrance by visitors to Holocaust memorial sites in the twenty-first century.

The works of other scholars on generational memory and Holocaust tourism also proved instrumental to this study. Marianne Hirsch’s theory of postmemory helped form the idea of filtered memory, as did Esther Jilovsky’s arguments in her book *Remembering the Holocaust: Generations, Witnessing and Place*. Postmemory is a term that describes how the generations after the Holocaust bear the trauma of

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Holocaust survivors and how they “remember” the Holocaust through the stories, testimonies, images, and behaviors of the survivors themselves.\textsuperscript{56} Jilovsky’s arguments are similar to Hirsch’s in terms of generational memory, but bridge the gap between the memory of individuals and Holocaust sites. Jilovsky argues that with each passing generation, there is an “evolution” from survivors’ memories to Holocaust sites in bearing witness.\textsuperscript{57} Hashtag Holocaust builds off of postmemory by arguing that visitors “remember” the Holocaust through the stories of survivors in addition to fellow social media users. Esther Jilovsky’s work on Holocaust memory is a more contemporaneous work to Hashtag Holocaust in terms of historiography. Having the sites themselves as those “bearing witness” to the atrocities of the Holocaust is a theme that reflects in the analysis of Flickr and Instagram posts.

The popularity of Holocaust-themed tours and sites in Germany and Poland were part of the “Shoah business” described by scholars Erica Lehrer and Tim Cole.\textsuperscript{58} They explained that in Poland, sites such as Kazimierz, the former Jewish Quarter in Krakow, and concentration camp sites such as Auschwitz-Birkenau, became attractive sites of tourism and as a result commercialized the Holocaust.\textsuperscript{59} Cole warned of this commercialized aspect of the Holocaust; however, it helped

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{57} Esther Jilovsky, \textit{Remembering the Holocaust: Generations, Witnessing and Place} (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).
  \item \textsuperscript{59} Lehrer, \textit{Jewish Poland Revisited}; Cole, \textit{Selling the Holocaust}, 1999.
\end{itemize}
inform a central argument of this dissertation: Holocaust memory was global, and these tourist advertisements were an example of how visitors interacted with the sites and the cities around them. Literature on the methodology of dark tourism helped further contextualize the popularity of visiting dark sites such as Auschwitz-Birkenau.

**Dark Tourism**

Dark tourism, or thanatourism, is explained as the act of individuals to visit sites of genocide and mass murder. Visits to concentration camps bring all kinds of people, including survivors, and the families and descendants of survivors and victims, as well as people with no personal connections to the sites.60 These visitors view their visit as a sort of “pilgrimage, as a journey of commemoration and witness.”61 To take the example of Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial, millions of people visited former Nazi concentration camps in Europe per year during the early twenty-first century. The Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial and Museum reported that 1.7 million people visited their site in 2015, making it the most visited museum in Poland.62

Scholars of dark tourism ask why individuals travel to places “that have been preserved as museums, monuments, [and] memorials.”63 As they further explain, it

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“is clear from a number of sources that tourist interest in recent death, disaster and atrocity is a growing phenomenon in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries and that theorists have noticed and attempted to understand it.”64 Dark tourism applies to many sites of mass murder and disaster, including the World Trade Center, as well as "war battlefields, genocides museums and prisons, ... Kurt Cobain’s suicide site, cemeteries, Gettysburg, Gallipoli...former slave-trade sites in Ghana."65 As one anthropologist noted, sites such as war battlefields, genocide museums, and death camps can "be categorized as 'dark in the sense that they represent instances of violence and/or death, which by most Western perspectives are considered malevolent, negative, ghastly and destructive.'”66

The Internet, according to scholar William F.S. Miles, may lead to “darkest tourism,” something that is beyond museums which present stories of mass death and genocide, and to the actual sites of genocide, which he called dark tourism and darker tourism, respectively. Darkest tourism, he explained, “would transcend both the spatial differences that distinguish dark from darker type and the time gap that separates both dark and darker from the remembered tragedy.”67 The Internet, with

64 John Lennon and Malcolm Foley, Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster, (London: Thomson Learning, 2006): 3. Although dark tourism was a growing phenomenon is the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, visiting “darker” sites is not new. For example, during the nineteenth century tourist visits to asylums not only gained popularity, but were also encouraged by some asylum administrators as it “became a way to gain the public's confidence.” See Jennifer L. Bazar and Jeremy T. Burman, “Asylum Tourism,” American Psychological Association, February 2014, http://www.apa.org/monitor/2014/02/asylum-tourism.aspx; Janet Miron, Prisons, Asylums, and the Public: Institutional Visiting in the Nineteenth Century (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).
its absence of physical space and the opportunity to contribute one’s memory of a place on the Internet, was what made social media a unique platform for memory-making. As German Studies scholar Daniel Reynolds explained, taking photographs at Holocaust remembrance sites is a way in which visitors exercise their agency, and in turn become part of the collective memory of the sites.68 Tourism to sites like Auschwitz-Birkenau became a vital component in the collective memory of the Holocaust.69 Darkest tourism is a factor in explaining collective memory on Flickr and Instagram, a type of memory now integral in understanding the role of social media in global Holocaust memory.

The images of Auschwitz-Birkenau, as well as Dachau, Sachsenhausen and Neuengamme, are part of dark tourism. Holocaust sites are often at the forefront of dark tourism due to their popularity among tourists. As dark tourism scholars John Lennon and Malcolm Foley noted, the re-creation of the Holocaust in different forms of media "reminds us of the massive interest in this dark period of human history."70 Photographs are key to the study of dark tourism, as visitors are exposed to them in the museum exhibits, and they bring their cameras to take photos of what they saw. Dark tourism scholars John Lennon and Malcolm Foley explained that photographs are central to the exhibitions at Auschwitz and have "the ability to transmit the

reality of the death camps with a shock effect that words can rarely achieve.”71 Images of the Holocaust, which used to be limited to museums, books, films and other types of media, are now seen in copious amounts on the Internet.

**Visual Culture and Public History**

This study benefits greatly from scholars who published on themes of visual culture and photography. One of the most important books on visual culture and the Holocaust for this dissertation is Barbie Zelizer’s monograph *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera’s Eye*. She examined Holocaust imagery and argued that the general public fabricated and rearranged collective memories of the Holocaust, and the authenticity of the images are changed in order to accommodate issues such as identity and political affiliation.72 The work of Susan Sontag is equally as important for my project, with her discussions on the authenticity of Holocaust imagery and the mass viewership of atrocity photography.73 Sontag, who wrote the prolific books *On Photography* and *Regarding the Pain of Others*, offered key insight into Holocaust photography.74 In *On Photography* she shared her fear that photos lost their power as method of recollection with the recycling of the same images. Photographs that everyone

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71 Lennon and Foley, *Dark Tourism*, 29. Susan Sontag, known for her studies on photography, described the horrific nature of Nazi concentration camp photos “a negative epiphany”, and she felt that "something broke" inside of her when she saw them. Sontag, *On Photography*.


recognizes, such as the barbed wire above, are a part of what society chooses to think about, or it decided to think about.75 The photos examined on Flickr and Instagram use similar motifs and imagery: most of the photos focus on the Arbeit macht frei gate, the barracks, or the crematoria. These locations – the Arbeit macht frei gate, the barracks, the crematoria, the Roll Call Square – became filters themselves as visitors chose to remember their experiences through those locations.

Social media users chose to think about these certain parts of the memorial sites. The work of Zelizer and Sontag shaped the argument of filtered memory, though other scholars such as Janina Struk helped push these arguments further. In her book *Photographing the Holocaust: Interpretations of the Evidence*, Struk questioned what kinds of stories Holocaust photography tells.76 Depending on the country and its respective archives, the story behind the photographs would be presented differently. According to Struk, “photographs illustrate stories, they do not tell them.”77 The photographs, then, do not tell us more information about the Holocaust itself, rather they tell us how the world interprets the event. Struk’s work is particularly relevant to *Hashtag Holocaust* as it demonstrates how countries and individuals used Holocaust atrocity photography to match with their own national or personal memory narratives.

In addition to literature on memory of the Holocaust and mass violence in Europe, dark tourism, and visual culture, the field of public and digital history 

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77 Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust*. 

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influences this project. As someone with a strong background in the field, the ideas in this dissertation are from known public historians and practitioners. In their seminal work of public history, Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen conducted a survey of 1,500 Americans about their feelings towards history. They concluded that the respondents had a fascination for the past; they were not apathetic about past. This growing interest in history during the 1990s reflects an important aspect of this project: that people want their voices heard, and they want to share their opinions and thoughts about history.

Daniel Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig asked in their formative book about digital history how online sources could enable them to do their work. Their answer, in short, is a great deal. Digital sources are not only numerous, but give historians flexibility when it comes to research. Cohen and Rosenzweig warned, however, that historians should always question these sources in terms of their usability, durability, and accessibility. Historians, they further argued, also have the moral imperative to learn these technologies, for if they do not, who will? For these two historians, developing skills to understand and use these technologies are of the utmost importance.

Media scholars working on new media and digital storytelling are also central to this dissertation. José van Dijck, a media scholar whose work focuses on web-based platforms, demonstrated how early social networking sites like Flickr

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were different from its analog equivalents such as the photo album. She described these sites as a part of the “culture of connectivity,” a culture where people connected and networked over the Internet. In the earlier days of social media platforms, from 2004 to 2007, platforms such as YouTube and Flickr began as community initiatives, as “video buffs and photo fans” wanted a space where they could share their creativity. Lev Manovich and Nadav Hochman’s work helped explain the uniqueness of Instagram. In their article on computational analysis and data visualization, “Zooming into an Instagram City: Reading the Local through Social Media,” the authors asked how people’s experiences are shaped by particular social media interfaces, and in their article they specifically looked at Instagram. One of their major points was that Instagram’s two geo-tagging functions allows for a unique storytelling experience, one that is not found on Flickr.

The work of media scholars Jean Burgess and Jill Walker Rettberg helped further explain the motivations of social media users. Burgess advocates for the importance of digital images in her work on “vernacular creativity.” Vernacular creativity describes the opportunity that photographers have to snap and share their images over photosharing platforms such as Flickr. These people become digital storytellers and are able to tell stories of their travels or events from their daily life, and people around the world can experience this from the comfort of their

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81 van Dijck, The Culture of Connectivity, 12.
homes. For a historian working on digital history, “vernacular creativity” shows them how people experience museums and historic sites. Vernacular creativity will be explored in this dissertation, with an examination of why and how people took photographs at concentration camp sites. Likewise, Jill Walker Rettberg’s analysis on selfies helped shape the argument of filtered memory.\textsuperscript{84} For Rettberg, taking a selfie was an expression of identity. The selfie was a visual form of self-reflection that communicated with a large audience. This dissertation will show that selfies at former concentration camps were not only a form of self-reflection, but also an aspect of collective memory of the Holocaust in the twenty-first century.

**Methodology, or Working with Big Data**

Looking through a social media source base is a difficult as the Internet is a big, messy archive but also an ephemeral one: sources remain uncategorized and are always changing. People edit their photos, change their locations, or delete them completely. How does a historian look through this wealth of information? Flickr is slightly easier to look through than Instagram due to its community focus. One can easily find community groups related to particular subjects, in my case Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dachau, Sachsenhausen, and Neuengamme. As it is in the very fabric of the platform to share and upload photographs to these groups, this research focused on groups dedicated to those four memorial sites. Research on Instagram proved to be much trickier, however.

One of the problems is using data collection software is that the Instagram API does not allow for scraper programs to go through its data. In other words, it will not allow third parties to collect data for the sake of research, unless companies pay for it. The programming language R, and its software companion R Studio used to be useful search tool for the platform, with the researcher able to script their desired query directly into R or in R Studio, which was a little more user-friendly. One could search the term “#auschwitz” throughout Instagram’s entire site. However, that changed in mid-2016 with Instagram changing the terms of its API. A person could only scrape through material in their own accounts, meaning one could only search #auschwitz within their own account. R and R Studio was then obsolete for research purposes. The organizations that could still use Instagram for scraping and data collections were companies willing to pay Instagram for using that service. As this type of searching requires a significant amount of money, this solution is out of reach for many historians.

Another way to collect data was to use the software program Composer on a Mac computer. Although this process was inferior to R because the program could not collect the actual images, it still managed to collect the metadata of 3000 results at a time. With this data, one could see the Instagram user’s name, date, likes, and captions. Although this data may seem useful, it made research more difficult. By searching #auschwitz using Composer, there were 3000 of the latest results, meaning that the search only produced three months worth of data. This was the case as there are more than 230,000 results for #auschwitz on Instagram. In order to do a full-scale analysis of Instagram, one would need to search through all
230,000 results, plus Auschwitz-related hashtags such as #auschwitzbirkenau (31,979 results) and #auschwitz70 (2,549 results). Searching through this many results would cause Composer to crash. The case is the complete opposite for Neuengamme: if one were to search for #neuengamme, there would only be 1,492 results total, dating back from 2013. As Neuengamme is not well-known, there are not as many tourists going, and therefore less social media activity. This wide discrepancy between Auschwitz and Neuengamme does not show how photographs changed over time, but rather a popularity contest between the two sites.

In addition to the vastly different number of results, Composer also failed to conduct an in-depth search for terms such as “#auschwitz,” “#dachau,” “#sachsenhausen.” There was a significant amount of results unrelated to Auschwitz, Dachau, and Sachsenhausen, or the Holocaust as a whole. For Dachau, there were hundreds of results dealing with the town of Dachau; photos of people at restaurants or with friends. The case was similar for Sachsenhausen, as Sachsenhausen is also a neighborhood in Frankfurt-am-Main. There were results of people going to parties and working out at the gym. The case is rather different for Auschwitz; a search for the term on Instagram, as well as other social media sites like Twitter and Tumblr, will frequently result in pornography. #Auschwitz is a popular search term for “porn bots” (porn-based spam accounts) and someone looking for information about the camp may not find what they are actually looking for. Not only is big data a laborious task, but it also offers inconsistent results for historians.
There is no software for historians that filters out spam or pornography, nor were there specialized search engines that only searched for particular images of Auschwitz. One could not request a search of only site-specific photographs or artworks about the camp, all the results were mixed with each other. There was also the problem of the “silences within the archive:” the voices of many visitors to Auschwitz were untraceable for the researcher. The search results for Auschwitz were not only massive and limited, but are also a mess due to the lack of a proper search engine.

The question for historians is how to sift through thousands upon thousands of results, and that is especially difficult considering few historians have yet to incorporate social media, or social media 2.0, in their peer-reviewed and published works. Analyzing social media in historical works, then, is a new area of research for historians. However, historians write on the history of photography at length, demonstrating that photography, like written sources, are documents which shed light on the past.

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85 “Silences within the archive” was coined by the historian Antoinette Burton in her book *Dwelling in the Archive*. Burton, a historian of colonial India and empire, used this phrasing to discuss the experiences of Indian women whose voices were lost in the greater historical narrative of nineteenth-century colonial India. Burton’s methodology is not only used by historians of empire, but also theoretically-minded public historians. Public historians use Burton’s work to help conceptualize the absence of minority voices in historical discord. Antoinette M. Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

86 Although there are a few scholars, such as Gavriel Rosenfeld and Jeffrey Shandler, who published about the memory of Nazism, the Third Reich, or the Holocaust on the Internet, they have not analyzed social media 1.0 (MySpace, Flickr) or social media 2.0 (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat). It is an important distinction to make as they do not discuss how Internet users engage with different platforms or with each other. Gavriel David Rosenfeld, *Hi Hitler!: How the Nazi Past Is Being Normalized in Contemporary Culture* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Jeffrey Shandler, *Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age: Survivors’ Stories and New Media Practices*, Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2017).
Organization

The dissertation will be organized in the four chapters, with each one focusing on one memorial site and its particular challenges with Holocaust memory. The first chapter will discuss the Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial and how visitors and the Memorial itself use social media to discuss the site’s history. It will also explore the particular challenges this site had with competing narratives by Jewish and Catholic groups in Poland. It will also address Auschwitz-Birkenau’s place as a “ground zero” of Holocaust memory: how was this site, so often associated with the Holocaust, portrayed on Flickr and Instagram? The second chapter will address the Dachau memorial, which had competing narratives of its own in West Germany, which led to Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish groups setting up their own memorials on the site. It will show how Flickr and Instagram users portrayed this complicated history. The third chapter will discuss Sachsenhausen’s past as memorial site in East Germany, and how its role in East German propaganda determined which victim groups the state acknowledged and what kinds of monuments it erected. Visitors to Sachsenhausen in the twenty-first century took photos of and with the memorial for communist and socialist victims of Nazi terror. These photos on Flickr and Instagram added more layers to filtered memory on the Internet, as visitors uploaded images of a memorial meant to include certain people and exclude many others. The final chapter will address the issues of the Neuengamme memorial, located in a suburb of Hamburg. Used as a prison until the late 1990s and only formally opening as a memorial site in 2005, the site went relatively unnoticed by people outside of the Hamburg area, and no books, documentaries, or films included
Neuengamme. As a result, the site created their own memory narrative in the twenty-first century, aided by their social media accounts such as Twitter and Instagram. However, visitors to the site still took photos echoed in atrocity photography: the destroyed barracks were a common theme in uploaded photos on Flickr and Instagram.

The argument of filtered memory is central to this study; it frames Holocaust memory culture on the Internet in the early twenty-first century. Through the exploration of other methodologies and fields of study such as dark tourism, visual culture, and public history, this dissertation aims to show that interdisciplinary study is crucial for the analysis of this online memory culture. The exploration of four case studies will show how filtered memory is different based on the unique histories of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dachau, Sachsenhausen, and Neuengamme.
CHAPTER 2

HOLOCAUST “DISNEYLAND:” AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU AS A CENTER OF MEMORY

“Auschwitz, you know, has become kind of a Holocaust Disneyland.” – Bryan Fellbusch, tour guide, Mosaic Tours

Memory at Auschwitz-Birkenau differed from other concentration camp memorial sites in Poland and Germany due to its status as a “ground zero” of the Holocaust. The former concentration camp loomed large in Jewish memory, due to the high number of Jewish victims at the camp. Historians estimate that around twenty to twenty-five percent of the Jews killed during the Holocaust were killed at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Flickr and Instagram posts of Auschwitz-Birkenau frequently reference Jewish suffering, whether it is through subject matter (men wearing kippahs, Israeli flags), hashtags (#jewish), or emojis (Star of David, synagogue). However, were these Instagram users Jewish themselves? Both Jews and non-Jews were actively involved in creating an online memory narrative of a site central to the Jewish remembrance of the Holocaust. This chapter will address the fact that social media made Holocaust memory more globalized than ever before due to the ease of sharing experiences on free media platforms. The lifting of travel restrictions of

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87 Erica Fagen, Interview with Bryan Fellbusch, November 5, 2015.
88 This statement only includes sites that were former concentration camps, not death camps or ghettos. Memorialization of death camps such as Treblinka and Sobibor were also a large part of Jewish memory of the Holocaust, but due to their wartime purpose of mass murder and the fact that little of these camps remain, they deserve their separate analysis. Former ghettos, located in cities and towns, also have a different memory narrative as they are part of cities like Warsaw and Krakow, they are not a separate memorial.
Westerners to Poland following the fall of the Soviet Union also made Holocaust memory more globalized: more visitors had the opportunity to express their voices in memorializing Auschwitz-Birkenau in the twenty-first century.

The chapter’s main focus, however, will discuss this project’s two main arguments. Firstly, social media was a form of Holocaust memory as it was a continuation of visual culture memory narratives of the Holocaust. Atrocity photography, images of Auschwitz taken at liberation, largely informed public perceptions of the camp, and images of the gas chambers, the *Arbeit macht frei* gate, and mounds of corpses became part of collective memory of the Holocaust. The chapter will also show that social media, specifically the platforms of Flickr and Instagram, were different from previous forms of visual memory such as analog photography. Based on Alison Landberg’s theory of prosthetic memory, social media allowed people regardless of race, class, or gender to contribute to mass media. This project demonstrates this point a step further, arguing that not only did social media allow people regardless of background to contribute to platforms such as Flickr and Instagram, but it also allowed users to share their “filtered” versions of historical memory online. Social media acted as a virtual exhibit of individual experiences interacting with Holocaust sites. Informed by previous forms of visual culture, this project asks historians to think of a new kind of memory theory: filtered memory. Filtered memory describes how images on Flickr and Instagram were literally and figuratively filtered. Users had the choice of placing a variety of filters, including black and white, sepia, and ones that lightened and darkened their photos. In terms of figuratively filtered, people chose to present certain parts of their visits on social
media platforms. They filtered their experiences and chose the part of their story they want to tell. Like Holocaust memoirs such as *Night*, and graphic novels such as *Maus*, survivors and their descendants chose to depict certain parts of the story and made a choice on how to tell it.\(^9^0\) Films such as *Schindler’s List* were also interpretations of a story.\(^9^1\) The work of memory scholars Shoshana Felman, Dori Laub and Alessandro Portelli help frame this more figurative aspect: in both of their work, they discussed how people remembered events at Auschwitz and Fosse Ardeatine, Italy. In those cases, survivors and family members of victims chose to remember events in a certain way, as well as remember “false histories.”\(^9^2\)

Following the analysis of photographs on Flickr and Instagram, the chapter will shift to a discussion on how the Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial interacted with its online visitors, and why it benefitted them the early twenty-first century.

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Historical Background

“Harrowing.”

(five stars) Reviewed 30 December 2015

This place is something else, it’s (sic) difficult to believe that it actually existed! It did and going there is a very personal choice as it is beyond belief what you see and listen to. Our guide was excellent, she (sic) was passionate about her job and knew so much of what happened there. It’s a very humbling place and everyone should go there sometime in their lives.

Visited December 2015

Historian Tim Cole explained that “[m]ore than any other place, ‘Auschwitz’ has come to symbolize everything about the ‘Holocaust.’ ‘Auschwitz’ is the ‘Holocaust’ what ‘Graceland’ is to Elvis!” TripAdvisor user Sue M, who wrote the above review of the Auschwitz Memorial on that travel website, reflected a larger trend of people leaving reviews of the memorial site and telling people they “should go there sometime in their lives.” How did Auschwitz become so popular? Why did it become the “go-to” site for Holocaust tourism? Mass media in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries made imagery of Auschwitz as focal point in the collective memories of the Holocaust. Atrocity photography of the camp as well as visual representations such as films together made Auschwitz a central component of global Holocaust memory. Social media sites built for sharing visual content continued this trend of such representation and in became its own incarnation of

Holocaust memory. Additionally, the special place held by Auschwitz in Jewish collective memory made it a focal point of Holocaust tourism for young Jews from Israel and the Jewish Diaspora.95

The photographs on these two sites are literally and figuratively filtered forms of Holocaust memory. Literally speaking, users have the choice of applying black and white filters, light and dark filters that hark back to the days of Polaroid photography, and to crop, brighten, or even give the photo a “vignette” focus. Figuratively speaking, and on a more meta level, people choose to present certain parts of their visits on social media platforms. They filter their experiences and choose the part, or parts of the story they want to tell. This type of Holocaust memory is different from previous forms of mass media such as films and graphic novels. Though television series and films such as Holocaust and Schindler’s List were massively popular in Western Europe and North America, it was big-budget film studios that produced the films and circulated them. Graphic novels such as Maus required a publisher and attracted additional attention after appearing on The New York Times bestseller list.96 Before those questions can be answered, it is imperative to discuss the history of the site and its memorialization in post-war Poland.

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Oswiecim and its surrounding region had ethnic Germans living in it since the late thirteenth century, and Poland was divided up by Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Germany during the eighteenth century. Poland as a country was reestablished after World War I, but on September 1, 1939, it was invaded by Nazi Germany and quickly capitulated. Concentration camps were soon set up under Nazi occupying forces, with the first camp of Auschwitz established in 1940. It is important to note that although Auschwitz was not the first Nazi concentration camp, it was central to Jewish collective memory in the postwar era because it had the largest number of Jewish victims. Auschwitz was the seventh concentration camp after Dachau, Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald, Flossenbürg, Mauthausen and Ravensbrück.\(^{97}\) It is also important to distinguish the three different parts of Auschwitz: Auschwitz I, the small parent camp with brick barracks, Auschwitz II-Monowitz, a factory, and Auschwitz III, also known as Birkenau. Birkenau was several times the size of Auschwitz, capable of imprisoning and killing many more prisoners. The Nazis originally intended to house Polish political prisoners and ethnic Germans, but it later held Jewish prisoners, asocials, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and homosexuals. Birkenau was the part of camp where many people, mostly Jews, were sent to their deaths in the gas chambers and later burned in the crematoria. By the end of the war, Auschwitz-Birkenau claimed between 1.1 and 1.5 million victims, and the number of Jews murdered there corresponds between 20 and 25 percent of the Jews killed during the Holocaust.\(^{98}\)

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Although death camps such as Belzec, Treblinka and Sobibor collectively murdered over a million Jews, Auschwitz-Birkenau loomed large in public memory after the war partly due to its sheer number of Jewish victims, but also because of how the Polish state decided to commemorate the Holocaust. Tim Cole explained that Auschwitz had a different fate than the former Nazi concentration camps in the West. In the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, sites such as Bergen-Belsen and Buchenwald became part of the western Allied war history rather than connections to narratives of Jewish disaster. These camps acknowledged Nazi war crimes, but they did not address Jewish victimhood in the early postwar years. The Holocaust was not yet seen as a distinct “Jewish” event. Although the Polish government decided to build a memorial site at Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1947, the communist state centered the history on narratives of antifascism rather than the Holocaust.

The Polish government chose Auschwitz as the central memorial site in order to curb Polish nationalism, not because they wanted to recognize Jews as the primary victims. They selected Auschwitz as a memorial site over other

concentration and death camps in Poland. Concentration camps such as Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka were not deemed possibilities since they were razed to the ground. Majdanek, however, was liberated around the same time as Auschwitz-Birkenau and was also left relatively intact. The Polish government chose Auschwitz over Majdanek for two reasons: there were more victims at Auschwitz and it had a bigger international reputation, but a big reason was geography. Auschwitz looked westward to German aggression, and Majdanek looked to the east, to Soviet liberation. In other words, Auschwitz became the memorial and not Majdanek because it fit better with the Soviet-backed Polish government's anti-fascist narrative. Andrew Charlesworth, a geographer, further explained the political reasons for choosing Auschwitz. Majdanek could have fueled Polish nationalist sentiment; 40% of the victims were non-Jewish Poles, while at Auschwitz 7% of the victims were non-Jewish Poles. Majdanek's location also could have reminded Poles of their victimization by the Soviet Union between 1939 and 1941. In addition, by emphasizing Nazi crimes, the communists in the Polish government minimized the

Soviet Union's war crimes such as the massacre at Katyn.\textsuperscript{104} However, despite the fact that the Polish government chose Auschwitz over Majdanek as its memorial, the Jewish suffering at Auschwitz was largely ignored. Although 87\% of the victims at Auschwitz were Jews, their memory remained unmentioned. Like concentration camp memorial sites in East Germany, Soviet-backed regimes erased Jewish suffering in favor of an anti-fascist narrative.

The politics of memory grew more complex in the 1970s as Catholic Poles saw Auschwitz as a site of Catholic martyrdom, and it thus became a site of pilgrimage. Father Maksymilian Maria Kolbe, a Polish priest and prisoner at Auschwitz, gave his life in exchange for a fellow Polish Catholic prisoner and pilgrims in the post-war period commemorated his actions. Celebrating him as martyr and hero was problematic for Jewish groups as he was an editor for a newspaper with strong anti-Semitic content. Using the story of Kolbe, Auschwitz (or Oswiecim to Poles) became a symbol of Polish martyrdom due to its wartime past. As sociologist Geneviève Zubrzycki explained, Auschwitz became a symbol of Polish suffering during and after World War II, a move from the Polish government and the Catholic church to represented “the attempt by Nazis to physically and culturally annihilate the Polish nation.”\textsuperscript{105} Commemorating Polish Catholic victims was, therefore, a testament to the fact that the Nazis failed to erase the Polish nation. The push to make Auschwitz a center of Polish suffering clashed with claims by Jewish groups. The papacy of John Paul II that began in 1978 was also important for Polish


\textsuperscript{105} Zubrzycki, \textit{The Crosses of Auschwitz}, 102-103.
national identity. The Polish-born pope was fiercely anti-Communist and encouraged Poles to express their faith and national identity. The geopolitical context is also significant, as the late 1970s and 1980s saw the easing of travel restrictions in the Eastern Bloc and the beginning of closer ties with the West and the Vatican.  

Although Poles claimed Auschwitz as a center of their suffering during World War II, Jewish groups claimed it was a site of Jewish suffering and memory. With the political and social activism of Jewish groups in Israel and North America, Jewish memory became the dominant narrative of memorial site in the Western world. In 1960, Israeli Secret Service arrested Adolf Eichmann in Buenos Aires, and Eichmann’s trial a year later in Jerusalem brought interest within Israel and abroad. The testimonies of Holocaust survivors, most of whom never had any personal contact with Eichmann, prompted a new kind of openness in Israel and the Jewish Diaspora, one that encouraged Holocaust survivors to share their stories. The experiences of Jewish victims later appeared on American television and became a commercial success. The mini-series Holocaust told the fictionalized account of a German-Jewish family and their lives under Nazi racial laws and later in

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concentration camps. It first aired in the United States in 1978, and premiered in Germany in 1979. The series received noted attention in the West as it was one of the first televised series telling the stories of Jewish victims. Starting in the late 1980s, Jewish community organizations sent large groups of Jewish tourists from Israel and North America started visiting Auschwitz. Jewish school groups started to visit the memorial site, with Auschwitz portrayed as a focal point of Jewish suffering during the Holocaust. The March of the Living, an international organization, started to send groups of teenagers aged sixteen and seventeen to Poland in 1988. Although agencies such as the American Jewish Committee brought young Jews to German sites of memory since the 1970s, the March of the Living differed as it brought Jews from North America, Europe, and Israel to Poland at the same time, and for the “March of the Living” to take place on Yom Hashoah, Holocaust remembrance day in the Jewish calendar.\textsuperscript{108} The March of the Living became one of the most popular youth tours to Poland by the early 2000s, bringing in 6,000 to 10,000 Jewish youth there each year.\textsuperscript{109} From the organization’s inception, its goal was to educate Jewish teenagers about the horrors of the Holocaust and teach the lessons of “Never Again.” Jewish identity was a core part of the trip’s focus, and the march from Auschwitz to Birkenau reflected the organization’s name. Teenagers and their adult chaperones walked from Auschwitz to Birkenau in silence as they remembered the six million


Jews who perished during the Holocaust. Their "March of the Living" signified the continued existence of the Jewish people despite Nazi efforts to murder all the Jews of Europe. Additionally, the teenagers participating on the trips heard from Holocaust survivors at the sites of mass violence themselves.

Organized trips of Jewish teenagers from Israel, Europe, and North America such as the March of the Living became an expression of Jewish identity in Poland, a country whose Jewish landscape was almost erased. Oren Stier, a scholar of Jewish Studies, explained that the “superstructure,” or overall goal of the March and its itinerary are for students to connect to their heritage through a Zionist ideology of history. As he further argued, the trips “follow the contours of collective, popular memory more than it adheres to strict historical realities. Israeli flags, for instance, are seen everywhere on the tour in Poland, reclaiming symbolic space for a country that did not exist during the time and history the pilgrims are exploring.” The March of the Living continues to bring Jewish teenagers to Poland, but since expanded its programming to include trips for young adults aged 21 to 35 as well as an adult trip for those over the age of 35. Dr. David Machlis, an American, and Eli Rubinstein, a Canadian, were both involved in the March of the Living and in 2001 founded The March of Remembrance and Hope. This trip brings young adults from a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds to Poland and Germany in order to learn about "the dangers of intolerance" by learning about World War II and the

Holocaust. Organized trips such as The March of the Living and the March of Remembrance and Hope made Jewish suffering the focus of their trips to former camps in Poland.

From the late 1940s to the early twenty-first century, Auschwitz-Birkenau was fraught with competing memory narratives by the Polish state, Polish Catholics, and Jews from Israel, Europe, and North America. Of the four memorial sites analyzed in this dissertation, Auschwitz-Birkenau is the one most associated with Jewish victims because of its wartime and postwar history. Jewish visitors to Auschwitz-Birkenau wear kippot (or yarmulkes), and participants on organized trips from Israel and the Jewish Diaspora bring Zionist symbols such as the Israeli flag. The presence of the Israeli flag is unique to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Since 2010, Dachau banned the use of flags on its grounds due to concerns of right-wing nationalism.

Social media posts, specifically photographs found on Flickr and Instagram, were a continuation of different memory narratives at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Jewish visitors continued to mark the site as a place of Jewish suffering. However, these online memory narratives presented a shift from earlier forms of memory-making during the twentieth century. With the ability to share their experiences online, people not only presented their personal memories but ones influenced by popular

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113 I interviewed Rebecca Ribarek who works in the Education Department at the Dachau Memorial and she explained Dachau’s no-flag policy to me there. She further explained that the policy extends to Israeli flags, as they do not want any nationalism of any kind on their site. Erica Fagen, Interview with Rebecca Ribarek, November 24, 2015.
culture and other social media users. To take an example, nell_dee, a young adult visiting Auschwitz-Birkenau and expressing her sadness in visiting the site was part of her personal memory, but including hashtags such as #auschwitzmemorial and #holocaust connect her to the collective Holocaust memory online. Instagram user juantelmogarcia used hashtags such as #hope and #freedom to express his own personal memory, and his chosen subject of the barbed wire fence and using a black and white filter reflected two aspects of filtered memory: the barbed wire fence was a popular choice of setting among other Instagram (and Flickr) users, and the black and white filter was also popular for Holocaust-related photographs on social media. Moreover, the choice of setting and filter reflected the trend of social media users mimicking Holocaust atrocity photography. Filtered memory is about combining personal memory with the more collective, online memory-making.

Image 1: Nell_dee, Barbed Wire, Black and White
Photography pre-Social Media

In order to understand the role of Flickr and Instagram in the formation of Holocaust memory in the twenty-first century, it is necessary to discuss the larger history of photography. The invention of the daguerreotype in 1839, named after its inventor Pierre Daguerre, influenced not only the history of photography but also the history of communications. Along with the telegraph, first introduced in 1838 by Charles Morse, the notion of time and travel changed. The emergence of photography as well as telegraphy, contended communications scholar Simone Natale, informed “a dream of going beyond previous boundaries of space and distance.”114 Photography acted as a way to preserve a certain time, place, or person. French sociologist and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu published his seminal book

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Photography: A Middle-Brow Art in 1961 and explained the significance of the family album into the wider history of photography. Bourdieu demonstrated that the family album was an act of social remembrance. Families would organize their photographs family photos chronologically, with additional commentaries. This chronological order, or the natural order, “arouse[d] and transmit[ted] the remembrance of events worthy of preservation because the group sees a unifying factor in the monuments of its past unity, or what amounts to the same thing, because it derives from its past the confirmation of its present unity.”\(^{115}\) As Bourdieu explained, photographs present in photo albums were the ones worth preserving according to the owners. They were the memories worth remembering.

Works such as Roland Barthes’ Camera Lucida show historians what makes photography different from other forms of representation: in short, when we look at a photograph, we do not see the photograph itself. What we see is what the photograph represents.\(^{116}\) Photographers are mediators between the image and the viewer; in other words, photographers themselves are filters, giving the viewers their own sense of reality.

David Bate, a scholar of photography, asks what analog and digital photography did for memory, and how photography affected or changed individual and collective memory. Bate argues that “with photographs, memory is both fixed and fluid: social and personal. There is nothing neutral here. As sites of memory,


photographic images (whether digital or analogue) offered not a view on history but, as mnemonic devices, are perceptual phenomena upon which a historical representation may be constructed. Social memory interfered with photography precisely because of its affective and subjective status.”117 As Bate explained, photography changed memory because it is both personal and social. Memory and photography interfered with each other because they were both affective and subjective.

Both reporters and photographers covered the liberation of Nazi camps, but as Barbie Zelizer explained, photographs offered a graphic representation of Nazi atrocities that words could not. Photographs, she argued, “pushed the authenticity of unbelievable camp scenes by pitching depictions closely to the events being described at the same time as they signaled a broader story of Nazi atrocity.”118 The atrocity photos taken by American and British photographers appeared in newspapers days after the liberation of the camps in 1945 and featured images which shocked the West: mounds of corpses, German civilians forced to look at said corpses at Buchenwald, and women SS guards at Belsen, among others.119 Zelizer argued that photography became a more powerful tool than words in documenting Nazi atrocity, so it was no surprise that atrocity photography of the concentration camps became the center of the Holocaust story “as it was recycled into collective

119 Zelizer, Remembering to Forget, 87-120.
As historian Cornelia Brink points out, the mounds of corpses and the images of survivors came to represent not only the crimes committed at particular camps, but all Jewish victims. They also stood for the crimes of National Socialism more broadly.\textsuperscript{121}

The atrocity photographs taken in 1945 made a resurgence starting in the late 1970s, when collective memory of the Holocaust manifested itself through academic books but also through popular culture. Writers Philip Roth, Saul Bellow, and Isaac Bashevis Singer discussed Nazi atrocities in their books, and the television miniseries \textit{Holocaust} was extremely popular in the United States and Germany. The release of Lanzmann’s \textit{Shoah} in 1985 and Spielberg’s \textit{Schindler’s List} in 1992 further pushed public interest in Holocaust photography. Atrocity photos of the liberation appeared in museums, cultural exhibits, books, magazines, and television documentaries. Images of the concentration camps were thus recycled and became central to the collective memory of the Holocaust.

The over-saturation of Holocaust atrocity photography led Zelizer to question whether the images lost their power as a vehicle of memory, or of bearing witness.\textsuperscript{122} Susan Sontag also feared that photos lost their power as method of recollection, and Andreas Huyssen argued that the problem with Holocaust imagery was not its ubiquitousness but its excess.\textsuperscript{123} However, photographs still became a

\textsuperscript{120} Barbie Zelizer, \textit{Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera’s Eye} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998): 140.
\textsuperscript{122} Zelizer, \textit{Remembering to Forget}, 200.
powerful vessel in helping people remember the events of the Holocaust.

Photography, argued Zelizer, fundamentally shaped the way the West viewed atrocity. Images of the concentration camps that appeared in newspapers worldwide paved the way for other atrocity photography to make their way to international headlines, such as the genocides in Cambodia and Rwanda.\textsuperscript{124} Photography, through its pervasive use in the media and influence in popular culture, was one of the central mediums for different publics to discuss the Holocaust. In his analysis of photographs of Sobibor and Nordlager Ohrdruf taken by professional photographers Dirk Reinhartz and Mikael Levin in 1995, Ulrich Baer argued that these photographs did not reflect the sites in actuality: although the photographs served as a useful \textit{aide-mémoire} they did not show how the sites are disintegrating, and that the lived memory of the Holocaust was slowly disappearing. Baer reminded his reader that those photographs ultimately train one’s gaze; what we see is always a question of how, and from where we see it.\textsuperscript{125} When someone looks at a photograph, in other words, they are seeing the site through they eyes of the photographer, not the realities of the site at hand. The photos present on Flickr and Instagram represented a continuation of the trend analyzed by Zelizer, Sontag, and Huyssen. Both sites, dedicated to the sharing of photos, contains hundreds of thousands of photos dedicated to the Holocaust. How were these photos different from previous forms of memory in popular culture? One answer is that they were a


product of mass culture, one that allowed anyone regardless of race, class, or gender to share their photos from visiting Holocaust sites. Social media acted as a virtual exhibit of different individuals’ experiences visiting former concentration camps turned memorial sites.

**Flickr**

The prominent roles of Auschwitz-Birkenau in international and cosmopolitan popular memory of the Holocaust lead to various interpretations of the sites on Flickr and Instagram. Flickr and Instagram users often tried to emulate the cinematography of *Schindler’s List*, or add somber quotes from Elie Wiesel and George Santayana. They also tend to take photographs of well-known areas of the camp such as the *Arbeit macht frei* gate at Auschwitz and the *Appelplatz* at Birkenau. The two platforms differ in one major area: it was common for Instagram users to upload selfies, while Flickr users focused more on the physicality of the sites themselves. This trend is reflected in the albums and snapshots selected in this chapter. The reason is the increased popularization of social media, smartphones, and app-based platforms, making photography more accessible and easier to use than before. Although self-photography was not a twenty-first century invention, a rear-facing camera significantly aided the selfie-taking process. The selfie differed from posing for a picture taken by someone else as it reflected the

practice of self-authenticity, or a reflexive space for the selfie-taker in question. By taking a photograph of themselves, they made a personal statement about how they interact with their surroundings.\textsuperscript{127} For some selfie-takers, placing filters was one of the ways they felt comfortable sharing images of themselves on the Internet. The filters enhanced or muted colors, or gave the photograph a retro or vintage feel. The selfie was a deeply personal way for social media users to express their identities.\textsuperscript{128}

Although Flickr and Instagram were similar to their analog predecessors, they had significant differences. Media and technology scholar Lev Manovich provided a helpful framework in explaining these differences as well as the development of analog to digital media. Manovich argued in \textit{The Language of New Media} that new media is a continuation of older media forms such as the photo album or Polaroid images. Manovich discussed "how conventions and technologies" of older media such as rectangular framing and montage styles appear on new media technologies.\textsuperscript{129} Although this is an important point, Flickr and Instagram differed from their analog counterparts because they were part of the culture of connectivity explained by José van Dijck.\textsuperscript{130} In the earlier days of social media platforms, from 2004 to 2007, platforms such as YouTube and Flickr began as community initiatives, as "video buffs and photo fans" wanted a space where they could share their creativity.\textsuperscript{131} Their social and community-building mind frame

\textsuperscript{131} van Dijck, \textit{The Culture of Connectivity}, 12.
continued after their takeovers from Google and Yahoo, respectively. Google and Yahoo continued to market these sites as places where people could share and discuss their experiences, despite the commercial ambitions of the two companies. Although Flickr’s analog background was much like the traditional photo album, a series of neatly organized images with some explanation, it was different because users from different parts of the world could share their photos on a platform that can be easily accessed, and they could create groups dedicated to their interests. As Jean Burgess explained in her study of Australian travelers, people used Flickr in order to share their photos and make connections with fellow travel-lovers. The digital photo album also served as an exposé of one’s journey to a destination, and Flickr was thus an archive of personal experiences to numerous travel destinations and lifecycle events.

Instagram’s analog background was comparable to that of the Polaroid. The famous SX-70 camera that first appeared in the 1970s eliminated the need for a darkroom or a photo-finishing company to develop the photos. The easy to use technology made snapshot consumption a public activity. Although Polaroid filed for bankruptcy in 2001, partly caused by the onslaught of digital cameras, the cultural form of snapshot photography remained, with Instagram as its digital descendant. Like Flickr, however, Instagram differed from its analog predecessor. Snapshot photography was not only consumed in physical public spaces, but virtual

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ones as well. The sharing of photos on Instagram, like Flickr, was an archive of personal experiences and memories taken at historic sites, landmarks, life cycle events, parties, and more. This phenomenon of mass culture was unprecedented as professional, amateur, and occasional photographers use the same social media platforms to share their creations. Social media was a method of documentating and remembering in the twenty-first century.

The Flickr albums analyzed in this chapter were found through two community groups, “Auschwitz” and “Auschwitz Birkenau.” Flickr began as a community-oriented platform, with users encouraging each other to share their photos and also to stop spam accounts.\footnote{José van Dijck, The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).} Due to this set up, the Flickr albums were analyzed through these two groups, and also showed that these photographers communicated with each other through message boards and by commenting on each other’s photos. The albums chosen in this section reflected the idea of the network; that social media users are connected to one another and “like” or comment on fellow users’ photographs. The Flickr users discussed in this section interacted with one another, thus showing the digital and online aspect of global Holocaust memory. Organized chronologically from 2007 to 2013, one will see how the albums of Auschwitz-Birkenau changed over time, and that none of the Flickr users chose to include themselves in their albums.

The albums from 2007 and 2009, found through the community group “Auschwitz,” featured similar photographs of Auschwitz-Birkenau. However, the
user Big Viking included photos from his overall trip to Poland, not just Auschwitz. He posted the album “Poland” in 2007 and included photos of the entrance, barracks, and barbed wire fences at Auschwitz and Birkenau. He did not include images of the exhibits or of himself, but he did add three photos of visitors walking through Birkenau. The rest of the album consisted of images from the Wieliczka Salt Mine, another heavily advertised destination in the Krakow area. Similarly, Imre Farago’s album dating from 2009 featured photographs of the entrance, barracks, barbed wire, and destroyed gas chamber at Birkenau. Like Big Viking, he did not include any photographs of himself.

Image 3: Big Viking, Barbed Wire Fence 1

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Image 4: Big Viking, Barbed Wire Fence 2

Image 5: Imre Farago, “Tracks leading from the watchtower into the camp”
The important points arising from these two albums are that in addition to taking photos of the same things, they also reflect the culture around digital cameras popular in 2007 and 2009. Big Viking’s album contained ninety-nine photos, and while his repetition of similar images may seem redundant or boring to the viewer, it reflected the shift in photography at the time. Professional or amateur photographers were no longer limited to twenty-four exposure film rolls, but could take hundreds or even thousands of photographs depending on the capacity of their camera’s SD card. People could take several photos of the same fence at Auschwitz, which is exactly what Big Viking did. Unlike Big Viking, Imre Farago used his real name and wrote in his profile that he was Hungarian, therefore making his identity less anonymous. Despite the fact that he was Hungarian, he included captions in English for each of his photographs. The English captions were a trend that would develop over the years – a sign of the dominance of the English language on the
Internet. Writing in English also allowed his photographs to be accessible and searchable by a wider Internet audience.

The trend of posting a large number of photographs continued, as users such as Jason Wells demonstrated. Wells recounted his tour of the site in eighty-two colour photographs of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Wells organized his album as one would a tour: he started at Auschwitz I with the Arbeit macht frei sign, then moved to the watchtower followed by the cell blocks which today house the exhibits. He included the “highlights” from guided tours of the camp, including camp statistics, maps, the glass encasings of Zyklon B canisters, the gas chamber, and crematorium. His photos then shifted to Birkenau, where he posted images of the camp entrance, train tracks, barbed wire fence, train car at the roll call square, and the dilapidated gas chamber and crematorium. He repeated the same themes as Big Viking and Imre Farago, notably the entrances to both Auschwitz and Birkenau.

Wells’ album was also a prime example of van Dijck’s arguments about the community aspect of Flickr. Wells considered himself to be an amateur photographer, and mentioned that he contributed to Getty Images. His skills as a photographer garnered him some praise by fellow Flickr users in the “Auschwitz-Birkenau” group including Steven Whittaker, who “faved” several of his photos and commented on one of them. He also received several likes and comments in English, German, French, and Italian from the wider Flickr community, including one German-speaking man who wrote that his twenty year-old daughter wanted to go, 137 Jason Wells, “Auschwitz I & Auschwitz II-Birkenau (Album),” Flickr, February 14, 2012, https://www.flickr.com/photos/wellsie82/albums/72157629367429547.
and that he believed that everyone must go and visit Auschwitz, and another user who wrote that his snow-covered image of the train tracks and gate at Birkenau was a “[g]reat capture of a very harrowing place.”\textsuperscript{138} He also integrated short testimonies of Holocaust survivors, one of which was a caption for his photo entitled “Looking Into Auschwitz-Birkenau site (sic).” It read: “There is only one worse thing than Auschwitz itself...and that is if the world forgets such a place.”\textsuperscript{139} The higher volume of faves and comments, as well as the repetition of notable landmarks at the memorial site, made Wells’ album a good point of reference for understanding the platform of Flickr.


Flickr community groups such as “Auschwitz” and “Auschwitz-Birkenau” succeeded in crowdsourcing photographs on a particular theme or place, but they also reflected the negative side of Michael Frisch’s idea of “sharing authority.” Administrators or participants of these groups did not always share historically accurate information in the albums, thus challenging the notion that academics and the public can share authority on the past. Gaia Federico, the administrator of the “Auschwitz” and “Auschwitz-Birkenau” groups illustrated this dilemma with her contributions to the two community groups. Her album, simply titled “Auschwitz-Birkenau,” predominantly featured photographs of the barracks and barbed wire.

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fences at Auschwitz I, and three images of the train tracks at Birkenau.\textsuperscript{141} For each of her photos, she included a short title in either Italian or English. Her own interpretation of her photos reflected the problems with sharing authority. In her photo of the Auschwitz I gas chamber, she explained that camp victims left the scratch markings on the walls.\textsuperscript{142} Her factual understanding of this part of Auschwitz was incorrect, and is something that Pawel Sawicki, the social media coordinator at the Auschwitz Memorial, tried to counter on the Memorial’s Instagram account. Federico and countless other people on social media continued to believe this incorrect meaning of the markings, prompting Sawicki to explain that these markings were signs of postwar vandalism.\textsuperscript{143} Federico uploaded her album in 2012 and was an example of “getting it wrong” on the Internet. Despite her false claims about the gas chambers at Auschwitz, “getting it wrong” was nonetheless a significant part of collective memory on the Internet. Even with false claims, historians can gain insight on the development of historical knowledge; to paraphrase historian Hans Kellner, getting the story “crooked” is way for historians to ask larger questions on how those ideas came to be.\textsuperscript{144}

\textsuperscript{143} Erica Fagen, Interview with Pawel Sawicki, December 1, 2015. He also does this on the Museum’s other social media accounts such as Twitter.
The albums in the Auschwitz-themed community groups reflected social media culture as people wanted to share their everyday experiences on a large scale. Social media was an extension of the theory of prosthetic memory put forth by Alison Landsberg; mass media engaged audiences regardless of their gender, socio-economic, or cultural background, and social media took that a step further by allowing these groups of people to only express their opinions on mass media platforms, but also share them with extensive web-based communities. The recycling of popular Holocaust imagery featured in the Flickr albums studied in this project.

Holocaust photography in tourism advertisements in cities such as Krakow was another example of Holocaust imagery reproduced in mass culture. The popularity of Holocaust-themed tours and sites was part of the “Shoah business”
described by scholars Erica Lehrer and Tim Cole. They explained that in Poland, sites such as Kazimierz, the former Jewish Quarter in Krakow, and concentration camp sites such as Auschwitz-Birkenau, became attractive sites of tourism and as a result commercialized the Holocaust. Although Cole warned of this commercialized aspect of the Holocaust, tourist advertisements in Krakow nonetheless catch the attention of visitors and encourage them to visit Auschwitz themselves. Steven Whittaker, who added his album “Auschwitz & Birkenhau (sic)” to the “Auschwitz” community group, continues the trend as previously displayed by Big Viking. Whittaker, who uploaded his album in 2013, included forty-six photos of Auschwitz-Birkenau and Krakow. The Auschwitz-Birkenau photos included trains, train tracks, barracks, barbed wire fences, suitcases, and teenagers with Israeli flags draped over their shoulders. In other words, the photos were similar to the photos posted in previous years, save for the image of teenagers with Israeli flags. For the photographs of Krakow, he included the old city, Wawel Castle, and a minibus tour bus that brings tourists to Auschwitz and the Wieliczka Salt Mine. The juxtaposition of the Auschwitz and Krakow photos is important to consider when looking at Flickr albums. For many tourists, visiting a concentration camp while touring a European city was part of their experience. Visiting Auschwitz was not only a site of great historical importance, but it was also part of a list of sights to see in cities. From 2013 to 2015, the minibus tour bus that Whittaker

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147 Whittaker, "Auschwitz & Birkenhau - Krakow (Album)."
included in his album could be found throughout the old city of Krakow, a major tourist centre of the city.\textsuperscript{148}

The reproduced images of the \textit{Arbeit macht frei} gate, barbed wire, and barracks were part of the collective memory of Auschwitz-Birkenau in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Personalized images, from war photographers to tourists with smartphones, tangle with the issue of authority. Why was the photograph taken, and for whom? Why were certain photographs deemed more “authentic” than others?

Janina Struk explains that a photograph is never “just” a photograph, and this was certainly the case with post-war Holocaust photography.\textsuperscript{149} Early journalistic photographs of the camps were problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, the US Army Signal Corps had specially trained photographers, coached to take their photographs in an emotive, Hollywood style. Photographs of white American soldiers liberating the camps came to dominate newspapers, when in reality African-Americans were among the first liberators. Soviet troops, on the other hand, had poor camera equipment and ran out of film by the time they liberated camps such as Auschwitz-Birkenau and Majdanek. In some cases, Soviet soldiers filmed documentaries of “liberation” long after liberation took place.\textsuperscript{150} In terms of photo

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\textsuperscript{148} Similar tours were available in 2015 during my research trip to Krakow.


\textsuperscript{150} In addition scholars such as Janina Struk and Barbie Zelizer addressing this in their books, museums such as the Montreal Holocaust Museum include this footage in their permanent exhibitions and describe how Soviet soldiers “re-created” liberation by filming a few weeks after liberation initially took place. “Video and Wall Plaque, Permanent Exhibition, \textit{Liberation},” \textit{Montreal Holocaust Museum}, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.
viewership, people in the West primarily saw photos taken by American army photographers, while those in the Eastern Bloc looked at images taken by Soviet army photographers. American and British audiences saw photographs of Bergen-Belsen and Dachau, taken by the US Army Signal Corps, but not of concentration camps or death camps in Poland, as the Soviet army liberated camps such as Auschwitz-Birkenau and Majdanek. American and British audiences did not see photographs of the liberation of Majdanek as it was deemed “Soviet propaganda.”

The photographs of concentration camps after liberation, drummed into the minds of the American and British publics, started to disappear starting in the late 1940s as the West had a new enemy: the Soviet Union. The Soviets were not the kind of hero Western powers wanted to promote, and their liberation photos were seen as propaganda. As a result, the American and British publics believed that the concentration camps in western Europe represented the entirety of Nazi crimes.

In the Soviet Union, by contrast, photographs of Nazi atrocities were routinely published to warn the public about “the barbarity of fascism” and to remember the twenty-seven million Soviet citizens and soldiers who died during the war. In Israel, with 40% of its population Holocaust survivors, it was the photographs of the martyrs and fighters in the ghettos that dominated the narrative, told through a Zionist perspective. The dissemination of Holocaust photography depended on world politics.

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152 Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust*.
153 Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust*.
Holocaust photography grappled with the authenticity of its posting these images on social media was part of filtered memory and set them apart from earlier visual representations of the Holocaust. The user Ice_Original included these reproduced images in his 2013 album “Auschwitz e Birkenau;” his album reflected the themes of photo reproduction and tourism.154 His photographic subjects consisted of the most popular and well-known areas of the site, such as the barbed wire fences, the crematorium at Auschwitz I, the train tracks at Birkenau, and the infamous Arbeit macht frei gate. This album was part of the collective memory of the Holocaust, memory heavily influenced by previous forms of visual culture such as atrocity photographs from concentration camps and popular culture mediums such as films. Certain images of the Holocaust became part of its popular memory, such as photos of barracks, gas chambers, and the Arbeit macht frei gate. They were so heavily reproduced that they came to represent public perceptions of the Holocaust.155 Social media, specifically photo-sharing sites like Flickr and Instagram, departed from previous forms of visual representations of the Holocaust due to its accessible and participatory culture. Flickr required no paid subscription, just an Internet connection. Once on Flickr, users joined groups catered to their interests, and favorite and/or comment on photographs if they wish. Public engagement with history on this level was unprecedented, as there was no technology before social media that could involve people on such a mass scale. Ice_Original’s depiction of

155 Barbie Zelizer explains the links between imagery and collective memory and how atrocity photography helped define the events in popular memory. Barbie Zelizer, Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera’s Eye (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
Auschwitz-Birkenau was part of this dissertation’s central argument: that not only were visitor photos of former concentration camp sites-turned-memorials a form of Holocaust memory, but they represented a filtered memory of the Holocaust. Flickr and Instagram, as the primary photo-based sites, acted as an archive of individual experiences with Holocaust sites. The many photos of the Arbeit macht frei gate posted on these social media sites were how people chose to share their experiences with the larger world.

Image 9: Ice_Original, “Auschwitz1”
Instagram

“Life time experience // Stop taking selfies!!”

Words cannot express the feeling in this memorial. When you realize the scale of this crime against humanity it gives you chills. Be wise and take a guided tour. Museum has very professional team of tour guides. Only they will know how to tell the history of this memorial. My eyes got teared up a couple of times while listening to heartbreaking stories. It is a shame that some visitors don’t realize they are in a mass murder and sacred memorial. Taking a smiling selfies? Oh c’mon people, pay some respect to this place!!

You should be prepared for this tour, take an umbrella, good walking shoes and warm clothes (if it’s not summer) because most of the programme takes place outside.

30 pln for 3,5 hour tour is nothing in comparison with the experience in this museum. This is the place you will never forget.156

Similar to Flickr, Instagram photographs of Auschwitz-Birkenau mostly consisted of famous landmarks such as the Arbeit macht frei gate, barracks, the display of shoes, and barbed wire at Auschwitz I and Birkenau. There were a few differences between the two platforms, notably that Instagram’s creators built it as a smartphone app while Flickr’s created it as a standalone website. Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger invented Instagram in 2010, after the 2007 introduction of smartphones such as Apple’s iPhone. The purpose of Instagram is in its name: as a combination of the words “instant” and “telegram” the app intended its users to take a photo and upload it on the app right away. While Flickr introduced an app in 2015, the program never marketed itself as an instantaneous sharing platform, rather as a

“the best photo management and sharing app in the world.” Their two goals were to allow users to share their photos, but also to organize the “sheer number of photos” made possible by digital photography. Friends and family could be given access to organize these large amounts of photos if the initial Flickr user wished.157

Designed as a smartphone app with the purpose of instantaneous and snapshot photography, researchers focused on Instagram for their studies on selfies. The Selfiecity research project, which analyzed 2.3 million photographs by hundreds of thousands of people in 13 cities worldwide, showed that most people in their photos were young, with a median age of 23.7.158 They found that there were significantly more women than men who took selfies, (as many as 1.9 times more in cities like Berlin, and 4.6 times more in Moscow), but there were more older men (30 and over) who posted selfies than women did.159 The images of Auschwitz-Birkenau found on Instagram reflected a global youth culture as well as a popular smartphone app, but more importantly reflected the historical reality that people taking the photos were several generations removed from the events of the Holocaust.

In terms of methodology, the selection of Instagram photographs for analysis differed from Flickr. Unlike Flickr, Instagram users are not part of communities, or networks, as Flickr users are. Rather, Instagram users add hashtags to their photographs that act as keywords or search terms, and it is through these hashtags that photographs of Auschwitz-Birkenau can be found. The first step of the

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159 Manovich et al., Selfiecity.
methodology consisted of establishing a time frame: like the selection of albums from Flickr, the photos from Instagram will also be analyzed chronologically. The years analyzed range from 2013 to 2015 for the months of March, July, August, September, November, and December, to highlight both low and high tourist season. The second step was choosing photographs that echoed Holocaust atrocity photography and Hollywoodized depictions of the Holocaust using the hashtags #auschwitzbirkenau, #auschwitz, and #auschwitzconcentrationcamp. These images included snapshots of the Arbeit macht frei gate, barracks, and barbed wire fences. Among these photographs, the author a selection of photographs that contained this recognizable imagery, along with other hashtags, quotes, emojis, and Instagram users that represented global Holocaust memory: European visitors of various ages, young Jews from Israel and North America, and other visitors from around the world. The analyses of photographs represent a sample of the photographs of Auschwitz-Birkenau on Instagram, and a representation of its ever-growing archive of the #auschwitz, #auschwitzbirkenau, and #holocaust tagged photographs.

Auschwitz received thousands of Jewish visitors every year. It is therefore unsurprising that there were many photos of Jews and Israelis visiting the camp on Instagram. These images also reflected filtered memory, meaning that Instagram users literally and figuratively filtered their images to represent how they experienced Auschwitz-Birkenau. One of these photos, taken by horvathkrizta77, featured a young Jewish man wearing a green kippah with a large Israeli flag draped over his shoulders and standing just outside a barrack with his back to the
Although this young man’s nationality was unknown, he possibly traveled to Auschwitz on a trip with a Zionist outlook like the March of the Living. Horvathkriszta77’s use of Instagram and photo app-themed hashtags such as #picoftheday, #bestaward, and #vscocam demonstrated that her photo was seriously memorializing Auschwitz and delved into filtered memory and the culture of faux-vintage photography. It perhaps reflected how Instagram “debas[ed] real

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photography” according to the journalist Kate Bevan.\textsuperscript{162} The VSCO program, a photo filter app compatible with Instagram, allows for users to lighten, darken, or make their photos more “authentic.” This is problematic at face value but asks more interesting questions on how people choose to experience a site.\textsuperscript{163} As for horvathkriszt77’s hashtags #israel #jewthings and #jewpeople, it is uncertain what she thought about Jews, whether she was a philo-semite or otherwise. She herself was not Jewish, nor was she part of the group she photographed. Erica Lehrer, Michael Meng, and Slawomir Kapralski, scholars of Jewish-Polish relations, explained there was a fascination with Jewish culture in Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{164} They explained this fascination through the examples of the “cultural appropriation” of Kazimierz and Polish towns such as Tarnow using its Jewish past to attract tourists.\textsuperscript{165}

The recognizable landmarks did not only characterize these photographs, but also the historical memory captions some users included. The British user stormtrooperinstilettos uploaded an image of barbed wire fences at Auschwitz I.\textsuperscript{166}


\textsuperscript{164} This discussion is lengthy and deserves its own study in another project. To read about the interest and fascination with Jewish culture in modern day Poland, see Erica Lehrer, \textit{Jewish Poland Revisited: Heritage Tourism in Unquiet Places} (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013) and Erica Lehrer and Michael Meng, editors, \textit{Jewish Space in Contemporary Poland} (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015).


\textsuperscript{166} Although the name stormtrooperinstilettos may bring associations to Star Wars, neo-Nazis, or pornography, it is in reality a song from the rock band Queen’s fifth studio album entitled \textit{Sheer Heart
She took the color photograph on a cloudy day, and it depicted the area between a barbed wire fence and the barracks. This photo was an act of remembrance in the literal sense - she had visited two years prior, but decided to post the photo on the seventieth anniversary of the liberation of the camp. She made it clear that she was posting the photo to remember the liberation of the camp. In her caption, she wrote, "'For the dead and the living, we must bear witness' --Elie Wiesel. Today is the 70th anniversary of the liberation of this terrible, terrible place - picture taken when we visited 2 years ago." #Auschwitz #Auschwitzmemorial”167 By referencing both Elie Wiesel and liberation, she, like other Instagram users, made it clear that they learned something from their experience visiting the site.

Image 11: Stormtrooperinstilettos, Reflection on January 27th

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Although she did not make it clear why she waited two years to post her post a photograph from her visit to the Auschwitz Memorial, the fact that she waited raises more key points regarding online memory. Stormtrooperinstiletto was not the only Instagram user to reference the seventieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz; there were 2,500 results for the hashtag #auschwitz70, all commemorating the liberation of the camp. Aware of the seventieth anniversary, Instagram users chose to commemorate the event by mostly including photos of the entrances at Auschwitz and Birkenau, or barracks and barbed wire fences. These photographs, to paraphrase Susan Sontag, were not simply a transparency of something that happened but “always the image that someone chose; to photograph to frame, and to frame is to exclude.”168 Stormtrooperinstiletto framed her image on the seventieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz and chose a part of the camp that would resonate with her audience. However, by choosing to photograph the image of the barbed wire she chose to exclude another part of the camp and took the same photograph that many other visitors took with their cameras or phone. Although her image of the barbed wire did not begin to explain the complex history of Auschwitz, it showed that there is meaningful engagement with the lessons of the Holocaust online.

Like other Instagram and Flickr photos of Auschwitz, however, her photo too was an example of filtered memory. She chose a recognizable part of the camp – barracks and barbed wire fences – a common representation in Holocaust atrocity

photography and in popular media. Stormtrooperinstilettos also figuratively filtered her photograph, as she chose to add hashtags and a quotation. The captioning one’s photographs was an expectation on Instagram; these digital Polaroids were not only for the consumption for family and friends, but the millions of Instagram users. The methods of presentation that defined Instagram were also what set it apart from previous forms of Holocaust memory.

Similar to stormtrooperinstilettos, Instagram user pasqua.enzo marked the seventieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, but did so with another recognizable landmark: the Arbeit macht frei gate.169 Aware that he took the photo on the seventieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, he included a caption and hashtags relating to the anniversary. He wrote "#remember to #not #forget #memorialday #Auschwitz #oswiecim #shoah #anniversary #70 #worldwar #cruelty #madness #mankind #remembertonotforget." Like stormtrooperinstilettos, the hashtags served as an added layer of memory, one that is particular to social media. Including hashtags and captions was expected in Instagram culture, and unlike previous forms of visual Holocaust memory. Intended to be social and communal, one way for users to be part of Instagram community was to use hashtags so others could find their photos.

Pasqua.enzo’s photograph also illustrated the argument of filtered memory. Echoing Holocaust photography from Liberation, or atrocity photography coined by

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Barbie Zelizer, pasqua.enzo’s chosen filter made the image darker and more somber-looking. The desire to make Instagram photos look more “vintage” reflected what sociologist Nathan Jurgenson called “faux-vintage.”170 Jurgenson explained that Instagram users tried to imitate older photography aesthetics in order to make their visual representation more authentic, or more representative of a certain historical period. This desire, explained Jurgenson, was a sort of “nostalgia of the present,” and attempt for Instagram users to make their photos look “more important, substantial, and real.”171 In her arguments about the place of nostalgia in the late twentieth century, Svetlana Boym explained that nostalgia was a way for people to connect with the past, either by way of recreating it (restorative nostalgia) or longing for it (reflective nostalgia). Speaking from her own experiences as a Jewish émigré from the former Soviet Union, Boym questioned whether the past should be reclaimed by nostalgia.172 Pasqua.enzo included a filter in his photograph of the Arbeit macht frei gate as a way to connect with the past by reproducing older photography aesthetics. By copying the aesthetic of postwar atrocity photographers, he demonstrated that he too portrayed an authentic portrait of the former camp. By choosing to present his experience in this way, pasqua.enzo gave his audience a filtered interpretation of what he saw and learned at Auschwitz. As argued throughout the dissertation, photographs on both Flickr and Instagram served as a virtual exhibition of experiences visiting concentration camps.

171 Jurgenson, “The Faux-Vintage Photo.”
Photography at Auschwitz-Birkenau not only reflected faux-vintage reproductions of atrocity photography, but also reproductions of landmarks made famous by popular media. The room full of shoes, located in Block 5 at the Auschwitz Memorial was one of these landmarks.\textsuperscript{173} The shoes and other items of clothing such as coats and eyeglasses were powerful and memorable symbols thanks to films like Schindler’s List and graphic novels such as Maus. Instagram users such as veciospare, a professional Italian photographer, combined these two aspects in his photographs: using popular symbols of the Holocaust and combining them with Spielberg-esque styling. In his photo, veciospare made the background shoes black and white, and in the center of the image, saturated the already-red shoes into a deeper red color.\textsuperscript{174}

His photo harks back to the famous scene in *Schindler’s List* where a little girl dressed in a red coat is liquidated from the Krakow ghetto with her family. Later in the film, Oskar Schindler recognizes the girl’s dead body from the color of her coat. This is one of the only non-black and white scenes in *Schindler’s List* and is an iconic part of the film.175 Communications scholar André Caron argued that this scene, along with the red candles and matches in the opening credits and the red roses at the end, could symbolize the Burning Bush narrated in the Book of Exodus.176 Veciospare’s photo was a powerful example of how popular culture influenced the ways in which generations after the Holocaust chose to memorialize its events.

175 The only full-color scene of the film is the end, where mourners places red roses on top of Oskar Schindler’s grave at the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. Spielberg, *Schindler’s List*.
The photograph of "Auschwitz selfie girl" was one of the most well-known social media images, or selfies, with Auschwitz as the backdrop. Since Breanna’s 2014 selfie, many people took photographs of themselves at Auschwitz-Birkenau and various other concentration camps. The popularity of taking selfies at sites of mass violence was not limited to Nazi concentration camps, but to other sites as well, including Hiroshima, Chernobyl, and the 9/11 memorial. In addition to selfies, people also uploaded photos of themselves smiling, using monkey emojis, and joking around in the gas chambers and crematoria. It is important not to dismiss these images completely and call them worthless, or to call the owners stupid or foolish. These photos often sparked debate among fellow users who called them geschmacklos or tasteless. Although filtering and cropping a selfie may seem cliché, Jill Walker Rettberg argued that “seeing ourselves through a filter allows us to see ourselves anew.” For Rettberg, taking a selfie was an expression of identity. Other scholars took this a step further by saying that although selfies provide the opportunity for superficial performances, selfies also allowed “for the pursuit of more profound self-reflection and communication.” The selfie, in other words, was a visual form of self-reflection that communicated with a large audience. The selfies taken at Auschwitz-Birkenau and other memorial sites were partly a form of documentation, but more a serious introspection of how people interacted with the

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sites. They were part of Holocaust memory because they took imagery from atrocity photography and put their own interpretations. Selfies were, in other words, a form of filtered memory.

One of these selfies included a black and white photograph taken by user stuiemack7 in front of well-known landmark: the entrance to Birkenau. This young man, who appeared to be in his thirties, took his selfie near the watchtower. He gazed into the distance with a serious expression on his face. Other visitors were in the background, one of who took a photo. The selfie itself was not strange, as many people took selfies at Birkenau. His use of hashtags, however, combines the aspects of profound self-reflection and superficial performances. While the hashtags #auschwitz and #neverforget demonstrated that stuiemack7 reflected on his time at Auschwitz-Birkenau, the hashtags #smouldering and #toomuchsexyness spoke more to the negative aspects of identity expression, namely narcissism. Selfies, like other visual forms of expression, were complex. Stuiemack7’s selfie demonstrated that filtered memory can be contentious, but other forms of Holocaust art, such as Maus, were also once deemed as inappropriate and offensive. Rather than dismissing selfies as silly or crass, historians should see these photographs as part of a virtual exhibit on individual experiences and memories dealing with the Holocaust.

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Whose Story Is It Anyway? How Auschwitz-Birkenau Uses Social Media as a Middle Ground

Selfies taken at Holocaust memorial sites and posted on Instagram like stuiemack7’s were not uncommon; not only did members of the general public post selfies but star athletes and celebrities as well. San Antonio Spurs player Danny Green took a selfie at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and was put under scrutiny. Justin Bieber made a similar error when he visited the Anne Frank House in 2013, and wrote in the guestbook that it was “[t]ruly inspiring to be able to come here. Anne was a great girl. Hopefully she would have been a belieber.”

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A “belieber,” it should be noted, was a term for avid Justin Bieber fans. Bieber received criticism for his comments, with people saying that he should “show some respect.” However, not all celebrities who visited Holocaust sites received

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complaints from their fans or the larger public. Beyoncé and Jay-Z visited the Anne Frank House in March 2014, and Beyoncé put a photo of herself in the education center on Instagram, staring seriously at the camera.184 Katy Perry visited Auschwitz in February 2015 and took a photo of barbed wire, a watchtower, and barracks and wrote that her “heart was heavy” visiting the site, and implored people to remember what happened there.185

These celebrity photos as well as selfies like stuiemack7’s were a reflection of social media culture that promoted the “culture of connectivity” and the sharing of self-expression. Visitors posted whatever and whenever they wanted, and this had the potential to lead to misinformation about the historical sites themselves. These questions led to the question of how memorials such as Auschwitz-Birkenau did in order to promote their education agendas. How did they put “history to work,” to paraphrase public historians?186 Were they able to reach a middle ground between themselves and the different publics? The last part of this chapter continues to argue that photography on social media was not only a form of memory, but one that was different from previous forms of Holocaust memory such as analog photo albums or films. It also demonstrates why it is important that the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum uses social media: they did not only share visitor memories of the site, but also made the memories and experiences of visitors more accessible to Instagram users who could not visit the physical site by reposting

185 Butnick, “Katy Perry Visits Auschwitz.”
visitor photos on their official Instagram feed. While the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum used Facebook and Twitter for sharing facts about the Holocaust rather than images pertaining to the site, those social media channels were no less important. Finally, this section will show how Instagram users responded to their outreach efforts, but also the challenges of using social media to promote Holocaust awareness.

In terms of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum’s social media presence, Pawel Sawicki, the Communications and Social Media Coordinator, regularly updated the Facebook and Twitter feeds. He posted news about the Museum and Memorial on both social networking sites, updating users on the museum’s opening hours and visitor statistics, visits by dignitaries, and educational content with themes such as “today in history” where he posted an anniversary of an event usually accompanied by an archival photograph. He also used these two platforms to dispel historical inaccuracies. One such incident occurred on Twitter when the user @AMAZINGMOMENTS posted a photo of scratch marks in the gas

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chamber at Auschwitz I. Claiming that Jewish victims scratched the walls of the gas chamber trying to escape, Sawicki responded by saying the historical information was false, and that it was “an act of vandalism made by visitors who do not know how to act in a historical place.”\textsuperscript{188}

Sawicki created the @auschwitzmemorial Instagram account in 2013, and began with posting archival images on the account page. He later decided to switch the focus from archival images to photographs taken by visitors; he started reposting visitor photos of the memorial he found on Instagram. Although he posted other content, such as the Memorial’s own photographic material relating to the seventieth anniversary of Liberation, he mostly focused on photographs taken by visitors. When asked which photos he decided to post on Instagram, Sawicki explained that he went through photos on Instagram and found them using hashtags like #auschwitz or #birkenau. He tried to select photos that had good composition and were meaningful; he explained that some people take beautiful photographs of the site, but judging by their captions they did not get much out of their visit. In other words, he tried to find a balance.\textsuperscript{189} The photographs chosen for this analysis reflected well-known areas of the camp, such as the Arbeit macht frei gate, the barbed wire fences at Auschwitz I and Birkenau, the room of shoes at Auschwitz I, and the unloading ramp at Birkenau, and also reflected pre-conceived ideas about Holocaust imagery in popular culture.

\textsuperscript{188} Auschwitz Memorial, “@AMAZINGMOMENTS These Are Signs of Vandalism Made by Those Visitors Who Do Not Know How to Behave in a Historical Place,” Tweet, @AuschwitzMuseum (blog), November 10, 2015, https://twitter.com/AuschwitzMuseum/status/671209598481768448.

\textsuperscript{189} Erica Fagen, Interview with Pawel Sawicki, December 1, 2015.
The *Arbeit macht frei* gate was a common subject of photography among visitors to the site. The photo that Sawicki chose was powerful; the *Arbeit macht frei* sign reflected off a pool of water, with a leafless tree and a blue sky in the background. In the photo caption he explained, “it is not easy to photograph such a powerful visual icon of the place.”

Ironically, this sign was a replica - the original stolen but recovered by Polish police. The original lied in the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial’s archives as of 2016. The user comments for this photo included “Never again!” with a Star of David and two heart emojis, and another wrote “A Very (sic) beautiful picture!!” while another user wrote “Great picture. It captured all that the place represents.” This photo also showed the interaction between the photographer and another user and the Auschwitz-Birkenau Instagram account.

Jackthunders, who traveled to Auschwitz-Birkenau the year before, explained that he “took the same picture last year when I went to pay my respects to all those poor souls who perished in that place. My picture didn’t even come close to yours friend .. Nailed 👊★” In his reply, Aviantextraveler wrote “Thanks a lot for the repost of my photo and a memorable visit to Auschwitz. @auschwitzmemorial Thanks a lot, I really appreciate your feedback...sometimes everything just come

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(sic) out right! @jackthunders" Reposting people's photos not only got them greater exposure, but allowed for the wider Instagram community to experience the site through the eyes of a visitor, not through the perspective of the Auschwitz Memorial or a Holocaust museum. The @auschwitzmemorial account made aviantextraveler's photo more accessible. This photo also speaks to Holocaust memory, as it used an image ingrained in collective memory of the Holocaust. The Arbeit macht frei gate appeared in photos following the liberation of the camp, and also featured in popular media such as Schindler's List and Maus.

Similarly, plathido's black and white photograph of the train at the unloading ramp also showed engagement between Instagram users and the museum. Unlike

the photo of the *Arbeit macht frei* gate, however, Sawicki did not include his own caption, but just plathido's original caption. Plathido was grateful that Sawicki shared the photo, and explained that the place “haunted” him and that he would remember it for the rest of his life.¹⁹³ Plathido received additional praise for his photo from the user suefley, who wrote “what a wonderful photo I’ve been to this place twice and it haunts me everyday 😞.”

Image 17: Auschwitzmemorial and Plathido, Front of Train Car at Unloading Ramp

The Auschwitz Instagram account included images of well-known sites and lesser-known history of the camp. One example of this was a black and white photo

taken of black and white photos of prisoners at Auschwitz. Photos of other prisoners reflected in photo of Henryk Stirer, profiled in this Instagram post.

Image 18: Auschwitzmemorial and Bobdejongh, Photos of Prisoners

The inclusion of this photo was pertinent for a variety of reasons, notably its content. While the larger global public was aware that Jews became the primary victims of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the imprisonment and mass murder of non-Jewish Poles was not as well-known, with the exception of Poland proper. By showcasing this image, the Auschwitz museum fulfilled part of their mandate to educate, and did so on a platform that had the potential to attract thousands of people.195


195 The history and memory of Polish suffering during World War II is complex, and the following sources explain this. Dorota Glowacka and Joanna Zylinska, Imaginary Neighbors: Mediating Polish-Jewish Relations after the Holocaust (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007); John-Paul Himka and Joanna B Michlic, Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013); Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu, The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Robert Traba and Alex Shannon, The Past in the Present: The Construction of Polish
The memory of Auschwitz-Birkenau loomed large in public consciousness online, with people wanting to commemorate it in a meaningful way. Although some users include hashtags such as #toomuchsexyness with their photos, they too were part the twenty-first century trend of online memory.

Conclusion

Auschwitz-Birkenau, a place synonymous with Holocaust memory, experienced its challenges in public memory in the postwar era. Jewish survivors, their descendants, and the wider Jewish community sought to make Auschwitz a center of Jewish memory, rejecting the Polish (and Catholic) claims that Poles were the primary victims of the Nazis at Auschwitz. Trips to Auschwitz were part of the Jewish memory consciousness of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, affirming that Auschwitz was a ground zero for Jewish suffering under the Nazis. Whether it was Jews or non-Jews posting photographs of Auschwitz-Birkenau, social media was a form of Holocaust memory and was different to previous visual forms of memory due to audience and accessibility.

The atrocity photography taken at liberated camps, including Auschwitz-Birkenau, formed the basis of visual collective memory of the Holocaust. The images

of gates, gas chambers, crematoria, and piles of corpses formed public understanding of what happened at the camps. Starting in the 1950s, visitors took photos of areas made famous by war photographers: the Arbeif macht frei gate, the barbed wire fences, and the crematoria. These themes also entered public consciousness through popular media, with miniseries such as Holocaust, films such as Schindler’s List, and graphic novels such as Maus.

The albums and snapshots on Flickr and Instagram, respectively, continued this trend in the digital age. Using familiar visual motifs, visitors filtered their experiences through the photos they took. They chose to apply photo filters, lightening or darkening the image, and selected which parts of Auschwitz-Birkenau to present on social media. Their actions represented a filtered memory of the Holocaust. Social media was different from previous forms of mediatized memory as it not only allowed people of various backgrounds to post photos online, but allowed the mass public to share their filtered memories of their experiences. Social media acted as a virtual exhibit of individual experiences relating to their experiences visiting Auschwitz-Birkenau. This messy, populist form of memory was never seen on such a scale. Finally, the @auschwitzmemorial Instagram account, along with its Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube accounts, work to keep the various publics engaged with the Memorial’s news, activities, commemoration events, and share visitor experiences of the site. Through their active engagement on social media, the Auschwitz Memorial showed that it was possible for the museum and the larger public to find a middle ground: social media allowed both groups to engage and learn from each other.
The following chapter will look at another well-known former concentration camp in (Western) collective memory. The Dachau Memorial became a center of West German collective memory practices and held educational programming for youth from the 1970s onwards. Similarly to Auschwitz-Birkenau, imagery made famous by atrocity photography dominated filtered memory on Flickr and Instagram. The chapter will also demonstrate a key issue facing historians when analyzing social media: how does one study an ephemeral archive? With its ever-changing photo landscapes, Flickr and Instagram posed challenges for historians wanting to gain insight on twenty-first century Holocaust memory practices.
CHAPTER 3
EXPLORING DARK TOURISM: THE CASE OF DACHAU

Historical Background

The Dachau concentration camp is located sixteen kilometers, or ten miles, northwest of Munich. Heinrich Himmler, who later became the head of the SS and one of the main perpetrators responsible for Nazi atrocities, opened Dachau in 1933. It functioned as a forced labor camp for political prisoners, but starting in 1938 following Kristallnacht it also held Jewish prisoners. As World War II progressed, it imprisoned German and Austrian criminals, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Roma and Sinti, and political prisoners. Dachau and its subsidiary camps held 63,000 prisoners by the end of 1944. American troops liberated the camp on April 29, 1945. The total number of prisoners incarcerated at Dachau numbered around 188,000 from 1933 to 1945, and from January 1940 to May 1945 around 28,000 people died. It is unknown how many people died between 1933 and 1939, and for this reason the total number of victims from the Dachau concentration camp is unknown. The immediate postwar period saw the US military maintain control of the area until 1948, when its jurisdiction was handed over to the Bavarian state.

Two groups initiated postwar memorialization practices at Dachau: the CID (Comité de Dachau), a curatorial committee formed in 1959, and the Catholic and

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Protestant churches. The CID pressured the Bavarian state to create a memorial, and the Bavarian state granted their requested in 1962, with the official opening of the memorial site in 1965.\textsuperscript{198} Prior to the Dachau Memorial’s official opening, however, Catholic and Protestant groups raised funds in their respective communities for religious memorials. The activism of Catholic community groups resulted in the first memorial on the Dachau Memorial site in 1960, shortly after the formation of the CID. Former Dachau prisoner and later the Auxiliary Bishop of Munich, Johannes Neuhäusler, took the initiative to build a Catholic memorial called the Mortal Agony of Christ chapel.\textsuperscript{199} Its official dedication took place on August 5, 1960, as part of the World Eucharist Congress in which 50,000 people attended.

Protestant groups in Germany also wanted to build a church serving as a memorial at Dachau. Their objective was twofold: to atone for their guilt and complicity in Nazi rule, and to achieve reconciliation among themselves and with other groups.\textsuperscript{200} The creation of the Protestant youth group \textit{Aktion Sühnezeichen} (Action Reconciliation for Peace in English) in 1958 helped with this endeavor, as they were committed to performing volunteer work in Germany and abroad to help

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make amends for Germany's past. Financed by donations of Protestants living in Bavaria, the Church of Reconciliation opened in 1967 and featured a chapel and meeting room.

Jewish memorialization at Dachau had different objectives. Following the suggestion of Bishop Neuhäusler in 1960, the Jewish community of Munich agreed to place a “simple Star of David” as a memorial to Jewish victims. After the Eichmann Trial in 1961, Jewish leaders in Bavaria erected a more elaborate memorial as a “symbolic focal point of ritual memory.”201 Jewish survivors did not want to build a synagogue on the site of Dachau. German and Austrian Jews, survivors from Kristallnacht, and Eastern European Jews brought to Dachau in 1944 to work as slave laborers, did not think that a house of God would be appropriate at site of mass murder. Zvi Guttman, the architect of the Jewish Memorial, affixed a menorah made of marble on top of the memorial. The menorah had a special significance, as the marble was from the Israeli town of Peki’in, which according to Biblical lore was a place where Jews were always supposed to live. The menorah symbolized the continuity of Judaism and its connection with Israel.202 It is important to note that few Jewish prisoners died or were interned at Dachau, and the memorial did not reflect the murder of Jews at Dachau, but rather the death camps in Poland.203

Located near the permanent exhibition on the site of the Appelplatz, or Roll-Call Square, the central memorial at Dachau also contained religious symbolism.

Unveiled in 1968, Nandor Gild’s memorial sculpture remained a prominent feature of the camp in the twenty-first century. Gild’s memorial contained emaciated figures with the intent to resemble barbed wire and echoed Christ’s suffering on the Cross.  

“The forgotten victims” of Dachau began their commemoration efforts in the 1970s. Following the popularity of the American TV miniseries *Holocaust* in 1979, Sinti and Roma drew attention to the fact that they only received five Deutschmarks

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per day in compensation, compared to the ten Deutschmarks the Jewish victims received. Sinti activists performed hunger strikes and demonstrations at West German memorial sites to bring attention to their continued discrimination in West Germany. Over the Easter holiday, they held a demonstration at the Dachau Memorial in 1980. Homosexual victims also began their commemoration efforts during the 1970s. They drew on their victimization under National Socialism to pressure the government for current-day political recognition. Activists lobbied the Dachau Memorial to include pink triangle memorial plaque at the Memorial. The International Dachau Committee (CID) rejected requests for a commemorative plaque for homosexual victims in the Dachau Memorial’s museum in 1986. Following the unification of Germany, the leadership of the CID changed and in 1994 they placed plaque commemorating homosexual victims.

Between 1968 and the late 1990s, German youth groups were the main audience for educational initiatives at Dachau. Before the era of mass, global tourism starting in the 1990s, many of Dachau’s visitors were German. Tourism scholars

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208 Although the exact reason is unknown, Paragraph 175 was still in effect during this time. This German legal provision banned homosexual acts between two men, and was repealed in 1994. Historians have written on the impact of Paragraph 175 in divided Germany and the United States, and more recently on its memory culture in united Germany in the 1990s and the early 2000s. Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past*; Karen Hagemann and Sonya Michel, eds., *Gender and the Long Postwar: The United States and the Two Germans, 1945-1989* (Washington, D.C: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2014); Clayton John Whisnant, *Male Homosexuality in West Germany: Between Persecution and Freedom, 1945-69*, Genders and Sexualities in History (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); W. Jake Newsome, “Homosexuals after the Holocaust: Sexual Citizenship and the Politics of Memory in Germany and the United States, 1945 - 2008” (State University of New York at Buffalo, 2016).
John Lennon and Dorothy Weber explained that there were fundamental changes to the site and exhibition content. Younger generations pushed local authorities to provide resources and accommodation in order to encourage educational initiatives aimed at fellow German youth. Groups of high school-aged youth went Dachau and stayed at youth hostels nearby to learn about the camp’s history. Organizations such as Action for the Reconciliation for Peace held workshops at the Church of Reconciliation to build community and teach young people the horrors of the Nazi past. They also promoted volunteerism to help atone for the sins of their parents and grandparents. A campaign for youth center at Dachau began in 1983 with the goal of educating future generations, and finally completed in 1998 after years of negotiations. German school groups from all over Bavaria continued to visit Dachau as part of educational initiatives ranging from lectures, workshops, and volunteering into the twenty-first century.

Visits to the Dachau Memorial as well other former concentration camps in Europe soared in the 2000s. In 2005, the 60th anniversary of the camp’s liberation, the original entrance of the camp opened and became accessible to tourists. The original gate, however, was stolen in 2012 and has yet to be recovered. The Arbeit macht frei gate that is currently at the Dachau memorial is a replica. See “KZ Dachau: Diebe Stehlen „Arbeit Macht Frei“-Schriftzug,” Welt, November 3, 2014, https://www.welt.de/vermisches/article133924781/Diebe-stehlen-Arbeit-macht-frei-Schriftzug.html; Harriet Torry, “German Police Appeal for Clues to Solve Theft of Dachau Gate,” Wall Street Journal, November 3, 2014, sec. World, http://www.wsj.com/articles/thieves-steal-gate-from-dachau-concentration-camp-1415010937.

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211 Marcuse, Legacies of Dachau, 327-406.
212 Marcuse, Legacies of Dachau, 382-387.
mid-2000s, the Dachau Memorial received roughly 700,000 visitors per year, and these visitors spoke in a multitude of languages including English, Spanish, Russian, French, and German. As reported by a former Dachau tour guide in the German magazine Der Spiegel, these tourists had various motives for visiting the Dachau Memorial.\textsuperscript{215} He reflected on his more positive experiences as a guide, explaining that he saw Germans from Dachau and Munich wanting to learn more about their past, and also saw them speak with Jewish tourists from the United States. Americans he had on his tours included the grandson of a Nazi official who worked with Joachim von Ribbentrop, and another where an elderly man explained that he was a medic with the Rainbow Division, the US Army unit that liberated Dachau in 1945. He also expressed his frustration with another group of tourists: ones that regard Dachau as part of their to-do list. A friend of his who worked for a car rental company in Munich told him stories of tourists who would come into his store and ask if they could see Neuschwanstein castle and the Dachau Memorial, located 131 kilometers or 81 miles apart, in one day.\textsuperscript{216} The idea that tourists wanted to see if they could fit in a visit to a concentration camp between art museum and a beer hall disturbed him, as he believed that these groups of tourists did not understand the seriousness of the Dachau Memorial.\textsuperscript{217}


\textsuperscript{216} “Distance from Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial to Neuschwanstein Castle,” Google Maps, 2017, https://www.google.ca/maps/dir/Dachau+Concentration+Camp+Memorial+to+Neuschwanstein+Castle,+Germany/@47.9129278,10.4987041,9z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m14!4m13!1m5!1m1!1s0x479e7a87a8ac8390:0x16794e4417b9a4062!2m2!1d11.4682724!2d48.270124!1m5!1m1!1s0x479cf7cac44ea35d:0xc8a6866bd39dab312!1d10.7498004!2d47.557574!3e0.

\textsuperscript{217} Hawley, “Touring a Concentration Camp: A Day in Hell.”
This guide believed that whatever the visitor motivations, the large numbers of visitors to Dachau reflected the fascination with dark sites, or sites dealing with instances of genocide or mass violence. The phenomenon of dark tourism, explained briefly in the Introduction, was part of the globalization of Holocaust memory in the early twenty-first century.

**Dark Tourism at Dachau**

The methodology of dark tourism helps explain the surge of international visitors to Dachau and other sites of mass violence starting in the late 1990s. Tour organizations such as InMunich Tours help fill the demand for international tourists wishing to visit the Dachau Memorial site. It also contextualized people’s motivations to visit sites such as Dachau in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Coined in 1997, the term was a response to the rising numbers of tourists to dark sites, or places of mass violence and genocide, in the 1990s.\(^{218}\) John Lennon and Dorothy Weber, the former who helped coin the term dark tourism, investigated why tourists decided to visit the Dachau Memorial Site in a study they conducted in 2011. In their study of 206 participants done over Oktoberfest, a popular time for visitors to come to Munich, they found some things that were of interest. They discovered than after sixty years of liberation, World War II still had its impact on the town of Dachau. Visitors still associated the town of Dachau with the concentration camp, and were the primary reason for their visit to the town.

\(^{218}\) As dark tourism was term introduced in 1997, it is not appropriate to use it to describe tourism to concentration camp sites before the 1990s. As previously explained, visitor motivations for visiting these sites were limited by geography and socio-economic factors of the day.
While visitors also listed the Old Town, the Castle, and District Museum as reasons for their visits, the former concentration camp far outpaced those sites with 68.9 percent of people visiting the town of Dachau for the sole purpose of seeing the Dachau Memorial.\textsuperscript{219} The Dachau Memorial was not only the most popular destination in the town of Dachau, but one of the top destinations in the greater Munich area. As previously discussed, former tour guide Charles Hawley lamented in his article in \textit{Der Spiegel} that tourists lumped their visit to Dachau with art galleries and visits to Neuschwanstein.\textsuperscript{220}

Despite Hawley’s qualms with Dachau treated as a “must-see” site among international visitors, tourism scholars challenge the assertion of these visitors were inauthentic, and that their trips to Dachau were purely consumerist. As German literature scholar Daniel Reynolds argued, education and identity formation were among the dimensions of Holocaust tourism that happen alongside postcards and on-site refreshments.\textsuperscript{221} Influenced by Michel de Certeau’s ideas of tourism in urban centers, he viewed tourists as producers. Tourism, in de Certeau’s sense, was an “arena in which individuals ma[de] use of practices and instruments that merit consideration.”\textsuperscript{222} Tourists, in other words, are in a search of a type of confirmation

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\textsuperscript{222} Reynolds, "Consumers or Witnesses," 338.
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of what they see. In the modern era, photography was the chosen medium for tourists to show, to confirm to others of what they saw.223

Photography was an important part for the tourist gaze described by John Urry and Jonas Larsen, as vision and documentation were central to the tourist experience.224 For them, photographs activate both “imaginative mobility” and “memory travel,” thus framing their tourist gazes.225 Using the framework of the tourist gaze, Reynolds argued that photography was more than a tactic to allow users to document material objects. He explained that “Holocaust tourists use[d] photography to perform an ethically engaged subjectivity. Holocaust tourists produce selves that confront fundamental questions about a historical evil and their relationship to it.”226 Snapping a photo at Dachau was not a passive act for visitors, rather an active form of creating memory. Photography on social media allowed users to share their “ethically engaged subjectivity” on a wide platform. It also allowed them to share their filtered memory of Dachau in a messy, populist form of mass media that allowed people regardless of race, class, and gender to share their experiences with confronting Holocaust history.

Visitors shared their experiences visiting the Dachau Memorial on tourism websites such as TripAdvisor. Websites such as TripAdvisor allowed its users to post reviews of tourist attractions such as monuments, memorials, and museums such as the one below.

225 Urry and Larsen, The Tourist Gaze 3.0, 129.
226 Reynolds, “Consumers or Witnesses?,” 341-342.
“Stunning tour of Dachau, can’t imagine a better one”

(five stars) Reviewed 31 March 2015

Picked up this tour by InMunich Tours at Marienplatz in the centre of the Altstadt. (sic) Our guide was Adam. What a great guy. Friendly and immensely knowledgeable. (sic) We caught the train then a short bus ride to the concentration camp with Adam. The tour was relaxed, no time pressure and we could ask as many questions as we liked. Adam’s knowledge was fabulous, he talked about dachau (sic) with a real passion for that period of time and with a great depth of knowledge of the camp but supplemented (sic) it with information of what else was happening in that period that affected dachau. (sic)

We got great detail and understanding, far superior than we would have gained on our own at the camp, Also impressive was that the information Adam gave was not a regurgitated rambling, But (sic) was delivered to us in a unique and fresh manner and information was also tailored to the types of questions we asked.

We loved loved loved this tour, and Adam is FANTASTIC. I can't imagine a better tour of Dachau being available.

Visited March 2015

The co-owners of InMunich Tours, Adam Martin (mentioned in the above reviews), and Marcin Wright explained their motivations for becoming tour guides in interviews. Wright, originally from Wales, wanted a career change after working as a music teacher for several years. Shortly after moving to Germany, he went on a tour to Dachau, a life-changing experience that moved him to become a tour guide there. For him, giving tours around Munich and to Dachau gave him renewed purpose and believed that his work was important. Wright gave over 1000 tours to Dachau since moving to Munich in 2008, as well as themed tours in Munich such as

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227 Kate W, "Stunning Tour of Dachau, Can’t Imagine a Better One - InMunich Tours, Munich Traveller Reviews," TripAdvisor, March 31, 2015, https://www.tripadvisor.ca/ShowUserReviews-g187309-d6405697-r262948612-InMunich_Tours-Munich_Upper_Bavaria_Bavaria.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT.
228 Erica Fagen, Interview with Marcin Wright, November 2015.
“Munich City Tour,” “Third Reich” and day trips to Neuschwanstein Castle. Wright explained that he and Martin carefully designed their tours: he explained that their tours last five hours to the usual two and a half for other tour organizations such as Sandemann’s, and that they do not visit or explain any of the religious memorials, including the Jewish one. Wright argued that showing these memorials to visitors would acknowledge the fact that not all victim groups had a their proper memorial.229

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229 Erica Fagen, Interview with Marcin Wright, November 2015.
In Munich Tours brochure, November 2015
Although Wright and Martin were dedicated guides and received favorable reviews on TripAdvisor, some of their guiding techniques were questionable. By ignoring the Dachau Memorial’s major monuments, they missed a chance on explaining a more nuanced history of the site. Neither of them discussed Nandor Gild’s “Never Again” memorial in the center of the camp or any of the religious memorials such as the Church of Reconciliation, the memorial created for Protestant victims. They were opposed to the “Never Again” memorial as there were other genocides since the Holocaust. The religious memorials for Jews, Catholics, and Protestants were not included in their tours. They argued that it was important to remember that many people died at Dachau, not just Jews, Catholics, or Protestants. Rather than ignoring Gild’s memorial completely, explaining why homosexuals were not included on the memorial had the potential of encouraging critical thinking among their tour participants. InMunich Tours, as well as other tour organizations such as Sandemann’s New Europe, helped fill the needs of international tourists wanting to visit famous sites in and around Munich, including the Dachau Memorial.

The fascination with visiting dark sites reflected in the practices of filtered memory, and like the guided tours, users on Flickr and Instagram were equally selective as the visitors chose what to feature in their social media feeds. They did, in other words, create a kind of “curated memory” that the tour guides at InMunich Tours also used. Visitors chose which parts of the Dachau Memorial to share on their Flickr and Instagram accounts. They uploaded images of the barracks, the gas chamber and crematoria, and the various religious memorials on the site. The decision of “to selfie or not to selfie” was part of their curated memory. Users also
included photo filters which made their photos black and white, sepia-toned, and with muted or enhanced color. Finally, by sharing these images, Flickr and Instagram served as an online archive of people’s experiences interacting with the Dachau Memorial.

Image 21: Erica Fagen, Coloured Stars

**Flickr**

It is key to analyze different memory discourses in order to understand the community dynamics of Flickr. Collective memory defined by Maurice Halbwachs helps contextualize how individual thought placed itself within social frameworks of
memory. Collective or community memory influenced the way an individual remembered a certain event. Halbwachs’ argument on how collective memory shapes individual memory is especially applicable to Flickr due to its community-based design. A significant part of Flickr culture was joining community groups and sharing photos of a particular event or place. It attracted both professional and amateur photographers, and faves and comments were ways for the larger Flickr community to engage. Jean Burgess, in her study of Flickr groups in Australia, called this process “vernacular creativity.” This process was an opportunity for Flickr users to share and discuss their photographs and become digital storytellers.

In his discussion on digital media and its link to memory, Andrew Hoskins argued that “we connect to our web memory,” which he defined as digital platforms such as Google and Flickr. Hoskins put forth the term “connective memory” to define real-time and instantaneous messaging between peer-to-peer, groups, and social media networks.

In the collective memory framework of Flickr, users repeated similar imagery of Dachau such as the barracks and Arbeit macht frei gate as they were part of the larger collective memory surrounding the memorial site and Holocaust atrocity photography. Through their albums, they told their stories of visiting the

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memorial and added their albums to community groups. These actions were a form of memory, and the theory of connective memory set forth by Hoskins is useful for an analysis on Flickr albums. These photographs are best defined through this project’s central argument: they are part of filtered memory on the Web. Visitors chose specific parts of the Dachau Memorial to share on their Flickr accounts. They also included filters to make their photos look more “authentic,” or similar to photographs taken during liberation.

Similar to the Flickr albums of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the Dachau Flickr albums repeated the same imagery year after year. The albums chosen come from the community group “Dachau Concentration Camp” and featured well-known imagery such as the Arbeit macht frei gate, the Roll-Call Square, barracks, the gas chamber, and crematoria. The Flickr albums varied in size, from eleven photos to over a hundred. The analysis runs from 2008 to 2012, right before the popularity of Instagram. The number of photos included in Flickr albums were indicative of the time period at hand: with the massive popularity of digital cameras, people could take as many photos as their memory cards could hold. Flickr mirrored that trend by allowing people to upload numerous photos, and those amounts rose from Yahoo’s purchase of the platform in 2005 to 2017. In 2006, the photo-sharing platform raised the storage space of free accounts from 20 megabytes to 100 megabytes. This allowed users to upload up to 100 images of medium quality, and unlimited space for its Pro users.235 By 2017, users could store up to a terabyte of

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data that could consist of thousands images depending on the format (.jpeg, .png) or size (megabytes). The albums in this section varied from the amount of photos, but all speak to fact that Flickr gave their users the freedom and choice of how much to upload on their site. The image quality of these photos changed as Flickr allowed high-definition photographs and videos on their platform.

Photography played a key role in the tourist experience and memory of their travels to different locations. In their analysis of the “tourist gaze,” John Urry and Jonas Larsen argued that vision and by extension photography was central to the tourist experience. They proved their point further by stating that tourists take photographs so to produce tangible memories that could be “cherished and consumed well after the journey.” Through photographs, tourists “strive to make fleeting gazes last longer.” Photographs for Urry and Larsen are “blocks of space-time” that have effects beyond the people who take the photos and the subjects of the photos themselves. They are, in other words, a form of memory. As the following paragraphs will demonstrate, Flickr albums of Dachau were tangible memories created by people who visited the site and shared their experiences online.

Flickr user Joe included sixty-eight photos in his Dachau album that he uploaded in 2008. He included photographs that were popular in the larger collective memory of the Holocaust, such as the barracks, gas chamber and

237 Urry and Larsen, The Tourist Gaze 3.0, 129.
crematorium, the Appelplatz, barbed wire, and the Arbeit macht frei gate. Joe’s album was particularly interesting because of how he organized it – he began his album on the Dachau train platform, then to the bus taking him to Dachau, followed by images leading up to the entrance of the camp. He then organized his photos in a similar fashion as a tour guide would show the camp: he carefully took his viewer around the memorial, starting with the Appelplatz located near the entrance, and ending the Nandor Gild international memorial, also located near the entrance. The last few photos of his albums were back at the Dachau train platform.

Joe’s album can be understood in the context of what the art historian Martha Langford called a performance. Langford argued, “the showing and telling of an album is a performance. Most of us are spoiled by the ideal circumstances in which we normally encounter an album – with an interpreter in the home.” Langford’s lengthy analysis of photo albums applies to the physical family photo albums passed on through generations, but her arguments apply to Joe’s album nonetheless. By organizing his album as a tour of Dachau, Joe invited the viewer to share his experience of visiting Dachau. Instead of looking at the “DACHAU” photo album in Joe’s living room, the viewer reads Joe’s explanations and interpretations of Dachau in an online community group. This online community aspect of Flickr is what made the platform different from its analog predecessors: the physical living room transformed into a digital space potentially accessible to thousands of viewers.

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Although the total number of viewers was unknown as Flickr did not release data to researchers, the platform nonetheless provided exposure for amateur photographers to share their images of the site. Flickr made the experience of sharing a photo album more social than ever before.

Joe’s photos show the “social” side of social media, meaning the more community-based feature of Flickr. The photo with the most faves and comments, one with rusted barbed wire fencing, had interactions such as “Cool shot,” with Joe responding with "danke." Another user wrote “What a dramatic shot! It takes a thoughtful photographer to capture in a macro a symbol of such large-scale inhumanity. Well done!” Joe replied with “thank you very much. i (sic) thought it was representative.” In another image of barbed wire, this time with barracks behind it, both commentators used the word “haunting,” a popular word on social media.

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240 Flickr’s Terms of Use changed over the years of its existence, making it difficult for researchers to access content. In 2012, when research was conducted for Hate 2.0: Combating Hate in the Age of Social Technology, it was possible to “scrape” metadata from Flickr using digital tools such as OutWit Hub. However, Flickr restricted the use of the digital tools by the time research was undertaken for this dissertation in 2015. It is possible to get metadata from social media sites such as Flickr, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, but costs are significant and usually undertaken by companies wanting to do market research for certain demographics.

241 Rebecca Onion, the editor of the history blog The Vault and a staff writer at Slate magazine, gave a talk entitled "Truth, Lies, Clicks, and Shares: How History is Faring on the World Wide Web" at the University of Massachusetts Amherst on March 2nd, 2016. Onion, who was the Department of History’s Writer-in-Residence that year, explained in her talk that the word “haunting” is a popular word on the Web to describe photos dealing with mass violence and/or death.

Image 23: Joe, “Dachau Decay,” Comments
Pablo Lora uploaded his album “Dachau” in 2009, and like all Flickr albums analyzed in this chapter, included an image of the *Arbeit macht frei* gate. However, unlike the other photos, Lora’s post illustrated one of the consequences of digitally reproduced Holocaust memory. An image can lose its meaning and authenticity if reproduced on a mass scale. The last photo in his album, a black and white photo of the *Arbeit macht frei* gate entitled “Doorway to Hell” is the following.

![Image 24: Pablo Lora, Doorway to Hell](flickr.com/photos/pablol/albums/72157614646905333)

Entrance to Dachau concentration camp in Dachau, Germany

Words on the door: "*Arbeit macht frei*

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"Arbeit macht frei" is a German phrase meaning "work brings freedom" or "work shall set you free/will free you" or "work liberates" and, literally in English, "work makes (one) free". The slogan is known for being placed at the entrances to a number of Nazi concentration camps. The slogan "Arbeit macht frei" was placed at the entrances to a number of Nazi concentration camps "as a kind of mystical declaration that self-sacrifice in the form of endless labor does in itself bring a kind of spiritual freedom."

6 Million Jews and approximately 5-11 Million people from other ethnicity's (sic) were killed during the Holocaust.244

Along with the slightly incorrect German translation, Lora used a quotation from an anonymous blog called Spectacle.org that due to its lack of historical rigor had several incorrect facts. One of these incorrect facts included the one Lora posted, which stated that five to eleven million in addition to the six million Jews perished during the Holocaust. Historians do not know how many civilians perished during the Holocaust and Nazi persecution, and there is no single historical document that says how many people were killed during World War II or the Holocaust.245 From wartime reports and postwar demographic studies, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum estimates that up to 6 million Jews, around 7 million Soviet civilians, 1.8 million non-Jewish Polish civilians, and 196,000 to 220,000 Roma died under the Nazi regime.246 Lora’s odd captions were not exclusive to that image, but also in his photo of the crematorium which he entitled “Burners.”

244 Lora, "Dachau (Album)."
246 “Documenting Numbers of Victims of the Holocaust and Nazi Persecution,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
Whether this was a misunderstanding or a language issue is not clear. However, it asks the viewer to consider the relationship between photography and mass reproduction: photographs are reproduced and reused so often that sometimes they lose their original meaning.247 Similar to Gaia Federico’s Auschwitz album, Lora included historically inaccurate facts in his image captions. Lora’s album should nonetheless be considered as a part of online Holocaust memory; getting the story “crooked” also shows the processes of creating memory at Dachau. By analyzing albums with both factually correct and incorrect information, historians can have a better grasp of what filtered memory looked like on social media in the twenty-first century.

Filtered memory on Flickr also questioned the issues of authenticity in terms of both subject matter and presentation. The photographs on Flickr mimicked the subject matter of the early photojournalists. Atrocity photography, the photographs taken at liberation by American, British, and Soviet soldiers, showed the terrible conditions of camp life to the world. These photojournalists fixated on the liberated prisoners, the rows of corpses, gas chambers and crematoria, and German civilians digging graves for prisoners murdered at nearby camps such as Wobbelin.248 The photographs of barracks, camp entrances, and corpses shaped public understanding soon after the Holocaust: on June 30th, 1945, an exhibition of camp photographs entitled “Lest We Forget” opened at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC.249

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249 Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust.*
The Washington Evening Star and the St Louis Post-Dispatch co-sponsored the event, with the latter newspaper reporting that 5,229 people attended the opening day of the exhibition, despite the hot weather. Three weeks later, The Washington Evening Star reported that the exhibition broke all records with 88,891 people who visited the exhibition.250 These jarring photographs, carefully selected to show the American public the atrocities of the Holocaust, became seared in public consciousness of the Holocaust in the United States and the Western world.251

In terms of presentation, some users included black and white or sepia filters to make their photographs look more legitimate by making them look old. What does engaging in “faux-vintage” photography do to Holocaust memory online?252 Meldeine Sipes’ album “Dachau,” uploaded in 2011, exposed the problems of authenticity when it came to presentation. Her photographs were beautifully shot and featured sepia or black and white filters but did not include captions explaining what the photos contained. Sipes, an American photographer based in California, did not provide much context for her forty-three photos. Like other photographers she took photographs of widely-recognized areas at concentration camp sites. Her presentation and her captions did not explain what the images actually contained, but instead reflected her reactions or emotions looking at the different sites.253

Some examples included a photo of a walkway behind a group of barracks titled “Don’t let the pretty color fool you,” and a photo of a tree titled “Magical...this is not.” Once she entered the memorial itself, all of the photos had sepia filters. She captioned one of these photos of barbed wire as “Fenced In.”

Image 25: Meldeine Sipes, “Fenced In”

Sipes’ album not only reflected photography as a means of memory, but also Flickr culture. Photographs that everyone recognizes, such as the barbed wire above, are a part of what society chooses to think about, or it decided to think about. Images like barbed wire entered public consciousness not only through atrocity photography, but also through earlier forms of popular media such as films (*Schindler’s List*) and books (*Maus*). Her decision to not include any context or explanations was not only a personal choice, but also one framed by Flickr culture. While Flickr users encouraged each other to share their photographs in community

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groups, there was no expectation to include captions describing the photograph and providing it with context. There was no requirement to include tags such as dachau or concentration camp if the album was already in a community group dedicated to collecting photographs of Dachau. This was in contrast with Instagram, where the primary way to find photographs on a particular subject such as Dachau was through its hashtags. Flickr stuck to its founding principles as a global, community photo-sharing platform even with the rising popularity of Instagram. The notion of a global Holocaust memory was also more apparent on Flickr due its platform’s design.

Under the “About” tab on Flickr, users had the option of listing their hometown, their current city, and country, along with other categories such as occupation, relationship status, and personal website. Looking at this page, the viewer had the opportunity to find out where the photographers of the albums were from. Pablo Lora listed his hometown and current city of residence as Columbia, MD and his country as the United States. Meldeine Sipes listed herself as American and her current city of residence as Santa Monica, California. Other Flickr users in the “Dachau Concentration Camp” group listed their hometowns (and countries), with Bratislava, Krakow, and Brøstadbotn (Norway) among them.\textsuperscript{255} Flickr users

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discussed in the Auschwitz chapter also came from North America and Europe, with people listing their countries of residence as Hungary, Italy, Great Britain, and the United States. Global Holocaust memory in the twenty-first century also saw people from Asia and South America shared their images on Flickr and Instagram.

One example was Taylor Xu, a native of Shanghai who uploaded an album of images from her visit to Dachau. She included photos of barracks, of the crematoria, the Nandor Gild memorial, and the religious memorials. Like Flickr users from North America and Europe, Xu took photographs of the same memorials and ruins. Xu’s album echoed an aspect of Flickr discussed earlier; none of Xu’s thirty-one photographs included captions, only the file number from her digital camera. For Xu and other Flickr users, digital storytelling was based on the images themselves.

These albums reflected that Holocaust memory in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first moved increasingly became globalized. Memory scholars Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider explained that Holocaust memory became globalized due to forms of cosmopolitan memory, which they defined as films, books, and digital media. They argued that global memories “left their cage and

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257 Spanish and Portuguese-speaking tourists from South America uploaded a significant amount of photographs of Sachsenhausen on Instagram. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

became unbound.” Global memories of the Holocaust in mass media before social media were examples of high culture. Commercially successful films such as Schindler’s List, Life is Beautiful, and Shoah were made because they had the necessary financial backing. With social media, an example of modern low culture, anyone anywhere could upload their own memories of a visit to a concentration camp such as Dachau.

Flickr acted as a platform for amateur and professional photographers in the early twenty-first century, and was also a center of filtered memory on the web. The social media platform was an online archive and photo repository anyone with an Internet connection could contribute to if they chose. The notion of accessibility was important for Flickr as well; while big-budget Hollywood films represented a form of high culture, social media represented low culture as the masses could themselves contribute to mass media. Regardless of background, people could contribute to a vast media ecology. Their choices of images and how they conveyed them through digital storytelling represented filtered memory on social media. The Flickr albums were part of a virtual exhibit of individual experiences visiting Holocaust memorial sites. Instagram also served as this kind of virtual exhibit, but the way in people framed and shared their photographs was different in terms of content and captioning.

Instagram

Journalists in Europe and North America criticized how people, especially young people, used Instagram at Holocaust memorial sites and other sites of mass violence. Some criticized the platform for its aesthetic qualities, while others argued that it paved the way for selfies and inappropriate behavior. Kate Bevan, a journalist who wrote for the British newspaper The Guardian, accused Instagram for “debasing real photography” and that its filters were “the antithesis of creativity” as they made all pictures look the same.\(^{262}\) In her view, Flickr allowed for good, meaning creative, photography. She also argued that giving photos a faux-vintage look gave it a history and longevity that it did not deserve.\(^{263}\) Lilit Marcus, who described herself as a Jewish and a travel writer, took issue with celebrities snapping photos at the Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe. She lamented that people took photos of their smiling friends at Auschwitz and others who took “cheesy selfies in front of prisoner uniforms.”\(^{264}\)

Writing for German online news source Deutsche Welle, journalist Heike Mund reviewed Austerlitz, a documentary that filmed visitors using their phones to take photos at the Dachau, Auschwitz-Birkenau, and Sachsenhausen memorials.\(^{265}\) Mund explained that at the Arbeit macht frei gate at Dachau, visitors


\(^{263}\) Bevan, “Instagram Is Debasing Real Photography.”


checked in on Facebook and posted their selfies on Instagram. Serge Loznitsa, the filmmaker, did not provide his commentary on visitor actions: he allowed viewers to judge for themselves. Magazine columnists such as Mark Milke did however criticize visitors like the ones in Loznitsa’s film. Writing for the Canadian magazine *Macleans*, Milke wrote the following.

In an age of ubiquitous technology and look-at-me social media, where “selfies” have replaced a focus on others while traveling – remember when people once took pictures of their friends and family, with their own visage only one among many in a group photo – one might hope that at a concentration camp, restrained behavior might still exist.266

He harkened for the days where people took photos of their friends and families. If a person chose to be in a photo, they were a face among many. He criticized Dachau visitors, arguing that they were more concerned about their own visage than the people they were traveling with. He went further by explaining that he “spent half a day among selfie-snapping crowds seemingly incapable of somber contemplation.”267 Milke mostly criticized youth for partaking in this “unfortunate phenomenon.” Furthermore, he claimed that visitors did not care about the serious nature of the site. He cited one man in his forties licking a popsicle on the way to the main gate. To him, it looked as though the man was about to enter Disneyland and not Dachau. Smiling while snapping selfies was a type of behavior more suited to an amusement park than a former Nazi concentration camp.

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267 Milke, “The Casual Indifference of Dachau’s Selfie-Taking Holocaust Tourists.”
The factors that Milke complained about in his article—high tourist numbers, photography subjects, and the prevalence of smartphones—were characteristic to twenty-first century Holocaust memory. Taking photographs at Holocaust sites was a way for tourists “to perform anethically engaged subjectivity,” or a way of witnessing and telling others what they saw. While Milke saw the selfies as offensive, they functioned as a vehicle of self-expression in a culture of connectivity.

Milke, Bevan, Marcus, Mund and other writers did not ask why youth took selfies, nor did they visit social media platforms to see how young people experienced sites of genocide and mass violence. This oversight is unfortunate, as they failed to see that just because someone took a selfie, it did not mean that they were demeaning the site or insulting the victims. Rather, selfie-taking was a twenty-first century method of remembering the Holocaust, and many of the selfie-takers treated the site with respect. The following section will examine some of these selfies, and demonstrate that they are a valid form of memory, just like group photos. Like the albums in the Flickr section, the Instagram photos are organized chronologically, from May 2014 to February 2015.

Similar to the Instagram posts of Auschwitz-Birkenau, there were areas of Dachau popular with Instagram users such as the *Appelplatz* and the reconstructed

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and remaining barracks. It was common to see visitors take photos in the
Appelplatz and near the barracks, but also with Nandor Gild’s memorial in the center
of the camp as well the crematoria. As the Nandor Gild memorial was located in
the spacious former roll call square and next to the exhibition rooms, it was
unsurprising that many people stop and take photos in that area. One of these
people was the Instagram user erin_micklow whose photo at first glance may seem
flippant and disrespectful, or a product of “look-at-me social media.” Standing with a
somber expression, she posed with the camera facing upward so the viewer could
see her, the barracks and the sky, making for some dramatic effect. Erin_Micklow
did not use the memorial site as runway and contrary to Mark Milke’s observations,
she used the photo as a method of solemn contemplation. In her photo caption, she
gave both a brief historical account as well as her reasons for uploading the photo.
She correctly explained that Dachau was the first concentration camp set up by the
Nazis and existed throughout their rule. In addition, she explained that the
information presented to her was “very emotional to look at” and visiting Dachau

270 Like Mark Milke and Charles Hawley, I saw visitors taking photos at Dachau during my visits there
in 2013 and 2015. People asked their travel companions to take photos of them individually or in
groups with their camera or smartphone, and there were also people who took selfies with their
smartphone. I noticed that the most popular locations to take photos were the reconstructed and
former sites of barracks and Nandor Gild’s memorial. There were also people who took photos in the
gas chamber and crematoria. Mark Milke, “The Casual Indifference of Dachau’s Selfie-Taking
indifference-of-dachaus-selfie-taking-holocaust-tourists/; Charles Hawley, “Touring a Concentration
Camp: A Day in Hell,” Der Spiegel, 27 2005,
http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,338820,00.html.
271 Her Instagram profile confirmed that she worked as a model. erin_micklow and Erin Micklow,
“Modeling at the Camp,” Iconosquare, Instagram, May 16, 2014,
http://iconosquare.com/viewer.php#/detail/721870238454522323_1850513
and learning what happened there made her feel sick to her stomach, “but that it is such an important part of history.”

Image 26: erin_micklow and Erin Micklow, Modeling at the Camp

Erin_micklow’s post was also a form of activism against hate groups due to her choice of hashtags. She concluded her caption with the hashtags #dachau, #wwii, #smashracism, and #smashnazis. Instagram users involved with street skirmishes and protests against neo-Nazis used hashtags such as #smashracism and #smashnazis to relay their encounters with hate groups. Some did not list any affiliation with an anti-neo-Nazi groups, while others used the hashtag #antifa to denote their support of the Antifa movement, a collection of various anti-fascist

Two examples of online activism against neo-Nazi groups are pictured below.

![Image 27: Skriptzsocialclub22, #smashnazis](https://www.instagram.com/p/WBxLOsorU/?hl=en&tagged=smashnazis)

Activism against the far-right on social media was not only limited to Instagram. For the interdisciplinary project entitled *Hate 2.0: Combatting the Far-Right in the Age of Social Technology*, researchers looked at Flickr and how activist

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amateur photographers documented Antifa and other counter-protests against neo-Nazis from 2010 to 2012. There was similar imagery and hashtags found on Flickr: signs crossing out swastikas, boots trampling Nazis, and numerous gegen Nazis signs with smashed or destroyed swastikas.274 These photographs also ridiculed neo-Nazis through witty and subversive photographs; one activist photographer took a picture of a Port-o-Potty with a sign on top reading “Braunes ins Klo,” featuring a swastika in a toilet.275 Erin_Micklow’s photograph was one of the many examples of young people posing in suggestive manners at Dachau. However, their

images were more subversive than initial viewings suggested: not only did erin_micklow engage in her own form of filtered memory, but she also used Instagram as a platform to warn of the presence of the far-right and neo-Nazis.

Selfies and individual camera poses such as erin_micklow’s came under ire by critics who saw them as disrespectful. Instead of accusing young people as disrespectful for documenting their visits to Dachau (and other concentration camps) on their smartphones, it is more useful to think about how they interact with space. Much of the Dachau Memorial consisted of open spaces with outlines denoting where barracks once stood. Tour groups, like the one below, often stopped in the barracks area. Guides had the opportunity to give explanations of what living conditions were like during the Nazi years.

Image 29: Erica Fagen, Tour Group Near Barracks
The barracks area, the Nandor Gild memorial, and barbed wire fences were popular as selfie-taking areas for Instagram users, but more importantly served as examples of curated memory online. Like the Flickr users mimicking the photojournalists at liberation, these Instagram users were selective in their choice of photo setting and which photos they decided to share with their Instagram followers. Group selfies such as the one by eduardomontenegroduque were common in the 2010s, as were the use of selfie sticks such as the one used by fikrihayati. Eduardomontenegroduque’s photo includes him and three of his friends, one of whom was smiling in the photo. He included three hashtags, including #eurotrip, which denoted that he was on vacation.276 Fikrihayati, with the colored triangles behind him, noted in his photograph that the triangles “had meaning.”277 Other photographs, such as the ones uploaded by criskleine and tutururutu, featured the Instagram users standing in contemplative poses in near barbed wire and the Nandor Gild memorial.278

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Image 30: eduardomontenegroduque and Eduardo Montenegro Duque, Group Photo at Dachau

Image 31: criskleine and Cris Kleine, Woman at Fence, Dachau
Image 32: Tutururutu, Woman Standing at Dachau Memorial

Image 33: Fikrihayati, Man in Front of Colored Triangles
To dismiss selfies or “questionably” posed photographs such as the ones above as flippant or offensive misses the point; this genre of digital photography was a type of memory aid. Selfies were a form of media that helped the photographer remember what they saw and to tell a story of their experiences with a site. Media scholar Joanne Garde-Hansen explained that smartphones and cameras were other types of forms in which memories were produced. She argued that the forms of media were just as important to analyze as their content.\(^{279}\) A useful example of a media form according to Garde-Hansen was Google Street View, a platform that explored places through 360-degree immersive photography. As Garde-Hansen illustrated, childhood homes could be revisited and the viewer could see how their past memories were brought to light by recent image-taking and storage.\(^{280}\) To prove this point even further, Garde-Hansen asked the reader to consider New York City, one of the most filmed cities in the world. She argued that people could navigate their way through the city by films they saw or video games they played such as Grand Theft Auto. From “[c]inematic triggers, lines from films, scenes, frames, shots up the avenues, images of the Statue of Liberty, the Brooklyn Bridge, Manhattan and Staten Island have featured in film, television and games to the extent that New York becomes a character itself.”\(^{281}\) Additionally, as Alison Landsberg presented in her theory of prosthetic memory, people often formulated emotional attachments to the content posted online.


Taken together, the selfie as a form of memory did not ridicule the Dachau Memorial, rather it made it into a recognizable symbol online: the selfie both situated the user at the memorial and showed the audience major landmarks from the memorial site. Rather than the memory of Dachau disappearing, selfies helped the memorial site retain its important role in Holocaust memory. Similar to the guided tours of Dachau and the photographs on Flickr, selfies were part of a carefully curated memory on Instagram. Visitors chose to take selfies as their own way of remembering, and chose those images as representative of their visits to the Dachau memorial. Selfies were another example of filtered memory, as the photographers chose to present certain parts of their visits and filtered their experiences for the larger Web community. They were also part of the virtual exhibit of individual experiences relating to the Holocaust. Filtered memory also posed another issue for the Dachau Memorial: who owned its history? Was it the Memorial itself, the German school groups who visited the site, or tourists with smartphones?

**Whose Story is it Anyway?**

From 2016 to 2017, the Dachau Memorial created a Facebook page and a smartphone app in order to engage their audiences online; but struggled with outreach to non-German speakers. *Max Mannheimer Haus*, a German-language study center and international guesthouse dedicated to the study of the Dachau Memorial, used Twitter to publicize their activities and Instagram for study workshops.⁵⁸²

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Geared towards youth, the organization put together tweet-ups (#TweetUp) and Instagram workshops (#instagramworkshop) to encourage their students to share their experiences learning about the history of the site. This Dachau Memorial-affiliated organization did important educational and outreach work with German-speaking youth, but the Dachau Memorial did not use social media up until 2016 to engage its non-German speaking visitor groups. During an interview with Rebecca Ribarek in 2015, a member of the Education Department at Dachau, she explained that there was no social media presence because the Memorial did not have the funds to hire someone for that job. Following the creation of their Facebook page, KZ-Gedenkstätte Dachau / Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site used their space on Facebook to share information about lectures, themed tours, and tweet-ups and Instawalks, where participants had the opportunity to upload pictures from their tours. Although the Dachau Memorial struggled with non-German language education and outreach on social media, they nonetheless had a web presence. Their website offered some background information on the site, and their app, launched in 2017, allowed German and English speakers to go on self-guided tours of the Memorial with their smartphones.


Erica Fagen, Interview with Rebecca Ribarek, November 2015.


was also a useful tool for the virtual tourist, someone who visited the site remotely via their computer or smartphone.\textsuperscript{287}

The content on the Dachau Memorial’s website, though sparse, had basic information on the topics of opening hours, news, historical background of the site, exhibitions, and publications.\textsuperscript{288} The information was available in German, English, Italian, French, Spanish, Polish, and Hebrew and including tabs featuring opening hours and information about exhibitions, as well as a map of the grounds.\textsuperscript{289} It also served as a source of information for those either unable to travel to Dachau or people looking for information on the history of the site. The “Virtual Tour” included brief historical anecdotes and grainy images of different areas of the memorial such as the barracks, the Nandor Gild Memorial, and the religious memorials. For example, the section on the “Roll-Call Square” includes one paragraph describing the function it served during Nazi control of the camp. The following paragraph is an excerpt from a Dachau survivor, then two small archival photographs of the site and one current photograph from 2007.\textsuperscript{290}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{287} Anne Lindsay, “#VirtualTourist: Embracing Our Audience through Public History Web Experience,” \textit{The Public Historian} 35, no. 1 (2013): 67–86.
\item \textsuperscript{288} “Visitor Information - Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site.”
\item \textsuperscript{289} “Visitor Information - Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site.”
\item \textsuperscript{290} “Station 8: Roll-Call Square - Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site,” \textit{KZ-Gedenkstätte Dachau: Stiftung Bayerische Gedenkstätten}, n.d., https://www.kz-gedenkstaette-dachau.de/stop08.html.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
One of the problems of cultural heritage sites like Dachau is how to engage with an ever-changing audience, and the Memorial began to change its digital media
outreach in 2016 with the creation of a Facebook page.\textsuperscript{291} The Dachau Memorial’s website included succinct information about different areas of the site, but not designed for the age of Web 2.0 and the smartphone. The Dachau Memorial created a Facebook page in 2016 and used it to display basic information like operating hours, their address, and directions by public transit and by car.\textsuperscript{292} In terms of content, they used the page to advertise its German-language events. Some of the events were themed tours, or \textit{Themenrundgang}. One of these themed tours focused on football and how prisoners during the early years of the camp played the game on Sundays. Other tours focused on specific victims groups such as homosexuals and Jehovah’s Witnesses.\textsuperscript{293} The Dachau Memorial also utilized social media for their German-language themed tours. The themed tour on Jehovah’s Witnesses included a Tweetup which asked people to bring their smartphone and tweet their experiences using the hashtag #RundgangDachau. Steffen Jost, who worked with the \textit{Max Mannheimer Haus} and in charge of their Twitter and Instagram accounts, led tours for young people and encouraged them to use social media while participating on the tour.\textsuperscript{294} He too asked participants to use the #DachauRundgang hashtag on

\textsuperscript{293} KZ-Gedenkstätte Dachau / Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, “Themenrundgang: Jehovahs Zeugen Im KZ Dachau,” \textit{Facebook}, May 13, 2017, https://www.facebook.com/events/1833811763548107/?acontext=%7B%22source%22%3A%5C%22Facebook%5C%22%2C%22page_id%22%3A130348257015069%2C%22action_history%22%3A%5C%22%7B%22surface%22%3A%5C%22page%22%2C%22mechanism%22%3A%5C%22main_list%22%2C%22extra_data%22%3A%5C%227B%5C%22page_id%5C%22%3A130348257015069%2C%5C%22tour_id%5C%22%3Anull%7D%22%7D%5C%22has_source%22%3Atrue%7D.
\textsuperscript{294} @MMSZ_Dachau, “MMSZ Dachau.”
Twitter to memorialize their experiences and held InstaWalks using the same hashtag.295

One of the challenges that the Dachau Memorial faced in the era of Web 2.0 was how to deal with the “virtual tourist.” Public historian Anne Lindsay explained that the virtual tourist was someone who accessed information about a site remotely – from their desk chair, an arm chair, or the local café – and accessed tourism on their terms. The virtual tourist comes from different demographics and needs different digital interfaces such as immersive websites and interactive platforms such as social media.296 The Dachau Memorial managed to engage visitors on their social media platforms thanks to their Tweetups and InstaWalks, with some tweets and Instagrams photos with the #DachauRundgang hashtag. However, this social media outreach was only in German. A search for the #RundgangDachau hashtag on Twitter yielded forty results with most of the tweets composed from the Max Mannheimer Haus account and Steffen Jost’s personal account. On Instagram, there were only two results with that hashtag.

The Dachau Memorial’s outreach was somewhat limited by their German-only social media accounts, but the creation of their own app in 2017 engaged non-
German speakers by having the app in German and English.\footnote{Linon, “KZ-Gedenkstätte Dachau,” \textit{App Store}, June 13, 2017, https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/kz-gedenkst%C3%A4tte-dachau/id1199821365?mt=8.} Available free of charge on the Apple App Store and Android Google Play, a user could download the app on their smartphone. Similar to the website, it listed basic information such as operating hours and directions, but also included an interactive exhibit of its permanent collection. Organized in seven parts, the interactive exhibit had tabs on the structure of the exhibition, followed by a tab dedicated to each room of the physical exhibition. With simple taps on a screen, the virtual tourist could find out information about the camp in different periods of its existence: 1933-1936, 1939-1942, 1942-1945, and after 1945. The interactive exhibit also featured a tab with a site map, which allowed the virtual tourist to where the barracks, the crematoria, and religious memorials.

Data on the impact and reception of this app is a difficult thing for historians to measure, as the amount of downloads does not represent the educational value of the app. For example, several visitors could use the Dachau Memorial app installed on one person's iPhone. Another example was that it was difficult to determine how much new information a virtual tourist learned from their app use. Public history methodology offers a beneficial way of thinking about digital content, and its practitioners explain that the web is a way in which historians and museum professionals can better reach their audiences.\footnote{As discussed in the Introduction, public historians have long debated the use and relevance of digital media within the realm with public history. They did so by arguing for the usefulness of new and social media in museums, and also dark tourism sites. Michael O’Malley and Roy Rosenzweig, “Brave New World or Blind Alley? American History on the World Wide Web,” \textit{The Journal of American History} 84, no. 1 (1997): 132–55; Stacey Zembrzycki, “Bringing Stories to Life: Using New
of the museum visitor experience in the twenty-first century. As Anne Lindsay argued, an effective web presence helps cultural heritage organizations cultivate new audiences, new media, and further engages existing visitor relationships. In addition, creating an inviting web experience and embracing the virtual tourist is not only good for educational outreach and business, but also for the changing face of public history. By creating an app and having social media platforms, the Dachau Memorial embraced both the physical and virtual tourist. In an increasingly interconnected age, the Dachau Memorial made efforts to engage past, current, and future visitors to their site.

**Conclusion**

The Dachau Memorial struggled with its own memory narratives during the postwar era; different religious groups wished to build their proper memorials on

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300 Lindsay, "#VirtualTourist," 86.
the site, while other victim groups struggled to get any recognition at all. Catholic groups led by Johannes Kolb, the auxiliary bishop of Munich and former Dachau prisoner, pressured the Bavarian government to have its church built. Protestants recognized that they were complicit in the actions of the Nazi government and built the Church of Reconciliation and Peace as a way to begin the process of healing between victims and former perpetrators. The Jewish community of Bavaria commissioned a memorial for the purposes of reflection, and included symbolism signifying the continuity of the Jewish people. Conversely, former homosexual and Roma and Sinti victims struggled to get their voices heard because of continued discrimination in the postwar years. However, the Dachau Memorial made efforts in outreach and education from the 1970s onwards, and invited German youth groups to participate in learning workshops about Dachau’s dark past.

The methodology of dark tourism helps explain visitor motivations to the Dachau Memorial. Dark tourism describes the phenomenon of growing visitor numbers to sites of genocide and mass violence, and scholars of this field ask why that is. For some visitors, going to dark sites was a way of confirming what they already knew. Other tourists included trips to Dachau along with other “must-see” sites in Munich and the surrounding areas: the famed Marienplatz town square, art museums, and the Neuschwanstein castle on the German-Austrian border. One of the most valuable insights from dark tourism was the argument that photography was central to the tourist gaze. The act of taking of the photograph led to the person to experience the site and creating a memory of it.
The photographs on Flickr and Instagram demonstrated that the act of taking a photograph was a form of memory, specifically filtered memory. As in the case of Auschwitz-Birkenau, users took photographs of areas popularized by atrocity photography taken at liberation. Certain motifs such as the *Arbeit macht frei* gate and barracks appeared in their digital storytelling and snapshot photography narratives. This form of memory was different from previous forms of mediatized memory as it allowed people from various nationalities and backgrounds to share their filtered memories of their visits to Dachau. Their photographs of visits to the Dachau Memorial served as a virtual exhibit of individual experiences with the site.

In terms of online outreach and education, the Dachau Memorial used social media and smartphone technology later than the Auschwitz-Birkenau did, but created engaging material nonetheless. The *Max Mannheimer Haus* engaged German-speaking youth through its study center and its own social media channels, and later created tours encouraging youth people to tweet and post photos on Instagram. The Dachau Memorial created its own Facebook page in 2016 and an app in 2017, creating spaces of online tourism and learning. As the next chapter will show, not all concentration camp memorial sites entered Western collective memory after liberation. The Sachsenhausen memorial, located on the outskirts of Berlin, received little attention in the West due to its location in East Germany.
CHAPTER 4
MULTI-LAYERED MEMORIES: EAST GERMAN MONUMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL VISITORS AT SACHSENHAUSEN

The Sachsenhausen memorial posed unique challenges for filtered memory, at once a site of propaganda and later a tourist attraction for those visiting nearby Berlin. Sachsenhausen was relatively unknown in Western collective memory of the Holocaust before the reunification of Germany and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990. The East German government used the site as a symbol of anti-fascist struggle and chose to memorialize communists, socialists, and Soviet POWs. It gave little mention of Jewish prisoners, and none to homosexuals, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and other groups of victims. With the GDR’s portrayal of Sachsenhausen as a symbol of anti-fascist struggle combined with ignoring other victim groups, how did visitors depict filtered memory of Sachsenhausen in the twenty-first century? Given the fact that international visitors not from the former East Germany and Soviet Union had little access to photographs of Sachsenhausen in popular culture before 1990, what sorts of images did these visitors share on Flickr and Instagram? Did visitors problematize the ever-present Soviet-era obelisk memorial? The Sachsenhausen memorial posed unique challenges for filtered memory: a site once used for propaganda, and later seen as an attraction close to the tourist haven of Berlin.
**Historical Background**

The SS first established the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in July 1936 with the transfer of prisoners from the Esterwegen concentration camp. Designed as the model concentration camp by the SS, in 1938 the Concentration Camp Inspection Office oversaw the operation of all concentration camps and moved its headquarters to the city of Oranienburg adjacent to the camp. Like many of the original concentration camps, Sachsenhausen originally housed political prisoners and later imprisoned Jews, homosexuals, “asocials,” Soviet POWs, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Roma. Initial estimates stated that more than 200,000 people were imprisoned at the camp; and later a Soviet commission estimated that more than 100,000 people died at the camp. Newer research, however, argues that the number of the dead was more likely between 30,000 and 50,000.301 Following the end of the war, Sachsenhausen fell within the borders of East Germany after 1949.

Memory politics in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) influenced the staging of Sachsenhausen’s memory in East German society.302 Due to the advocacy of former prisoners, the ruling East German political party *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* (SED) agreed to build three memorial sites with Sachsenhausen included along with Buchenwald and Ravensbrück.303 In terms of World War II and Holocaust memory, the SED focused on a pro-Soviet, “anti-fascist”

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narrative. This meant that the East German state focused solely on victim groups that aligned with its party ideology: political prisoners such as socialists, communists, and Soviet POWs. The sites ignored other victims such as Jews and Roma. Other activist organizations that attempted to hold commemoration ceremonies had their plans stifled by the state government.304 Some of these activists were a group of homosexuals imprisoned at Sachsenhausen who tried to lay a memorial wreath on memorial grounds. Police quickly stopped their efforts and chased the activists out of the memorial.305 Historians such as Jeffrey Herf criticized the East German government for its failure to recognize Jewish victims while praising Konrad Adenauer’s reparation policies in West Germany.306 Germans saw themselves as victims in the immediate post-war era, and this narrative mythologized by the returning German POWs from the Soviet Union.307 By branding themselves as victims, East (and West) Germans ignored the genocide of the Jews.

304 Gay and lesbian activist groups trying to commemorate homosexual victims of the Nazi genocide at Sachsenhausen were barred from holding groups ceremonies, which included laying wreaths and saying the names of victims. This information was garnered from the "Sachsenhausen mahnt!” exhibit held at the Memorial and Museum Sachsenhausen held in 2011, which I visited a few times. Due to its proximity to Weimar, residents of the town wanted to keep Buchenwald out of its historical narrative, while the GDR government wanted to portray Buchenwald as an "exemplary site of antifascist struggle." The townspeople did not want to see Weimar’s historical associations to Goethe marred by a Nazi camp. Klaus Neumann, "Goethe, Buchenwald, and the New Germany," German Politics & Society 17, no. 1 (50) (1999): 55–83. Ravensbrück, a concentration camp used to imprison women, also focused on antifascist struggle en lieu to memorializing women from various religious and ethnic background. Neumann; Insa Eschebach, "Soil, Ashes, Commemoration: Processes of Sacralization at the Former Ravensbrück Concentration Camp," History and Memory 23, no. 1 (2011): 131–56.
The Sachsenhausen memorial opened on April 23, 1961, the third memorial opened by East Germany following the memorials at Buchenwald and Ravensbrück. Used as a Soviet “special camp” from 1945 to 1950 and falling into disrepair in the 1950s, the Sachsenhausen memorial opened on the site of the former prisoner’s camp and included an obelisk-shaped monument, which was common to many of the postwar memorials throughout East Germany that commemorated victims of fascism. The memorial covered five percent of the former concentration camp, with areas such as the “Station Z,” which housed gas chambers and crematoria, razed to the ground from 1953 to 1953 to make space for a shooting range for the East German police.\textsuperscript{308} Over 100,000 people attended the state’s opening ceremony in 1961. The opening ceremony at Sachsenhausen coincided with two major events, one related to the Holocaust and the other to East German policies. In Israel, the ongoing Eichmann Trial captured the attention of the world, and provided Holocaust survivors a televised platform to give their testimonies against the accused Nazi and mastermind of the genocide. The construction of the Berlin Wall began a few months later in June 1961, following a continuous wave of East Germans fleeing to West Germany. This was important to the East German state as it wanted to demonstrate that it took action against former Nazis. According to the East German state, it had purged Nazis from its government, while former Nazis remained in positions of power in the West German government.\textsuperscript{309}

\textsuperscript{309} Jeffrey Herf, Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997).
German state also used it as a political statement to West Germany as Dachau only opened in 1965.310

One of the defining features of the new memorial was the obelisk-shaped memorial, standing at forty meters (132 feet) tall. Marked with eighteen red triangles representing political prisoners, the obelisk represented the eighteen different countries of origin of the political prisoners at Sachsenhausen, similar to the Path of Nations at Buchenwald. Standing in front of the obelisk was a sculpture designed by René Graetz that featured a Soviet soldier handing his coat to two newly-liberated prisoners. Notably absent from the obelisk were other colored triangles representing other victim groups, yellow for Jews, purple for Jehovah’s Witnesses, pink for homosexuals, and black for Roma. By creating such a monument, the East German state continued the trend of its anti-fascist visual representation as was already present in the Buchenwald memorial. Such monuments provided a “memory framework for a national historical consciousness” in addition to fostering a German-Soviet friendship “based in part on gratitude for the Soviet liberation.”311

Following the reunification of Germany in 1990, the Brandenburg Memorials Foundation decided to keep the obelisk memorial as it was part of the site’s dual history – as a site of the Holocaust, but also a site of East German propaganda. It did, however, demolish a brick fence surrounding the memorial in 2012 to make way for renovations. As will be discussed in the sections on Flickr and Instagram, in the

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digital age this memorial became a popular site in which to take different kinds of photographs, selfies included.\textsuperscript{312}

\textbf{Image 36:} Erica Fagen, Snowfall at Sachsenhausen

\textsuperscript{312} There is another sculpture at the Sachsenhausen Memorial located at “Station Z.” This sculpture, featuring two prisoners “in an act of strength and defiance” carrying another prisoner was built by Waldemar Grzimek following the Sachsenhausen Memorial’s opening in 1961. Catherine Plum, \textit{Antifascism After Hitler: East German Youth and Socialist Memory, 1949-1989} (Routledge, 2015): 107.
Similar to other sites like Buchenwald, the East German state used Sachsenhausen as a way to solidify its anti-fascist narrative. The founding myth of the GDR was central to its legitimization as a new state, and the SED wanted to present the GDR as heroic against the evils of fascism. Youth groups traveled to the camp on organized trips and learned about Sachsenhausen’s history through this anti-fascist narrative. It also attracted attention in somewhat unconventional ways; there were racing events for runners, like the Orientation Run at Buchenwald, and photographs from the “Sachsenhausen mahnt!” exhibit featured young couples getting married at the memorial. The state sought to use such events to keep the memory of the camp active in people’s minds. By using the site for fitness and lifecycle events, the SED made sure that the memory of Sachsenhausen became part of the fabric of everyday life. After the reunification of Germany, the Brandenburg Memorials Foundation, an organization dedicated to remembering Nazi crimes, took charge of the Sachsenhausen memorial and began to incorporate the stories of other victim groups. The Sachsenhausen memorial became a popular tourist destination with numerous tour companies in Berlin advertising the camp.

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314 Olsen, *Tailoring Truth*, 120.
315 During my visits to Sachsenhausen in 2013 and 2015, I looked at the photographs of young people visiting Sachsenhausen in their youth groups. There were also photographs of athletes in their running gear racing around the camp, as well as numerous wedding photos. CLEMENS TANGERDING, “Antifaschistische Gedenkläufe,” Die Tageszeitung: Taz, May 6, 2011, sec. Archiv.
Filmmaker Sergei Loznitsa tackled the issue of large numbers of tourists visiting Sachsenhausen and Dachau in his 2016 documentary *Austerlitz*. Loznitsa aimed to show how tourists, not Holocaust survivors or historians, experienced the two sites. Filming in black and white, Losnitza documented tourists stopping by the *Arbeit macht frei* gates of Sachsenhausen and Dachau. Tourists took photos of the gate, asked to have their photos taken, and took selfies. In one sequence, Loznitsa showed visitor after visitor taking a selfie with the *Arbeit macht frei* gate in the background. Following the completion of his film, he was skeptical whether tourists remembered what happened at the sites, or if they fully understood the horrors that occurred. In his documentary, he portrayed the two camps as “just another stop on a sightseeing list.” The film, while addressing important topics such as tourist numbers and the frequent use of smartphones, did not ask what the tourists did with the photos they took. Taking the photo was only a component of filtered memory.

**Flickr**

In order to see what people take photographs of at Sachsenhausen, a search through community groups was necessary. One of the groups found was [http://www.mosaictours.org/](http://www.mosaictours.org/); “Sachsenhausen Memorial - Berlin Tours,” SANDEMANs NEW Europe, accessed August 9, 2015, [http://www.newberlintours.com/daily-tours/sachsenhausen-memorial.html](http://www.newberlintours.com/daily-tours/sachsenhausen-memorial.html).

“Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp,” chosen here for its numerous community members from around the world, thus reflecting a more global Holocaust memory. The description of the group is short, and asks users to add photos “of and from the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in Oranienburg near Berlin in Germany.” In terms of further historical description, there is a link to the Wikipedia page on Sachsenhausen, as well as a webpage from JewishGen.org with short blurbs and four archival photographs of the camp. All the albums analyzed in this section were part of this group, and were best suited for this analysis because they reflect their engagement, or the social aspects, of Flickr’s social network. Like the Flickr albums in Chapter One and Chapter Two, these albums are organized chronologically and range from 2010 to 2014.

The administrator for the “Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp” Flickr group, Matthew Benjamin Coleman, uploaded his album in 2010 and included personal connections that echoed postmemory, the term coined by Marianne Hirsch. Coleman, a British Flickr user, included photos from personal and family visits in 1995, 2003, and 2010, and the album contains eighty-one photographs. He began his album with a photograph of a ledger featuring his great-grandfather’s name (Aron Fertig) along with names of other Jews from Berlin imprisoned at Sachsenhausen. Aron Fertig died at Sachsenhausen on August 13, 1940. We can analyze this album as an example of postmemory due to Coleman’s family history at

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Sachsenhausen. Postmemory denotes how generations after the Holocaust relate to the event through stories, images, and the culture in which they grew up. The concept allows for an analysis of how people connect with the historic events of the Holocaust through imaginative and creative means. Here we see how Coleman connected with his own family history by visiting Sachsenhausen three times over fifteen years and used a photograph of a ledger with his grandfather’s name on it to begin the album. Hirsch’s concept of postmemory is explicitly about intergenerational memory and how descendants of survivors dealt with the memory of the Holocaust. It was not Coleman himself who took the photo of the ledger featuring his grandfather’s name, rather it was other members of his family during a visit to Sachsenhausen in 2003. This photograph, part of Coleman’s larger family album of visits to Sachsenhausen, resembles what Pierre Bourdieu called an act of social remembrance.322 The inclusion of this particular photograph meant to Coleman that it was one worth preserving and sharing widely. For Coleman, the photograph of the deceased family member’s name was a memory worth remembering.

In addition to his family history, Coleman also included several photographs of the memorial grounds.\footnote{Matthew Benjamin Coleman, “Sachsenhausen (Album),” \textit{Flickr}, (2003, 2010 1995), https://www.flickr.com/photos/suburbanslice/albums/72157624165926123.”} These photographs included the Sachsenhausen
National Monument and “Station Z,” the mass killing complex that held a gas chamber and crematorium. Coleman took the bulk of his photos in 2010, and included images of the town of Oranienburg as well as the Soviet memorial and the 
Arbeit macht frei gate. His photos of Oranienburg comprised street signs, the central train station, houses, and streets. Once he got to Sachsenhausen, he created a type of virtual tour for those who had not visited in person. He took photos of the welcome area and information building, then moved on to the watchtower, and the Arbeit macht frei gate. In addition to the gate, he also included images of the barbed wire fence, the GDR-era fence around the Sachsenhausen National Memorial, mass grave markers, and Station Z. His emphasis on the Arbeit macht frei gate and Station Z fell into the category of atrocity photography as described by Barbie Zelizer. While photographs of the liberation of Sachsenhausen did not receive the same amount of attention as Dachau, such images that are now associated with Nazi terror became a hallmark of retelling the Holocaust story “as it was recycled into collective memory.”

Coleman’s engagement with collective memory of the Holocaust also made his album an example of filtered memory. He chose to present certain parts of the camp and filtered his experiences for the viewer, some of which based on his family history. Due to the technologies of mass culture, Coleman had the opportunity to share his collective memories no matter his background. Social media, specifically Flickr, allowed him to present his filtered version of historical

memory online. The following albums belonging to the “Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp” group also demonstrate such examples of filtered memory.

Image 39: Matthew Benjamin Coleman, “Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp,” Entrance

Image 40: Matthew Benjamin Coleman, “Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp,” Inside the Grounds
Similar to the Flickr albums discussed in Chapters One and Two, the Sachsenhausen albums on Flickr dealt with issues of authenticity and reproduction. Italian Flickr user Nelson Wilbury included eleven photographs in his album “SACHSENHAUSEN ARBEITSLAGER,” most of them capturing imagery seen in atrocity photography. He included photographs synonymous with the Nazi concentration camp system, not Sachsenhausen in particular. His photographs included shots of the barbed wire fence, “Station Z”, toilets and wash stations in Barrack 38, the same building that held an exhibit on Sachsenhausen’s Jewish prisoners. Wilbury’s photographs illustrated one of the consequences of digitally reproduced Holocaust memory. An image can lose its meaning and authenticity if reproduced on a mass scale. Wilbury’s album asks the viewer the following question: does a symbol, in this case barbed wire, lose its meaning if everyone takes a photo of it? While these questions are important ones, Wilbury’s album also reflected something else: that there was a need for visitors to Sachsenhausen to depict “authentic” photographs of the site. By uploading black and white photographs, or ones with saturated colors, the albums had a “vintage” look. Using such filters made the images look more authentic and vintage-looking similar to archival photographs from the liberation, which had a similar aesthetic.

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atrocity photographs of liberated camps such as Auschwitz-Birkenau and Dachau comprise a large part of public memory of the Holocaust.

Image 41: Nelson Wilbury, “SACHSENHAUSEN – Entrata e cinta sud”

Image 42: Nelson Wilbury, “SACHSENHAUSEN – Cinta e torre di controllo ovest”
Flickr user C K continued the trend of posting well-known landmarks of the Sachsenhausen Memorial with references to popular culture. She included twenty-one photos of her visit to Sachsenhausen in February 2011. C K posted images of the infamous *Arbeit macht frei* gate, the barbed wire fence, barracks, and the Sachsenhausen National Monument. She also took a photo of one of the mass grave markers with small stones on top.\(^{329}\)


This practice of putting rocks on top of gravestones is a Jewish custom, and judging by her Hebrew name, C K, or Chaya333, was familiar with that practice and included the image in her album. The three photos with color in them – a memorial lantern, a brick wall, and a rose – are all red. The rose in particular seems like a reference to the famous ending of *Schindler’s List*, where mourners lay roses on top of Oskar Schindler’s grave. The fact that most of her photos are black and white, and

she ended her album with the photo of that rose, makes the *Schindler’s List* reference no coincidence. As previous scholars have noted, that film continues to loom largely in collective, global consciousness of the Holocaust.\(^{330}\) Like her other Flickr counterparts, her album also reflected filtered memory as she chose to interpret her visit through the filtered lens of popular culture. C K also applied black and white filters to her images, a popular trend on social media. This practice of faux-vintage photography, or making photographs look “old” was part of social culture.\(^{331}\) Other Flickr users such as blner37 also employed the faux-vintage technique in his 2015 album.

Image 44: C K, “Sachsenhausen,” Lantern


Blner37, a native of Berlin, uploaded fourteen photos to his album “Das ehem. Konzentrationslager Sachsenhausen,” (“The Former Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen”) and selected the more recognizable areas of the camp, including
the barbed wire fence, the barracks, and the Sachsenhausen National Monument.\textsuperscript{332} His photos were a mix of black and white, sepia, and color photography. A photo of the outline of former barracks with the camp gate and watchtower in the background was a panorama shot.\textsuperscript{333}

![Image 47: Blner37, "Das ehem, KZ Sachsenhausen,“ “Station Z” Commemoration Site](https://www.flickr.com/photos/blner37/albums/72157657113677556)
Blner37’s posting of these images provokes the viewer with the following question: how did faux-vintage photography change the way people view Holocaust memory online? Did giving the photos an older look or aesthetic give them more legitimacy? Giving the photos an older, or more “vintage” look did not give them more legitimacy, but it pointed to the online trend of making photographs “look” more historical and to mimick the photographs taken after liberation. As discussed in previous chapters, the chosen subject matter and using a particular filter were part of a selective memory-making process. Users on Flickr (and Instagram) curated their memories online for others to see.

This collective, communal part of Flickr was part of its identity and appeal as a photo-sharing platform.\textsuperscript{334} From its inception, Flickr prided itself as a milieu for

photography enthusiasts to share and store their work. Flickr user theiulson’s album “SACHSENHAUSEN” reflected this aspect of Flickr culture. Theiulson, who listed himself as French on his profile, uploaded his album in 2014. His forty-four (mostly) black and white images reflected the more professional or artistic side of Flickr. Thieulson, like the previous Flickr users discussed in this chapter, took photos of well-known landmarks recognized in collective memory of the Holocaust such as the Arbeit macht frei gate remnants of the crematoria. He took photos from several areas of the camp and provided titles for most of photographs. Some of these titles included “Camp de SACHSENHAUSEN Mémorial” denoting the Sachsenhausen National Monument, and “SACHSENHAUSEN clôture des barbelés,” a black and white photo of the barbed wire fences, and “SACHSENHAUSEN place de rassemblement,” a color photo of the Roll-Call Square.335

The user engagement in the form of faves and comments reflected the communal aspect of Flickr. One comment thieulson received was on a black and white photograph of the Arbeit macht frei gate. Flickr user Robert Krueger, incredulous as to how prisoners believed that work would set them free, posted the following:

"This is one of the most chilling things I remember from all the studying I did of World War II. The fact that people were told this and they actually believed it! Still gives me chills to think of it!"336

Image 50: Thieulson, “SACHSENHAUSEN,” Arbeit macht frei gate

336 thieulson, “SACHSENHAUSEN (Album).”
Robert Kruger's engagement with thieulson's photograph was part of the digital storytelling aspect of Flickr. As media theorist Jean Burgess explained, people used Flickr in order to connect with one another and share experiences.\textsuperscript{337} Although Kruger did not say whether he traveled to Sachsenhausen himself, he nonetheless shared his experience learning about World War II. This culture of community on Flickr was one of its defining characteristics, which users demonstrated by contributing to groups such as “Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp.” By sharing their photos in this way, Flickr became a useful tool for the virtual tourist, someone who visited the site remotely via their computer.\textsuperscript{338} Flickr also acted as a virtual archive of people's experiences visiting Sachsenhausen; an archive of individual


experiences relating to the interaction with Holocaust sites. These two characteristics also mark a shift in photography itself. These images were digital, not analog. Unlike analog photographs, they traveled in a digital network. This digital network allowed people to share their work freely on an online platform within fellow professional and amateur photographers.

As the next section on Instagram will demonstrate, it too served as a platform for historical memory. Unlike Flickr, however, which had more of a semblance of organization with its groups, Instagram represented the messy, populist archive of the Internet. Users did not share their images by posting in groups, but by using a variety of hashtags. Filtered memory on Instagram was about the photographs and hashtags, and together they reflected filtered memory through smartphones.

**Instagram**

Sergey Loznitza’s film *Austerlitz* featured visitors taking selfies at the *Arbeit macht frei* entrance at Sachsenhausen. His camera, which remained in the same position throughout the entire film, captured almost every single visitor stopping at the gate and taking a photo. 339 This behavior became synonymous with Instagram culture during the 2010s. The photographs in front of the Sachsenhausen National Monument pose some of the most compelling questions for historians. This monument served as a popular area for taking photographs with its imposing stature and central location within the Sachsenhausen memorial. The monument, a

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relic of East German memory culture, was one of the most popular landmarks for photo-takers. Did visitors realize they posed with East German propaganda, with only certain victim groups acknowledged? If yes, did they mention anything that demonstrated such knowledge? The more interesting question regarding Instagram and its role as a memory filter, however, was how the different layers of memory from the Nazi, the GDR, and the post-unification periods blended within one frame. The filtered memory of Sachsenhausen online was linked to the East German state’s own filtered memory. The following analysis focuses on photographs taken from 2013 to 2015 of the Sachsenhausen National Monument and the Arbeit macht frei gate. Though visitors took photographs of other areas of the Sachsenhausen memorial, this section compares the two most popular areas and relates them to the concept of filtered memory. As previously discussed in the chapters on Auschwitz-Birkenau and Dachau, visitors took solemn selfies reflecting on the historical weight of the concentration camp site. One of these Instagram users took a selfie and wrote that she needed more time to visit the site. Standing in front of the Arbeit macht frei gate with her companion, she expressed that she had “quite an experience.”340 Other visitors uploaded photographs of themselves in serious poses, but added filters or comments that could be deemed “questionable” or “offensive.” One of these photographs featured a man standing in front of the Sachsenhausen National Monument, stone-faced, but with a lightsaber filter evoking the Star Wars

franchise.  

Image 52: 74nj4, Selfie in front of Arbeit macht frei gate

Image 53: wheresdurr, Jedi at Sachsenhausen

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The photographs of the Sachsenhausen National Monument on Instagram differ from photographs of the monument in pre-digital age on a few fronts. Some of the more obvious differences are the prevalence of selfies, selfie sticks, and hashtags on Instagram. Although self-photography is nothing new, using it in combination with hashtags such as #eurotrip #eyeopener or #blackday separates Instagram from earlier the pre-digital snapshots of the monument. There are also physical differences: prior to 2011, there was a brick wall surrounding the memorial. Some Flickr users included images of this wall in their albums, such Matthew Benjamin Coleman, mentioned in the previous section on Flickr. As his photographs as the ones of other Flickr users pre-date 2011, snapshots of the wall on Instagram are virtually non-existent. The most notable difference, however, was the re-sacralization of the monument by Instagram users. They chose that part of the Sachsenhausen memorial to be a focal point of the site’s history and memory. The photographs of this obelisk-shaped memorial represent not the historical memory of Sachsenhausen itself, but how people chose to tell the story of Sachsenhausen. To paraphrase Janina Struk, the photographs do not always give the viewer a better understanding of the Holocaust, but “how the world has been ordered since.” Moreover, as she further states, “[t]he present always has its own agenda for restructuring the past.”342 Filtered memory, like other forms of Holocaust memory, was not neutral.

The photographs of the Sachsenhausen National Monument on Instagram, as explained, represented how people chose to remember Sachsenhausen, rather the history of the site itself. Another example of this comes from user electrolights, who stood in front of the Sachsenhausen National Monument and gazed into the distance. Electrolights uploaded his photo on August 28, 2014 during the height of tourist season in Berlin. Electrolights’ photo is pertinent for several reasons. He followed the trend of including himself in his post, something that Instagram users also did for Auschwitz-Birkenau and Dachau. Similar to visitors at Dachau, he took his photo at the memorial's central monument. He captioned his photograph to urge people to visit Sachsenhausen and learn about the history of World War II. Using the hashtag #eyeopener, electrolights conveyed to his audience that his visit was meaningful.

Image 54: Electrolights, Sachsenhausen National Monument

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His emphasis on learning the history of World War II also points to another problem – representing the site in post-unification Germany. The staff struggled with how to represent the “triple history” of Sachsenhausen: first as a Nazi concentration camp, secondly as a Soviet prisoner camp, and thirdly as a form of GDR propaganda. In 1990, soon after the unification of Germany, the state of Brandenburg appointed a team of historians to give recommendations to its memorial sites such as Sachsenhausen and Buchenwald.344 The interim director of Sachsenhausen, appointed in 1991, equated the actions of the Soviet camp to the Nazi ones prior the completion of the report. His actions showed that using the same memorial space did not necessarily guarantee a more balanced interpretation of Sachsenhausen’s history. Furthermore, the memorial’s administration had trouble identifying its public due to dwindling visitor numbers. Sachsenhausen was no longer a required destination for “school groups, trade union members, National People’s Army recruits, and other organizations.”345 Throughout the 1990s, administrators and historians struggled dealing with competing memory claims.346

Electrolights’ photograph shed light on this difficult history at the Sachsenhausen Memorial and how the site struggled to come to terms with its past, something that would continue well into the twenty-first century. The Sachsenhausen memorial received criticism for charging an entrance fee for all visitors.344

members of private tour groups in 2011. Günter Morsch, the director of the memorial site, denied that the one Euro charge constituted an entrance fee. The money collected from private tour organizations – amounting to 20,000 to 30,000 euros per year – would increase the site’s availability of tours. Morsch argued that these tour companies earned hundreds of thousands of euros per year, and the extra 20,000 to 30,000 euros would go towards the memorial site’s own and better-organized tours. In 2012, the memorial completed work on tearing down the GDR-era stone fence that surrounded the obelisk memorial. However, as historian Peter Monteath noted, the integration of Holocaust memory into unified Germany’s memorial culture was nonetheless useful. It connected Germans from the FRG and GDR to “confront more openly the historical reality of the Holocaust,” something which both sides tried to do a decade before the fall of the Berlin Wall. Electrolights, regardless of his knowledge about the history of the Sachsenhausen National Monument, made his own space and created his own memory of Sachsenhausen. By posing with the monument and including hashtags, he presented his own filtered memory.

Desdelakartoffel’s photograph, like electrolights, was an example of connected memory. She uploaded a selfie of her posing with a friend in front of the

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Sachsenhausen National Monument. She chose a black and white filter for her snapshot, matching the thoughtful tone of the photograph. Her choice of a black and white filter reflected what media scholar Elena Caoduro called “analogue nostalgia,” or a longing for the black and white photographs of yore. Similar to Nathan Jurgenson’s arguments on faux-vintage photography, by using a black and white filter, Instagram users want to reproduce the past in their present. Her caption reflected what she saw at the memorial; she wrote that it was a “very sad day seeing the worst we humans are capable of..#SachsenhausenConcentrationCamp #BlackDay.” Her choice of a selfie, a black and white filter, and the addition of a caption reflected the realties of Holocaust memory on social media. Like the other Instagram users who took selfies at Auschwitz-Birkenau and Dachau, desdelakartoffel’s selfie was an expression of identity. Her use of a selfie allowed her to purposely place herself in the center of questions about the human potential for evil. By taking a selfie, she added herself into this global commentary on Holocaust memory. This Instagram post is also useful for explaining filtered memory, as desdelakartoffel literally and figuratively filtered her experience visiting Sachsenhausen. She was also, it should be noted, a Spanish-speaking visitor to the site. This reflected a visitor trend to Sachsenhausen during the 2010s; as Berlin

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352 desdelakartoffel, “Instagram Post by Irene Falcón • Dec 8, 2015 at 7.”
became increasingly more popular with international tourists, visits to
Sachsenhausen went along with it.

Image 55: Desdelakartoffel, Selfie in front of the Sachsenhausen National Monument

Hitamabel’s photograph reflected the popularity of taking photos with the
Arbeit macht frei gate. In her photo next to the gate, she stood and smiled
awkwardly for the photographer.354 Her snapshot was reminiscent of Serge
Losnitza’s Austerlitz, as she was one of the many individuals who stopped and
posed for a photo in front of the infamous gate.355 The Arbeit macht frei gate seeped
into collective memory of the Holocaust thanks to the prevalence of atrocity

354 Mabel Hita, “Mabel Hita (@hitamabel) • Instagram Photos and Videos,” Instagram, July 30, 2015,
https://www.instagram.com/p/5xNFsgKTbd/?taken-by=hitamabel&hl=en.
photography and popular culture. The images of *Arbeit macht frei*, however, came from other camps such as Auschwitz-Birkenau and Dachau.

Image 56: Hitamabel, Standing in front of *Arbeit macht frei* gate

Hitamabel’s Instagram post reflected more on global Holocaust memory, specifically the boom of Spanish-speaking visitors to Sachsenhausen; visitors from Spain cited their country’s history of fascism as a motivating factor to tour the site. The German newspaper *Berliner Zeitung* reported that a significant portion

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of visitors to Sachsenhausen came from Spain and Latin America. As of 2017, the Sachsenhausen memorial received 700,000 visitors annually, however, they did not the nationality of visitors who did not participate in one of the memorial’s guided tours. The Sachsenhausen memorial provided approximately 5,800 tours yearly that consisted of roughly 130,000 participants. Around 60,000 of those participants went on Spanish-language tours, on par with the number of tourists going on English-language tours. The approximate number of visitors with private tour companies numbered around 94,000, with 46,000 of the visitors Spanish-speakers.

Image 57: Photograph of Arbeit macht frei gate by Spanish-speaking visitor c4rmend_.*

359 Henneke, "Gedenkstätte Sachsenhausen."
There were several explanations for this high proportion of Spanish-speaking visitors. Visitors from Mexico and Peru answered that they found history interesting and wanted to visit Sachsenhausen. Blas Urioste, co-owner of Vive Berlin Tours, said that his tour participants had a fascination with German history, specifically the history of Nazi Germany and chose to go Sachsenhausen to learn more. Two students from Barcelona expressed that due to their own country's history of fascism they wanted to see how Germany spoke about theirs. In their
visit to Sachsenhausen, they said that although the murder of thousands of people happened under Francisco Franco’s dictatorship, Spain did not have a memorial site comparable to Sachsenhausen.\textsuperscript{360} It did not come to terms with its own history like Germany did.\textsuperscript{361} Sociologists Oliver Dimbath and Peter Wehling, in their study about forgetting as a component of individual memory, pointed out that Spain did not opt


for the historical remembering of Franco’s regime, rather it opted for the “pact of forgetting” about Franco and the civil war.\textsuperscript{362} Locating and exhuming corpses of Franco’s victims became a way for local organizations in Spain to “recover historical memories.”\textsuperscript{363} As anthropologist Francisco Ferrándiz noted, Spanish society entered the early twenty-first century with “facing the ghosts of the 20th.”\textsuperscript{364}

Spanish visitors to Sachsenhausen had their own unique filtered memories of the site; in addition to seeing Sachsenhausen through the lenses of GDR-era monuments and Instagram filters, they also saw it through their own national history. The Instagram posts by hitamabel and others made Holocaust memory global because they connected to the Holocaust on a personal level, despite the fact that they did not have a personal connection to the Holocaust. By evoking Spain’s history of fascism as a way to connect to the Holocaust they made the lessons of the Holocaust more universal. By weaving together commonalities between the Holocaust and Spanish fascism, they contributed to the expanding narratives of Holocaust memory.

**Conclusion**

The Sachsenhausen memorial presented a compelling case of how people interacted with the history and remembrance of fascism during the time of the GDR

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\textsuperscript{364} Ferrándiz, “The Return of Civil War Ghosts,” 12.
and the early twenty-first century. The East German state used the site to promote itself as heroic against the evils of fascism and had school groups visit Sachsenhausen and learn this particular version of history. The obelisk-shaped memorial, the Sachsenhausen National Monument, built by the East German state to commemorate communist and socialist victims, remains at the center of the memorial while the GDR no longer exists. Visitors to Sachsenhausen during the early twenty-first century included German school groups and people from all over the world. With Berlin as a tourist haven, visitors could easily get to the Sachsenhausen memorial using public transportation. They uploaded images of the *Arbeit macht frei* gate and the barracks, and the GDR-era memorial. Some of these visitors came from countries with histories of fascism themselves such as Spain. Filtered memory at Sachsenhausen manifested through many ways, from national identity to a faux-vintage lens. Through the photos posted on Flickr and Instagram, the viewer could see how Sachsenhausen changed from a space of East German memory to a space of filtered memory, a place where monuments, atrocity photography, and popular culture all played a role in the site’s representation online.
CHAPTER 5
A MEMORIAL FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: NEUENGAMME AS THE "NEW" SITE FOR HOLOCAUST TOURISM

Despite its violent history, the Neuengamme concentration camp disappeared from Western collective memory following the end of the Holocaust. It was one of the largest Nazi concentration camps in surface area at fifty-seven hectares, with over 100,000 prisoners during the course of its operation. Political dissidents from Scandinavian countries made up a large number of the prisoners. In 1944, Nazi scientists brought twenty Jewish children to the camp to conduct medical experiments on them, and later murdered the children along with their Jewish caregivers.\(^{365}\) Death marches also left from Neuengamme, with prisoners forced to travel by foot to camps such as Bergen-Belsen and Sanbostel. Once they arrived, they had no food or medical care; they were left to die.\(^{366}\) Why were these events never publicized in novels, films, or television shows? How did Neuengamme escape collective memory?

Located close to Hamburg, it was not a memorial associated with the Holocaust. The “Counter-Monument” in Hamburg received more local and international attention than the Neuengamme Concentration Camp. The “Memorial Against Fascism,” designed by artists Esther Shalev-Gerz and Jochen Gerz, was a


response to increased neo-Nazi activity in Hamburg and its surrounding areas.\textsuperscript{367} In 1986, the artists installed their monument; a twelve-meter high, seven-ton lead column with an aluminum structure and it gradually sank into the ground over seven years with only the top visible after that time. The idea behind the sinking monument was for people to write, or hammer down their thoughts on how to stop fascism. The artists argued that one day the monument be swallowed by the earth and people will only have each other to fight fascism. Rather that locals and tourists engaging with difficult heritage at Neuengamme, they had the Counter-Monument.

After decades outside the public consciousness, the Neuengamme memorial site formally opened in 2005 and visitors from different backgrounds began to visit the memorial site. Over the years, German school groups from the surrounding Hamburg area visited as part of their school curricula, as did international tourists, many of them coming from tour groups associated with cruise ship lines. Despite the gradual influx of tourists during the early twenty-first century, the Neuengamme Memorial remained relatively unknown. Unlike Auschwitz-Birkenau, it did not have competing memory narratives between Jews and Poles, nor was it regarded a center of Jewish suffering. It did not have different religious groups making their proper memorials like Dachau, nor was it used as a government propaganda tool like Sachsenhausen. The Neuengamme memorial was also devoid of landmarks made famous in Holocaust atrocity photography: no \textit{Arbeit macht frei} gate, no gas chambers, and no crematoria.

Memory-making at the Neuengamme memorial differed from the other memorials discussed in this dissertation. Like the other case studies, Flickr photographers joined groups dedicated to sharing photographs of Neuengamme. These photographs traveled within the network of community groups, and Flickr users provided encouragement by adding faves or commenting on the photographs of their fellow users. The photographs of Neuengamme on Instagram, however, differed from the other case studies. The Education department, along with its student volunteers and tour guides, helped shape the memory of Neuengamme online. Their social media presence on sites such as Instagram (as well as Twitter and Facebook) explained several areas of the memorial site and engaged with other social media users. Coming from a history of anonymity, the Neuengamme memorial used more creative ways to educate the larger public about its history. This memorial site was quite different from the other three in this study. How did visitors depict their experiences at Neuengamme without the baggage of competing memory narratives? How did filtered memory function at a memorial with no Arbeit macht frei gate or monuments? This chapter will demonstrate that the Neuengamme memorial provided one of the most interesting challenges for historians: the absence of expected elements of a concentration camp – the Arbeit macht frei gate for one – gave Neuengamme the freedom to construct its own narrative. This gave the memorial a chance to focus on its own history, ultimately a good thing. Both visitors and memorial staff used Flickr and Instagram to educate others about the history of Neuengamme, but also used the platforms to encourage others to engage with the lessons of history more generally.
Historical Background

The Nazis built the Neuengamme concentration camp in 1938 and originally used it as a satellite camp for Sachsenhausen. The company Deutsche Erd- und Steinwerke GmbH, owned by the SS, bought an abandoned brick factory on the site, and by December 1938, Neuengamme's first prisoners arrived from Sachsenhausen. By the spring of 1940, Neuengamme became a separate camp and its administration forced prisoners to build the camp infrastructure, which included the barracks, the watchtowers, and fences.¹³⁶ Unlike camps such as Auschwitz-Birkenau and Dachau, Jews did not make up a significant portion of the camp's prisoners. Most of the inmates were political prisoners who resisted Nazi occupation in their home countries in Eastern and Central Europe, with many prisoners also from France, the Netherlands, and Denmark. Historians believe that out of the approximate 100,400 prisoners at Neuengamme, more than half did not survive.¹³⁷ Following the war, the British military used it as an internment camp to house former Nazis and war criminals, and closed it in 1948. Soon after, the city of Hamburg took over the site and began using it as a prison. In the 1960s, the city of Hamburg built a second prison facility on the site.

Neuengamme slowly transformed into one of the largest concentration camp memorial sites in Germany, transitioning from a milieu de mémoire, the real or

original environment of memory, to a *lieu de mémoire*, a site of memory.\textsuperscript{370} These processes began in the 1980s when grassroots activist movements in Hamburg insisted that the city close down the prison and acknowledge the site as a former Nazi concentration camp.\textsuperscript{371} In 1989, the Hamburg Senate agreed to move the prisoners, and thus began a lengthy process of relocating them. Although the Neuengamme advisory commission reinforced the argument to relocate the camp in 1992, it took until 1996 for it to be formally enforced by Hamburg’s Justice Senator Wolfgang Hoffmann-Riem.\textsuperscript{372} The first prison building closed in 2003, the second one in 2006. Following the demolition of the prison buildings, the entirety of the site became part of the memorial in 2007.\textsuperscript{373} The inauguration of the Neuengamme memorial took place in May 2005, sixty years after liberation.\textsuperscript{374} The site measured at fifty-seven hectares and featured a main exhibition building, recreated barracks built from the rubble of the destroyed barracks, the former brickworks factory, a monument, and several markers delineating where other buildings once stood.\textsuperscript{375}

The Neuengamme memorial changed drastically from its use as a Nazi concentration camp to a memorial site. With many of the original buildings and landmarks gone, the memorial site had the ability to create a permanent exhibition,

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{371} Ulrike Jensen was involved in these activist grassroots movements during the 1980s. Interview with Iris Groschek and Ulrike Jensen, October 25, 2015.
\item \textsuperscript{372} William John Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past: United Germany and the Legacy of the Third Reich* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2002).
\item \textsuperscript{374} For more on the history of memorialization at Neuengamme, see Harold Marcuse, “Holocaust Memorials: The Emergence of a Genre,” *The American Historical Review* 115, no. 1 (2010): 53–89.
\end{itemize}
provide guided tours, and launch a smartphone app in 2016 which allowed visitors
the opportunity to participate in self-guided tours. With these additions, the
Neuengamme memorial transformed into a lieu de mémoire where visitors could
learn about the past using educational tools provided by the memorial site.

This lieu de mémoire attracted German school groups from the Hamburg
area. Iris Groschek, the Director of Education, and Ulrike Jensen, heavily involved in
getting the Hamburg city council to recognize Neuengamme as a Nazi concentration
camp, explained the different kinds of visitors and tours they offered. Jensen, who
worked as a tour guide at the time of the author’s oral history interview in October
2015, gave tours to German high school students. She and Groschek explained that
as of 2015, they get around ten groups of twenty students per day during the school
year. Jensen explained that she crafted her tours according to the age group while
giving a thorough explanation of the memorial's history as a Nazi concentration
camp. What she did not do during these tours was discuss the experiments done on
Jewish children, as her purpose was to educate, not give the students a “horror
show.” While Jensen decided to leave out important parts of Neuengamme’s history,
her goal was to give students critical thinking skills and reflect on what they learned
during their visits.

In the same interview, Iris Groschek and Ulrike Jensen explained that one of
the biggest segments of international tour groups came from cruise ships docking in

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376 Carsten Manshusen, „KZ Gedenkstätte Neuengamme,” App Store, January 6, 2016,
377 Erica Fagen, Interview with Iris Groschek and Ulrike Jensen, October 25, 2015.
Hamburg. One example of cruise lines advertising day trips to the Neuengamme Memorial was Holland America, which enticed its clients with advertisements. The company gave vacation-goers options of city tours of Hamburg, day trips to the town of Lübeck to try their famous marzipan, and the Neuengamme Memorial. Other companies such as Cunard Line offered tours to well-known Hamburg sites such as the harbor; themed tours such as “The Beatles, Beer, & Bratwurst”; “Medieval Lüneberg”; and excursions to nearby towns such as Lübeck and Niederegger where vacationers can sample “Germany’s finest marzipan.” Cunard Line also offers a “Jewish Hamburg & Former Concentration Camp” tour advertised as “Discover Hamburg’s Jewish heritage and visit a former Concentration Camp, commemorating the lives of those who died in the Holocaust.” Groschek and Jensen explained that these cruise ship tourists usually stayed for an hour or two, had no tour guide, and were “disappointed” about what they saw at the memorial.

The methodology of dark tourism helps explain this interest in visiting a former concentration camp, as well as the expectations of what to see. Coined in 1997, the term was a response to the rising numbers of tourists to dark sites, or places of mass violence and genocide, in the 1990s. Dark tourism, which included sites ranging from Nazi concentration camps, Chernobyl, and the 9/11 memorial, rose in popularity during the 1990s and ballooned with social media due to the ease

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378 Erica Fagen, Interview with Iris Groschek and Ulrike Jensen, October 25, 2015.
380 As dark tourism was term introduced in 1997, it is not appropriate to use it to describe tourism to concentration camp sites before the 1990s. As previously explained, visitor motivations for visiting these sites were limited by geography and socio-economic factors of the day.
of sharing photographs. Groschek and Jensen explained that visitors at the memorial expected to see gas chambers and crematoria, since their knowledge about the Holocaust centered on popular culture narratives about more infamous camps like Auschwitz-Birkenau. Rather than labeling these tourists as frivolous or "macabre thrill-seekers," they were, like visitors to Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dachau, and Sachsenhausen, producers of filtered memory narratives. As Michel de Certeau explained, tourism, and tourists, was an "arena in which individuals ma[de] use of practices and instruments that merit consideration." Tourists, in other words, are in a search of a type of confirmation of what they see. In the modern era, photography was the chosen medium for tourists to show, to confirm to others what they saw. Photographs posted on Flickr and Instagram showed some of the most popular areas of the memorial frequented by visitors. Unsurprisingly, that the barracks, now outlined with the rubble of the original buildings, were by far the most popular area to take photos at Neuengamme. The following sections will address the popular photo-taking areas at Neuengamme for Flickr and Instagram users.

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383 Reynolds, “Consumers or Witnesses?”

384 Reynolds, "Consumers or Witnesses," 338.

385 This is based on my analysis of Flickr groups and albums, and hashtags on Instagram.
Due to Neuengamme’s relative anonymity before 2005, there are fewer published works about the site than about other concentration camps. Yet, there are books and articles written in German and English about the history of Neuengamme from 1937 to the late 1940s in addition to more specific narratives about camp prisoners. Historians such as Bill Niven explained that the local government

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transformed Neuengamme into a prison following World War II and as a result was little known in the Western world.387 Some scholarship exists on the Neuengamme's main exhibition, specifically the way it displays survivor testimonies. Cornelia Geissler, a researcher at Yad Vashem, looked at how newly-designed exhibition spaces such as the Neuengamme Memorial, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, and the House of the Wannsee Conference and how it affected pedagogical practice in the classroom.388 While publications on the history of the camp existed before 2005, works on collective memory of Neuengamme began publication after 2005.

Neuengamme’s relative absence in popular culture and histories about concentration camps meant that visitors had less references for their experiences at this site. There were fewer photographs to mimic, and the site changed drastically from its time as a concentration camp in order for the prison to run. Visitors at Neuengamme mainly took photographs of the rubble barracks, the brickworks factory, and the building that houses Neuengamme’s permanent museum exhibition. These visitors helped determine what was worth remembering at the memorial site due to their choice of what they put online. However, the stylistic choices of Flickr and Instagram users were similar to photographs of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dachau, and other sites.

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and Sachsenhausen. There were black and white photographs, close-ups of the remaining barracks, and comments reminding viewers the horrors of genocide. Flickr photographers utilized the digital storytelling platform of Flickr to share their memories of Neuengamme, despite the fact that had limited knowledge of the site's history available to them.

Flickr user Allisonfire gave her photos a type of aura in her album “Hamburg,” a collection of photos recounting her school trip to the city. She included photos of her visit to Neuengamme. The album contains 112 photographs, and they range from popular tourist spots like the Rathaus, the harbor, to a classical concert, snapshots of her friends and tour leaders, and sixteen photos of various points at Neuengamme. Her photographs were a combination of black and white, and landmarks with and without people. She gave her viewer a short tour of the camp based on her order of photos: she began at the entrance, with a view of people through the grate, followed by the rubble barracks, the Roll Call Square, the rubble barracks again, her friends listening to survivor testimonies inside the permanent exhibition, a view of the rubble barracks taken from the permanent exhibition, the International Memorial, and then more photos of her friends either walking solemnly, hugging, or joking around. This photographer, like other site visitors, fixated on the rubble barracks at Neuengamme. Allisonfire filtered her experiences in an artistic manner through her choice of black and white photographs, and

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389 These filtered memories tended to be more in line with Jewish memory, despite the fact that Neuengamme had far fewer Jewish prisoners.
391 allisononfire, “Hamburg (Album)."
through a metaphoric manner as well. He photographs fit into the the more common memory tropes associated with concentration camp sites, such as as barracks. Like photographs of Jewish teenagers at Auschwitz-Birkenau, she featured images of teenagers looking both serious and jovial. While she did completely remove the unique aspects of Neuengamme, such the International Memorial, her images were mostly through the lens of popular culture representations of the Holocaust.

Image 61: Allisonfire, “Impact”
Allisonfire’s Flickr album reflected several important points about visiting Neuengamme. Firstly, her album demonstrated the international visitor experience at Neuengamme: the memorial is something to do while visiting Hamburg, and it has become one of the sights to see. Visiting the former Nazi camp was on the to-do list for visitors, with advertisements on cruise ship liners such Cunard Lines. Her album also reflected photography as a means of memory as well as Flickr culture. Photographs that everyone recognizes, such as the barracks, are a part of what society chooses to think about, or it decided to think about.\footnote{Susan Sontag, \textit{Regarding the Pain of Others}, 1 edition (New York: Picador, 2004).} Despite the relative obscurity of the memorial, visitors still used Holocaust imagery made known by atrocity photography and popular culture. Like other Flickr users, Allisonfire used black and white imagery to convey a sense of authenticity and seriousness.
Flickr user shuron’s album “KZ Neuengamme” also reflected this Flickr culture. His 2010 album included forty-two photographs of Neuengamme and were a combination of color and black and white photography. He experimented with different angles and exposures at three main sites of the memorial: the train and train tracks, the rubble barracks, and the remnants of the crematorium, now accompanied by benches for visitors.393

Image 63: Shuron, Rubble Barracks, Black and White

Shuron took black and white and color photographs of the same landmarks, such as the rubble barracks pictured above. The repetition of the same imagery is common in Flickr albums of other concentration camp memorials, such as barbed wire fences or the Arbeit macht frei sign. As Neuengamme lacks both of these symbols, repeated and reproduced in museums and mass media, shuron and others chose the rubble barracks as the iconic image of the Neuengamme memorial. The barracks are one of the few (visible) landmarks of the memorial site that have counterparts at other concentration camp memorial sites.\(^{394}\)

Frank K.’s 2014 album “KZ Gedenkstätte Neuengamme” featured twenty-six black-and-white photographs of various areas of the camp, including the train, the brickworks factory, the wheelbarrows close to the brickworks factory, the rubble

\(^{394}\) There are remnants of a crematorium at Neuengamme, but they only consist of bricks on the ground. Visitors would not know it was once a crematorium unless they read the plaque next to it.
barracks, exhibitions, and the International Memorial, which is the only color photograph in the entire album. His imagery is stark, serious, and contains no people in any of the photographs. Using black and white photography and starting his series of photos with the train reflect how the Holocaust was portrayed in popular culture.

Image 65: Frank K, Brickworks Factory

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Nelson Wilbury’s album of Neuengamme contained mostly panorama and close-up shots of various areas of the memorial site. In terms of content, he focused on the rubble barracks, the permanent exhibition, the brickworks factory, and some close-up shots of the fallen victim memorial by the International Memorial.\footnote{Nelson Wilbury, “NEUENGAMME KONZENTRATIONSLAGER (album).” \textit{Flickr}, October 1, 2014, https://www.flickr.com/photos/30995962@N06/albums/72157647841785158.} Because the site is so large, people do not go to both ends of the camp, such as Wilbury, who did not include images of the train or the remnants of the crematorium. Ulrike Jensen explained that visitors usually stay in the center of the memorial, the location of the permanent museum exhibition and the rubble barracks. Groups usually came for two-and-half to three hours, and they did not
have time to see everything with or without a tour guide. Jensen also found there was not enough time to visit every part of the Neuengamme memorial. 397

Although Flickr users Wilbury, Nilssen, Frank K., shuron, and alisonfire all took photos of sites located in the center of the camp, their choice of capturing the rubble barracks speaks to the larger theme of Holocaust atrocity photography and its relationship to historical truth. The photographs taken by Allied soldiers following liberation of concentration camps pushed the authenticity of “unbelievable camp scenes” and also told “a broader story of Nazi atrocity.” 398

397 Jensen expressed her frustration with this, as visitors (especially from cruise ships) walk around the center and are disappointed because it does not look like Auschwitz. Erica Fagen, Interview with Iris Grosschek and Ulrike Jensen, October 26, 2015.
media scholar Judith Keilbach argued, the meaning of these photographs changed over the years. Photographs depicting scenes such as former barracks or crematoria became disconnected from the concrete thing, rather they came to “signify abstractions such as ‘cruelty,’ ‘National Socialism,’ or ‘history.’” These photographs took on a more symbolic nature, and could still contain historical truth due to their transformation into documents reflecting the perception and reception of viewers.\textsuperscript{399} The photographs of the rubble barracks on Flickr represented the abstractions described by Keilbach and also fit into filtered memory. Wilbury and the other Flickr users in this section took the image of the barrack – an image strongly associated with atrocity photography – and made it fit into their own memories of visiting Neuengamme. The image of the rubble barrack became a focal point in the visual memory of Neuengamme and how Flickr users chose to remember it. The rubble barracks were also a popular choice for Instagram users, but the culture of Instagram led to further interpretations.

**Instagram**

The Education team at the Neuengamme memorial employed different pedagogical frameworks in order to get people more interested in Neuengamme’s history. In addition to guided tours, there were also student volunteers that helped Iris Groschek, the Education Director, with the memorial’s social media profiles.


\textsuperscript{400} Keilbach and Wächter, “Photographs, Symbolic Images, and the Holocaust,” 74.
Groschek created the memorial’s Instagram account in August 2015 and with her team of volunteers posted photographs daily. Together, they curated the memory of Neuengamme by posting photographs along with captions providing historical context, something which was missing from the Instagram posts of visitors. They added hashtags to make the images more searchable on Instagram. They carefully chose which parts of the memorial to highlight such as the rubble barracks, the Roll Call Square, and the International Monument. While the photographs did not receive thousands or even hundreds of likes or comments, the staff and volunteers at the Neuengamme memorial hoped that their Instagram posts would help educate and engage visitors from Germany and around the world about the “forgotten” history of Neuengamme.

The staff at the Neuengamme memorial made a point of including several hashtags on their Instagram account, as visitors used hashtags to not only engage with their network of followers, but also to describe where they were. Iris Groschek and Ulrike Jensen remarked that one of the biggest groups of international visitors the memorial received were from neighboring Scandinavian countries. Neuengamme’s history resonated with these visitors as the camp held large groups of political prisoners from Denmark.401 One can find many photographs and photomontages about Neuengamme taken by Norwegian and Danish visitors on Instagram, and one such example is a photograph taken by casparlange89.

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This young Danish man took a photo of the rubble barracks from the nearby permanent exhibition building. Like Flickr users, Instagram users chose this spot to photograph the barracks, as it gives the viewer an idea of the vast expanse of the memorial site. The caption, made up of hashtags including “#tbt #neuengamme #kz #gedenkstätte #camp #germany #tysland #kzlejr #hamborg #hamburg” mostly reference the location itself and nearby Hamburg. Although there was not any explanation of what was contained in the image, it was an example of the many shots of the barracks and photographs taken from that angle. Hashtags not only described the location or subject at hand, but also made their experiences more social; their function included the ability to search for a particular tag on Instagram.

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as well as use tags that denoted Instagram culture such as #tbt. Both the image and the hashtags denote the user’s personal experience at the site, and thus part of filtered memory.

Another part of filtered memory in the case of Instagram was people’s behavior in photographs. Images of visitors smiling at concentration camps was a taboo, a faux-pas, something discussed in previous chapters. Like at the Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dachau, and Sachsenhausen memorial sites, Instagram users also took photos of their friends smiling at the Neuengamme memorial. Hamburg-area schools frequently sent their students to visit Neuengamme, as learning about the Holocaust was a requirement in the German school system. Student behavior online, however, was one thing the Neuengamme staff could not control, nor did reprimand users for their behavior on their social media accounts. Instagram users oberlappensss, bennet2716, and uploaded images of teenagers smiling and relaxing at the Neuengamme memorial. Oberlappensss took a photo of two German teenage girls dressed in jeans, tank tops, and sneakers, sitting cross-legged in front of the brickworks factory, smiling at the camera. The photograph also contained the following caption made up of hashtags” #KZ #Konzentrationslager #Neuengamme #Love #BestFriendsForever #IchLiebeDich #School #Ausflug #LaufÜberLeichen

403 The #tbt hashtag, meaning “throwback Thursday” is social media-speak for something that happened in the past and the person wants to post it and discuss it on a Thursday.
Instagram user bennet2716, a 17-year-old German boy, uploaded a photograph of himself and three friends posing in front of one of buildings at the memorial site. This photograph of brooding teenagers included the hashtags #bestfriends #concentrationcamp #neuengamme #hamburg #memorial. This method of behavior – documenting travel with friends or family – reflects José van Dijck’s argument that media was always social. People wanted to share their experiences through media; social media was similar, but made the process go faster and dealt with more data.

Image 69: Oberlappensss, Sitting in Front of Brickworks Factory

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407 bennet2716 and Bennet, “Four Friends Posing.”
These two photographs also represented the differences between first-generation camera phones and second-generation camera phones, and thus one of the differences between Flickr and Instagram. Digital media scholars Larissa Hjorth and Natalie Hendry explained that first-generation camera phone users usually uploaded their photos on their computer and then onto sites like Flickr, whereas second-generation camera phone users uploaded their photos directly onto smartphone apps like Instagram. While Flickr was a representation of networked visuality, with movement between nodes in a network, Instagram reflected the second-generation “emplaced visuality,” which involved “the entanglement of

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movement and placing across temporal, geographic, electronic, and spatial dimensions.”410 In other words, the intersection between the geographic, temporal, image, and caption provided a new way to narrate one’s experiences.411 Furthermore, the boundaries between people’s personal lives at home and in public spaces such as schools and shopping centers became blurred, and this according to Hjorth and Hendry was particular to youth. Oberlappnesss and bennet2716’s snapshots represented this emplaced visuality, or a new way of narrating their experiences. Their photos represented the ease of sharing images with a smartphone along with adding hashtags, or captions, to their snapshots. Taking photos with friends and posting them on Instagram illustrated the blurred boundaries described by Hjorth and Hendry. The personal was no longer private on social media; oberlappnesss’ and bennet2716’s photographs were products of these blurred understandings of the Internet. Both the smiling and brooding photographs represented filtered memory in a figurative sense, as they chose to portray themselves in this way and contribute to the messy, populist archive of the Internet.

Instagram photographs taken at the Neuengamme memorial also represented the literal form of filtered memory, meaning that they applied black and white, sepia, and other styles that harkened back to the past. This faux-vintage form of photography was a way to make their photographs more representative of a

certain historical period. By mimicking older photographs, they also strove for a sense of authenticity. Marcel_mcvegan, a young German man, used Instagram’s black-and-white filter to share his photograph of the former barracks now reduced to rubble, which provides an aura of seriousness and reflection, similar to photos taken of the Arbeit macht frei gate at Auschwitz. His caption encouraged people to visit the camp, and he wrote “Visiting the neuengamme concentration (sic) Camp memorial again. If u (sic) are from Hamburg and have Not been there yet: go there! It’s worth it. #hamburg #neuengamme #kz #gedenkstätte #kzgedenkstätte #concentrationcamp.” On a primary analysis, Marcel_mcvegan took his photo as an opportunity to encourage others to visit the site and learn about its history. His Instagram post reflected the wider interest of tourism to dark sites. Photography was the chosen medium for tourists to show and confirm to others what they saw and was not a passive act for people like marcel_mcvegan, but an active form of memory. Photography on social media allowed users to share their “ethically engaged subjectivity” on a wide platform.

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413 Barbie Zelizer, Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera’s Eye (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).


Photographs taken by visitors at Neuengamme are examples of filtered memory in both senses: literally in terms of the black and white filter options, and figuratively due to the choice of what, who, and which words they included in their posts. Similar to the Instagram photos of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dachau, and Sachsenhausen, the images were “remembrance of events worthy of presentation.”417 The Neuengamme memorial itself used social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and chose which parts of the memorial to present. Memory of the site was curated by Neuengamme’s education director and her team of volunteers, and encouraged other Instagram users to take part.

Whose Story Is It Anyway?

Photographs on Flickr and Instagram were a representation of how people engaged with the Holocaust and the history of mass violence on digital platforms. Reaching a wider audience was one of the goals of Neuengamme’s various social media platforms. In addition to its Instagram feed, the memorial also had Facebook and Twitter pages, as well as two smartphone apps for Apple and Android devices – one an hour-long audio guide in German and Russian, and the other a self-guided tour of the memorial that includes historical information, photographs, and stories from prisoners from 113 stations at the Memorial.\(^{418}\) The Neuengamme memorial’s Instagram account helps educate the online visitors about the historical realities of the camp and the major landmarks people can still visit today.

This entrance of the Neuengamme memorial site is different from others because that it does not have an Arbeit macht frei gate; rather than addressing the absence of such a gate, the memorial staff used the opportunity to explain the early history of the camp. In this photo from August 2015, the caption explains that the Nazis opened the camp in 1938 as a satellite camp of Sachsenhausen.\(^{419}\) In 1940 it became its own camp and the main concentration camp in northwest Germany. The photo caption also describes how the Gestapo and the SS worked together to bring thousands of people from across Europe as inmates of this camp. The photo also includes hashtags such as #neuengamme #concentrationcamp #hamburg and #kz

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\(^{418}\) The audioguide in English is forthcoming, according to the Neuengamme Memorial website. “Explore on your own,” KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme, n.d., http://www.kz-gedenkstaette-neuengamme.de/en/service/explore-on-your-own/.

(shortened name for concentration camp in German).

Image 72: Neuengamme_memorial, Entrance to Site

This photo of barracks describes the living conditions of sleeping in the barracks, which held 300 prisoners, sometimes up to 600 in 1941. By 1943 and 1944, more buildings were erected and they held 500 to 700 prisoners. Conditions made it difficult to rest and prisoners suffered from poor sanitation and diseases such as typhus. The images also includes a selection of hashtags, including #neuengamme, #kz, #hamburg, and #barracks.\textsuperscript{420} Other photographs such as the brickworks factory and the inscription on the obelisk-shaped memorial contained further factual information about Neuengamme’s history during the war and

postwar years. As the rubble barracks, brickworks factory, and the obelisk memorial all features in Flickr and Instagram posts of the site, the education team sought to share information that was not necessarily accessible to visitors.

Image 73: Neuengamme_memorial, Rubble Barracks

Image 74: Neuengamme_memorial, Brickworks factory
One of the important aspects of the education team curating the memory of Neuengamme was their choice of language; rather than write their captions in German, they chose to do it in English. Iris Groschek explained that her team shares online interpretations in English rather than German in order to appeal to people outside of Germany and to engage them in the memorial’s activities. She explained that staff members write the English-language captions under her supervision, in the hopes that people on Instagram respond, learn more about the site, and perhaps visit the memorial.\textsuperscript{421} This careful decision also reflected an important part of a global, online Holocaust memory. By posting the captions in English, one of the most widely used languages on the web, Groschek and her team wanted to make sure that

\textsuperscript{421} Erica Fagen, Interview with Iris Groschek and Ulrike Jensen, October 25, 2015.
their curated narrative of Neuengamme could be understood by a multitude of people.\textsuperscript{422}

In addition to utilizing English as their language of education, Groschek made sure to involve the student volunteers working at the memorial to contribute to the site’s own memory-making. The student volunteers took the photographs, received credit for them, and were themselves featured in the photographs. Groschek took the photograph below, featuring volunteers holding historical photographs. They held archival photos of the Roll Call Square trying to find the spot where the photos originated. The image showed German soldiers in the Roll Call Square after the end of the war, and the caption gave a short history of post-war Neuengamme, and included the brief use of it by the British as an internment camp.\textsuperscript{423}

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The Neuengamme memorial, as an active participant of the larger museum community in Hamburg, invited other museums to contribute to their curated memory of the site. The Neuengamme memorial education staff participated in Hamburg Museum Week in November 2015, which saw a consortium of Hamburg museums “swapping” places and showing what they learned through their photographs and captions.⁴²⁴ The Neuengamme Memorial visited the Hamburg Museum of History for a week, and the Archaeology Museum of Hamburg visited the

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former concentration camp and took twenty-eight photos of the memorial site. The Memorial reposted five of these photos to display on its own feed.425

One of these images is a photograph of the Detention Bunker with flowers and memorial candles, with the Lo-Fi filter which gave it a darker look, and geotagged as KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme / Neuengamme Concentration Camp.426 The photo had 53 likes, including fellow Hamburg Museum Swap participants, hamburger.kunsthalle, (the Hamburger Kunsthalle, a prominent art museum), histmuseenh (Historische Museen HH, a collection of history museums in Hamburg, including the Hamburg Museum and the Museum der Arbeit, which showcases Hamburg’s industrial history) mkg.hamburg, (Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, an arts and crafts museum), kunstvereinhh (Kunstverein in Hamburg, an art museum for up-and-coming artists) and the Neuengamme Memorial itself. The photo has a bouquet of red, white, and blue flowers, which could represent the victims of various European countries such as France or the Netherlands. The caption, in English and German, describes the historical significance of the site and encouraged users to ask questions.

425 Reposting on Instagram denotes a user taking a photo from another account and posting it on their account. Although Instagram itself does not allow this, there are third-party applications that a person can download and sync with their Instagram account to repost images.
Let's start #MuseumSwapHamburg! Today's topic: ARCHITECTURE.

We searched for connections between @neuengamme.memorial and us! We took a close look at the Detention Bunker: Remains of the foundations of prisoners’ barracks, sick bays and kitchen barracks, as well as the arrest bunker, were brought to light during excavation of the premises of the Neuengamme concentration camp, which were carried out by the Archaeological Museum of Hamburg. In the winter of 1940, a camp prison called the "Arrestbunker" (Detention Bunker) was built by the prisoners. You can identify the 1.30-metre narrow lengthwise corridor and the five narrow cells. Here, camp punishments - such as detention in a blacked-out cell, food deprivation, corporal punishments and, in the corridor in front of the cells, also executions were carried out. Please join us by asking questions or using the hashtag #MuseumSwapHamburg!
The inclusion of the detention bunker in visitor exploration of the memorial was important for several reasons, notably the fact that most tourists opt to include images of the rubble barracks or brickworks factory in the Instagram posts. In addition, as this photo was the first in their series of #MuseumSwapHamburg, it reflected the reasoning for the event, as it showcased an overlooked part of the museum. The Archeaological Museum of Hamburg’s association with the landmark made it clear why the museum chose that as their first Instagram post for the museum swap campaign; museum staff uncovered the bunker. The Archaeology Museum continued with its background in excavation with a post about the remnants of the parade ground.

The image of the historic parade ground – again geotagged as KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme / Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial so Instagram users can find it on a map, and liked by same museums as the previous photo – is a much more popular landmark with Instagram users. The photo was taken from the main exhibition building, and features the historic parade ground, but also the barracks, current administration building, and people walking towards the entrance are included in the photo.427 The photographer did well in showing an overview of some of the famous landmarks of the memorial site. The caption included a brief historical description of the parade ground in English and German.

Image 78: Archaelogischesmuseumhh and neuengamme.memorial, Remnants of Parade Ground

#MuseumSwapHamburg Here's a shot from the Remnants of the Parade Ground @neuengamme.memorial. A fragment of the historic parade ground, around 800 square metres in size, was discovered when the prison building was demolished in 2003. This fragment was integrated into the reconstruction of the parade ground. The broken lines are part of the concrete foundations of the cell block (sic) which was erected on this section of the ground in 1949/50. Together with the remains of the prison building to the north, they document the post-war use of the grounds." 428

Comment: (all hashtags by archaeologischesmuseumhh)

"#Hamburg #Museum #Neuengamme #Gedenkstätte #Instaswap #MuseumSwap #swap # History #Geschichte #Plätze #Architektur #architecture #ig_architecture #igerarchitecture #instaarchitecture

428 The text repeats in German. Archaelogischesmuseumhh/Archäologisches Museum Hamburg, “Fragment of Parade Ground.”
These two photographs taken by the Archaeology Museum during #MuseumSwapWeek reflected the goal of this social media campaign, which was to bring awareness to museums in the greater Hamburg area. There was a difference in authority between the two museums and regular visitors to Neuengamme, as both the Archaeology Museum and the Neuengamme memorial were respected historical institutions. The intent was also different, as museum in Hamburg participated in this activity to showcase Hamburg cultural institutions more generally. The way in which The Archaeology Museum undertook this was rather Instagram and social media-savvy with its use of filters, geotags, hashtags, and bilingual captions. By using the filters Lo-Fi and Clarendon, respectively, the Archaeology Museum used one the central features of a photo-filtering app such as Instagram, and furthermore incorporated the culture of the faux-vintage photo in posts. Its use of geotags also reflected one of the central features of Instagram, as unlike other photo apps, one can pin the location of the museum’s image. Although the use of hashtags may seem excessive with over twenty per photo, the hashtags show an effort of reach out to the wider Instagram community. Using hashtags such as #Museum #Neuengamme, #MuseumSwap and #Gedenkstätte attract people who are already interested in museums and memorials. However, by including tags such as #ig_hamburg, the

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Archaeology Museum reached out to the Hamburg Instagram community to introduce the museum to potential visitors. The bilingual captions were a positive addition to the photographs: by using the common language of the Internet as well as the local language, the Archaeology Museum, Neuengamme, and the Hamburg Museum Swap team demonstrated a willingness to reach out to the Instagram community.

The Neuengamme memorial’s willingness to allow the Archaeology Museum to take over their Instagram account for a week showed that the education staff wanted others to contribute to the historical memory of the site. Although the Neuengamme memorial curated, or decided, how and what to include on their Instagram account, they still invited another museum to add to their narrative. This participatory and collaborative method of memory curation showed that the Neuengamme memorial wants to invite others to not only learn about the history of Neuengamme, but participate in ensuring that the site remains part of public consciousness about the Holocaust.

**Conclusion**

The Neuengamme memorial struggled to receive international recognition due to its forgotten past and recent memorial status. Unlike Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dachau, and Sachsenhausen, did not figure in political or religious battles, popular culture, or used as a vice to promote postwar, state-sponsored anti-fascism. Due to the absence of markers such as an *Arbeit macht frei* gate, gas chambers, and crematoria, the memorial had the ability to create their own narrative. They curated
the memory of Neuengamme and decided how to present it to the public in an accessible way. It concentrated its efforts on an Internet-savvy approach to education and outreach about site-specific information but also the Holocaust at large. In a digital age with massive amounts of information, it is important that the Neuengamme memorial continues its important work in Holocaust education. It is especially relevant in a world where there are fewer and fewer Holocaust survivors who can recount their stories to younger generations such as Millennials and Generation Z, and one where fabricated news and actions of the far-right are on the rise. The Neuengamme memorial knew that good interpretation of the past matters, and used the messy, populist platforms of social media to provide concise and accessible historical information to visitors, both at the memorial and online.
CHAPTER 6

HOLOCAUST MEMORY THROUGH NEW FILTERS: CONCLUSION AND EPILOGUE

**Conclusion**

PETER SAGAL, HOST:

We want to remind everybody to join us most weeks back home at the Chase Bank Auditorium in downtown Chicago, Ill. For tickets or more information, just roll over to wbez.org. You can find the link at our website, as well. That’s waitwait.npr.org. Right now, panel, time for you, of course, to answer some questions about this week’s news. Adam, in an effort to curb the summer heat, officials in charge at the Auschwitz Memorial installed outdoor what at the front gates?

ADAM FELBER: Anyone who’s ever listened to this show...

AMY DICKINSON: No.

FELBER: ...Knows the answer should not be, but absolutely has to be, showers.

DICKINSON: No.

SAGAL: Yes.

(SOUNDBITE OF BELL)

SAGAL: That’s what they did. It seemed you have to be sympathetic to the people who run the museum and memorial at the site of Auschwitz. It’s very hot. People are uncomfortable. You can't modify the buildings to put in air conditioning. So, of course, you want to give visitors there a chance to cool off, sort of an Ausch-spritz (ph).

(LAUGHTER)

SAGAL: But they reminded some people, which is another way of saying literally every person, of the gas chambers. The managers have been widely criticized in the media, which is crazy. What person is like, I came to visit Auschwitz. The last thing I wanted was to be reminded of the Holocaust.\(^{430}\)

This episode of NPR's popular podcast “Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me! took a

humorous position on the Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial installing “mist showers” to prevent visitors from fainting in a heat wave in August 2015. News reporters asked why the memorial did this, especially since memorial staff knew the mist showers would remind visitors of the gas chambers. This incident reminds historians how difficult it is to welcome visitors, maintain the site, and keep its visitors safe, and to not offend modern sensibilities.

The four memorial sites of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dachau, Sachsenhausen, and Neuengamme faced unique challenges when presenting the history of the Holocaust, something that was reflected in the photographs posted on Flickr and Instagram. Auschwitz-Birkenau became the center of Holocaust memory due to its presence in atrocity photography, clashes between Catholic Poles and Jews, as well as its representation in popular culture. Images such as barracks, crematoria, and emaciated victims of Nazi terror were part of atrocity photography, or the type of photography taken during liberation. Catholic Poles claimed Auschwitz-Birkenau as their own lieu de mémoire, using it to express their identities as Catholics and Poles in the Soviet Bloc. Jewish groups claimed the site as their lieu de mémoire, citing the fact that the majority of the victims at the camp were Jews. Auschwitz-Birkenau later became prominently featured in Hollywood films such as Schindler’s List, and the site saw more visitors after the lifting of travel restrictions in Eastern Europe. Visitors to Auschwitz-Birkenau during the twenty-first century shared their filtered memories through these historical lenses; photographs of the Arbeit macht frei entrance, the crematoria, and barracks were central themes on both Flickr and Instagram. Auschwitz-Birkenau as a place of Jewish memory was also apparent in
these photographs, with Jewish teenagers proudly wearing kippahs and waving Israeli flags.

Dachau, another memorial featured prominently in atrocity photography, also had barracks, the Arbeit macht frei entrance, and crematoria featured in visitor photographs on Flickr and Instagram. It too had a history of religious groups – Catholics, Protestants, and Jews – establishing their own smaller memorials on the site, albeit less controversial than at Auschwitz. Dachau, as this dissertation argued, became an interesting case for not only filtered memory but of dark tourism. Tourists who traveled to Munich went to Dachau as a day trip, out of interest or fascination of violent pasts.

The Sachsenhausen and Neuengamme memorials, far lesser known than Auschwitz-Birkenau and Dachau, had themes of atrocity photography in filtered memory, but each had its own sets of challenges. Sachsenhausen became a center of East German anti-fascist propaganda, similar to other sites like Buchenwald and Ravensbrück. The large obelisk memorial in the middle of the memorial site – unveiled in 1961, commemorating socialist and communist victims of the Nazi regime – still stands. The history of memorialization in the GDR was ever-present on Flickr and Instagram. Neuengamme, unlike the three other sites examined in this dissertation, became a prison after World War II and did not feature in atrocity photography, popular culture, or government propaganda. Simply put, people forgot about Neuengamme. Starting in the 1980s, activists fought with the Hamburg city government to have the site recognized as a memorial site. Neuengamme later opened as a memorial site in 2005. With its history virtually unknown, the
Neuengamme memorial framed their historical narrative free of popular culture influence. The filtered memory of Neuengamme reflected this missing link of popular culture; visitors focused on the specificity of Neuengamme’s rubble barracks and brickworks factory, and emphasized through hashtags that the site was close to Hamburg. The Neuengamme memorial’s Education staff, realizing that the site did not have the same recognition as Auschwitz-Birkenau or Dachau, created an engaging social media presence on a variety of platforms including Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook.

The staff at these sites wanted to educate the general public about the history of their memorial site and the larger history of the Holocaust. They also knew the realities of presenting this history to younger generations who did not live through the events or have any personal connection to the Holocaust. This issue was difficult for memorial directors and their employees, as they had to present this material in a way that is accessible to visitors, whether it is through improved museum exhibits or guided tours. The need for outreach is even greater in a world where far-right parties, white supremacy, and renewed anti-Semitism become increasingly popular. Filtered memory, with its color filters, hashtags, and comments, became a central component of collective memory of the Holocaust during the twenty-first century. This dissertation demonstrated the need for

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historians to carefully study social media as it provided a window into Holocaust memory culture of the twenty-first century.

**Epilogue**

The rise of Poland’s far-right government made the work of the Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial increasingly difficult, as it became a crime in Poland to say that Poles collaborated with the Nazis.1 The emergence of far-right political parties, white supremacy, and renewed anti-Semitism demonstrated the continued importance of Holocaust memorial sites in the twenty-first century. The national election in 2015 saw the right-wing, nationalistic, and populist political party Law and Justice voted into power. Its minister of justice, Zbigniew Ziobro, introduced legislation with the intent to “defend the good Polish name.”433 The new set of laws would carried the threat of three-year prison terms for those “who publicly and against the facts, accuse the Polish nation, or the Polish state, [of being] responsible or complicit in Nazi crimes committed by the III German Reich.”434 Included in those laws were punishments for people who referred to the “Polish death camps” during World War II. Critics of Poland’s new legislation claimed that these new laws whitewashed Poland’s wartime history and erased Polish complicity in Nazi crimes in favor of a “feel-good” history of Poland. These debates are still quite relevant in the public sphere, as evidenced with the case of Jan Grabowski, a historian who

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433 Grabowski, “The Danger in Poland’s Frontal Attack on Its Holocaust History,”

434 Grabowski, “The Danger in Poland’s Frontal Attack on Its Holocaust History,”
criticized the actions of the Polish government. Grabowski came under scrutiny for his publications on Polish complicity during the Holocaust. In June 2017, the Polish League Against Defamation launched a campaign claiming that Grabowski insulted and blackened Poland’s name. It published an open letter claiming that he falsified Polish history and the letter was signed by dozens of Polish academics.

Far-right politics and the rise of anti-Semitism pose an additional challenge for Holocaust memorial sites. Germany and the United States saw an increase far-right ideas enter mainstream political culture. The Alternative for Germany (AfD) – a far-right, populist party with overtly racist ideas – won ninety-four seats in the Bundestag during the 2017 election. The noted German magazine Der Spiegel likened the AfD to the Front National Party in France, a “xenophobic, chauvinistic, anti-European party.” In April 2018, the AfD tried – and failed – to present a bill changing the paragraph in the Criminal Code relating to “incitement of hatred” to also include Germans. Critics from other political parties such as the Christian Democratic Union and the Free Democratic Party argued that the law already protects Germans, and is meant to protect minority populations from discrimination. Martina Renner, a member of the socialist Left party Die Linke, argued that the AfD wanted to abolish the law altogether in order to make it easier

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for them to discriminate against the disabled, Jews, Muslims, and refugees.

powers of good.” Lipstadt concluded that the White House did just that, as it was the same day as the order banning refugees.\textsuperscript{441} The white nationalist rally in Charlottesville in August 2017 displayed blatant anti-Semitism as well as racism towards groups such as African-Americans. The rally, which saw the deaths of three people, led to discussions about the rise of white nationalism in the United States.\textsuperscript{442}

Holocaust memorials grappled with questions of memory during this rise of extreme right politics in Europe and the United States. Memorials continued their educational work and promoting their events across social media platforms. The Dachau Memorial continued to offer themed walking tours advertised on their Facebook and Twitter pages. In May 2018, they shared their event for International Museum Day, a testimony with a Holocaust survivor named Abba Naor.\textsuperscript{443} The Sachsenhausen memorial also used their Facebook page to share events, and like the Auschwitz-Birkenau and Neuengamme memorials, reposted photographs taken by visitors at the site. Starting in 2018, the Sachsenhausen memorial shared the filtered memory of its visitors on social media. The increase of social media for these sites does not guarantee more likes, comments, or shares. Their actions do, however, make information about their respective sites more readily available. The virtual tourist can go on the Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dachau, Sachsenhausen, and

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Neuengamme social media accounts and learn about the histories. They can also see what the memorial sites look like in the present day and see how Education staff at each site presents history through walking tours, photographs, and archival imagery. With the plethora of information available on the Internet, the importance of memorial sites sharing accurate historical information should not be underestimated.

Other Holocaust memorials such as the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin continued to be controversial hotspots of Holocaust memory. The Israeli-German artist Shahak Shapira launched his website *Yolocaust* in 2017 and caused an international stir.\textsuperscript{444} The project contained twelve photos from Facebook, Instagram, Tinder, and Grindr and features visitors posing at the Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe.\textsuperscript{445} The visitors act in different ways; some jump on the gray stelae, another does gymnastics, one group pose as “German gangsters” and others take selfies. When one scrolls over the photos, the people are photoshopped over images from concentration camps, with the people now posing with mounds of dead bodies from the crematoria.\textsuperscript{446} Shapira’s project is a response to the culture around the Memorial: over 10,000 people visit per year, and many of them take


\textsuperscript{446} Shapira, "YOLOCAUST."
“goofy pictures” as Shapira put it.\textsuperscript{447} On his website’s FAQ page, he posted the following tongue-in-cheek questions and answers.

"So what am I allowed to do at the Holocaust Memorial, and what not?"  
No historical event compares to the Holocaust. It’s up to you how to behave at a memorial site that marks the death of 6 million people.

"Isn’t this disrespectful towards the victims of the Holocaust?"  
Yes, some people’s behaviour at the memorial site is indeed disrespectful. But the victims are dead, so they’re probably busy doing dead people’s stuff rather than caring about that.

"I’m on one of the pictures and suddenly regret having uploaded it to the internet. Can you remove it?"  
Yes. Just send an email to undouche.me@yolocaust.de\textsuperscript{448}

Shapira criticized people’s actions and questioned what proper behavior should be at a somber site. He shamed them by posting their photographs and by using the email address undouche.me@yolocaust.com for complaints. Shapira’s project is part of a wider discussion on memorialization at Holocaust sites, and how memorials such as The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, and former concentration camp memorials such as Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dachau, Sachsenhausen, and Neuengamme deal with memorialization in age of filtered memory.


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