Reproducing Discourses, Reinforcing Opinions

Establishing Dialogue Amongst Youth in Leipzig's Ethnographic Museum

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Chapter One: The Dialogical Museum and Youth

'All human beings are anthropologists.
All are concerned with the general theoretical questions about human beings,
about explanations of diversity and similarity' (Maurice Bloch)

Introduction

This thesis presents an ethnography that sheds light on language practices embedded within informal and formal educational discourses engaging with contemporary political and societal issues. The work analyzes the museum space and its modes of critical engagement and opinion-making. It does so by studying Leipzig's ethnographic museum and its potential to establish a dialogue, allowing participants' critical reflection on covered topics. The central argument of this study is how the museum is affected by participants' established perceptions of the museum space and styles of socio-cultural discourses engaging with contemporary social issues

The thesis focuses on the discursive engagement of youths with contemporary issues, which was often fraught with conflicts; theorized and practiced by imposing opinions on others, often to convince and enlighten their interlocutor. Moreover, constant discourse repetitions cause a deepening of opinions and separate communicators. I trace the root causes for the participants' discursive styles in a variety of contexts where the relevant topics are usually initiated, e.g. school, family and friends, and how these discourses transmit into museum space- often condemning the aims of the project to failure that aimed to provide dialogue and critical evaluation of topics.

This thesis, in its key contribution, provides evidence for how to facilitate a museum experience for specific visitor groups, including the ongoing issues of the museum landscape. Many museums struggle with how to position themselves within the reproduction of contemporary issues, which sides to take. (Sandell 2007: 177). How to address questions regarding the ethnographic museum's position within contexts of diversity within society? How to address the emerging social conflicts that we can observe in Germany for example (McDonald 2016)? The question of how to transmit specific messages through museum narratives and relating that knowledge to visitors then becomes essential. It is an important aspect linking the museum space to the theoretical landscape of education. Much has been written about the advantages of museum education as an informal space; within that context, many educational approaches such as dialogical conduction, participation, constructivist

teaching, and so forth have been elaborated. What all of these approaches to museum discourse have in common is methodology. Methodology, as a form of activity, is embedded both within a curator's processes of object arrangement and within a museum guide's strategy to provide particular narratives. It is furthermore embedded within process of interpretation amongst visitors (Thomas 2010).

This work traces how, through continuing meetings based on dialogical and dialectical intense reflection, a critical evaluation of topics eventually became possible within the museum space. Issues encountered during the facilitation of this project and described in the following, while sometimes making me wonder what situation I have actually created, in fact show the necessity to provide, create, and facilitate a space in which critical engagement can and must be encouraged, because critical engagement is prevented in many other socio-cultural contexts.

Going back to my initial research question in how the ethnographic museum can create engagement amongst youth within the context of contemporary societal and political issues this study presents data highlighting particular modes of language use that influence the museum discourse. It highlights how not only opinions, which are to be found everywhere, but in particular how language within discourses constitute and reinforce opinions amongst youths (Briggs 1996: 6).

Discourse and Museum in anthropological theory and comparable contexts

The following develops a theoretical framework to trace how previous engagement with contemporary issues influences discourses in a museum setting. On the one hand, this refers to theoretical resources about historical and cultural positions of visitors within the museum experience (Hooper-Greenhill 2000:8), and on the other hand, refers to language and its links to the museum space as learning and teaching environment, because educational processes are mediated through language and every discourse is 'language in action' (Wortham 2008; Blommaert 2005:2). Subsequently, the within this study important aspects of methodology and anthropological theory explain the conducted museum project.

Museum experience and visitor learning

At its very beginnings, the museum was a space where scientists met and discussed questions that were important to them - a place dominated by discursive practices in order to make sense of the world. At that time, objects were absent, but absent was as well a large majority of visitors, because it was a place highly restricted and limited towards a specific elitist audience (Findlen 1989). Since then, the museum space went through a variety of changes

and developments ranging from classification of environments (and therefore institutionally categorizing the museum into different thematic spaces as well) and the accumulation of objects serving to understand the world (ibid.) to its establishment as a social space, opening its doors to a public audience.

Academia invested much time in writing about object - visitor relationships and the process of meaning-making in museums (Stocking 1985; Silverman 1995; Hooper-Greenhill 2000, 2007; Griswold et al 2013; and many more) Much of the existing literature emphasizes the interpretation of objects through "meaning-making", a process highly dependent on the historical and cultural position from within which objects are seen. This highlights the commonly acknowledged fact that in order to produce knowledge in the museum space, visitors rely on previous knowledge to understand and make sense of museum objects (Silverman 1995).

Knowledge, though, is not only transferred through objects alone, but narratives as well, which includes the arrangement of objects in a specific order to communicate a specific story and spoken narratives by those guiding the visitors through the museum. Both open-narratives or master narratives, in several ways depend in their reading by visitors on the visitors themselves. The meaning-making at a particular point in time is always shaped by the visitor's past experiences; these influence the contemporary moment in which the visitor relies on memories, opinions, knowledge, etcetera. Therefore, individual understanding of the objects or narratives in question differs from visitor to visitor, because social positions and experiences differ (Silverman 1995).

Academics have previously focused on meaning-making in the museum as a social space, addressing in how far visitors shape each others' opinions, for example, when visiting the museum together. This social interaction is not only embedded within the museum experience itself, but as well in how that experience can contribute to positioning the museum within wider societal contexts. That contains in how museums can contribute to reducing prejudices towards cultures, or strengthen them (Silverman 1995; Sandell 2002, 2007). Museums' contributions towards society, specifically talking about the ethnographic museum space, by way of its reappraisal of colonial history and resulting effects on culturalization, may furnish a more just and equal discourse. This provides a first direction for how the museum may seek to position itself regarding past and present contexts that are socially relevant (Sandell 2007:177; McDonald 2016).

Discourses and language practices

Within the context of debating diversity that had been theorized, it had often been highlighted how the framing of others is based on language practices such as "us" and "them", creating generalizations and timelessness. This study is not foremost concerned how people, 'the others' are framed, but how discourses concerned with 'others' are significantly affected by the framing of the self and opinions generated through language practices (Blommaert&Verschoeren 2008:18). This highlights how social relations are affected by language, which inhabits a significant position within cultural contexts, and is evident when considering a semiotic approach and analyzing the case study from a linguistic anthropology angle (Wortham 2008).

Hanks defines discourse as "language in action," embedded within contexts that contribute to the interpretation of that language (Blommaert 2005: 2). Blommaert here includes the treatment of discourses as 'meaningful symbolic behaviour' (ibid: 2); that process of language interpretation occurs in contexts that significantly influence the interpretational process, i.e. the process of meaning-making, which, as he describes, "makes it (mis)understandable to others" (ibid: 40). Most important is the uptake of utterances from those who receive the message and who project meaning towards it. They contextualize the utterances furthermore based on their cultural position (ibid: 41-43). The message can be loosely defined as a sign which according to Peirce can "be something which stands for something in some respect or capacity" (Eco 1976:16). Because of that, the significant position of the interpreter becomes clear, as Eco additionally elucidates: "(…) a sign can stand for something else to somebody only because this "standing for" relation is mediated by an interpretant" (Eco 1976: 15). It can only become a sign, because it is treated as such by those who receive it (ibid: 15). In the context of this study, a sign can very generally be an object, be it semantic, or since this study is located within the museum, ethnographic or an artefact. Eco describes how basically, signs do not necessarily even need to exist, they merely "can be taken as significantly substituting something else" (7). The notion of meaning as produced by those who are active within the dialogue, interpreting those signs is particularly meaningful for this thesis.

Blommaert (2005) elaborates that by using (at least) two individuals' processes of meaning-making by imposing different contextualization, broadens and generalizes the signs' message (44). This can be understood in terms of knowledge that is specific and, referring to Gumperz, has been acquired through practical experience' (Gumperz 1982:90), relying on aforementioned contextualization. Context is not only depending on the specific moment in which dialogue occurs, i.e. the communicative event, but as well on the unique individual's

personal context. The analysis of a communicative event can never be limited to that particular moment in time and space, but to investigate the event means to investigate the history of speakers. In this study it means to trace how topics were approached previously and discursively, permitting an analysis of the communicative events in the museum. Discourses are always both local and translocal; meaning- making of language and messages does often continue to be processed amongst those who experienced it, which Blommaert describes as post-hoc recontextualization (Blommaert 2005:46). This often explains, how discursive formations appear repeatedly, specifically in the context of discourses engaging with political and societal topics (Blommaert&Verschueren 2007: 27).

What people do is a constant process of referencing and echoing aspects of other discourses, such as politicians using preexisting scientific discourse, media using political discourse, and so forth (ibid.). Finally, these made-common discursive elements find their way into people's everyday conversations on the same topics, specifically in regards to this study, because participants are exposed to it, care about it, and discursively reproduce it in a variety of contexts. This explains then, why we can study discourses in the museum engaging with these topics; because discourse, and therefore language styles transmits into the museum discourse as well. Ferguson elaborated that style merely refers to the mode of how one does things. Often, this is a subconscious process cultivated through stylistic routines. These routines become automated to the point where we no longer (need to) think about what and how we do certain things, or in this context, say (Ferguson 1999). Grice elucidates that the 'cooperative principle' as intrinsically language, or more specifically conversation, related, is essential within communication, and thus becomes especially interesting for this work. Subconscious behavior is developed from childhood onwards. Behavior therefore is deriving meaning from utterances and people expect certain things to happen as a response to the message they utter (Grice 1989:28-29). Dialogue as social action in which people interpret meaning from sentences is "the home" of language, it is what makes it alive, creates new meaning for the communicators and gives significance evidence for agency that shapes cultural positions, social relations and in this case opinions (Ahearn 2001: 129).

Museum methods and anthropological fieldwork

The field study occurred at the Grassi Museum für Völkerkunde in the city of Leipzig; it took place over a four months period in the winter of 2015/2016. The project was facilitated with three different groups, consisting of ten to twelve participants. Each group met approximately

twice per week over the duration of one month. Within the museum space, participants and I were mostly concerned with the permanent exhibition, in particular the objects and space of the Middle Eastern collection, because I worked in and previously studied the Middle East during years of working in the Grassi Museum. Furthermore, many objects thematically relate to relevant political and social matters (Qur'an, maps etcetera) and aided in generating discussions amongst my participants. Temporary exhibition elements were not ignored, however, but were used to investigate participant's critical engagement, as is elaborated on in chapter four.

Participant observation, rooted in a classic anthropologies methodology, allows a researcher to be close to the subject of study, or in other words is 'putting you where the action is', allowing observation in a 'natural setting', also discussed as 'going out and staying out' or 'stalking culture in the wild' (Bernard 2006: 344). This study therefore employs unusual research tactics, because it does not observe an existing practice or site, as it is not primarily investigating everyday practice, but instead brings a test or research population into the museum space. People do not live in museums; when they enter the museum space they do so for very specific reasons. When they do enter, they employ behaviors in very specific ways, influenced by everyday practice as this thesis will demonstrate. Observing these then required to make sense of behavior, talking about sensitive topics such as ongoing political issues, trying to understand several life histories and most importantly through ongoing participant observation trying to understand meanings of what was observed which then comes back to common participant observation as anthropological method (Bernard 2006: 344). This leads to those whom I actually observed within my study.

Performing a visitor study necessarily requires visitors. Subject visitors for this study, however, were artificially created focus groups, allowing the study of an age group normally significantly underrepresented in the Grassi Museum. Concerning youths in the museum, school classes visiting the museum do not provide an intense engagement with the subjects and thus do not lend themselves to anthropological research. There are various reasons that make youths an ideal group for research, but the main point of scholarly interest lies with the perception that this age group very often connects knowledge accumulated in the museum with what they are exposed to in daily life, including societal or political contemporary debates. Approaching adulthood, they will have to convert all their knowledge into relevant political decision making processes soon, which raises the question of one can facilitate a museum project that offers opportunities for this age group to engage with these topics, and

what methodological form and shape such a project would need to take, leading to another unusual subset for this study.

Those who participated were between 15-17 years of age and were educated at diverse schools, i.e. what is called Realschule, Gymnasium, Gesamtschule. Most importantly, they were mainstream inhabitants, neither rich nor poor, but middle class, and according to their disclosure felt no extreme affiliation for any subculture. In their own words, some explained they were "no nerd or something". Not all of them were regular museum visitors, but all were interested in the latest developments regarding PEgIdA and for them particularly important, its local regional variant LEgIdA, as well as the connected refugee debate. On the one hand they are representative for the age group, but by knowing that they are partaking in a museum related study project the whole research population became not only respondents or subjects but to a certain extent key informants, which in anthropology are described as knowledgeable agents within their culture and within the context of this study it is important that they are willing to share this knowledge with the researcher through participation in the process extensively (Bernard 2006: 196). The problem about that is that key informants often tell you what they think you should know, because as an anthropologist you may have disclosed what information you are looking for. Within this study, this complicated the process: Participants were told that they would create a museum project together with the researcher, using the ethnographic museum as a place to engage with contemporary societal issues. The project was to be based on very specific methods: first of all the museum method and therein the research method coined *group talks*.

Initially, the focus was placed on group discussions, as they correlate to shared museum experiences based on active participation and dialogical conduct (Hein 1998), partly having its origin in previously experienced work with youths in the museum. It provides an active research method, instead of a passive method such as a lecture, and would allow reflection on the learned topics. As a research method, group conversations proved helpful. Sometimes one person came up with a thought or point to discuss and many others, who may not have provided a working point themselves, had the chance to reflect on their experiences through those peer provided prompts. Thereby enabling the investigation of how things worked previously and trace relevant imprinting experiences of the subjects. Often these topics weren't nearly introduced in a way by myself that could have let me to data, which became so important within the context of this study. Placing the focus of research on working with a group is an important aspect within applied anthropology, in particular when working within specific institutions or organizations, and it allowed for the gathering of data

through turning the research population into research partners. However, this does not exclude individual interviews nor does it preclude the use of other methods within this study. Individual interviews, for example, permitted a further analysis of what occurred during group discussions, or if necessary, analyzing the truthfulness of prior statements by investigating it on a deeper level.

This study is embedded within a methodology that understands the museum as space in which discursive practices have a 'come back'. As I have elaborated in the introductory chapter, this study follows previous research in museum anthropology and linguistic anthropology and highlights how pre-experiences pervade modes of current experiences, both within the museum and more general discourses and their perception through language.

The subsequent chapter describes the initiate state of study participants before the project started, recorded mainly within the museum space, but before we started engaging with the collections. It describes my participants' general original views on the museum space and demonstrates how it is both theorized and practiced. In addition, the chapter investigates the perception of important social issues such as the ongoing refugee debate or political movements such as PEgIdA or LEgIdA, within this context.

Chapter three engages with specific language practices in and outside the museum that engage these issues and affect the museum discourse; highlighting the reinforcement of opinions, by providing examples of those practices, e.g. school and family, perceived most influential by subject participants. Moreover, it highlights aspects of travelling discourses and their effects on a variety of spaces in addition to language styles that systematically affect the discourses and the objects of which they speak.

Chapter four details the engagement with a specific exhibition set up at the time of this study, aiming to provide a range of perspectives through art installations within the permanent exhibition. This specific exhibition enabled the visitor to see ethnographic objects within an often problematic history, all leading to an exploration of viewer engagement with this exhibition. It will become evident that the perception of the museum space described in chapter two, the constituted language and discourse styles traced chapter three, and the underlying implication of art objects as meaningful signs all jointly influence the subject's engagement with this exhibition.

In conclusion, chapter five explicates the theoretical contributions of this study and provides some suggestions for further museum work, in particular with the here relevant youths visitors.

Chapter Two:

Contextualization of the Museum Space and Discourse Perception

This chapter presents ethnographic data demonstrating this study's participants construction of the museum space in differentiation to school education. It delineates its functions for and is experienced as a learning environment amongst its participants. At the early stages of this research, scientific linguistic turn and methodology had yet to be established, leading to an investigation of the participants' opinions about the museum and linking their statements to those regarding their previous experiences. In addition, their experiences and perceptions regarding the discursive practices linked to relevant political issues were recorded. This chapter thus provides the key elements for this thesis' by tracing the museum space and its general possibilities for engaging youth while reviewing already established signs (through semiotic relations to school and other educational contexts) and exploring how spaces are interconnected and possibly influencing each other.

General Perceptions of Museums

Investigating the museum and how it is perceived amongst the research population partly took place outside the museum during the recruitment of possible participants. Later, it became part of initial research group discussions with the permanent research population. One of the first discussions revealed that the absence of the relevant age group from the ethnographic museum visitor demographic is not necessarily a renunciation of the museum. In fact, the vast majority of possible project participants I spoke with (about 50 total), clearly expressed a positive attitude towards the museum that already implied the role schools have within this context. Subjects provided, ranging from single word answers such as "nice" to detailed analysis, explanations of their understanding. For some it allowed them to flee from school for a day ("*schön mal rauszukommen*" [aus der Schule]), for others it provided dialogical conduction. Sometimes, surprisingly, study participants provided almost literal recitations from museum literature, thematizing the advantages of working with objects, originality, and illustrative presentation. The positive attitude towards visiting museums indeed incorporated visiting museums outside the regular school curriculum i.e. in the subject's free time. This provides evidence that may be used when thinking about how the museum experience should be facilitated; starting with establishing projects, to further on processing the experience.

Asked directly, many participants mentioned that they would like to visit museums more often, both within the school context and their free time. In addition, many named

specific museums relating to their interests and thus a preference to the individual. A preexisting interest in the topic of the exhibition and/or its provided narrative was a sine qua non for the research population to instigate a visit to a museum during free time. One of the male participants, Fabian, 16, when asked whether he visits museums in his free times, answered: "Yes I do, I'm interested in nature and history, therefore I visit exhibitions related to that". A female subject, Miriam, 16, said she did not have enough time, but that she "would like to go more often, because it is interesting; for example the Zeitgenössisches Forum in Leipzig". Cause-effect connection of interest and actual visits to the museum became clear in several statements such as this boy explaining that he'd go to "historical museums, because …[he is] very interested in history". This quote is linked to an observation I made amongst a minority of participants who were more reluctant about visiting museums in their free time.

Some participants mentioned that the problem is not particularly the missing interest in a topic, time limitations, or the museum itself that prevents them from visiting, but rather the aspect of not knowing what the museum offers, regarding its exhibitions. One participant summarized the issue well by saying that, "I do not visit museums [in my free time] because I do not sit down and inform myself about ongoing exhibitions that could be of interest. I do not have time for that, so I do not know what I could possibly like". He laughingly explained: "When I'm with my friends and we are discussing what to do, we certainly do not say 'hey let's check what the museum has to offer and go there". After being asked if he'd consider going alone without his friends, he replied that due to his limited time, he definitely does not cancel chances to meet up with friends in order to go to the museum and thus being alone. When it was brought to his attention that he had provided many detailed and positive examples about what in particular he liked about museum experiences and that these were evident reasons to visit museums he responded that he had related this to experiences made in a specific previous museum trip. He explained that this had been a visit with his school class to the military history museum in Berlin, embedded within the context of history class' topical focus on WWII.

> Researcher (R): "So, the problem is not that you do not like the museum in general or particular exhibitions, you had mostly good experiences with your previous visits. It is also not the money that prevents you from going?"
>
> J: "No, money is alright. It is very cheap for me because I'm a student and have to pay less; also when it comes to financing these things my parents take care of it".
>
> R: "So, you need a certain motive to go to the museum? A specific purpose? I mean, now we are standing in a museum and you are participating and I haven't forced you to, so what is the difference now?

Jonas: "I Think so".

Me:" What exactly? So, it was the fact that I came to you and offered a specific plan without the necessity that you have to actively research and make up a plan"?

Jonas: "Yes. Though I was also interested in what you were proposing… the topics.

Me: (Laughing) "You mean interest in things you yourself are not looking for"?

Jonas: (Laughing) "Haha, yes".

This provides some possible insights in how to facilitate a museum project for future purposes. How to actually propose ideas to the possible visitor in this age group? How to stimulate the willingness to engage in a rather time intensive project? Even the more positive participant statements illuminated a clear connection of originating interests necessary to facilitate a museum visit. The subject interested in the Zeitgenössische Forum had stated that she first discovered her interest in this museum specifically, because she visited it with her class, again a sign of the museum space previously embedded within a relevant educational context. The first discussion sample, by the male participant interested in historical and natural history museums also had encountered these museums first on visits with his school class. Once he knew that these kinds of museums are enjoyable to him, he continued going there. This encouraged him to also started looking for other museums fitting that description.

These elucidations imply an important part of schools in creating a positive experience and sparking an interest in their students to visit museums. They have created entry points in arousing curiosity amongst this study's and their school group's participants. It is not the personal preference that is of interest here, however, but what inherently lies at the core of the individual taste, the interest embedding the museum as a space of conversation within it; irrelevant whether one likes historical, natural, or military museums. More accurately, the advantages of the museum as a space to engage with one's favorite topic are of special interest; highlighting inherent characteristics in museums in general, common in a wide variety of them despite their topical focus. This directly relates to the study's participants' perception of museum education as distinguishable from school education. In as much as both contrast each other, they are related to each other in so far that the difference of the museum space is constructed in comparison to school. In as much as school education was present to first establish contacts amongst the participants with museums, it also provided the possibility for comparisons between the differing teaching approaches. It was easy to trace a clear appreciation of dialogical museum methods amongst the study subjects, which relates to the theoretical implications of this thesis and to my research question both. The following passage elucidates not only the immediately perceived differences between the two spaces, such as

seeing the museum merely as an escape from the school environment, but also the more complex ones such as working with objects with varying methods.

"It's nice to get out once in a while" or museum versus school

One aspect brought up a lot by the participants, both in talks outside the museum and within the initial discussions in the museum space, relates to school education versus museum education. Participants often replied to questions about the museum in a way that emphasized this difference and the museum's otherness. Utterances, seeing the museum as some form of alternative to standard experiences "something different" or "nice, to get out once in a while" were used to initially describe the positive aspect of the museum visit in order to 'escape' from school. The status bestowed upon such trips is emphasized by mention of the "unfortunate" fact that schools do not visit the museum more often with their classes since museum experiences are "great".

Participants provided specific details about the apparent 'greatness' of museum learning and connected experiences; they contextualized it as a form of alternative to traditional school learning. Many of them stated that it is "super, because it is a practical experience instead of a theoretical lecture". Relating to that they added museum experiences contain "things you do not hear about in [school] lessons". Interestingly, those who had negative museum experiences emphasized the frontal lecture aspect during the museum tour. They focused on its similarity to daily school education, which, to them, made it boring and difficult to follow. This refers both to a museum guide talking matter-of-factly and headphone narration, something quite typical and available in many museum environments. Especially following the recorded headphone narration was generally described as being boring, because you cannot chat with others about the seen objects, as you wear a headphone which somewhat separates you from your peers. They added that this gives them the feeling of being "fobbed off". This implies that shared experiences and dialogues may play a significant role in group related museum visits and experiences, also made evident in the above conversation with Jonas in regards to enjoying the museum with friends over lone visits. It additionally indicates in how the museum space is constructed for the participants as a shared, communal experience, a contrast to "being boring" but quite the opposite: a fun, active, and lively evironment, yet also one that permits information to be seen in terms such as 'clear', 'illustrated' and 'vivid'.

This became much clearer during further investigation of museums and their experience relevant methodology. Relating to others that are simultaneously accompanying

my participants, the dialogical aspect of the museum experience was appreciated in many ways. One participant talked about the advantage of having a "anschaulichen Dialog", something translating to vivid or lively a dialogue. What was it that makes him describe a dialogue as being "vivid" or "lively"? As this was brought up in group discussion and many others not only nodded enthusiastically, but also confirmed through a variety of colloquial exclamations, how is it that this appears a common perception of the museum experience?

This debate and its common attributes identified, for one, a present museum guide who asked many questions, aiming to elicit thoughts amongst participants, and engage his audience, thereby asking them to share their experiences and knowledge. They actively needed to process already existing knowledge in order to make sense of new knowledge provided in context with the museum tour. The participants' reception also relates to working with the given museum objects. The word "anschaulich" was used several times by the participants in describing how the museum guide worked; not only dialogical- but also including museum objects in the presentation.

Museum objects described as being presented in a vivid or lively fashion is not an unexpected discovery. In fact, it has been elaborated several times in museum literature and in the theoretical context of material culture that objects contain inherent lively aspects. This is due to their unknown or known characteristics, which, in order to be understood, require cognitive processes that project the cognitive activity towards them. Connected to lived experience therefore, the object is perceived as being "alive" (Hein 1998, Falk and Dierking 2000, Stocking 1985). Participants emphasized the diversity of museum objects opposing schoolbooks' monotony. This relates to images in schoolbooks, which are, according to the focus group, perceived as rather boring compared to museum objects. An important aspect linked to the fact that the majority of participants visited mostly historical museums is the possibility of working with various sources, such as documents, objects, and originals. In working with originals, there is an added level of educational information, the processes of conservation, which were fascinating for my participants.

Considering the ongoing and wide debate about presenting ethnographic objects as being timeless, out of their context, and displayed in permanent exhibitions, which may provoke the picture of timeless cultures, separated from the rest of the world and stagnant in their development, the inclusion of this debate by the study's participants was quite fascinating. Having participants in the ethnographic museum who were mostly used to historic collections, i.e. seeing objects such as political documents witnessing important political developments human history, there was a chance they might transfer their

experiences to ethnographic objects such as a Bedouin tent in the collection, and therefore not only perceive it as something being undeveloped or unmodern, but as well as something that may account for all Bedouins, consequently provoking a homogeneous cliché in which all Bedouins are equal. Engaging the participants in conversation, which allowed them to ask many questions regarding the Bedouin tent - who, what, where, and why - allowed the guide to clarify and consequentially explain the complex contexts regarding Bedouin culture. Participants stated that it was "a good thing you are here, Diana", which shows there appreciation of clarification and also implies they may have otherwise interpreted the tent as associated with all Bedouins. As is thus evident, it is not the content of the narrative , but the way in which the narrative is constructed, dialogically, in the museum space and through interaction between a guide and the study audience.

The created discourse was neither possible by the arrangement of the objects within the exhibition, nor by the additional textual explanations, as their necessary brevity makes detailed information problematic. Obviously, an appropriately long text, according to the study subjects "would not [be] read (…) because that is what [students] (…) have to do a lot, all the time," "…because it is boring". While objects may hold more interest for the viewers, simply said, there is not enough space to exhibit all kinds of shelters used by Bedouins to emphasize their ethnic variety, nor can the museum accumulate all of them, so possibilities are limited. Relating to these two limitations of the museum exhibit space, which were addressed by present participants, one of the female subjects said that "even then, [she]… would not have come to all the conclusions, which the dialogue provided and if she wanted it the other way, [she]… could read a book, at home". This narration-objects relation can be linked to the initial question in how the museum space is constructed as contrary to school education.

Participants stated at the study's onset not only the previously mentioned characteristics of the museum space as a general place opposed to school, but in fact highlighted the space and method presented within the museum that is related to engaging with objects and the tour experiences. Space in the museum is intrinsically linked to teaching and learning methodologies that contrast school education making a pure lecture situation in the museum is less preferable. Participants explained points such as "being more independent", and "being flexible" within the museum setting. Independence in regards to this study meant the ability to explore the setting in groups with a specific task which, in theoretical terms, is known as a problem-based educational approach. It, additionally, meant avoiding a rather passive position often perceived as typical with a frontal lecture. However,

as they seemed very interested in this researcher's rather long, while enthusiastic speech about complexity amongst Bedouins, which one might call frontal lecture, mode of presentation clearly also affects perception. They commented on question relating to this by saying that since they already had the chance to engage with the object and had time to come up with questions, they were interested and listening to the lecture in order to find answers was "totally fine".

Teachers I spoke to, teachers of the youths participating in the study, as well as the participants themselves, used the museum to make the school content "clearer" (which may explain why such visits are often conducted as a form of section-closure) with the help of objects. Participants independently visited the museum to clarify the object of their interest, which indicates how the museum experience is imagined to work methodologically amongst visitors. It also implies that a museum visit provides the possibility "to make things clearer". It has already been elaborated on what exactly it is that made things clearer for the participants, which was not only related to museum objects, but actively engaging with them through dialogical conduction, the clear delineation of space, independence in interaction, and working with peers. Consequently, the museum is theorized and experienced in a very specific way which will in itself be addressed in more depth in chapter four. Collectively, these results indicate how school and museum are constructed as different from each other, while still connected in educational agenda and clearly influencing each other. The previous observations also aid in defining how the museum space can, and possibly should, work, and how it worked amongst the youths in the focus groups of this study.

Perceptions on discourses "I want to convince the other person"

The discourses that group subjects engage with in this context are focused on contemporary issues. Participants' previous experiences provide a basis for interpretation for their perception of the discursive reproduction of relevant topics, and allow an analysis of how they frame the ongoing discussion and consequently the position to take within that matter.

This investigation was initially conducted in individual interviews, private conversations between this researcher and the participant. Questions asked pertained to their evaluation of the latest developments regarding specific given topics, and asked them to put it into a wider societal context. Further, the interview sought to address how they position themselves, both theoretically and in possible practical ways (including active participation in movements, or how and with whom they thematize these topics) within the debates. Later on, these issues were brought up again in group talks, basing the group dynamic processes on the

results to engage in a deeper investigation of certain elements. The following most exemplary descriptions derive from both investigation methods.

Every participant regarded the latest ongoing developments (refugee crisis, PEgIdA, Afd) as concerning and emphasized that these topics occupy their mind quite a lot, although they are not necessarily active in any movements (on either side of the debate). Reasons for non-participation were diverse, including time limitations and concerned parents who are scared of violence and therefore forbid active demonstration participation, for example. The majority my participants emphasized and justified their own engagement with the topics at hand to them being societal matters; stating that for members of society it is important address the issues in some form. This was intrinsically linked to their developed opinions about these matters. The most obvious reason that emphasizes the context of this study importance of opinions is that everyone provided a very detailed description of why it is important to have an opinion. One problem within opinion research, specifically as it has been described within the academic field of sociology and when solely conducted through surveys, is that those subjects in the group without a clearly expressed opinion, become absent from the survey, which often is read as indicating a disinterest in the asked thematic (Perrin & McFarland 2011:88-90).

As the ongoing societal processes are important to the subjects by their own admission and connect to political positions, they consequently regarded the engagement as an active method to facilitate and contribute to the wider societal engagement. One of the boys, during group discussion, stated that:

> "Yes, I believe this is a societal problem that concerns everyone. I would rather not have people existing, that can stand next to a burning refugee camp and not care about it." („Ich finde, es ist ein gesellschaftliches Problem, das jeden etwas angeht. Ich möchte nicht, dass es Leute gibt, die neben brennenden Flüchtlingsunterkünften stehen und es sie nicht interessiert")

The rest of the group confirmed that this initiated a deeper engagement with the subject and prompted an exploration of other, connected issues. This demonstrates engagement and opinion-making as defining to understanding and participating in societal change. It indicates an opinion generally perceived a liberal political position, in particular pro-refugee, implying how this opinion then relates to other people not sharing his opinion. Further investigation indicated that not caring about burning asylum houses implies people's disinterest based on their political position, and it furthermore contains the aspect of disinterest in that matter because there is a lack of opinion. The opinion-making aspect was picked up in a following

debate by the participants, and extensively discussed afterwards, highlighting how important opinions are.

Many participants stated that having an opinion is important, but it does not necessarily need to be acted upon (through demonstrations for example). These comments ranged from "a general orientation in regard to these issues is good for everyone" therefore relatively moderate compared to the previous quote, or conclusions such as "I agree [regarding having an opinion] because otherwise events such as Rostock Lichtenhagen[1] will happen again. You have to do something against it". Others agreed, all emphasizing how important having an opinion is, because "you should engage with what happens in your country of residence" and "sooner or later everyone is affected by it". Interestingly, the apparently predominant assumption is, that having an opinion goes along with the possibility to change, though in the following it was also emphasized that you do not necessarily have to make your opinion "public". It seems as, paradoxically, the mere existence of opinions in one mind is sufficient, which is why further investigation into with whom the relevant topics are approached and how becomes vital here. In fact, they were saying regarding opinions that it does not always reflect how they actually engage with it.

The relevant topics are discussed primarily amongst friends or family. Amongst these two groups, family was most often approached when something important and often news worthy happened. Participants elucidated that this often triggers an exchange of the latest developments and, again, an exchange of opinions regarding these matters. Most interestingly, when widening the questions towards how these talks are conducted, the word discussion was brought up. The term most often appeared to be associated by participants with conflict, or processes in which the personal opinion stands in the focus. Many stated that discussions do not happen amongst friends, because they mostly share similar opinions, therefore, a further evaluation of the subject does not take place. It was additionally stated that discussions or exchanges regarding the relevant matters are not appreciated when they perceive the other person as imposing their opinion on them. In turn, most often discussion was understood as a way to impose one's opinion on someone else, in other words to convince the other person. One male subject stated that "… [he] continuously discuss [es] with such people [referring to PEgIdA supporters] and try to explain propaganda to them ("Ich diskutiere sehr oft mit diesen Leuten, und versuche Sie von Propaganda aufzuklären." A female noted that "yes, [she]

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[1] This quote relates to the riots in Rostock Lichtenhagen in the year 1992. 300 right-wing activists, and nearly 3000 supporters, attacked the central office for asylum seekers as well a housing block for Vietnamese migrant workers. Civilians not connected to the right wing scene were bystanders.
https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ausschreitungen_in_Rostock-Lichtenhagen

like[s] to discuss with people who have opinions contrary to [her] own, in order to convince them in the end of [her] opinion. Unfortunately, this does not happen very often, because other people do not want to engage with these issues in an objective way". Others emphasized that they cannot really communicate with people who have other opinions than themselves, because they do not have any contact. Or if they did, they lost contact when the dispute came out. Some participants noted that they intentionally avoid bringing up these topics, in order to avoid conflicts so that they usually do not talk to anyone about it because it is just annoying.

What becomes clear throughout these elucidations is that people exchange information with people who share the same opinion more freely than those who have opinions contradictory to their own. They do this in order to prevent conflict, or when they engage they intentionally do so to "enlighten people of different opinion or to convince them" of their own. Interestingly, the last aspect could only be identified amongst those who are against PEgIdA and are pro-refugee. Participants who were rather skeptical, who did not take such strong positions are likely to not talk about it at all with people who have other opinions. The next chapter will link these aspects to more specific examples, providing ethnographic data that explains why there is often conflict, why people rather tend to engage with relevant topics in one or another way through language styles within discourses. As a result this may explain why it was sometimes hard to facilitate dialogue in the museum space with these focus groups.

Chapter Three: Tracing discourse styles – Prevented critical engagement and communicator segregation

This chapter presents ethnographic data tracing language practices within discourses in learning environments. It specifically reviews discourses that engage with contexts relevant to contemporary societal issues and how they move into the museum space, collectively affecting the discourses in the museum space and effectuating strengthened opinions, instead of critical engagement.

Subjectivity in Language "I cannot understand why I was rubbished like that"

This passage elucidates subjective metalanguage, employing the use of I and You and subjective words such as mean, think, find, etc. illuminating the root cause for why participants felt personally attacked during discussions within the museum, which often

provoked tensions and prevented any further engagement with topics. Participants often behaved as if they were the ones at the core of the argument, where in fact the topic discussed was, for example, the basic relevance of the group project. During initial discussions with all three participating groups, there was a subjective metalanguage that created questionable tensions amongst the participants, often creating an entirely subjective communication. Instead of arguing about the topic at the core of the discussion personal arguments developed, creating a hostile atmosphere in which any critical engagement became nearly impossible.

I found that participants almost started every sentence with phrases such as "I think", "I mean" or "I find". Other participants then reacted to these utterances by saying what 'they think', 'they mean' or 'they find' and then basically turning what was supposed to be a critical evaluation of a specific topic into a statement exchange regarding that matter. It not only invited respondents to follow the first example and affirm the content, but it as well lay ground to argue against the first expressed utterance by negating it through saying "I do not agree…" [Ich finde das nicht]. In this context particularly interesting is "I believe" [I find] "I believe/I mean" implies linguistically interesting aspects because in German I mean is to be translated with `Ich meine`. It, therefore, shares a common word root with the German word 'Meinung' which means 'opinion' in English. However, in the German language, the phrase I find as it is the most common and from a linguistic perspective the most interesting one deserves particular attention.

It is used in order to describe what you think about things in the sense of evaluating something, which is comparable to the English language in which it can be used in sentences such as `I find my neighbors very annoying`. The interesting aspect is that in German the English use of "I find" as something to show that I reached a nonmaterial conclusion in the sense of a discovery would be expressed with 'herausfinden' (to find out), e.g. 'Ich habe herausgefunden, dass meine Teilnehmer etw. tun'. 'I find' without any prefix in this context[2], is always used to state my personal feeling about something or when I ask others, e.g. 'wie findest du das' (how do you find that). When formulated as a question, one is particularly interested in the other person's personal opinion about something and then I find becomes interchangeable with to perceive, to feel, or to believe, which in German is 'etw. empfinden als'. It is interchangeable with the German word 'etw. befinden als' which interestingly translates into the English noun 'opinion' or into the verb 'adjudge'. And what all these words

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[2] *I find* without any prefix can also be used to express for example 'I cannot find my left shoe' (I finde meinen linken Schuh nicht'. However, *I find* within that context has a complete different meaning, i.e. the theoretical conclusion related to the verb 'to search for something' therefore engaging with material matters instead of an imaginative 'finding'.

have in common is that they share the inherent aspect of an emotion (empfinden), an individually created judgement (befinden), or broadly speaking a content that significantly emphasizes the reference and is therefore linked to the subject that uttered it. This aspect is furthermore apparent in the pronoun 'I' in which context becomes important now.

When the group talks started, and questions related to the political discourse were asked, participants were never asked for their personal opinion directly. They were asked to share "well, comments on the previous tour?", or prompted to "talk about the content of the previous tour", an address "how (…) what we have learned relate[s] to the refugee issue" and more questions phrased in the same manner. Questions were never phrased as "how do you think this relates to the wider topic of refugees?" and never explicitly formulated in a way that could suggest that personal opinions or thoughts were foregrounded. Very often, if not to say all the time, participants spoke in a way that expressed the personal opinion on something, not only through subjective verbs (find, mean, think), but always emphasizing it through the use of 'I' therefore demonstrating and referencing the utterance as belonging to the speaker which is always 'a unique human being' (Benveniste 1971:218). What then followed were responses, also formulated in that manner, referencing the subject who utters the response. Since the first utterance implied a personal opinion expressed through I, which implicitly addresses you, respondents then adapted the previous response by expressing their opinion as well.

This has its root cause in the fact that speakers always refer to 'one's own discourse in which that person engages with a topic with oneself' (Benveniste 1971: 225). It does not make sense to use I except there is someone else to talk to, which is you. When speakers then express their opinion with the subjective metalanguage we identified, it is done within a dialogue. Respondents then interpret the message as an invitation to speak out their own opinion which is due to the relation between the illocution and its implied proposition. That is not generally a bad thing, but in this context, it was, because instead of personal opinion exchange the plan was to critically engage with topics, which also means to shed light on topics from perspectives which do not necessarily reflect one's own opinion. Additionally, when there are disagreements regarding these opinions, this can lead to the aforementioned tensions, participants who become angry or sad and the interruption of the discussion. As a result, information exchange and critical reflection are prevented. When the refugee crisis was approached for the first time, it was part of a discussion that aimed to thematise the museum project. It was meant to clarify engagement with other museum projects that relate exhibitions to ongoing societal or political issues. This talk stands exemplary for many others in which

participants turned the intended discussion into an opinion exchange in statement form that prevented a deeper engagement.

> Girl 1 "I think ("Ich finde") this is a good subject for the project. We should take in refugees, because Germany is part of the original problem and can financially support it more easily than other countries.
>
> Girl 2: "Well, but it is a fact that refugees take away our jobs"
>
> Girl 1: "What job? As if you had one that someone took away. I guess all you can do is repeat NPD posters, huh ?"
>
> Girl 2: "Well, as if you would pay for all the refugees. You are not paying any taxes or something"!

The first statement does exactly what has been described previously. The use of 'Ich finde' to initially start the statement and then provoking a response in statement form that disagreed not directly, but indirectly by proposing a disadvantage that is associated with refugees coming to Germany. Particularly interesting is the content of that contra statement itself. The argument of migrants or in this case refugees that take away jobs of locals is probably the biggest rhetoric cliché about migrants that exists and is often used by predominantly right wing parties in their political propaganda (Blommaert 2002, Stolcke 1995). In the past, this rhetoric was applied in terms of migrants, but lately used as an argument against refugees as well. In this context the girl had polish roots; usually, she would have suffered from these accusations. In the light of the latest refugee crisis, this language practice gives evidence for how boundaries are created through what Stolcke described as 'rhetoric of exclusion' (Stolcke 1995: 2).

One might wonder what job the girl is talking about; probably not hers, because she still goes to school and as I have further on investigated in a private talk, she never had any experience in which her job was taken by a migrant, nor that of anyone close to her, such as her parents for example. What this whole conversation indicates is that the responding girl first makes sense of the sentence by stating her opinion as a response to the previous opinion. The most interesting part, however, is that the girl does not state an opinion that is made up by herself based on experience or knowledge, but one that she was confronted with through other discourses. In this case, these were transmitted through specific media discourses that found their way into the family household. Information of certain discourses, also termed 'echoes', as Blommaert (2005) calls it, finds its ways into public minds. This public audience the repeats and distributes these echoes further, which appears to have been the case here (27-28). However, relating to the content of the argument, the girl who started the discussion probably had the same thought, which is visible in her answer that addresses the absence of the girl's job. Here as well a subjective metalanguage addresses the girl by the use of you. It is also

present in Girl 1s' response, identifying herself with Germany and therefore laying ground to the last contra argument of the girl.

There is no obvious visible shift of the propositional content whether one says 'I think, that we should accept refugees' or within 'refugees should be accepted'. The main propositional content describes that refugees should be accepted, but the additional words such as 'I think' change context of the sentence. It becomes an utterance that significantly links content to an individual that talks about his/her opinion. The illocution becomes a speech act in which the individual describes a personal persuasion and therefore lays the ground for a response that is perceived and conducted as attacking the speaker, rather than the object or argument of the discussion. This became clear throughout the following interviews addressing the previous discussion with the present participants. Upset and disappointed, Girl 2 told me: "I do not understand why I was slammed like that. You said this is a neutral space." Girl 1 told me that "I cannot understand how someone can be that stupid."

What these quotes indicate is that Girl 1 perceived the messages as a personal offense. Girl 2 transferred her disagreement to Girl 2s' opinion to the girl herself. In conclusion, what we can see within this conversation is a process of an unconscious use of rhetoric device ad hominem, i.e. attacking the sender rather than the message. Not to say that both girls did not grasp the contents of the arguments within the sentences, but a clear hostility could be observed that was projected towards the speakers. Contents of the arguments were not specifically evaluated with examples, contextualization, or facts, but with, for their part likewise subjective responses. There is no elucidation or consideration in relation to the stated arguments because participants are busy defending their opinion and themselves. In sum, we can conclude that the museum space failed, considering the plan to enable critical engagement, but in the following the events were processed and from that point onwards the group was able to establish critical engagement, peacefully.

Dogmatic metalanguage and exclusion of communicators within school discourses

The following elaborates on the discursive reproduction of the contemporary refugee issue within the school system and its inherent power relations. These are emphasized by a moral and dogmatic metalanguage within the discourse that eventually leads to selective in- and exclusion of communicators and prevents a deeper critical evaluation of thematised topics as an ongoing information exchange and leads to a possible segregation of communicators.

Though not describing the localized museum discourse it is intrinsically linked to the museum's potential of establishing dialogue and the museum's link to school education.

This is intrinsically important, since it relates to the previous chapter describing how the museum space is constructed differently from school spaces amongst my participants. In this way, several actors speaking about their contradictory opinions or thoughts, invites for a deeper engagement and keeps the discourse alive, whereas in school an ongoing discourse was often prevented by specific dogmatic metalanguage amongst teachers who excluded those who are already cautious (which may in part be caused by regional moods). Furthermore, one cannot assume that the discourse at a particular place, namely a school, ends with its physical confines and does not influence discourses addressing the same topics.

As described by Blommaert (1998) linguistic repertoires of people do not stagnate: "a lot happens to people after they have shut their mouths" (p.35). An appropriate discourse analysis therefore necessarily has to investigate under which conditions previous discourses were conducted, and how they transmit into the discourse at a specific moment (ibid.). A purely language related investigation limited to the moment in which topics were thematised in the museum space could not provide an analysis of power relations, which a historic investigation of previous discourses outside language, i.e. in the social environment of formal school education did permit.

One of the very first findings I encountered was that within the political discourse of refugees thematised in school contexts, people who tend to a rather contra or sceptical opinion regarding that matter stay silent whereas in the museum space they do not. Within school contexts many stated they did not participate verbally, do not speak out their opinion. The problem appears to be that they are nevertheless still part of the discourse; they might not make their words audible, or actively and openly use language, they are, however, actively processing words of others, pupils, and teachers, which eventually leads to their silence and exclusion from the conversation. Not speaking out words does neither include not thinking or active participation, or processing words of others. In fact, the ongoing interpretational process tells them to hide their voice while processing the ongoing discourse.

During the project, the participants were asked to reflect on how the present refugee debate was thematised in school, which was meant to inform the study of the school-museum discourse transfer previously addressed, to see if it accounted for this context. In fact, this was confirmed by my participants, they told me that the topic and subsequent conversation was initiated by their teachers. Interestingly, my participants used the term discussion and not conversation as I did now, though as we shall come to see both terms are not appropriate for

what was actually done. Jonas who is already known for his general museum analysis in this thesis, told the following story in which their homeroom teacher started by asking opinions and thoughts about the current debate. During this classroom talk Jonas and some of his classmates in turn spoke out their pro-refugee opinion. In particular, these were opinions signed by word usage often containing forms of normative values. Language practices such as "Germany must", "We cannot [treat people like this]" and "human rights" all convey aspects of superior morals and make use of dogmatic metalanguage. This was often based upon Germany's past history, which transmits into the present in so far as what had been done wrong must not happen again and even more obligates Germany, in particular, to compensate past failures by acting differently now.

I continued by asking whether that was it and no one spoke out concerns or even contra positions and it was replied that no one did. I kept on asking why- is there no one in his class that represents those opinions and he answered that he knew that some people do think that way, yet they did not speak within that talk. He furthermore added that officially in class this does not come up, but outside the classroom everyone knows what other pupils think about these issues. I then replied how the talk continued and he replied that his teacher concluded by saying that offering refuge to people is the right thing to do.

At this point I would like to mention that I do not mean to reject the content or want to say that the teacher is wrong. I merely want to describe what this innocent and for many people probably ethically correct sentence does to those who are present within this dialogue. It is important to notice that it was a rather unilateral conversation between teacher and pro-side speakers in which the contra side was verbally absent. It furthermore should be noted that the 'discussion' was closed by the teacher after the pro side finished. I do not know it exactly because there was no chance for me to speak to the teacher so that I can only assume causes that lie behind this action and provide relating examples of different contexts not limited to the localized classroom discourse in order to evaluate why the conversation as conducted.

If we relate this aspect to the wider societal context in how political opinions perceived as being wrong are treated within the linguistic system, we can often find paroles that emphasize the aspect of silencing opinions or mindsets, such as: "no space for right mindsets" or more radical examples such as "no space for Nazis", or "no voice for Nazis". "No voice for Nazis" is particularly interesting, because the primary denotation of this sentence is to take away voting rights, or the freedom to conduct election campaigns. The emergent meaning, though, relates to the aspect that utterances relating to these opinions should be prevented. The first two examples indicate the space that should provide an

opportunity to speak out those utterances. It also implies that somehow stopping someone from speaking out may prevent the proliferation of these mindsets in general. Furthermore, we can find these strategies within demonstrations against PEgIdA, who thematise the refugee issue within their demonstrations.

It is often tried to stop these people from conducting their demonstrations in order to prevent them from being heard. PEgIdA's 'Montagsspaziergänge' (Monday-walks) are often tried to be prevented by oponents who attempt to block their ways through the city or by screaming louder than they do. This is only an assumption that could possibly be one factor why the teacher did not explicitly ask for contradictory opinions, but it relates to the quote above from Jonas who said that anyone knows anyways who has contradictory opinions and to chapter two in which a girl described that everyone can say everything -except if it is related to political right wing attitudes[3]. It then seems as if making it an official matter in class discussion would somewhat strengthen these opinions. Conversely, not making it official suggests that those opinions would disappear or possibly be rendered ineffective if spoken. In theoretical terms, what we see in the classroom case is that people are socially excluded from the communicational process, or rather exclude their voice themselves – a process in which voice becomes an important metaphor in the sense of 'having a voice' (Keane 2000).

Communication is based on the premise that a response needs to follow an utterance. Social activity necessarily needs two or more people involved in an action, which is the case here, but only between people who share a common opinion since we have investigated that contra opinions supporters do not communicate their position (Gumperz 2002). This linked to the fact that when people communicate they are making sense of the content of the conversation and which position is to be taken in it, i.e. in order to respond to people and evaluate the basic message. This is followed by a specific reaction, which can be verbal or nonverbal, but reacts and relates to what the signified person thinks the signifier intends and wants (ibid.). Looking at the present example, one gets the impression that everyone is invited to speak out their opinion, but due to the development of the conversation (only pro speakers) and the concluding sentence of the teacher in which the propositional content supports pro speakers, the meaning of the conversation that was introduced as discussion, radically shifts to a conversation in which only pro speakers are accepted and thus excludes people from the social process of communicating with non-conform positions.

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[3] This is also manifested in the Germany's constitutional law: "Wer die Freiheit der Meinungsäußerung, [...] zum Kampfe gegen die freiheitliche demokratische Grundordnung mißbraucht, verwirkt diese Grundrechte". GG, Art.18).

Going back to the localized classroom discourse we have to investigate the emergent meaning of the described word usage and what it does at the specific moment in which the discourse takes place. Then one can address its transmission into the museum space. More than the very basic problems within the communicational process that were already identified, the use of metalanguage degrades communicators by semiotic properties that link apparent linguistic ideologies to social behavior. What we could see is that the concluding sentence "(…) *it is right to* (...)" marked the end of the conversation and content wise approved the opinions spoken out by the communicating actors. The thus transferred inherent meaning of some things being right or some things being wrong then may become a problem. The term dogmatic applies in this context as something that is believed to be true amongst a specific group of people. In particular, this relates to the fact that agreed upon "truth" builds the basis for a specific belief system, i.e. pro-refugees. It could additionally be widened to the aspect of moral metalanguage, containing a dialectical assumption of right or wrong behavior, in which right behavior is assigned to the pro-refugee opinion and thus suggesting that contra positions, or opinions that do not unconditionally agree, are considered wrong. However, despite the fact that the question of what is right or wrong has been bothering philosophers for thousands of years, anthropology has developed a whole school that emphasizes the fact that what seems to be acceptable behavior, highly depends on the angle from which it is perceived, and everything that surrounds and constructs this perspective, i.e. known as cultural relativism.

When this was the topic of the group discussion many other participants stated that they experienced similar events during discussions in their schools. One female participant told the group that her teacher relativized[4] the utterance by saying: "Well, I think we can all agree on the fact that it is a good thing to accept refugees who are in need for help". This utterance is formulated much more carefully, established by the use of 'well' and 'I think' and 'need'. The relativizing words may have meant to provide options for compromise by lowering the interlocutory force of the sentence. The message would be much stronger without the 'well' and exchanging 'I think' with for example 'I state' or 'I say' (Searle 1979). Nevertheless, it conveys the message that being pro refugees is the correct behavior. It is interesting that the context was similar to the first example, in which the contra side remained silent. Using the words 'all agree to' is, considering context, a very optimistic utterance. Agreeing on something requires an object of negotiation; a negotiation likewise requires different actors negotiating something. In this example, though, we do not have negotiators,

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[4] The girl may have paraphrased to protect her teacher, something that I could see amongst the other example as well. Jonas felt the need to add: "Well, it is okay how she does things, she is our homeroom teacher and we know each other for a long time".

only one side dictating conditions. Also, utterances that I often investigated amongst participants who cannot be strictly identified as being 'pro' show that many of the concerned utterances could have been easily evaluated, specifically when utterances occurred within the context of school subjects such as sociology, politics, or history.

The discursive style of the above discussions should actually work, considering their possible denotations and shifts, which in part supports the previous chapter describing the problematic connotations of the term 'discussion'. What both examples suggest, however, is that critical engagement with varying causes and reasoning, could not be established within the school setting. These were all examples provided by rather pro speakers that also contained the repetition of secondary sources prompting an investigation of those who spoke about their concerns in individual interviews, asking questions related to the previously elucidated aspects.

In this contexts, I was told that they would "definitely not speak about things like that within official classroom discussions," which was in particular related to Jonas' story. Reasons for that were both the present teacher their wish to prevent further conflict. Some participants told me that they are scared their opinion might affect their grades, because the teacher may transfer those results to his general perception of students. Participants generally were convinced that their grades are "highly" affected by how the teacher likes and perceives them. Therefore, they would be scared to object to specific utterances and start a discussion with their teacher or their fellow course members. Much museum literature has elaborated on the different educational dynamics in museums compared to schools, which may be leading to students starting to "shine" in the museum setting and generally behave differently (Hooper-Greenhill 2007:174). It also relates to time limitations, and effort oriented learning (grading), which to some extent binds children to a way of learning that is task oriented, instead of driven by the search of or reflection on knowledge (Janes and Conaty 2005:77).

They also mention the prevention of conflict. Chapter two elucidated that aspect in general, but specifically within school contexts, when participants addressed how conflicts there can have significant effects on how they are treated, for example being "put in a corner", or "mobbing." School life does not, different from the museum project, end after just one month. Students could potentially have to deal with negative effects for a "long, long time and never get rid of it anymore".

Age: A meaningful metaphor within family discourse

This passage elaborates on the rhetorical use of age as a strategy to appease youths opinions within the communicative reproduction of societal issues between them and their parents. Initially intended by parents to function as something that emphasizes the link between age progress and opinion progress, relativizing the legitimacy of the study participants' opinions, subjects instead understood this as not being taken seriously, which effectuates the exact opposite. In that context, the rhetoric instrument serves as an instrument of power that does not, as intended, function as an instrument to re-evaluate and re-think opinions, but rather to a strengthening of that opinion in order to be taken seriously. In theoretical terms it is a pragmatic investigation of the term age, invested with individually crafted semiotic meanings. Age becomes an important sign, effectuating contexts that provide insight for why this study's participants project meaning and value towards their own opinions. For them, opinion-making and communicating opinions, are strongly embedded within the idea of being taken seriously.

One girl said that her parents often confront her with her age, when they do not know what to say next: "mostly they'' come with a [response] such as 'life experience will teach you". When the girl recounted that story she even gestured the quotation marks with her hands and accompanied by a very annoyed voice, followed by eye-rolling. The 'promise' that life experience will change their opinions is common. One boy said his father stated that "well, you do not have enough [life] experience and your opinion is yet to change". Subsequently, another boy mentioned that he often feels that older people think, because of his age that he does not understand enough about certain topics. Not explicitly mentioning his parents, but relating to the age of his conversation partners, yet another boy stated that he often has the feeling his age is used as a reason to not take him seriously, when he is talking to older people. I responded to that by asking what 'older' stands for and he replied "well, 50+". This quote does not explicitly name parents, but it generally supports other examples in which age semiotically plays a significant role during discursive processes as an instrument of power used to degrade my participants' opinions. In particular, the last example, in which the use of age as a semantic object within the conversation was not used, the age difference between the interlocutors is generally visible as being an influencing aspect of the reproduction in that conversation.

Participants also told me that their age is often used in other contexts in which it "suddenly seems to be something good", e.g. when their parents want them to do something emphasizing that they are not children anymore so that the can actually do it. "On the one

hand, people tell you constantly that you are not a child anymore and therefore you have to do this and that and then suddenly you are still not old or experienced enough for some things because you are still too young. That is super annoying and they do that all the time". Obviously, "all the time" is an exaggeration. All examples, including those provided later on during the discussion, happened in specific situations, in which age served as a useful rhetorical instrument for those employing age as such. Often this appears to be done as a last effort within a context that requires some sort of convincing or appeasement. The effect of age as a powerful instrument within this context makes it necessary to investigate its impact, i.e. investigate questions such as how power works on those who are actually affected by it (Blommaert 2002). As Blommaert (2002) has noted 'the deepest effect of power is inequality, as it differentiates and selects, includes and excludes' (p.2). Transferring this to the context of this study's participants status, it becomes evident that age is used to hierarchically lower them due to their age. Eventually, this excludes the subjects from continuing as equal participant in a conversation. All study participants, without exception, stated that the content of the related debates is important to them, that they are committed to the debate, and had already spent a lot of time thinking about it. They would not engage in conversations about these topics, if they weren't interested in being part of them, sharing their thoughts in order to be heard and, in effect, being taken seriously.

The investigation also revealed that many discussions are initiated by the evening news, which are often viewed by the whole family. Entering the ensuing family debates already in an emotional state, the subjects stated that they often felt alienated and no longer wished to participate by sharing their opinions. Some added that they started with staying silent before engaging heavily, because they are annoyed with their family discussion quite soon. I continued the group discussion by asking with whom they talk then and they replied with those who they can talk with in a proper manner, i.e. people who let them speak and listen, and not those who interrupt or degrade with language thematising their age rather than opinion. The interesting aspect about that is, though, that it actually happens many times that the topic is still taken up again, as my participants described that they still get into discussions with their parents when those comment on the news. When their commentary includes something they do not agree with, it makes it difficult for them not to say anything, albeit re-establishing the age-related hierarchical difference perpetuated by the parents.

After discussing all the examples of participants confronted with these reoccurring processes of being forced into a position that is based upon their developmental stage I like to emphasize that many other participants mentioned that they are never confronted with their

age in this context. However, these were participants who in some cases do not talk with their parents about societal issues, because, without anything specific that happened to cause this, they described it "as feeling weird". These participants said, that they prefer talking to their friends instead of their parents, though their parents often discuss important matters during supper. Nevertheless, an interesting related aspect is that some of the unaffected participants, when asked whether they sometimes feel that they are not taken seriously because of their age, replied in a way that implies that this does not happen to them because they can "communicate opinions or positions in a way that effectuates that they are perceived as to be taken seriously". These participants told me that their parents at a certain point withdraw from conversation instead, which is perceived amongst these participants as a success. This supports the theoretical connection between being taken seriously how opinions can be communicated. What we can extract from the previous descriptions is that being adolescent does not play a central role, rather hierarchies rely on being younger than the other in itself and therefore effectuate that, as age progresses, opinions will mature over time. There is, however, a significant disjunction between what was verbally intended to be expressed and how participants perceived it.

Age is in this context strongly contextualized within the concept of maturation and its link to opinion - making. It becomes meaningful not only as being socially imagined as progressing from young to old as a life trajectory, but it also contains the aspect of 'individual progress' in relation to developing opinions (Eckert 1998). Bearing that in mind, age, as it is here combined with life experience, produces the sign of what Bucholtz describes as 'not-yet finished human beings,' in which development of the individual highlighting selfhood is a process (Bucholtz 2002: 529). Nevertheless, age identities such as adolescence or youth are not necessarily constituted through the discursive practice, in the examples provided in which age plays a role, age could probably be used by any communicator who is older than his conversation partner and therefore in a position to mark their counterpart as younger. Hence, age is much more flexible and complex than its individual categorizations into adolescence, adulthood, etc. would suggest.

Age can only become an important agent within the interpretation of discourses related to opinion making, because it is already imbued with semiotic meaning within the discourses in which it is used as such. Imposed on others, the meaning shifts for the receiving persons, because they process the term with their individual knowledge, information, and experience to make sense of it (Blommaert 2005:43-45). Since they are working with different resources to interpret the meaning of that sign, having different perspectives on age, obviously, individual

outcomes can askew the message originally intended. For parents, the rhetorical use of age in the specific discourse engaging with societal issues served as nothing more as an indicator for the possibility of changing opinions. Participants, reviewing previous conversations using age as a determining factor of hierarchy, however, see it as used to degrade them and their opinions (ibid: 43)

Chapter 4:
Exhibition: fremd- Künstlerische Kritik im/am Ethnographischen Museum, An Exhibition Trying to Establish Critical Engagement

"Aesthetic experiences are peculiar" (Køppo in: Roald&Lang 2013)

Almost halfway through the museum project a new exhibition was set up in cooperation with the local Academy of Fine Arts in the Grassi Museum. The present chapter evaluates this art exhibition within the context of discursive reproduction and critical engagement which lie at the core of the exhibition and my research. Ethnographic data forms the basis of the discourse generated amongst my participants at reviewing the art exhibition's narrative, which purposely seeks to create such discourse with particular attention to art objects and their difference to educational artefacts in the museum. This illuminated general ways in which the museum experience is constructed and supposed to work and how the dialogue with art objects may create problems.

Findings suggest that art as object is problematic in this context as it was invested with a power that has its root cause in how art may be perceived as being attractive based on various reasons, or found to be repulsive art for those similar reasons that make it appealing to the former. Hence, the exhibition limits itself to a specific audience. Furthermore, objects and installations could not provoke an interpretational process amongst study participants as it may have been intended to. The objects were narratively connected to their artists' involvement with and relation to the issues that the exhibition was to reflect upon. This level of transference and a lack of pre-existing knowledge made it hard for my participants to perceive and understand these objects as signs that were made to provoke critical engagement. At the beginning of the focus groups' engagement with these objects participants received a lot of freedom, meaning they did not have a specific tour but were invited to investigate the exhibition on their own terms. In general, every visitor study in the museum is interested in how visitors evaluate their visit (Hein 1998:101). I was not, at this particular moment of the

museum project, interested in my participants' general perceptions about the museum space, but in how a very specific exhibition and its master-narrative worked amongst my participants, which is intrinsically linked to processes of meaning-making. Here objects that became part of the permanent exhibition are of particular interest, as the temporary exhibit objects, due to their limited exposure, did not allow for a long-enough study period.

One of the art object's purpose within the permanent exhibition was to systematically communicate an ongoing message to the visitor emphasizing the difficulty of ethnographic objects as being out of place and robbed of the historical context in which they were accumulated. We can therefore suspect, because the long debated problems of object arrangement, meaning-making, and narrative will not be solved soon that the objects are seen as necessary vital to accompany the ethnographic objects. An interview with one of the artists made clear that his object was designed for a very mainstream visitor, who comes to the museum, maybe with a partner, but without guidance and without any kind of prior knowledge regarding the ethnographic museum's history or any specific knowledge about the problematic of meaning-making in museums. Therefore, giving the study participants a lot of freedom regarding their experience of the exhibit seemed appropriate in generating the expected experience. Yet, this proved rather challenging to the study subjects, prompting the provision of more background knowledge regarding the relevant matters such as colonialism. Considering the group was used to being observed it can be assumed that their experience remained unaffected by the observation itself, and two art objects in particular garnered attention from the participants.

Regarding my research population, I respectfully have to conclude, although said sample is very limited to the outcomes of my ethnographic data and a subsequent analysis that the intended purpose of the exhibition and the arguments it is based on, such as the decontextualization of objects, failed. The following traces the exhibition's master-narrative which is here transmitted through art and the outcomes of analyzing the same as an entry point to engage critically with contemporary societal issues.

The exhibition

The said exhibition was set up in the designated space for special exhibits which is an area in the museum that usually contains temporary exhibits. Additional objects were displayed within the permanent exhibition, mostly the African department on the same level in the museum. These objects within the permanent exhibition have to be imagined differently from the isolated objects in the special exhibition department in so far, as they were coupled

with specific objects from the permanent exhibition. They were created and displayed in order to relate to a particular object both in a physical and topical way. 25 art students designed individual objects for the display, created in cooperation between the museum and the local Academy of Fine Arts, the Hochschule für Grafik-und Buchkunst (HGB), in Leipzig.

The aim of the exhibition was to critically engage visitors in both the ethnographic museums in general in Germany, set up mainly in the second half of the 19th century and with their thus established rhetoric involving the distinction between 'our culture' and 'foreign cultures.' The exhibition's master-narrative was designed to raise questions about modes of display in the museum and their effects, such as creating a constructed image of the 'foreign/er', removing 'foreign cultures' from their historical contexts, and the spectator's position relative to museum's display. These elements were meant to engage visitors in a discussion of the function and future of the ethnological museum and the notion of 'foreign' as such.

Only those activities are relevant in this context that were engaging with the objects brought into the permanent exhibition, as the temporary material allowed for a less constant analysis. One of the art object's purpose within the permanent exhibition was to systematically communicate an ongoing message to the visitor that emphasizes the problematic of ethnographic objects as being out of place and robbed of their historical context. We can therefore suspect, because the problem of object arrangement, meaning-making, and narration will probably not be solved anytime soon, having been debated for a long time that the objects are seen as necessary to accompany the ethnographic objects for a significant period of time.

The following descriptions of the ensuing investigations is based on the assumption that visitors guided by a museum employee are informed, while talking about a specific object, that this object does not stand in for a representative ethnic whole. It may furthermore be expected that, if the object, important for the topical content of a tour, would have a particularly disturbing historical context, this context would be communicated to the visitors. For examples, certain masks were originally designed and crafted, only to be seen by those who'd wear them. Exhibited in a museum, their whole context and their purpose have been radically altered. It becomes intrinsically important to relay this information and it necessarily needs to be communicated to the visitor to allow the same to fully understand the object in question, in this case the masks. As a result from this assumption, the more interesting visitor to study thus would be such that does not necessarily visit the museum alone, but does not partake in guided tours, that visitor mentioned above, for whom the artist designed the wall.

The participants thus received information in a form that a mainstream museum visitor would have as well, i.e. the exhibition flyer. Additionally, because of the interest in the outcomes of the museum narrative as related to this project, the participants' pre-knowledge and initial position towards the addressed historical contexts such as colonialism had to first be established, in order to evaluate the affect and success of the exhibit (Hein 1998). Given the limited knowledge of the study subjects, they showed a very strong pejorative opinion about colonialism, which was the perfect basis to engage critically with these contexts. This thesis already highlighted the tendency of my participants to engage with topics in a subjective way that expresses personal opinions rather than linking information to context, so it is important to note, while not surprising that every group member with no exception answered similarly: that colonialism "sucked, because you cannot just conquer a country, take everything and subjugate its people".
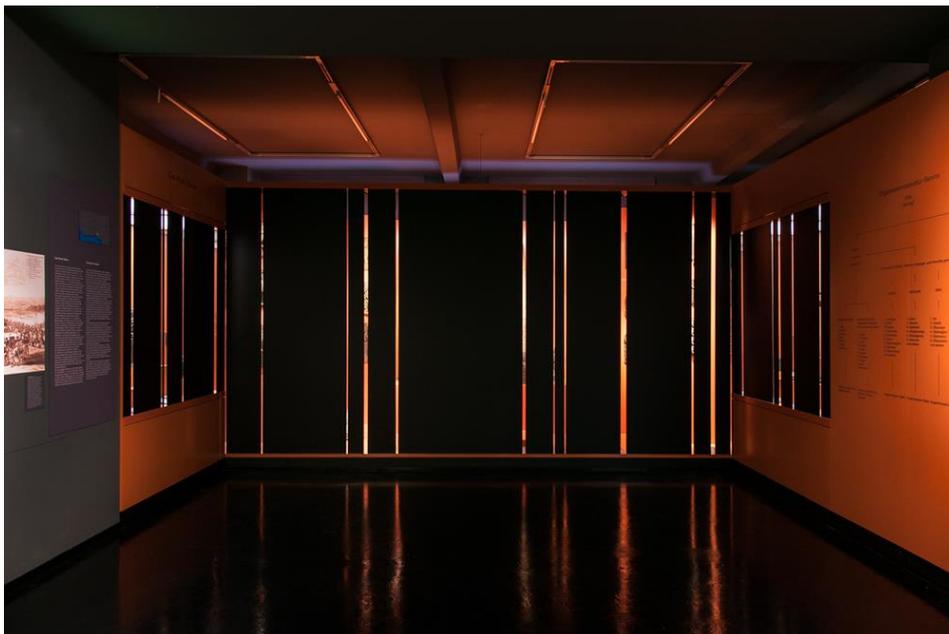
Connoting art and exhibition outreach

Before we engaged with the objects we investigated the semiotic means of art as a profession amongst my participants. I found that art and its origin, i.e. being made by an artist, are contextualized in a way that invests it with power that either attracts or rejects consumers (Gell p.24). Many of my female participants were highly interested in the exhibition, because it involved the HGB and the young artists studying there. Initially there was no mention of the exhibit's concept perfectly fitting with the target aim of the museum study project hey were partaking in. Interest in the exhibition was purely based on the information that it is organized by the HGB artists which is also the reason why many wanted to accompany me for the opening evening in order to meet them. however, only two subjects could go to the event, with the remaining participants' disappointment tangible whenever the subject was mentioned..

Group discussion a few days later revealed another level of reaction to the event as some students when asked if they had wanted to attend responded with: "nahh, that's super gay" and "oh no, so snobby and me within that? No, rather not." Interestingly, when that boy to whom this quote relates, reviewed the exhibition flyer added *"oh, though it would be good for us, right? Hm…but the exhibition is still open to visit so not a big deal we missed it."* He was apparently the only one who linked the similar purposes of both projects, as this quote indicates. He also appears to not have a problem visiting the exhibition within the context of our project, implying that the characteristic that immediately caught his attention was not the exhibition itself, but the context in which it was embedded.

When we merely consider who was attracted by the exhibition and why it is not generally a disadvantage in order to first get people into the museum space, we have to

remember that there were incentives to get them into the museum space and to convince them to participate in the project. The difference is, though, that they were approached personally, therefore providing immediate interaction. An exhibition flyer cannot answer questions, and it cannot read their faces and react to rejection or approval so that it might work on convincing the subjects.

The interpretation of the flyer continued, but many asked what it means, "what history, Diana?" or merely stated "hm" when I kept on asking what they think about it. I continued by asking what they think they could expect and one boy replied laughingly by putting the flyer in front of his face and read out the whole flyer text that described the exhibition. I did not want to ask directly whether they would go to the exhibition, but since they could not give me clear answers I did then and they replied "rather not", "näähh, no" or just made a face. They replied that it does not sound that interesting. They stated that the ad-text did not entice them to a visit (angesprochen), because they cannot really understand the meanings of the text and what it relates to. They furthermore stated regarding the aspect of why it is not interesting that it "somehow sounds arrogant" and "so theoretical".

Considering the second chapter this is not a surprising investigation. The text was quite long and addressed many questions, so that the 'clearness' my participants usually appreciated about the museum was to an extent absent. Nonetheless they stated. after I 'translated' the text into easier language, that it does indeed sound interesting, specifically now that they had already learned how differently people engage with objects, which was due to our many museum games such as Whip Around, Association Game, or Blind Fold. It is also important to mention at this point again that this was the flyer for the whole exhibition e.g. including the temporal. The long term objects in the permanent department are designed as long-term installations, so that if they just visited the museum for a different purpose, they would see the objects anyways.

"Reminds me of what you see in horror movies". Perception of and opinion- making through art

This passage presents data that describes the difficulties for my participants to use the exhibition's objects as entry points for critical evaluation of colonial history and as a result the ethnographic museum's history of accumulating objects. Several causes collectively did not lead to critical evaluation of historical contexts, but again to a strengthening of personal

opinions based on rather limited knowledge. Subsequently, problems with these objects as entry points, issues with understanding them and the involvement of art as an aesthetical profession will be described. This chapter is intrinsically linked to chapter two and the ways in which participants define the museum as a method and the way it contradicts this exhibition.

As stated above, subjects were allowed to form their own groups while investigating the exhibit, giving significant evidence for which objects were in the focus of their attention. The installed objects were connoted as art objects by the students, and therefore went through a radical aesthetical evaluation by participants, distracting from there dialogical context.

Usually, professional art objects are exhibited with the purpose of an aesthetical evaluation, which means, they need to be shown to the public in order to establish value and price. These are characteristics intrinsically linked to the professional aspect in which selling is the last station of the production sector (Bell 1914). That evaluation is often depending on a specific aesthetical investigation, which is even more often, though also other aspects such as technique etcetera influence it, a matter of taste. It varies amongst people (Bell 1914). From an anthropological point of view, I would say the only thing that matters in this specific research context is the exhibited art not limited to certain aesthetic feelings, but rather the socio-relational context in which it is embedded and how that affects the purpose for which they were created (Gell 1998:3). That does not mean, however, that my participants looked at it from the same angle. Whether good or bad art, beautiful or not, became irrelevant but solely a part in the analytical processes amongst the participants. The subjects' prior knowledge, i.e. knowing that something is art, apparently goes along with a certain need for aesthetical evaluation that affects the intended purpose for which these art objects were created so that I caught many of them making jokes about the objects highlighting "how bad they are". The group had to be reminded that they were not asked to judge how beautiful the objects are, but to engage with their message and how analyse how it could relate to the ethnographic objects they were connected to.

However, participants calmed down and discovered the two objects, but they were not able to make sense of the objects. Comments ranged from "I do not understand that" and "How can I connect both objects if I cannot see the ethnographic ones". I have to admit here that they also did not try a lot. They were in a very blocking mood, which I could not understand at that time, though I guess, because they could not directly understand, were unsatisfied with the objects they became to a certain extent restless and frustrated. For the reader it might be difficult to understand, because these elucidations project the image of a

time scratch, were in fact the whole process took us two hours after everyone was very annoyed and had to go home. Then, however, I was able to investigate the problem of missing context, when one of my participants found me standing frustrated in front of 'the wall' and asked what I was thinking. I have to mention at this point that what I said then was something I did not plan to say or forbid myself to do before the project, which was to speak out my own opinions. I was, however, confused by the whole experience and the boy who asked was one of those with whom I particular had a very nice communicative relationship so that I accidentally said, that the object strangely reflects exactly what I'm sometimes feeling when I pass objects of which I know have a very violent history, because they were taken in questionable ways throughout colonial history, but are crafted in such a nice way that I can also not look at them. Before I could start noticing what I actually said the boy said "*well, if I had known that, I would understand the objects as well. See ya*".

Next time we met, my participants begged me to do what we did before and "*please not engage with the other things again*" I begged in turn whether they can please try once again and because I knew at that point, that they tend to express personal emotions and I gained a very interesting answer from the boy that related to context and my personal perception of the object, I said I merely want to know what they feel and how they perceive the objects. I added they should forget the exhibition flyer and just engage as if they did never read the text. Many replied laughingly, that they could not remember the text anyways, but they would try. Standing in front of the window with the textual inscriptions one girl mentioned the aspect that "*it reminds her of horror movies in which sometimes when something bad happens you find a message on the mirror in the bathroom with a shocking message and the actor freaks out*". She was standing with 4 other girls in front of the installations who confirmed her analysis. I asked then whether they think the object is shocking and they replied that it seems like it, also because the text suggests an image like that. Analysing the text my participants could not really understand the meaning. After I left them alone for a while they kept on asking why the texts talks about cages and education and why it talks in such a manner about people's appearances. The main problem here was that participants had no idea about the ethnographic museums history which made it hard for them to understanding what the text is talking about. Moreover, they could not relate it to the obvious fact, that they are watching 'the other' and its culture in a vitrine under the flagship of education. The only difference is that the text said it in a cynical and exaggerated way.

Since it was intrinsically hard for my participants I thought I should provide more guidance though it was neither intended by the exhibition nor by me at the beginning.

We started talking about how they perceived the objects and they used adjectives such as "shocking", "strange" and "weird". Additionally they added that "*well, we knew before that colonialism was not the best thing on earth right*"? What this quote relates is that once again an already exisiting opinion was reinforced, but a debate, or critical evaluation of historical contexts could not be provoked. However, I also thought maybe they got too fixed on the notion of colonialism, but the exhibition as well addresses other issues, the broader image of difference and the creation of the "others" or as used in the exhibition title "the foreign". For the next meeting I told them to think about the exhibition and how it could relate to what we have done previously. What they have learned about perspectives, and working with objects. I furthermore told them to think not to complicate and that they should try to relate the objects not too strongly to the objects they are connected to, but to methods in the museum, and very basically to the contents of the ethnographic museum. I thought that would make it easier for them to understand without requiring too much knowledge about objects or history.

During the next meeting many of my participants stated that they did not have the time to engage deeper with their tasks as it was just way too complex. I then decided to provide more background information about the ethnographic museum's history and the problems of exhibiting objects as being timeless. I reminded them about the Bedouin tent example, and how they had assumed a cultural whole and stagnation. This discussion turned out to be productive and my participants were able to understand the objects and their narrative. They brought up examples that had been thematised through various museum games that were aiming to highlight the differences in how they perceive objects. However, they also stated why it must be that complicated, why people cannot be simply told about the problematics before they enter the museum. Relating to that one girl had a quite radical opinion and stated that she perceives narratives as "playing games with visitors". Moreover, others added that they understand that museums need to be entertaining in a way, but providing a little bit more information in order to make things more understandable and ,again, "clearer" cannot be asked too much.

What I have described throughout chapter 2 and 3 becomes visible throughout these elucidations. First, the museum is seen as something to make things clear, not to set up, as some called it, "riddles". Participants stated, that they could indeed receive more information that they are able to understand problems which relates to chapter 3 in which I described how important it is for them to be taken seriously. More information relates to context while engaging with objects, but as well to the purpose of the art installations that were highlighting the missing context within ethnographic museum.

"Bei der Konzeption einer Ausstellung zur Völkerkunde, wie auch bei ihrer Betrachtung muss die Entkontextualisierung der Objekte, die über verschiedene Wege, zu einem großen Teil unfreiwillig, in ‚unsere Museen' gelangt sind, immer bewusst sein. Diese Gegenstände sind an einem anderen Ort und zu einer anderen Zeit entstanden, welche nicht im Rahmen einer Ausstellung rekonstruiert werden können. Deshalb stehen diese Objekte in einer fremden Anordnung und können zu Recht als Raubkunst bezeichnet werden." (Artist Jamal Cazaré, „the wall")

Going back to the introduction of this chapter in which I have described the purposes of the exhibition we can compare this to the above quote to emphasize the aspect of decontextualization of objects within the museum space which is thematised in both texts. This decontextualization of objects in the ethnographic museum is described as being at the core of the problem when it comes to arranging exhibitions and provides the foundation for this exhibition's criticism about the ethnographic museum. That is an interesting and confusing claim considering that the objects used to make that criticism visible are significantly decontextualized themselves. This also explains why the participants had such a hard time not only understanding these objects by themselves, but their intended purpose (a critical engagement with colonialism and resulting accumulation of objects from colonialized countries). What we are dealing with are artists that analyzed the theme of colonialism are embodied in ethnographic objects and their display. This has been transferred through time and space with objects entering new contexts, and to an extend, becoming stolen art objects. The analysis itself seeks to detextualize, describing the process in which one takes a specific point of view and puts it into one or many different contexts in order to create a new one within the interpretational process (Blommaert 2005).

The issue about that is the methodology embedded in the artist's work to transmit his specific engagement with the topic and, as a result of his interpretational process, put it into an object (here installation) itself. That (art) object, therefore, becomes a sign, because everything which means something is, in some respects, a sign (Eco 1976). This sign, although based on a purely aesthetical foundation of the artist and, consequentially translated into meaning, perceiving, sensing (Bell 1914, Roald&Lang 2013) a significantly subjective sign that reflects the artist's personal perception of a topic. Perception is a significantly subjective process and varies amongst people. Akin to embedded emotional contexts, this makes a general interpretation difficult. Particpants, as has been shown, likewise interpret the object from an aesthetic perspective. Its aesthetic foundation is also to be found amongst those who have to engage with the object, e.g. the viewer. While these objects we were engaging with are significantly abstract (black wall), the visitor (and we have to remember that not all visitors know about the ethnographic museums history and colonialism) must as well rely on

a process based on perception and senses in order to make sense of its means; this is evident in this subject's reaction: *"Well, if I had known all that, I could have come to that conclusion as well"* or in particular emphasizing the aesthetics aspect stating that it: "reminds me of what you sometimes see in horror movies". This effectuates an interpretational process in which all actors build up knowledge and make sense based on individual perception.

As the artist is rarely in a position to grant explanations on his art all the time, the object itself stands at the end of the interpretational process in which the artist has already come to a conclusion about the topic he is engaging with. That conclusion, based on the inherently subjective process building on aesthetics and resulting in an abstract decontextualized object, offers no critical evaluation, but ipso facto an opinion, reflecting the personal perception of a topic-object relationship.

Simultaneously, because the art object does not stand alone, but is physically and thematically connected to a particular ethnographic object, the viewer has to make sense of that ethnographic object as well; and as a reminder, the interpretational process that goes along with analyzing museum objects has already been elucidated as being highly affected by the individual's personal position. Bearing these different aspects in mind, it may appear strange to denounce ethnographic objects as being decontextualized. An exhibition with, in turn, decontextualized objects and additionally highly subjective messages cannot criticize methods and techniques in their employ. At least, the big advantage about mainstream ethnographic objects is that they are usually not abstract. A Qur'an for example whether containing aesthetically appealing ornaments and taken into a different context such as moving from an ethnographic museum into an art museum or moving into a Mosque will always in its primary function be the Qur'an that can be identified as a (religious) book- an information that can be easily printed on a little piece of paper accompanying the object in its cabinet.

Clearly identified as a tent amongst participants, the problem of not being able to establish critical evaluation and this in light of missing context, could not be solved through the basic information that the tent is a Bedouin tent (which was provided on the additional text next to it). Problems in evaluating the complex history, the aim of describing ethnographic objects as not being showpieces between the researcher and the study's participants. Despite all these aspects affecting meaning making processes, it is the question of the intended narrative that aims to create critical engagement or on a simpler level, often aimed at opening new perspectives.

I have shown that participants were able to understand the installations when they had context, which was provided during our group talks. However, the most important problem was that I had to approach them through subjective emotions; because how they perceived the installations, and their whole interpretational process, was based on those in the beginning. The previous chapters have described that participants usually tend to be very emotional, and individually engaged with topics and conversations. What they have experienced within this experience is rather to work with personal perception and the reinforcing of opinions, instead of critical evaluation, which was also visible in the sentence: "well, we knew that before".

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Research and Museum Work

The present study has demonstrated the ethnographic museum's potential in engaging youth in the light of contemporary political issues through dialogue. I have elucidated how the museum space is theorized and practiced as a space for youths, and shown that it highlights the ethnographic museum's position in establishing museum experiences that address contemporary issues. I also have shown that not only common contents and opinions of socio-cultural discourses find their way into the museum, but as well discourse and language styles that influence the museum's discourse and reinforce existing opinions, collectively pervading modes of dialogue.

Theoretical contributions of the thesis

This thesis utilizes and reflects upon the discursive approach to a visitor study regarding youths. As I have shown, discourses and opinions are significantly shaped by language practices (chapter 3). Studying language as set of sociocultural relations, as I have done through tracing several discourses that engage with similar topics, I was able to allow on reflecting in how they constantly redefine both the relation of speakers, meaning and opinions (Ahearn 2001). However, not all stories about recent discourses were ones I could directly observe throughout the description of school or family communication. Nevertheless, this study provided ample material for discourse studies, focusing, for example, on how they are connected and shaped and may affect ongoing or future discourses that engage with similar topics as described by Briggs (1996), Blommaert (2005) or Wickman & Östmann (2002). As described by Briggs stories or narratives of people often have value to the narrator as they are evaluated as important to tell (1996: 21) therefore become present in the future and shaping

other discourses encountered, as I have described. While other discourse analysts such as Blommaert & Verschoeren often focussed on the content of discourses, such as prevailing opinions, the framing of others, and how opinions of groups shape behaviour between groups, I have focussed on language practices that do not only reflect, but constitute engagement in a specific way which relates to Briggs who states:' language not only reflects, but constitutes relations' (Brigss 1996: 6). Language and signs systematically 'form the objects of which they speak' (1996: 6). This aspect was particularly visible throughout descriptions in my study that engage with semiotic means of word use throughout chapter 3 often leading to arguments or conflicts.

As Paglia (2010) describes, verbal duels provide a certain understanding of how language and identity can be connected. Verbal conflict is seen as something inappropriate, exceptional, and connoted as something bad (ibid: 63). Usually, negative impacts of participant discourses are either prevented (school discourse), broken off (family conversations), or questionably conducted (chapter 2). As elaborated this reinforces opinions instead of propagating understanding or even just considering alternative opinions to ones' own. Paglia argues for seeing arguments or verbal duels as *'central to communication'* from a young age onwards their style continues to develop as a lifelong process (ibid.). None of my participants dropped out of the project even though we sometimes conducted passionate debates, combined with museum games. These museum games systematically emphasized that participants' opinions highly depend on perspectives that are created through previous experiences and knowledge. As a result participants could reflect on both themselves, and on 'the other' present within the debate. Furthermore, the challenging aspect when conducting the debates was perceived amongst my participants as satisfying, as the concluding group conversations confirmed.

This study provided significant evidence for studying the educational dimension of museums from a discursive perspective. A lot is to be learned about connections of varying social groups, for example when students talk, write, and produce evidence about their future life trajectories (2008: 39). Words are thus understood as an intrinsic part of discourses; they are never neutral. Instead their meaning always relates to sociocultural factors affecting the people involved in their speech (Ahearn 2001). If we consider Blommaert & Verschoeren in that context, we come to see that opinions often come as tools to legitimate and constitute behavior in specific ways. (200: 24). Considering the special and highly limited test-audience of this study, it is made evident that the study provides grounds for a longitudinal study and for comparative works. The social issues that were brought up are not stagnant, and neither

the museum in its practices and attempts to create narratives for its patrons which likewise accounts for studying the fluid concept of youth as described by Bucholtz as important cultural actors (2002: 525).

Future avenues for museum work

Based on my previous work experience in the museum with youth I understood that they are often more interested in what is happening around them than they are in exhibits referring to, for example, Bedouins, who are for them, far removed from their lives. I also suspected, that there something different from my experience to how they process knowledge, how they approach investigating issues, which they are exposed to. The lesson I learned is diverse in its outcomes. First, I realized that in order to facilitate a particular museum project for a specific audience you have to know that audience through intense engagement, which can certainly not be done through a survey for example or a look into the guestbook. I also learned that it is an ongoing process for me to create a project, because contemporary issues change, and people are diverse, which meant procedures were adjusted along the way when necessary. It is a process that needs to engage those for whom it is facilitated actively, not merely in a passive fashion. My participants often reminded me that "you do not have to do everything alone- we can also help, because wasn't that the plan to create something together?" And what I've found is that anthropologists and in this context also museum employees can share their thoughts and problems and sometimes these conclusions by people who are not caught in the same theoretical universe are very helpful in order to come closer to solve those problems, such as the topic of how to address the partly disturbing history of ethnographic objects which was discussed at the end of this thesis. It just takes time and willingness on both sides.

Thomas (2010) elucidations on which I have elaborated on in chapter 2 who identified the differing aspects of the academic field of anthropology and ethnographic museums, I have to conclude, that this is of course partly true, considering the basic working process (theory as starting point vs. objects as starting points), but that does not necessarily exclude the basic method of anthropological academic field. Anthropologists are concerned with people and obviously within the museum as a public space, we can find a variety of people that are important. However, though the academic field and the ethnographic museum might differ through their methods I would say that anthropologists who care so much about what people say and do (Ahearn 2001), and the museum space which is constantly busy with transporting

messages and creating ways for transporting messages through objects is the key point that provides evidence for the connectedness. Since processes of communication became intrinsically important for the work with objects in the museum, for the interpretational process of narratives, (Silverman 1995, Hooper- Greenhill 2000), and communication is an intrinsically important part of language, I would propose that the ethnographic museum and its academic field, anthropology, should at least for my research population find their way together again.

After all, the ethnographic museum is intrinsically linked to its academic field of anthropology and anthropology is highly affected by an intense intersubjective relationship between those who study and those who are studied, a distinction which lies at the core of how anthropological researchers define their critical position. Something I had already written in my research proposal without clearly understanding it consciously back then: "It is, for example, the critical position of the anthropologist to know that 'the other is never given, but *made'* (Fabian 1990:755) through the anthropologists examination, which is where one makes 'the other' while also 'making (…) ourselves*'* (ibid.:756), as research is an intersubjective practice that arises out of 'questions, listening and responding by communicating with the other' (ibid.: 764)". Considering my whole thesis, there are, as described at the beginning, many 'others' that are categorized within discourse. Very often, it was about imposing opinions on others: the framing of refugees, the framing of people who do not share political positions, to people in a different age group... I think, however, that the most important 'other' here may be the visitor. This museum patron onto whom museums often try to impose specific perspectives and whom they present with clear narratives, providing ways defining how they should see and interpret ethnographic objects, the history of ethnographic objects and their relation to those ethnic communities they were accumulated from.

Regarding my research population, I go along with the participatory model of museum studies that Simon (2010) describes. I have shown, through application of pertinent theory and use of ethnographic data that new perspectives are sometimes provided in most fruitfully, if discursively and openly approached through institution workers and casual visitors. As I have explained, the museum space and school are not just connected through being institutional learning environments, but amongst my research population the museum space is significantly theorized and practiced as supplementation, and as first entry point in relation to schools. Therefore it is imperative to cultivate this connection, through constructing the museum in a way that can fill in the gaps of school education, by facilitating supplementation in the museum. One of the few points my participants asked for, after evaluating the project, was to

design the contents of the museum project in a way that supplements their school curriculum. The project was time intense, and through combining the aspects they simultaneously would gain skills for school. They proposed project weeks, which are already established in schools, to be widened towards the museum space. These project weeks could supplement contents of sociology, religion or history classes.

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