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Teaching about the Holocaust –
Analysing Children's and Young
Adult Literature in the EFL classroom

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Declaration of Authenticity

I confirm to have conceived and written this paper in English all by myself. Quotations from other authors and any ideas borrowed and/or passages paraphrased from the works of other authors are all clearly marked within the text and acknowledged in the bibliographical references.

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Abstract

The aim of this diploma thesis is first of all to give guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust in general and in the EFL context. Second it will provide an analysis of several children's and youth books and a film concerning this highly sensitive topic. Finally, suggestions how these materials can be best used in the EFL classroom will be presented.

The importance of history must not be undervalued or forgotten and its role in education and school must be substantial. Within the framework of the education system students should learn about history, in the case of this thesis particularly about a very sinister part of that history, namely the Holocaust.

In his article on Holocaust pedagogy David Lindquist (22) states that

teaching the Holocaust involves unique demands, pressures, and potential pitfalls (...) as teachers consider the *if*, the *what*, and the *how* of Holocaust education as well as the moral implications that arise from any meaningful and appropriate study of the event.

This clearly indicates that education about the Holocaust in general as well as in the EFL classroom needs more than just a commitment to teach about genocide. Teachers must also understand the subject matter very well (Friedländer quoted in Lindquist, 22). Moreover teachers should make the students aware of the importance that this sensitive topic entails and provide age-appropriate material in order not to demand too much from the students (Shawn quoted in Lindquist, 22). Teachers must also take care to present the topic appropriately in class as well. On the one hand, the lessons should not frustrate the students or make them too miserable, but on the other hand they should convey the significance and highlight the extraordinary circumstances and consequences of this dark chapter in history. Showing empathy and raising awareness in students is probably the best way to achieve this balance.

Literature and media can help teachers to prepare the topic *Holocaust* for the students, as literature supports and deepens the theoretical input. By the analysis of *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, *The Diary of A Young Girl*, and the film *Life is Beautiful*, the way how literature and films can be used in education will be discussed. Emphasis will be

placed on the question in how far literature can help to teach historical events and how the Holocaust is represented in the respective books and the film.

Summing up, the importance and significance the Holocaust still holds when it comes to teaching shall be highlighted and several suggestions of how to best deal with it in an EFL class will be presented.

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Abbreviations

EFL	English as a foreign language
USHMM	United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
FE	Film Education
MoT	Museum of Tolerance
i.e.	Latin: id est, that means

1. Introduction

Educating young people is not easy. Educating young people about the Holocaust is a challenge. No teacher can give a definite answer to the question of how the Holocaust should be taught and thus this question arises again and again. Guidelines exist, but every teacher has to discover the best way to teach it; for the respective class and for him- or herself.

This diploma thesis seeks to raise awareness of the importance of the Holocaust in the context of teaching in general and in the EFL classroom. Educating students about the genocide and the Nazi era cannot be taken lightly. Among other things, it requires consideration, empathy, motivation, creativity and seriousness. However, the most important thing is probably historical knowledge. Every teacher who teaches the Holocaust has to be well-informed as students cannot understand the Holocaust without the essential background information. Holocaust education has to be taken seriously, no matter the age group to which it is taught.

This paper tries to lead from rather general guidelines that are suitable for various subjects such as History or Religious education, to more specific teaching tips for teaching the Holocaust in an EFL classroom. Concretely, if adaptations need to be made for the EFL classroom, they will be mentioned after each general section.

The entire thesis consists of three different parts. The first part can be best referred to as Holocaust pedagogy, as it focuses on how to teach the Holocaust. Not only teaching guidelines are provided; important factors that have to be considered before actually starting to teach are mentioned as well.

Additionally, reasons for teaching the Holocaust in general and in the EFL classroom can be found in the first part. When students are educated about this terrible event, they get the chance to think about democracy, the role of individuals, racism, responsibility and much more. This clearly shows that learning about the Holocaust involves more than learning dates and historical facts by heart.

How teachers should deal with literature as a part of Holocaust education, and why literature is a good tool to complement teaching is also covered in the first part. Emphasis will lie on the importance of accuracy of children's books with regard to fact and fiction. Teachers have to be careful when choosing which books to read in class; moreover they should have in mind that it is important to read the books actively with the students. The students should not be left on their own. Striking issues that occur in the book have to be discussed in class. Additionally, students have to be prepared for books and should not just start reading without any preparation.

Regarding literature as a tool to complement teaching, one might find out how helpful literature can be in Holocaust education and how students profit by it. Problems authors have to face when writing Holocaust literature for children, and why the genocide is difficult to represent will be discussed as well.

The last point that will be highlighted in the first part of this diploma thesis is the role of films in education. Emphasis will be placed on the fact that many teachers have problems using films in school and thus very often misuse them as entertainment. Films are rarely an object of pedagogy, as teachers lack the necessary knowledge to analyse films and moreover have no rationale in mind as to why they want the students to see this particular film.

The second part of this thesis is concerned with the representation of the Holocaust in the books *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, *The Diary of A Young Girl*, and the film *Life is Beautiful* and thus can be referred to as the analytical part. The representation of the Holocaust will be analysed with regard to using the books and the film in an EFL classroom.

When dealing with the representation of the Holocaust in Boyne's book, it is important to consider that it is a fictional story and fiction does not have to be factually accurate. As *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* shows Bruno's point of view, a nine-year old ignorant and naïve boy, the representation of the Holocaust is rather unrealistic. At this point it is essential to mention that a representation of the Holocaust can never be realistic since it is only a representation of it. However, by differentiating between a

realistic and an unrealistic representation of the Holocaust I refer to whether the Holocaust is depicted truthfully or not in the respective books and the film that are going to be analysed in the second part. Furthermore, when talking about the representation of the Holocaust, it has to be considered that representations never refer to the whole Holocaust, but just to fragments of the terrible historical event and to specific Holocaust experiences of individual victims, such as the respective protagonists of the books or the film.

The Boy in the Striped Pajamas is told by a figural narrator who can be referred to as unreliable narrator, as he focalises Bruno's thoughts and opinions. In contrast to the way Bruno perceives the Holocaust in the story, the readers' perception of the Holocaust requires their previous knowledge and general education. By relating their existing knowledge to what they read, they are able to develop a picture of the Holocaust even though facts are distorted and certain aspects are not explicitly mentioned in the story.

Since it is a children's book, it is not aiming at explaining the Holocaust in the same way as non-fictional stories do. Thus, it is essential to teach the Holocaust at least partly before reading the book in an EFL classroom. However, it is not always essential to explain every detail beforehand as reading motivation could decrease and teachers preclude the students from thinking independently and reflecting critically.

In contrast to *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* Anne Frank's work, *The Diary of A Young Girl*, is autobiographic and hence depicts real-life Holocaust experiences. Nevertheless, readers just get insight into Anne's point of view and her experiences. Thus the book merely provides a very individual rather than a broad Holocaust experience. However, the Holocaust is basically presented realistically in the book. Anne describes her life in the Secret Annexe, where she is hiding with her family for two years. She displays her feelings, her fears, and her problems she encounters during her time at their hiding place.

Reading the book in a lower secondary EFL classroom should not constitute a problem. As teenagers' problems are the same all around the world, no matter where the students come from, they can identify with Anne. Additionally they get personal information

about the Holocaust. However, the students should always be reminded of the fact that what they are reading is a subjective account and that every single victim has a different Holocaust experience. By highlighting the subjectivity, a generalisation of victims and ways of suffering should be avoided.

The analysis of the film *Life is Beautiful* complements the analytical part of the diploma thesis. When discussing the representation of the Holocaust in Benigni's film, it is essential to first mention that there is a great discrepancy between the father's and the son's perception of the genocide. Therefore, the way the Holocaust is represented to the viewers, i.e. the adult point of view, and how the Holocaust is perceived by Giosué, a four-year old boy, is of particular interest.

The film depicts realistic scenes such as the deportation of Jews in a train, their arrival in the concentration camp, and the cruel circumstances people have to bear in the concentration camps on the one hand. On the other hand, it also shows the "birthday surprise" of a four year old child who is forced to believe that their journey by train is an adventure, and the stay in the concentration camp is a game with the goal to collect 1000 points in order to win a real tank. Comparing these two scenes I would argue that the Holocaust is presented both, realistically and unrealistically.

Using the film in an EFL classroom first and foremost requires one important step: after viewing the film it must be appropriately analysed in order for the class to have the chance to work on it afterwards. Analysing the different points of views concerning the Holocaust that are offered in the film can be done together with the students; however the teacher is responsible for telling them that although the film depicts true Holocaust facts there are still several scenes that are rather unrealistic.

The third and hence last part of this diploma thesis is concerned with teaching suggestions. The discussion of several ways of how to best teach about the Holocaust in general and in the EFL classroom, and the analysis of two books and one film dealing with the Holocaust are followed by lesson plans including the material I have analysed in the second part of this thesis. Information about the age and the level of students as well as teaching goals, without which teaching would be of little value, are listed

preliminary to each plan. To conclude, the plans will be related to the theoretical part at the beginning of this paper. A discussion in which I reflect upon the activities and explain why they are useful in the respective context is added after each plan.

PART I

2. Teaching the Holocaust

How the Holocaust should be taught and which educational aims are valid are both questions that arise repeatedly. One possible explanation for this is the growing distance from the present. Eyewitnesses from the Nazi era are becoming fewer and finally will die out, and the direct link to the past will become lost (Davies, 74).

According to Berger (171) witnesses writing about the Holocaust are probably the only reliable source. However, the situation becomes challenging as the distance between the Holocaust and today increases. I am not quite sure how reliable Holocaust witnesses really are. What they tell is rather subjective and linked to an individual experience; thus their perspective may differ significantly from every single other Holocaust witness. However, it can be valuable to listen to the witnesses' experiences and ask them questions personally.

Unfortunately there is a tendency towards trivialising the Holocaust and as a consequence it becomes challenging for students to understand what the Holocaust really was and why it had to happen (Davies, 74). Additionally there are some pedagogical challenges that can occur and that teachers worry about. The fact that little time is devoted to teaching the Holocaust, for example, constitutes a problem. Holocaust education can take place in Religious education and History, and unfortunately most teachers of the respective subjects (according to Davies) do not collaborate very well. Some history teachers just devote two or three 50 minute lessons to 13- or 14- year old students and the school books as well do not offer a good account of the Holocaust (Davies, 4). As Davies is an American author this refers to American schools, but not to the Austrian school system. American teachers deal with the Holocaust in a different way; they have diverse methods to teach it. In Austrian schools there is more time devoted to teaching the Holocaust and consequently school books contain sufficient and helpful information about the genocide.

I am convinced that educating students about the Holocaust is essential. For this reason, the aim of the first part of this diploma thesis is to provide suggestions and methods for teaching about the Holocaust. As there is hardly any literature on teaching the Holocaust in the EFL classroom, since the majority of books and articles available are

written by English speaking authors who deal with this highly sensitive topic in their mother tongue, I will first focus on teaching the Holocaust in general. ‘General’ refers to teaching the Holocaust in the subjects History or German, the students’ mother tongue. Subsequently, adaptations that need to be made, due to a specific curriculum in Austria, when dealing with the genocide in an EFL classroom, will be mentioned.

2.1. Why teach about the Holocaust?

I would like to start the section *Teaching the Holocaust* with the question why it is actually important to teach the Holocaust and what impact it can have on the students.

Especially due to the fact that teachers rarely have enough time to teach complicated historical topics such as the Holocaust – although in most cases they are required to do so – teachers should keep questions of rationale in mind. So they have to clarify why they want to teach about the Holocaust and what the students are expected to learn. A well-prepared rationale could be helpful, but before actually deciding what and, above all, how to teach, the following questions constituted by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum should be considered (USHMM, 1).

Why should students learn this history?

What are the most significant lessons students should learn from a study of the Holocaust?

Why is a particular reading, image, document, or film an appropriate medium for conveying the topics that you wish to teach?

(USHMM, 1)

Davies (5), too, mentions that

[t]eachers rightly do not want to see the Holocaust only in intellectual or academic terms, and yet emotion is in itself not enough. There has to be clear rational thought as well as an emotional response. Even if teachers are engaging with the complex questions and issues surrounding the Holocaust, the climate that affects schools makes it very challenging to discuss powerful issues appropriately.

It is a fact that young people need to be educated about the horror of the Holocaust, but there is still the question of what form this should take and what the teachers’ aims are (Davies, 5).

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum concentrates on keeping records, studying, and interpreting Holocaust history and thus remembers the millions of people who lost their lives during that time. The Museum's task is to spread knowledge about this terrible event and the visitors should be motivated to save the memories of the victims, and moreover discuss moral questions that arise when thinking about the Holocaust. The Museum offers exhibitions and provides helpful and valuable teaching material (USHMM, n.p.).

The USHMM states that teaching about the Holocaust can serve as a basis for examining basic moral issues. By learning about it the students realise that it was an important turning point in history. They can build up an understanding of the origin of racism, prejudice and stereotyping in a society, and their consequences. Furthermore the dangers of being silent and obedient can be explored within the field of the Holocaust. The students learn that a democracy cannot simply sustain itself. It needs appreciation, care and, due to its fragility, also protection. The students start to think about power and how it can be used or even abused, and can learn about other nations confronted with civil right violations. Moreover, the role of individuals and their respective responsibilities can be discussed in class (USHMM, 1f).

A very difficult point for students to come to terms with is that the Holocaust did not simply "happen" in history, but resulted from choices made by individuals, organisations and governments that legalised discrimination and permitted prejudice and mass murder. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum also mentions that

[a]s students gain insight into the many historical, social, religious, political, and economic factors that cumulatively resulted in the Holocaust, they gain awareness of the complexity of the subject and a perspective on how a convergence of factors can contribute to the disintegration of democratic values. Students come to understand that it is the responsibility of citizens in any society to learn to identify danger signals, and to know when to react to prevent genocide and the steps that may lead to it. (USHMM, 1)

At this point I would like to mention that these reasons cannot be valid for every age group of students. In Austria the Holocaust is already taught in the 4th form, in which a teacher cannot expect the students to understand the genocide in great detail. Here I want to pose the question whether anybody is actually able to understand the Holocaust really. Such cruelty and atrocity can probably not be understood. Therefore it is a good

idea that every teacher has their own reasons and ambitions for teaching the Holocaust and does his/her best to familiarise the students with the subject matter. When preparing students for learning about the Holocaust, teachers should have their goals and reasons in mind and adjust their material appropriately to fulfil those. But before going into detail, a few very general things concerning Holocaust education should be mentioned.

Gwyneth Bodger (quoted in Eaglestone and Langford, 15) argues that the Holocaust is taught because of the hope that by remembering the past, atrocity and genocide will be avoided in the future and something like the Holocaust will never happen again. She states that “the Holocaust is not simply a subject for study – learning for learning’s sake – but a remedy for the social ills of prejudice, discrimination, and violence.”

Now that the reasons for teaching the Holocaust in general, that means teaching it in the subject History or German, were stated, I would like to mention the benefits of teaching the Holocaust in an EFL classroom. The question of why the Holocaust should be taught in a foreign language, although it is also taught in the mother tongue, is justified. The question of why children should read an English book dealing with the Nazi era, although they could also read *The Diary of A Young Girl* in German is justified as well. I suppose that there are at least some people who ask themselves whether there are any advantages of learning about this sinister part of history in a foreign language.

Two Austrian curricula deal with English as a foreign language: one for lower secondary school, and one for upper secondary school. The overall goal of teaching a foreign language for both lower- and upper secondary school is the development of communicative competence by teaching the skills listening, reading, spoken interaction, and coherent speaking and writing. As the Holocaust is a topic that promotes the voicing of positions as well as the stating of one’s own beliefs as an individual developing communicative competence is essential. Talking about the Holocaust and the Nazi period requires the students to acquire a special vocabulary while learning about this terrible event. As it is with any other topic in English, students learn new words and phrases when talking about the Holocaust. Additionally, teaching the Holocaust in a foreign language can motivate students to acquire new things independently to a certain extent. Many students have an opinion concerning the genocide they want to express, but they cannot express their thoughts and ideas unless

they learn new words, phrases, idioms or collocations. However, communicative competence cannot be merely developed by speaking. The Holocaust can be taught through books and films as well which promotes two further skills, namely reading and listening. By reading a book that deals with the Holocaust new phrases and vocabulary can be acquired too. Furthermore, statements heard by students while watching a Holocaust film contribute to the development of communicative competence.

Aside from linguistic competences, the curriculum for lower secondary school mentions social and intercultural competences. The Holocaust serves perfectly to teach about cultural differences and what consequences these cultural differences can have. Students learn that some cultures are more powerful than others and can use their power in order to reach goals; in this case to create one race.

The curricula for upper secondary school lists one category named “Human and Society”. Students are required to learn about conflict management, the competence of problem solving, and the education of peace. Teaching the Holocaust invites students to think and discuss about the motivations that led to the Holocaust, and to reflect upon the question how peace can be maintained.

Moreover, being educated about the Holocaust in a foreign language produces distance. On the one hand, distance impedes students from putting too many emotions into the topic. As producing sadness in students is not the teacher’s goal it is good that there is an emotional distance. Students should not feel sad or be concerned too much. On the other hand, does distance, or emotional distance, mean that students do not take the topic seriously? I believe that teachers can contribute a lot to the distance that arises when teaching in a foreign language. It is their task to communicate the severity of the Holocaust, and moreover to avoid that the genocide is regarded as an event that simply happened in history and which did not have any influence on humanity.

2.2. Preliminary considerations

As an introductory, Davies (52) argues that it is not sufficient to be consonant with the subject matter of the Holocaust. Teachers have to show respect for teaching the Holocaust and recognise that this is not a teaching task that can be undertaken easily.

Davies moreover states that

[i]t is not enough to inform about the Holocaust; our task is to educate young people about it. We should encourage an understanding of how it came about and what its significance was and, importantly, might be to us at the present time. (53)

The most essential thing when it comes to understanding the Holocaust is probably history. It is history that lets us know what happened and gives insights into the events and why they happened. We need history, since history provides us with material that is essential for deriving lessons, useful for the classroom. The requirement for learning from the Holocaust is a proper appreciation of events, how and why they took place. History is the source of information and therefore an appropriate recognition of the priority of history has to be granted by any rationale for teaching about the Holocaust (Davies, 53).

According to Davies (55)

(...) history provides the bedrock for informed discussion about the larger issues raised by the Holocaust. What a carefully wrought historical understanding will allow us to recognize is that racism, prejudice, antisemitism and other manifestations of discrimination enter into human affairs in all kinds of ways and with all manner of outcomes.

History, however, is not the only source of information. When teaching the Holocaust in an EFL class fictional stories and films can transmit information as well. Books and films can also lead students to think about racism, prejudice, and antisemitism, but the teacher's responsibility is to make sure that the students are able to distinguish between fact and fiction and do not accept fiction as true.

Teaching about the Holocaust cannot and must not be seen as an intellectual exercise exclusively. In order to let the students realise the realities of the Holocaust they have to be confronted with its horrors, although this may seem a bit brutal. The students should have the chance to see a vision of a world in which morality does not play a role. Literature, written by survivors of the Holocaust, gives insight to this world. The

authors wrote these texts with the goal to make the Holocaust understandable. Thus, Holocaust education has to convey the distress and the human degradation the genocide implicated and the demand that nobody should be judged according to race, religion or culture ever again (Davies, 58 f). The statement “Holocaust education expresses the hope that such atrocities will never happen again” seems very idealistic to me. I am not quite sure whether such atrocities can be avoided just by informing the people about it. The wish to avoid such terrible events involves probably more than merely talking about it.

Indeed, literature written by Holocaust survivors gives insight into this terrible world. However, fictional stories as well as fictional films can serve as valuable media to educate young people about the Holocaust too. *The Diary of A Young Girl*, even though it is an autobiographical work, still is no objective account of the Holocaust, but depicts a rather individual and subjective Holocaust experience. Nevertheless, students get an understanding of how the Holocaust was and which inhuman conditions people had to bear. Roberto Benigni’s *Life is Beautiful*, for example, is a fictional film containing many comical elements. Nevertheless, the Holocaust is represented realistically to a certain extent. Benigni does not make fun of the Holocaust, but rather uses humour as a kind of coping strategy for Guido, the protagonist of the film. Hence, I would argue that fiction and humour can also be used to communicate a serious message.

Lessons about Auschwitz should not strive to produce sadness in students as this cannot be referred to as education. Making students feel bad and concerned is closely linked to manipulation. As an excessive amount of shared suffering might lead to internal repression on the part of the students, talking about emotions too much should be avoided. Of course, Holocaust education cannot take place without talking about each other’s feelings and dramatic experiences, and therefore a basic educational task is to find out about one’s own feelings and share them with others. However, this should not produce sadness in the students (Davies, 73).

Teaching the Holocaust in an EFL classroom might probably not evoke too much sadness and dismay in the students as there is a greater emotional distance, which is produced by learning about the event in a foreign language. One reason for this could be

that the students are concentrating on the language rather than on the content. In general, it is more difficult to talk about feelings and emotions in a different language, since the majority of the students simply lack the necessary vocabulary.

Feeling affected and concerned when learning about the Holocaust is referred to as “Holocaust Piety” by Gillian Rose (quoted in Eaglestone and Langford, 2). It constitutes a pedagogic problem. The origin of Holocaust Piety lies in the subject matter of the Holocaust as it is different from other areas in the curriculum. The content – dealing with genocide, enormous human suffering, and destruction – seems to highlight and emphasise it. The belief that the Holocaust sets itself apart from other areas of teaching creates expectations in teachers as well as in students, which leads to Holocaust Piety. The event is experienced as something mystical that cannot be understood to its full extent. This piety creates difficulties and pedagogic problems. Teachers might feel responsible for limiting their teaching in order not to upset the students. This means that teachers, as a precaution, leave out information about death camps and gas chambers as talking about death and killing might make the students sad. The students, on the contrary, do not know how to utter their ideas and feelings they have concerning the Holocaust as they are affected by this topic charged with emotions (Eaglestone and Langford, 2). Most of the students have probably never been confronted with death before which makes it extremely difficult for them to talk about it.

Ideally, students leave school not only with great knowledge, but also with experience and orientation, and this is especially important when it comes to teaching such a terrible historical event. Thus, when young people encounter the hard facts of National Socialism, they should also learn what the history has to do with them, since history is not simply the past, but always also part of the present (Davies, 73 f).

Davies argues that

[w]hat is being taught to pupils as fact must not be presented to them as being the result of objective scientific endeavours, but as attempts to reconstruct and interpret past events by people with certain opinions about the events. (74)

Therefore, memorial sites do not represent the whole truth of the past, but are just a reflection of how a later generation interprets historical places. They are just efforts to rebuild past events with the goal to put them into a broader perspective. So students

should not mistake concentration camp memorial sites for concentration camps. Memorial sites always have to be interpreted. However, although many teachers – especially in Germany – prefer memorial site visits to rather theoretical work with books, there should always be both; theory and experience. Visiting memorial sites is a more direct experience and the students have the chance to combine the perceptions provoked by reality with what they learnt in school. This may sound rather comprehensible, but nevertheless there is the risk that students believe that exhibited memories are historical facts and accept those memories as true although they are not. It is the teacher's responsibility to reveal and structure the various layers and levels that historical places produced over the years. These layers and levels narrow the options visitors have for interpretations (Davies, 74 f).

According to Davies (74) the basis for Holocaust education should be Martins Buber's dialogic principle, which calls for equal discussions and hence is also called symmetrical communication between teachers and students. There is no one to win or to lose. Due to the fact that teachers themselves also participate in the conversation they are learners too and do not dominate the discussion by knowledge or age. Applying this principle helps to cultivate patience in difficult situations, such as students denying the Holocaust. Such an attitude towards the Holocaust can only be changed by facts or matter-of-fact arguments. Students like to get attention and ways of getting it are for example denying the Holocaust, shouting "Sieg Heil" without consideration or refusing to talk about the Holocaust in front of other classmates. Thus, teaching about the Holocaust demands empathy and sensitivity on the part of the teacher, as he/she will be confronted with many unique and challenging situations while teaching about the genocide.

The dialogic principle coincides with what Robert Eaglestone and Barry Langford (17) mention in their book. A tutor is not allowed to control or even manipulate meanings and messages that students grasp from a lesson. Teaching the Holocaust implies teaching ethical and moral issues, but a teacher cannot be a moral educator. This does not mean that students are left on their own when it comes to questions or discussions. It simply means that the teacher is not in the position of telling the students that their opinions and thoughts are either wrong or right. Students and teachers are in a balanced situation as well as in communication with one another.

2.3. Guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust

2.3.1. USHMM guidelines

Now that the preliminary work for teaching about the Holocaust has been mentioned, guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust will be introduced. These guidelines are taken from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. Those guidelines have been developed within the limits of the American teaching context and thus primarily focus on an American teaching environment. However, reasons for why they are appropriate for an EFL classroom as well are going to be discussed.

Define the term *Holocaust*

A teacher cannot act on the assumption that every student knows what the term *Holocaust* actually refers to. Therefore it is essential for the subsequent learning process to make clear that every single pupil knows what happened during this specific event in the 20th century: “The systematic, bureaucratic annihilation of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and their collaborators as a central act of state during World War II” (USHMM, 2). Of course, the Holocaust cannot be described in one sentence as this sentence just gives a very general overview of what has happened, however teachers can decide for themselves in how far they want to go into detail.

Although the Holocaust is also taught in the subjects History and German in Austria, EFL teachers nevertheless have to make sure that the students know what the Holocaust was and what consequences resulted from the Nazi regime. The students’ already existing knowledge is essential for every single activity that is done in class afterwards as Holocaust education in a foreign language is based on previous knowledge.

Avoid comparisons of pain

Teaching about the Holocaust should always emphasise the various policies carried out by the Nazi regime towards several groups of people. Nevertheless, these differentiations should be presented in a way that students do not compare the ways of suffering afterwards. It is not the teacher’s job to decide or even teach which groups of people suffered the most during the Holocaust and thus generalisations that suggest exclusivity should be avoided. Students have to build their own opinion about the tragic event and this is probably the most difficult task for the teacher: to educate them about

the Holocaust to the extent that the students are able to interpret and understand it and, consequently, be able to talk about it and express their own thoughts and opinions (USHMM, 3).

Especially when complementing Holocaust education in an EFL classroom with various media that present different kinds of suffering, it is of great importance to avoid comparisons of pain on the part of the students. When teaching *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* and *The Diary of a Young Girl*, students, for example, could argue that Shmuel (a character from *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*) is poorer than Anne Frank since he is captured in a concentration camp while Anne can still stay together with her family. It is the teachers' difficult and demanding job to prevent the students from comparing different ways of suffering.

Avoid simple answers to complex history

Teaching such a horrible event in class often poses questions about human behaviour. The students want to know why things happened as they did. If this is the case, teachers have to be aware that simplified answers to complicated and serious questions are the wrong way to educate students. They should have the chance to consider various factors that caused the Holocaust. It is not reasonable to keep some history back from the students and just mention some of the many reasons that contributed to the Holocaust. For example, the Holocaust did not only happen because of unbridled racism (USHMM, 3).

According to USHMM (3) it was

rather, racism, combined with centuries-old bigotry, renewed by a nationalistic fervor which emerged in Europe in the latter half of the 19th century, fueled by Germany's defeat in World War I and its national humiliation following the Treaty of Versailles.

Moreover a bad economic situation worldwide, the non-effective Weimar Republic, international differences and Adolf Hitler's manipulative propaganda made a contribution to the development of the Holocaust (USHMM, 3). In my opinion this is a lot for students to take in, especially for younger students, and teachers hopefully find good ways to teach this complexity in an understandable manner.

Just because it happened, does not mean it was inevitable

Due to the fact that an historical event actually happened, and that it was documented in literary works and films, people believe that it had to happen. This belief is definitely wrong. “The Holocaust took place because individuals, groups, and nations made decisions to act or not to act.” (USHMM, 3). By having a closer look at those decisions, insight into history and human nature can be gained. By taking that closer look, teachers can help their students to become good critical thinkers (USHMM, 3).

Strive for precision of language

Since the history of the Holocaust is so complex there is a tendency towards overgeneralising and therefore distorting facts. Facts can easily be distorted when talking about concentration camps, for instance. There is often the misbelief that all concentration camps were death camps, which is not true. Teachers should be aware of the fact that it is their job to help students to differentiate between categories of behaviour and relevant historical references. Students should know the difference between prejudice and discrimination, collaborators and bystanders, armed and spiritual resistance, direct and assumed orders, concentration camps and killing centres, and guilt and responsibility. Describing human behaviour can be extremely difficult as words that describe human behaviour often have several meanings (USHMM 3f).

Make a careful distinction about sources of information

When teaching such a serious and sinister part of history, it is especially important that students get to know the differences between fact, opinion, and fiction. Written documents, in particular, should be differentiated between fact and fiction. The teacher’s job is to lead the students to independent interpretation in order to analyse the sources (USHMM, 4).

According to USHMM (4) the

[s]tudents should be encouraged to consider why a particular text was written, who the intended audience was, whether there were any biases inherent in the information, any gaps in discussion, whether gaps in certain passages were inadvertent or not, and how the information has been used to interpret various events.

Due to different sources of information, interpretations of history can vary. These interpretations are very individual and have to be evaluated analytically. By improving

their ways of interpretation, students become readers who are able to distinguish between legitimate scientists presenting competing historical interpretations, and those who deny or distort historical facts (USHMM, 4). This guideline seems very idealistic to me and I wonder if students can ever become so discerning.

When using literature in the EFL classroom, a distinction about the sources of information is particularly important. When reading *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* and *The Diary of a Young Girl* in class, it is essential to explain the difference between fact and fiction. Whereas the first book is an exclusively fictional story, the latter is autobiographic and thus a true, but personal and subjective account of the Holocaust.

Try to avoid stereotypical descriptions

The fact that all Jews were targeted for destruction by the Nazis might lead to the assumption that all Jews had the same experiences, which they definitely did not have. To regard groups of people as monolithic in their attitudes and actions can easily lead to simplistic views and stereotyping. How students perceive groups in their daily lives strongly depends on the way that ethnic groups and social clusters are called and depicted in school curricula. It is of great importance that teachers remind their students that although certain members of a group may share similar experiences and beliefs, generalisations about them might produce stereotypes and moreover distort reality. This could be explained with the help of an example about Germans: Although, due to history, many Germans are perceived as Nazis it is not legitimate to refer to Germans as Nazis in general. This assumption is closely connected to stereotypes that have been developed concerning Germans. Stereotyping, in combination with the lack of knowledge, results in such suppositions. Thus no race or nationality can be restricted to a singular and subjective description (USHMM, 4).

Do not romanticise history to engage students' interest

When students are exposed to the worst of human nature there is often the danger that cynicism is fostered in the students. This constitutes one of the great risks of Holocaust education. Thus teachers have to pay attention that they keep the accuracy of facts. It is important for the students that teachers let them know that there have been people who risked their lives because they wanted to save other lives. However, overemphasising

heroic tales in relation to the Holocaust could create a wrong and unbalanced account of history (USHMM, 5).

Contextualise the history you are teaching

Holocaust education should aim at understanding the circumstances that encouraged or discouraged this event on the part of the students. Therefore the way individuals and organisations acted at that time should be put into a historical context. When and where an event took place should always be considered and by means of these considerations the approach to specific events and acts of joint guilt are framed (USHMM, 5). Factors such as

(...) the immediate consequences to oneself and one's family of assisting victims; the impact of contemporaneous events; the degree of control the Nazis had on a country or local population; the cultural attitudes of particular native populations historically toward [sic] different victim groups, and the availability, effectiveness, and risk of potential hiding places (USHMM, 5)

are important to be considered when it comes to build up a frame.

Students should be aware of the fact that it is not possible to put all individuals and groups into the same categories of behaviour. As already mentioned before, a distinction between bystanders, collaborators, perpetrators and rescuers has to be drawn (USHMM, 5).

It is the teacher's job to encourage the students not to judge people according to their experiences during the Holocaust: "contextualization is critical so that victims are not perceived only as victims." Jews had an active culture and a long history in Europe before the Nazi era, although they were the central victims at that time (USHMM, 5).

Students need help in balancing their perception of Jews as victims and to recognise the terrible disruption due to the Holocaust. Therefore, it is beneficial to expose students to cultural achievements of European Jewish life (USHMM, 5).

Translate statistics into people

The number of victims is often very difficult to comprehend, no matter what Holocaust study is read. It is important to mention that there are always people who are behind the statistics, including families of grandparents, parents, and children. First-person

accounts and memoir literature offer a way of making meaning out of collective numbers. Although personal accounts can complement genocide studies, students should learn a cautious exposure to first-person accounts, such as those from survivors, journalists, relief workers, bystanders, and liberators, as what they state are rather subjective experiences and opinions that cannot be generalised (USHMM, 6).

Be sensitive to appropriate written and audio-visual content

Teachers should always have in mind that what seems to be appropriate for one student may not be for all of them. This is especially true when graphic material is used to demonstrate the horrors that were going on during the Holocaust. Teachers should make use of graphic material rationally “and only to the extent necessary to achieve the objective of the lesson” (USHMM, 6).

Students should not be exposed to images they are not prepared for. Showing them pictures of horror without preparation does not place them in safe learning environment, which should ultimately be the teacher’s goal. The belief that every pupil is able to understand human behaviour just by being exposed to dreadful images is definitely wrong. The USHMM (6) states that

[s]ome students may be so appalled by images of brutality and mass murder that they are discouraged from studying the subject further; others may become fascinated in a more voyeuristic fashion, subordinating further critical analysis of the history to the superficial titillation of looking at images of starvation, disfigurement, and death.

Images of mass killings or other barbarisms very often do not coincide with the many events that took place during the Holocaust. Thus, it is advisable that texts and pictures do not exploit memories of victims since otherwise the students’ violability would constitute the centre of Holocaust education (UHSMM, 6).

Strive for balance in establishing whose perspective informs your study of the Holocaust

Teaching the Holocaust should not solely aim at informing students about the victims of Nazi aggression, but also provide information about victimisers that forced people to decisions or did not even give them a chance to decide anything at all. According to the USHMM students very frequently believe that the horror the victims had to suffer was

justified due to something they did wrong. Thus, students blame the victims themselves, although it is inappropriate (USHMM, 6). I do not think that this statement can be overgeneralised not that it is true for the majority of students. If the teacher teaches the Holocaust correctly, it is very unlikely that students will blame the victims themselves.

The USHMM further mentions that students tend to glorify power, although it was often used to kill innocent people. Some teachers explain that their students are fascinated by the symbols of power in Nazi propaganda (USHMM, 7).

Additionally, the USHMM (7) states that

any study of the Holocaust should address both the victims and the perpetrators of violence, and attempt to portray each as human beings, capable of moral judgment and independent decision-making but challenged by circumstances which made both self-defense and independent thought not merely difficult but perilous and potentially lethal.

These points clearly indicate that teaching the Holocaust is no easy job for a teacher. He/She has to be aware of the fact that he is responsible for what the students learn and know about the Holocaust, and what opinions they have developed about it afterwards. This coincides with what I have already mentioned in the section *Preliminary work and considerations*, namely that the teacher has to structure the layers, as those layers narrow the options for interpretation on the hand of the learners in order not to interpret certain things inappropriately (Davies 74ff).

Select appropriate learning activities

When teaching students for a longer time teachers know what their favourable learning activities are. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily imply that these are the right methods for teaching about the Holocaust. Activities such as word scrambles, crossword puzzles, and other playful exercises do not strive for critical analysis, but result in level types of thinking. This is especially dangerous in Holocaust education. This serious topic should not be trivialised by activities that cause more fun in the classroom than seriousness and awareness. When activities do not support the rationale for studying the Holocaust, they should not be applied in school (USHMM, 7).

Thought-provoking learning activities are preferred exercises in school, but even here teachers have to be cautious when making use of them. When teachers want to help

students experience unfamiliar situations, they often trust in simulation exercises. Even though teachers are very attentive and careful in preparing the class for such an activity, simulating experiences from the Holocaust are unreliable. Such exercises engage students and they take part actively, however, the actual purpose and aim of the lesson can be forgotten easily. The worst case would be that students leave the Holocaust lessons with false impressions and deduce a wrong truth from the activities (USHMM, 7f). I am not sure whether simulation exercises should be actually used in school. In my opinion students cannot be expected to simulate a situation that happened during the Nazi era.

Holocaust survivors and eyewitnesses are probably the best to explain the challenge of finding the right words to describe their experiences. Moreover they state that it is rather impossible to simulate the horror (fear, hunger, disease, inexplicable loss, brutality and death) that was going on during the Holocaust. Again, the problem with simulating events is simplification. Students get a falsified view of history (USHMM, 8).

Selecting appropriate material is especially important for teaching the Holocaust in the EFL classroom. In this case there are even more factors that teachers have to bear in mind. Of course, the material should be selected according to validity, age, appropriateness and so on. However, the factor “age” in teaching a foreign language does not only mean choosing material that does not demand too much from the students emotionally, but also refers to grammar and vocabulary. Understanding and interpreting the Holocaust presupposes that students comprehend what the teacher is actually talking about. When teachers use literature or media, it is of great importance that these materials are age- or level-appropriate according to grammar, vocabulary and syntax.

The USHMM (8) states that

[s]ince there are numerous primary source accounts, both written and visual, as well as survivors and eyewitnesses who can describe actual choices faced and made by individuals, groups, and nations during this period, teachers should draw upon these resources and refrain from simulation games that lead to a trivialization of the subject matter.

According to the USHMM simulation activities can be used perfectly when they are designed to explore various aspects of human behaviour, such as conflict resolution and

complicated decision-making. Considering different points of view on a particular event in history is considerably different from participating in a simulation game (USHMM, 8). Again, I am not sure how helpful simulation exercises can be within the limits of teaching about the Holocaust. Indeed, simulation activities can help to explore various aspects of human behaviour, but not within the context of the Holocaust.

Reinforce the objectives of your lesson plan

No matter what teaching situation is, the structure of opening and closing lessons is extremely important. A good opening lesson serves to diminish misinformation students received through prior Holocaust education. It should motivate students and move them from passive to active learners. That means that they should participate actively and bring their own opinions and ideas to class (USHMM, 8).

An effective closing lesson encourages students to connect the Holocaust to other world events such as the attack on the World Trade Centre. The students should be able to reflect upon what they have learned and moreover think about what this means to them as individuals. An extremely successful closing lesson motivates students to look for further information and material on the Holocaust either in literature or art (USHMM, 8).

Participating actively as well as reflecting upon what the students have learned is desirable in every teaching situation, no matter whether the Holocaust is taught in an American teaching context or in an Austrian EFL classroom.

2.3.2. Film Education teaching tips

The USHMM is not the only institution that constitutes guidelines for teaching the Holocaust. “Film education is a charity supported by the UK film industry. It promotes and supports the use of film within the curriculum.” (FE, n.p.) It provides resources for teachers and information about certain events for school groups. The charity “Film Education” lists helpful guidelines in a more compact way. As some of these guidelines overlap with the teaching tips I have already mentioned, I will just add a few more.

FE suggests that stories of individuals are preferable as lessons can be personalised with stories from people who experienced the Holocaust themselves. Moreover, the fact that

the Holocaust was a unique event with its own history should be emphasised and thus should not be compared to other genocides (FE, n.p.). At this point I would like to mention that I am not sure whether the Holocaust should be regarded as a unique event that cannot be compared to other events in history. One could counter that the genocide of Tasmanians during colonisation was a very terrible event as well and the result, namely that many people had to die, is the same.

Another teaching tip is to avoid images of Nazi flags and emblems that are decontextualised. These signs could have the effect of glamorising the Nazis which would be disastrous in Holocaust education. Thus teachers should make sure that any image used in class is contextualised and stresses the Nazi policy and its consequences. FE finally recommends teaching about the history of anti-Semitism as such (Film Education, n.p.).

2.3.3. Museum of Tolerance teaching guidelines

The MoT mentions particular guidelines that seem very important to me, but have not been considered by the USHMM and FE. The MoT focuses on the Holocaust and, amongst others, offers teachers' resources, a multimedia learning centre, virtual exhibits, and special collections (MoT, n.p.).

Allow ample time for students to explore and reflect upon the subject

As the Holocaust influences “theological, historical, legal, social, psychological, ethical, philosophical, literary, artistic, medical and political issues” students need time to consider all these points and the consequences. Thus, the students' knowledge of moral and religious implications of human behaviour can be increased by Holocaust education (MoT, n.p.). No matter what teaching situation is (EFL context or education in the respective mother tongue), students need enough time to explore and reflect upon the subject; especially when learning about a topic that is so charged with emotions.

Invite survivors of the Holocaust to discuss their experiences with the students

Due to the fact that the generation of Holocaust survivors is rapidly dying out not every teacher has the chance to invite eye-witnesses. However, if it is possible, this is probably the best way to teach the Holocaust as realistically as possible. The students

can ask questions and the answers they get will personalise the terrible event (MoT, n.p.).

Regarding the role of witness in the classroom, Eaglestone and Langford (19) state that many courses on the Holocaust can benefit a lot from the presence of survivors in the classroom. They come to class as they want to tell their own stories and share their experience, thus their visits are precious and powerful. Survivors can constitute an important part of the students' learning process.

A further teaching tip from the Museum of Tolerance indicates that there are various films and videos dealing with the Holocaust. No matter whether it is a fictional film or a documentary, films that sensationalise the historical event should be avoided. The MoT claims that it is preferable to use primary sources as actual accounts can best describe the situation (MoT, n.p.).

Invite liberators to the classroom

Amongst the first people that reached the concentration- and death camps were soldiers. Their eyewitness evidence in combination with the American background can probably delete the feeling of “foreignness” that is often related to the Holocaust (MoT, n.p.).

Concluding, it is essential to mention that these guidelines have been developed to “guide” the teachers through Holocaust education. They should serve as an orientation, but nevertheless have to be adapted accordingly to each class and the respective situation. All these guidelines – although not specifically developed for an EFL class – fit for teaching the Holocaust in an EFL class as well, as they cover rather general aspects of teaching this terrible historical event.

3. Teaching the Holocaust through Literature

According to the philosopher Theodor Adorno it is barbaric and impossible to write poetry after Auschwitz (Adorno, 19). With this statement he refers to the senselessness of the Holocaust and that it is very difficult to depict the atrocities of the historical event. Primo Levi, as well, highlights the inexplicability of the Holocaust in his statement “Here there is no why” (Levi). However, there is a lot literature on the Holocaust and thus this section of the diploma thesis seeks to explain the difficulties that can occur in representing the Holocaust in children’s literature, and what problems authors have to face when writing Holocaust literature.

Making the Holocaust understandable to young people through novels, picture books and auto/biographies has become more important in the last two decades. Nevertheless it is not always that easy to use literature to support theoretical input. Due to its brutalities and the problem of mixing fact and fiction the Holocaust is very difficult to represent (Kokkola, 1).

According to Kokkola (1f) there are two factors that make the Holocaust more challenging to represent than other historical periods. Firstly, it seems that ordinary words are not sufficient to describe the death of six million Jews and the brutal treatment many people had to bear, but Kokkola argues that the Holocaust is unique as it was a state-instituted systematic mass murder. “Unique” does not refer to the number of people killed, but how and why they were killed (Kokkola, 2). Again, I am not sure whether the Holocaust can be referred to as a unique event inasmuch as there have also been other genocides with equal atrocities and pain.

Secondly, people deny the Holocaust more than any other event. Other terrible events in history, as for example the attack on the World Trade Center, are not repudiated. This makes clear that authors writing about the Holocaust are even more responsible for telling the historical truth and representing it appropriately. It is their job to emphasise what happened and thus they should not use any form of writing that could encourage students to deny the historical evidence (Kokkola, 2).

Kokkola moreover states that

Holocaust literature for children can be conceived as having a greater moral obligation to be historically accurate than historical fiction dealing with less catastrophic events. Although the basic issues and techniques involved are not different from any other kind of historical fiction, when the Holocaust is represented in literature for young readers, they are accorded a greater enormity. (3)

Especially with regard to fictionality and factionality, children's books have to be accurate by indicating what is true and what is invented. On the one hand it is important that students are able to distinguish between fiction and facts in texts. Kokkola (2) argues that many teachers have the fear that their students regard fictional texts as true and thus have a completely wrong picture of the Holocaust. As I have already mentioned before, this is rather unlikely to happen when the Holocaust is taught diligently. On the other hand, it is also essential that children recognise the historical facts. Therefore many authors inform their readers in their works how much of the text is based on evidence and to what extent it is based on imagination (Kokkola, 2).

In her book *Representing the Holocaust in children's literature*, Kokkola (6) mentions a very important point: As authors write about the events readers get access to the information. Thus the role of writing and how the events are represented in writing have to be considered (Kokkola, 6).

However, Langer (quoted in Kokkola, 6) states a problem concerning language: language on its own is not able to give meaning to Auschwitz. This creates an unsolvable controversy: On the one hand, a great part of our knowledge of the Holocaust comes through writing, but on the other hand, language alone seems unable to contain the events. I would argue that this is a rather philosophical problem and to discuss it would go beyond the scope of my paper. However, how can we know about the Holocaust if not through language?

Another problem many authors face is lacking knowledge, especially with regard to fiction and auto/biography. Kokkola (6) argues that

[t]he hesitancy with which most authors approach this subject implies that they feel that the only people who have the right to speak are those who were empirically, rather than imaginatively, affected by the events.

Therefore, when working with Holocaust texts, it is of great importance to examine the author's biographical information. That entails their ethnicity, the fact whether they grew up in the Holocaust directly or indirectly, and of course when the text was written (Kokkola, 6).

As already mentioned before, we derive most of our knowledge about the Holocaust through writing. According to Kokkola (6) there are differences between an adult readership and a child readership:

When authors choose to address a child readership in a piece of Holocaust literature, they inevitably take on a highly moralistic set of ideologies for shaping their texts. (Kokkola, 7)

Here I want to pose the question whether this is not also true for an adult readership. In my opinion it does not matter which readership the author addresses; responsibility for what they write has to be taken in every case. Therefore the question how texts written for children should be separated from those written for adults is legitimate. Of course, the most obvious differences between can be seen in terms of content, linguistic difficulty, publication format, age of the protagonist, and theme. Nevertheless, with regard to responsibility there cannot be made a difference. It is valid for both, children's and adult literature (Kokkola 7).

Sure, it may occur that the better students read more challenging texts in their mother tongue, even texts originally written for adults, and thus there is no reason for creating such a sharp device between young readers and adult readers. However, I am of the opinion that this phenomenon may rarely occur in an EFL classroom, since all of the students should be at the same level actually. The need for appropriate material that does not demand too much from the students is very high in this case. The learners have a hard time learning about a very tragic event in a second language and thus the written material that is used to complement the theoretical input should be supporting and not frustrating. It should just deepen what they have learned already and they should have the feeling that they understand what the text is about. Therefore, it is very important that teachers do not just distribute texts to read, but prepare the students beforehand and discuss the texts afterwards. Activities that are related to the written works are a good way to revise the content and the most striking points.

3.1. Holocaust fiction etiquettes

Authors who write Holocaust fiction for children not only have to respect the general codes of writing, but also of historical fiction. However, I will first mention the basic benchmark for Holocaust writing in general as this is the presupposition of the guidelines for writing children's literature (Kokkola, 10). These rules should serve as a sort of writing guideline for authors who intend to write Holocaust fiction for children.

According to Terrence Des Pres (quoted in Kokkola, 10) these rules of decorum have to be considered when writing about the Holocaust:

The Holocaust shall be represented, in its totality, as a unique event, as a special case and kingdom of its own, above or below or apart from history. Representations for the Holocaust shall be as accurate and faithful as possible to the facts and conditions of the event, without change or manipulation for any reason – artistic reasons included. The Holocaust shall be approached as a solemn or even sacred event, with a seriousness admitting no response that might obscure its enormity or dishonour its dead.

Kokkola (11) mentions two further points which she considers as equally important. "We must not forget" and "All writing about the Holocaust should adopt an ethical position that fosters resistance to fascist philosophy". Combining her principles with the above mentioned, similarly unclearly-defined, but powerful rules for writing children's literature constitutes the guidelines for writing Holocaust fiction for children.

While there are many authors who try to stick to these rules, there are also exceptions that break the rules either wittingly or unwittingly. Some do so, as by ignoring conventions they want to open new dimensions of expectations. Kokkola (10) even argues that those authors who break the rules write the more interesting texts.

Although children's literature normally strives towards cautiousness and empathy, any kind of Holocaust literature for children breaks one taboo, namely that children must not be frightened. In a sense "frightened" means that they get to know a world where even their parents are out of control; a world in which other people decide about life or death. It does not necessarily mean that the students sit in class crying because they are so sad about what they read in a book. Kokkola (11) therefore distinguishes Holocaust

literature for children “by its combination of challenging subject matter, ethical responsibility, and its position outside the normal boundaries of children’s literature”.

Summing up, I would argue that there is no big difference between writing about any historical event and writing about the Holocaust. However, one must not forget the enormity and moral implications of the Holocaust. Although conventions for writing for young people do not always supplement the principles for writing about the Holocaust, authors should make use of those conventions as the addressed readership are children and teenagers. Therefore, authors have to grapple with a set of constraints. The subject cannot simply be omitted due to the fact that it is incomprehensible and thus authors of Holocaust texts for children have a very hard job in deciding how to write their works with regard to the existing conventions.

3.2. Why use literature in Holocaust education?

According to Markman (quoted in Millen et al., 147) it is rather impossible to depict the Holocaust as it was a very tragic event and the murder of six million Jews cannot be imagined. Therefore the event somehow has to be personalised to make it understandable for students.

Holocaust literature is able to paint descriptive and vivid pictures of numerous personal experiences and moreover offers various perspectives from which the Holocaust can be viewed:

the first hand, eyewitness testimonies of diaries and letters that transport readers to an [sic] historical moment as it occurs; the retrospective view of the memoirist, no longer insulated as diarists and letter writers often are; and the poetry, drama, fiction (and faction) that recreate the Holocaust experience. (Markman quoted in Millen et al., 147)

Furthermore, Holocaust literature looks for discussions and reflections. Students are asked to reflect upon social dilemmas, individual fates, responsibility and guilt, and various dimensions of human behaviour (Markman quoted in Millen et al., 147). At this point I would like to mention that not only Holocaust literature looks for discussions and reflections. History school books that deal with the Holocaust may also produce the wish to talk about social dilemmas and individual fates, in general, about human behaviour and how it can change depending on difficult circumstances.

The USHMM (13) argues that literature is able to be reflective of an immense number of subjects and concerns. These reflections can motivate students in a way that essays and standard text books are not capable of. Holocaust literature comprises several literary genres, such as novels, short stories, drama, poetry, diaries, and memoirs. As there are so many different genres, the teacher has a great choice with regard to the curriculum.

According to Jackie Metzger (n.p.) Holocaust literature is and will be one of the most effective pedagogical resources.

Literature remains one of the most influential genres in Holocaust education because of its widespread appeal to the public. Younger audiences can benefit from stories written by young people and adult readers can reflect upon stories and analyse their content within a historical context and a psychological framework. Literature, in particular Holocaust literature, often makes a lasting impression on readers due to the vivid imagery and the intimacy of the characters and events. (Metzger, n.p.)

Moreover, literature is able to narrate about important social concerns such as the consequences of intolerance, since many of the stories overlap with certain issues that occur in their own lives (USHMM, 13).

The USHMM (13) mentions various reasons for studying literature in Holocaust education: First of all it helps the students to create a respect for human decorum by letting them face the moral corruption and the dimension of Nazi evil (the despicable atrocity of the Nazi treatment of victims, the happening of the Kristallnacht¹, genocide, medical experiments, and the transportation in boxcars) (USHMM, 13).

Secondly, Holocaust literature should be studied in class as it lets the students recognise the acts of heroism depicted by teenagers and grown-ups in concentration camps. The USHMM lists the following examples:

(...) the couriers who smuggled messages, goods, and weapons in and out of the Warsaw Ghetto, the partisans who used arms to resist the Nazis, and the uprisings and revolts in various ghettos including Warsaw and in killing centers such as Treblinka. (USHMM, 13)

¹ The *Kristallnacht* was a “government-sanctioned reprisal against the Jews” announced by Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbles. Synagogues were destroyed and then burned. Cruel people broke windows of Jewish shops, and Jews were arrested and assassinated. The pogrom rioted throughout Austria and Germany (Rosenberg, n.p.).

Thirdly, students have the chance to examine the intellectual resistance proven in literary responses. These responses depict the overwhelming dignity of people who pass the evil of their assassins that can be found in the secret writing of diaries, plays, and poetry (USHMM, 13).

Fourthly, the students discover the different roles the people had or seemed to have during the Holocaust: victim, oppressor, bystander, and rescuer (USHMM, 14).

Fifthly, students can explore moral choices that had to be made, but also the absence of choices. Young and old people, as well as victims and perpetrators had to face these choices (USHMM, 14).

Sixthly, the falsification or even abuse of language designed by the Nazis can be analysed by the students. They made use of euphemisms in particular to hide their brutal intent (USHMM, 14). The following examples of euphemisms are listed by the USHMM (14):

(...) their use of the terms “emigration” for expulsion, “evacuation” for deportation, “deportation” for transportation to concentration camps and killing centers, “police actions” for round-ups that typically led to mass murder, and “Final Solution” for the planned annihilation of every Jew in Europe.

Literature, although it has to be chosen and dealt with carefully, can be a good way to complement the rather theoretical input the students get in Holocaust education. Students get the chance to experience the feelings and fears people had during the Holocaust better through reading, but, as mentioned many times before, it is the authors’ difficult task to highlight differences between fact and fiction, and stick to the historical truth.

The fact that literature is able to paint more vivid and descriptive pictures of events than ordinary history books are able to do, is also valid for teaching the Holocaust in an EFL context. Reading about the Holocaust embedded in a story is probably more entertaining than just being informed by a history book. Generally, the reasons why literature should be used when teaching about the Holocaust in general are also true for an EFL class. However, literature that is used in the EFL classroom has to be chosen carefully with

regard to grammatical level and vocabulary depending on the respective form. Additionally, I am convinced that students should be prepared before starting to read and in the course of reading really deal with the subject. A good way of doing this is analysing certain passages and thinking of various motivations in human behaviour. A teacher must not forget that, for students in an EFL class, reading involves more than just reading and being informed. As they read in a foreign language students have to make sure to understand the majority of words so that they can make sense out of what they read. It is essential that EFL students get the meaning right in order not to believe something to be true that is actually wrong.

4. Using films in education

In the second part of this diploma thesis literary works dealing with the Holocaust, but also a film, will be analysed. As an introduction this section provides information about the role of films in education, how films can be best used to educate students, and how films in Holocaust education should be utilised.

4.1. The role of films in education

Films have been used for a long time in education. However, there is hardly any pedagogical reason for using it. Most of the time, teachers show films to fill the gaps that occur and thus these films are more amusing and enjoyable than pedagogically valuable. Another reason why films are used is to complement or conclude a novel that is read in class. Unfortunately, films are rarely used for the film's sake. Films are independent works of art and have to be treated as such. When dealing with films in class it is important to regard them as accounts which inform about other cultures as they are products of a specific foreign-language context. The fact that films are disregarded in classrooms becomes more understandable as one recognises that films, next to watching TV, control the everyday life of teenagers (Bredella et al., 239). I would like to add that this statement cannot be generalised. Nobody knows how many teenagers watch TV and to what extent they do it.

Another reason why films are no self-evident part of education constitutes the certainty that the majority of teachers are not familiar with the specific ways of representation films can offer. Moreover, they do not know sufficient terminology to describe the various ways of representation. Compared to narrative and lyrical texts, where analyses are part of every study of literature, many teachers are not capable of interpreting films as they lack experience in analysing them. Moreover, many teachers are unsure about when and how to use films in class, and which approaches are appropriate in order to reach certain goals (Bredella et al., 240).

Bredella et al. (240) recommends creating a dialogue between film and media studies, and culture-scientific approaches within the literature studies, but film didactics is an almost untouched area and needs to be further explored and developed.

Concerning films in an EFL classroom, Petra Ederer in her diploma thesis on “Audio-visual comprehension in theory and foreign language teaching practice” argues that films display a content that is closely related to the viewers’ own lives and thus should be used when teaching a foreign language. She moreover states that films can be motivators inasmuch as they are authentic and real.

[W]hen students realize that the real thing, i.e. real English made for native speakers, is not necessarily beyond their comprehension, but can be achieved with some effort; it has a motivating effect not only for the concrete text, but also for all other learning processes. (Ederer, 59)

I argue that regarding films as authentic and real cannot be overgeneralised. Of course, there may be films that are specifically made for certain learning purposes and can be referred to as authentic. However, there are other films as well which do not display a content that is closely related to the viewers’ own lives. I even believe that there exist many films that display a content that is completely different from the students’ lives, but nevertheless can be perfectly used in class.

In order to lead the students of an EFL class to a success that motivates them for further learning processes teachers not only need to consider the film itself and the best way to teach it, but they also have to consider the linguistic level of the students. It is their responsibility to choose a film the students are able to understand. As each film contains new vocabulary and the students cannot understand every word, the teachers have to prepare the film in a way so that the students can deal with it and profit from watching it.

4.2. The use of film in teaching about the Holocaust

No doubt, films provide challenging opportunities in the ambition to educate students about the Holocaust. However, although there is a great amount of material of World War II and before, there is just little material of the process of the actual destruction and death camps. Therefore Nazi footage, liberation footage, newsreels, post-Holocaust fictional and non-fictional movies and television have to be examined in order to find out more about the time of destruction and death camps. When analysing these materials it is important to consider both content and context. Tools of visual media should be used and there should be a reference to historical knowledge of the Holocaust as well (Doneson, 15f). According to Doneson (16), teachers should be concerned about two factors: “the role of the film as it confronts history, and the moral issues involved in any depiction of the Final Solution”. At this point I would like to mention that what Doneson states concerning the material of the process of the actual destruction and death camps is approximately twenty years old and can therefore no longer be regarded as true. Starting with *Schindler’ List*, for example, many films dealing with death camps and the actual destruction have been produced in the last twenty years.

According to Doneson (16) the camera acts as a documenter through which we explore history. Furthermore, every film is a source of knowledge and proof, but also a symbol of its culture. In my opinion this is only true for documentaries. Films are artefacts and thus tend to be fictional.

Since films are parts of history, the instructor has to be aware of the source of the filmed images and – if necessary – add what the camera does not show. In short, the cardinal principle when using film in the teaching of the Holocaust is to treat the film seriously (Doneson 16).

Film in the classroom is neither a diversion or entertainment, nor a mere illustration. Under optimal conditions the teacher who uses film has some knowledge of film techniques such as camera angles and editing; of film theories, among them structuralism and semiotics; of the function of film as evidence; of the society and culture in which the particular film was made. (Doneson 16)

Concluding I suggest that teachers should be film-literate and aware of the fact that on the one hand documentary films can distort the truth, and on the other hand fictional films may reveal covered realities. Additionally, teachers should not use a film in Holocaust education without having certain goals in mind. They should have a reason for using certain films and consider why they want the students to watch these films.

In his article “Using Movies in the Classroom” Louw (n.p.) states that

[t]he theory behind using videos follows closely that of using the cassette player. Build up with a pre-viewing activity, have an activity for while viewing, and follow up with a post-viewing activity. Have a very clear purpose behind using the video, otherwise the lesson degenerates into a baby-sitting scenario. Prepare students for difficulties ahead of time by providing vocabulary, or reassure them that they needn't panic. When students get restless or lost, pause and wait for questions and comments.

Pre-viewing activities can contain a brainstorming or vocabulary work, especially vocabulary that is related to the Holocaust and the Nazi period. Expressions such as “Sieg Heil” have to be explained. In general, students should not be left alone with a film. They need a guide to help them analysing and interpreting what they see.

While-viewing activities are especially important with regard to disciplinary matters. As soon as the students get informed about while-viewing activities they know that the film is not merely watched for entertainment, but has a pedagogical purpose. A while viewing exercise, for example, can be to focus on a specific character and watch his/her development in the course of the film².

Post-viewing exercises help the students to organise the information they receive. Post-viewing exercises serve to ensure that the students understand the most important points and are able to talk about striking issues in class discussions. An example of a post-viewing activity could be answering comprehension questions about the content of the film, discuss important points in groups, or writing different endings and beginnings of the story.

² The teacher of course has to know that the behaviour of the respective character changes. Otherwise the task would be senseless.

As a final statement I would like to mention that preparing pre-viewing, while-viewing, and post-viewing activities is not only valid for watching films in an EFL classroom, but also for watching films in the respective mother tongue.

PART II

5. Representation of the Holocaust

As already mentioned in *Teaching the Holocaust through Literature* the representation of the Holocaust in books is challenging. According to Kokkola (1) authors face two problems: First, ordinary words are not sufficient to describe the death of six million Jews and the brutal treatment many people had to bear. Secondly, some people deny the Holocaust more than any other event. Theodor Adorno even said that there can be no poetry after Auschwitz (cf. *Teaching the Holocaust through Literature*). However, literature can be a good tool in complementing Holocaust education. Therefore, the representation of the Holocaust in literature for young readers is of particular interest. In the following I will analyse the way the Holocaust is represented in the books *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, *The Diary of A Young Girl*, and the film *Life is beautiful*.

The way authors deal with terrible historical events and how they solve the problem of telling these stories to their audience will be discussed. The two books and the film have one thing in common: The Holocaust is experienced through the eyes of a child. However, each child has a different level of knowledge and the analyses will show that the representations of the Holocaust differ a lot.

5.1. *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne

5.1.1. Information on the book

The book written by John Boyne was published in 2006. It is a work of fiction that tells the story of Bruno, a nine-year old son of a Nazi commandant, his twelve-year old sister Gretel, and his parents. Due to the father's new job they move from Berlin to Out-With. Boredom and curiosity lead Bruno to explore the area around their new house in Out-With where he gets to know Shmuel, a Jewish boy from the other side of the fence, who is forced to work in the concentration camp. They meet regularly and soon become good friends. In the end both Bruno and Shmuel unknowingly learn the brutalities of the concentration camp the hard way and share the same death.

5.1.2. How is the Holocaust represented in the book?

When answering the question how the Holocaust is represented in Boyne's book, it is important to consider that it is a fictional story and fiction does not have to be factually accurate. In contrast to the way Bruno perceives the Holocaust in the story, the readers' perception of the Holocaust asks for their previous knowledge and general education. By relating their knowledge they already have to what they read, they are able to build up a picture of the Holocaust although facts are distorted and certain aspects are not explicitly mentioned in the story.

"This well-meaning book ends up distorting the Holocaust" writes Rabbi Benjamin Blech (n.p.) in his book review and he is absolutely right. John Boyne is distorting facts in his story and the Holocaust is presented unrealistically. A great discrepancy between the perspective of the narrator and the perspective of the readers that can be found in the book contributes significantly to the unrealistic representation. The story is told by a figural narrator who can be referred to as unreliable narrator, as he focalises Bruno's thoughts and opinions (Nünning, 39 ff). Bruno is a nine-year old boy who is not aware of the political situation of that time, of the cruelties that Hitler commits, and of the fact that his father is involved in the brutalities. His naivety and young age, but also his parents' attempt to keep things from him are responsible for the unreliable narration and thus lead to an unrealistic representation of the Holocaust. The readers, however, know more than Bruno does and are not as ignorant as he is. Thus, they are able to detect that the Holocaust was different from how Bruno experiences it in the book.

The most unrealistic fact in the book is that Bruno lives within yards of the concentration camp and has no clue about what is going on there and whether he is Jewish or not. This makes it even more unrealistic to believe that Bruno does not know that his father is a Nazi commandant, who manages the concentration camp. Additionally, being the son of a Nazi Commandant who does not know what the father's job requires to do seems to be awkward, especially when the whole family is involved and has to move from Berlin to Out-With. Normally children want to know what their parents' jobs are. Bruno wants to know it too, but is satisfied with the elusive answer of his mother.

‘Your father’s job,’ explained Mother. ‘You know how important it is, don’t you?’ ‘Yes, of course,’ said Bruno, nodding his head, because there were always so many visitors to the house (...) ‘Well, sometimes when someone is very important,’ continued Mother, ‘the man who employs him asks him to go somewhere else because there’s a very special job that needs doing there.’ ‘What kind of job?’ asked Bruno, because if he was honest with himself (...) he wasn’t entirely sure what job Father did. ‘It’s a very important job,’ said Mother, hesitating for a moment. ‘A job that needs a very special man to do it. You can understand that, can’t you?’ (Boyne, 3ff)

Bruno’s mother obviously does not want her son to know about his father’s job and thus Bruno, at least to a certain extent, cannot be adjudged as he does not know what crime his father is actually committing. Nevertheless, attentive and curious boys would at least ask what is going on when wondering why so many soldiers are surrounding the area of the new house. Bruno is satisfied with what people tell him; in other words: he is an obedient and good boy who listens to his parents and does not want to annoy them.

Two boys sitting on either side of a fence, one in- and one outside the concentration camp is another point that is rather unrealistic. The concentration camps were controlled strictly and whether this could have happened as it is depicted in the story is rather questionable. With examples like these the author creates a distorted picture of the Holocaust and of everything else that is related to it. In his book review, Blech (n.p.) states his fear that students will not understand how brutal the Holocaust was and what kind of atrocity the people had to bear.

So what will the students studying this as required reading take away from it? The camps certainly weren’t bad if youngsters like Shmuley [sic], Bruno’s friend, were able to walk about freely, have clandestine meetings at a fence (non-electrified, it appears) which even allows for crawling underneath it, never

reveals the constant presence of death, and survivors without being forced into full-time labor. And as for those people in the striped pajamas – why if you only saw them from a distance you would never know these weren't happy masqueraders! (Blech, n.p.)

When reading the book in class, no matter whether it is in an EFL class or any other class, the teacher has to inform the students that what they read is a fictional story. Fictional stories *can* contain historical truth but do not necessarily have to do so. Books should not be used to confuse students and distort historical facts. Thus, it is essential that the Holocaust is taught accurately before, while or after reading a book like *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*. The readers should be better informed than the protagonist in the book. However it is not necessary to explain the Holocaust in great detail through pre-teaching activities. Explaining historical facts and how the book distorts them can also be done while and after reading the story together with the students. By doing so, students gain reading experience and learn to reflect critically upon what they have read. That the readers know more than Bruno himself does not constitute a problem. On the contrary, students are not seduced to believe everything as they know it better. Moreover they feel superior to Bruno as they have the knowledge Bruno lacks.

If students have been educated about the Holocaust properly (that means as good and truthfully as it is possible in the respective teaching situation), they will detect that it is rather unlikely that two boys with dissimilar backgrounds sit on either side of a fence and exchange things such as bread and cheese, and in the end even clothes. In the story it seems as if the fence was not electric and as if every child could get out of the camp easily. Children who read the book will ask themselves why people did not simply run away. If none of the fences had been electric, there would have been more places that offer the possibility to escape.

The friendship of Bruno and Shmuel seems to be unrealistic as well. How can their friendship persist throughout that long time without being recognised by Bruno's parents, soldiers or overseers? The two boys are meeting regularly within a certain period of time and play together as they both feel the need to be ordinary boys that have friends. Normally, it has to be conspicuous that somebody of the concentration camp is missing. It would not be possible to leave the compound due to the fact that they are observed all the time. Moreover the question arises why it was only Shmuel who came

to the fence, although there were many more children in the camp that would have liked to play. Consequently, the depiction of Bruno's and Shmuel's friendship contributes to the unrealistic representation of the Holocaust.

Although Shmuel and Bruno are meeting regularly at the fence to play and to talk to each other, Shmuel never tells him the whole truth about the concentration camp and what is going on inside. It is rather awkward that Shmuel never informs Bruno about the actual brutality and atrocity they have to bear in the concentration camps:

One afternoon Shmuel had a black eye, and when Bruno asked him about it he just shook his head and said that he didn't want to talk about it. Bruno assumed that there were bullies all over the world, not just in schools in Berlin, and that one of them had done this to Shmuel. He felt an urge to help his friend but he couldn't think of anything he could do to make it better, and he could tell that Shmuel wanted to pretend it had never happened. (Boyne, 150)

The fact that Shmuel is hiding the truth back keeps Bruno's naivety alive. Somehow he would never believe that something brutal is happening on the other side of the fence.

The following extract also shows that Shmuel does not reveal how their life in the concentration camp really is.

Every day Bruno asked Shmuel whether he would be allowed to crawl underneath the wire so that they could play together on the other side of the fence, but every day Shmuel said no, it wasn't a good idea. 'I don't know why you're so anxious to come across here anyway,' said Shmuel. 'It's not very nice'. (Boyne, 151)

'It's not very nice' is Shmuel's depiction of the life in a concentration camp. If people had had the chance to talk about their misery to other people, they would have probably done so. Shmuel, however, does not. And although he knows that Bruno lives a better life, Shmuel does not ask for his help to escape. All he wants is some food and in the end Bruno's help to find his father. As already mentioned before, according to Blech (n.p.) every child in the concentration camp knew what was going on and if they had seen any chance to escape they would have done so. I do not share Blech's view as I am not sure whether children would escape the camp by themselves and leave their parents behind.

Bruno is not aware of the brutalities of the concentration camp, but the readers are. Even though the concentration camp is first referred to as a farm, and later referred to as

the other side of the fence, readers with sufficient knowledge are able to detect what it really is.

Although the whole book in general seems to distort facts and depict the Holocaust unrealistically, there is a passage in the book that depicts the truth:

Bruno thought about his question, wanting to phrase it exactly right this time, just in case it came out as being rude or unco-operative. 'Who are all those people outside?' he said finally. Father tilted his head to the left, looking a little confused by the question. 'Soldiers, Bruno,' he said. (...) 'No, not them', said Bruno. 'The people I see from my window. (...) They're all dressed the same.' 'Ah, those people,' said Father (...) 'Those people ... well, they're not people at all, Bruno.' (Boyne, 52f)

This situation is very realistic and describes the Nazi's attitude towards Jews. They did not even regard them as people, but as creatures that have to be annihilated. Jews did not fit into their picture of the perfect race they wanted to create and therefore had to disappear. Bruno, however, does not quite understand why the people outside the window are not regarded as people, but has no chance to find out more as his father tells him not to worry about them (Boyne, 53). This situation can be compared to the scene where Bruno asks his mother what his father's job actually is about. In both situations Bruno wants to know something, but his parents put Bruno off with unsatisfying answers; at least this is how the readers perceive it. I assume that Bruno is satisfied with what his parents tell him and what they conceal.

The fact that the readers approach the Holocaust through children's eyes leads to an unrealistic representation of the Holocaust. It is a children's book and thus does not seek to explain the Holocaust in the same way as non-fictional stories do. Thus, as already mentioned before, it is essential to teach the Holocaust before reading the book in an EFL classroom. Additionally, it is the teacher's task to inform the students about the author of the book, and to raise awareness of the fact that fictional stories about the Holocaust can differ a lot from each other with regard to the representation of the Holocaust. *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* depicts the Holocaust through a nine-year old boy's eyes; it is important for the students to find that out in the course of reading. It is not always necessary to explain everything beforehand as by doing so reading motivation decreases and teachers preclude the students from thinking independently and reflecting critically. Nevertheless, the unreliability of the narrator should be

discussed shortly after reading at least. It is the knowledge that makes younger as well as older readers critical thinkers. In his book, Boyne builds on the knowledge the readers gained before and through this knowledge they are, for example, able to recognise that the farm is a concentration camp and the farmers are captives.

5.1.3. How is the Holocaust perceived by Bruno?

Bruno, although raised in the middle of the Nazi era, never gets to know the whole truth about the Holocaust. Moreover he does not seem to be able to interpret what he sees. In his book review Burling (n.p.) writes that “Bruno is blissfully unaware of the atrocities taking place around him and nothing --- not even what he sees with his own eyes --- seems to alter his seemingly permanent naiveté”. However, Auschwitz survivors claim that nobody, not even the smallest German children, did not know about “The Final Solution”.

And to suggest that Bruno simply had no idea what was happening in the camp his father directed yards from his home is to allow the myth that those who were not directly involved can claim innocence. (Blech, n.p.)

Even though there are people who argue that even the smallest children knew about “The Final Solution”, I am convinced that there have been many young children who might not have known about it. What if the parents have never told their children in order to protect them and avoid anxiety?

Bruno, indeed, is depicted as innocent and ignorant in the book. Thus, the following description of the concentration camp makes his sister and him think that they are in the countryside.

There was a huge wire fence that ran along the length of the house and turned in at the top, extending further along in either direction, further than she could possibly see. The fence was very high, higher even than the house they were standing in, and there were huge wooden posts, like telegraph poles, dotted along it, holding it up. (...) There wasn't any grass after the fence; in fact there was no greenery anywhere to be seen in the distance. Instead the ground was made of a sand-like substance, (...) there was nothing but low huts and large square buildings dotted around and one or two smoke stacks in the distance. (Boyne, 31f)

After having exchanged their opinions of what they had seen outside the window, Bruno and his sister Gretel, who considers herself as a grown-up, but nevertheless does not know what the area outside the window is, suppose that this must be the countryside. So Bruno believes the concentration camp to be a farm with farmers wearing pyjamas. According to Bruno the people on the farm are able to live pleasant lives. Concerning Bruno's view of the concentration camp Blech writes that Bruno

(...) actually believes that its inhabitants who wear striped pajamas – oh, how lucky, he thinks, to be able to be so comfortably dressed – spend their time on vacation drinking in cafes on the premises while their children are happily playing games all day long even as he envies them their carefree lives and friendships. (Blech, n.p.)

Sure, Bruno does not know what is happening at the concentration camp as his parents do not talk to him about the events and the political situation. He is just a young, naïve boy living his life believing that his father would never do any harm to people.

Shmuel is the only person that gives him an insight to the concentration camp. However, although Shmuel gives Bruno some hints about what is happening on the other side of the fence, Bruno does not realise the truth. He rather envies Shmuel for his “friends” on the other side of the fence:

‘It’s so unfair,’ said Bruno. ‘I don’t see why I have to be stuck over here on this side of the fence where there’s no one to talk to and no one to play with and you get to have dozens of friends and are probably playing for hours every day. I’ll have to speak to Father about it.’ (Boyne, 110f)

This extract perfectly illustrates Bruno’s naivety with which he reacts to Shmuel’s narration. Shmuel does not tell him that he has many good friends on the other side of the fence, but just, that there *are* a lot of boys over there. He even states that they are not very close (Boyne, 110). Sometimes it seems as if Bruno does not listen to what Shmuel tells him, but just hears what he wants to hear and consequently develops his picture of Shmuel’s life.

The next scene depicts the situation in which Bruno has an accident in the garden and Pavel, who actually is a doctor but is forced to work as a servant, comes to help him. Bruno receives a hint about the Holocaust and what is happening to the Jews, but does not wonder about it.

‘Will I need to go to hospital?’ asked Bruno. ‘No, no,’ said Pavel (...) ‘It’s only a small cut. It won’t even need stitches.’ (...) Bruno nodded and felt a little ashamed of himself for not behaving as bravely as he would have liked. ‘Thank you,’ he said. (...) ‘It could be worse than it seems.’ ‘It’s not,’ said Pavel (...) ‘Well, how do you know?’ asked Bruno (...) ‘You’re not a doctor.’ (...) ‘Young man,’ said Pavel (...) ‘I certainly am a doctor (...)’. ‘Before I came here, I practised as a doctor,’ he said finally. ‘Practised?’ asked Bruno, who was unfamiliar with the word. ‘Weren’t you any good then?’ Pavel smiled. ‘I was very good,’ he said. ‘I always wanted to be a doctor, you see.(...)’ ‘I want to be an explorer,’ said Bruno quickly. (Boyne, 80ff)

Bruno cares about the fact that Pavel worked as a doctor before and now has to work as a servant indeed, but obviously does not want to know more about it. Surprisingly, he does not ask his mother why Pavel is working as a servant and had to give up his job as a doctor. In this particular scene Bruno is depicted as rather ignorant, indifferent and also a bit selfish. He does not worry about Pavel's fate, but is satisfied with telling him that his wish is to become an explorer.

As Bruno's mother knows that her husband would have hated it, if Pavel had taken care of Bruno, she claims that it was she who did it. Although Bruno's mother wants to protect Pavel by saying that it was she who took care of Bruno, Bruno actually blames her since she takes credit for something she did not do. This scene constitutes another example of Bruno's naive way of drawing conclusions due to his ignorance.

A very childish comparison can be found when Bruno dresses in the striped pyjama to crawl underneath the fence to help Shmuel. The following passage perfectly illustrates Bruno's ignorance of the Holocaust and the persecution of the Jews:

'It reminds me of Grandmother,' he said. (...) 'It reminds me of the plays she used to put on with Gretel and me,' Bruno said, looking away from Shmuel as he remembered those days back in Berlin (...) 'It reminds me of how she always had the right costume for me to wear. *You wear the right outfit and you feel like the person you're pretending to be* (italics added by author), she always told me. I suppose that's what I'm doing, isn't it? Pretending to be a person from the other side of the fence.' 'A Jew, you mean,' said Shmuel. 'Yes,' said Bruno (...) 'That's right.' (Boyne, 205)

Bruno is absolutely unaware of what he is doing at that moment. He does not know that, through curiosity and his wish to be an explorer, he exposes himself to danger; a danger that results in a dramatic and sad death. He compares dressing in his "death-clothes" to playing games with his grandmother back in Berlin. When Shmuel says that Bruno is pretending to be a Jew, he says yes, but in fact does not even know that Shmuel is a Jew and he is not. On the one hand it can be regarded as good and laudable that Bruno is so ignorant and therefore also does not make a difference between himself and Jews and is not aware of the brutalities that racism can perpetrate. On the other hand, if he had known before that those people outside the window, who are not considered human beings at all, are Jews with the fate to be annihilated, he would not have pretended to be a Jew. As a consequence, Bruno cannot be referred to as generous and altruistic. If he

had known that he has to risk his life in order to help Shmuel, he would not have done it. Bruno does not want to get into any trouble and also accepts lies in order not to be accused of something. When Shmuel is cleaning glasses in their house, Bruno brings him something to eat, but afterwards denies his deed.

‘Do you know this boy?’ repeated Kotler in a louder voice. Have you been talking to the prisoners?’ ‘I’ve never spoken to him,’ said Bruno immediately. ‘I’ve never seen him before in my life. I don’t know him.’ (Boyne, 172)

His ignorance and curiosity, but not his altruism, made him help Shmuel finding his father. However, Bruno does not stay fully ignorant throughout the whole book. Close to the end of the story, Bruno experiences at least some of the truth of the concentration camp, but still it is too little to become aware of the danger he is exposed to.

He thought that all the boys and girls who lived here would be in different groups, playing tennis or football (...) He had thought that there would be a shop in the centre, and maybe a small café like the ones he had known in Berlin; he had wondered whether there would be a fruit and vegetable stall. As it turned out, all the things that he thought might be there – weren’t. (Boyne, 207)

Bruno, as already stated above, actually believed that the people in the concentration camps could lead pleasant lives without worries. When he enters the area to search for Shmuel’s father he recognises for the first time that the picture he had developed of the concentration camp is wrong. Nevertheless, his naivety overbalances.

‘What’s happening?’ whispered Bruno. ‘What’s going on?’ ‘It happens sometimes,’ said Shmuel. ‘They make people go on marches.’ ‘Marches!’ said Bruno, appalled. ‘I can’t go on a march. I have to be home in time for dinner. It’s roast beef tonight.’ (...) ‘That’s it,’ he said to Shmuel. ‘I’m going to catch a cold out here. I have to go home.’ (Boyne, 210f)

Bruno still believes that he can simply leave the area of the concentration camp and return to his parents’ house to have roast beef for dinner. He is not aware of the power and control the soldiers have over the captives and regards his stay in the camp as an exciting trip in a different world; a world full of dependence, pain, suffering, atrocities and a small spark of hope. Boyne’s depiction of Bruno is sometimes too naïve and ignorant.

Shmuel’s plan to let Bruno crawl underneath the fence is not well conceived. According to Blech (n.p.), every child in the concentration camp knew that they were annihilated and Shmuel should have known as well. But if he had really known that, would he have let Bruno crawl underneath the fence and take a risk to be killed? In fact, Shmuel does

not know what is happening to the people that are forced to go on marches. The only thing he supposes is that the marches do not take long, as “[he] never see[s] the people after they’ve gone on a march.”

The fact that Shmuel had been detained in the concentration camp for a long time and was only murdered when Bruno joined him is doubtful. Why were they gassed exactly the day when Bruno crawled underneath the fence to search for Shmuel’s father? Shmuel spent a long time in the concentration camp and, in theory, could have been gassed every day, but this was not the case. The fictional story is characterised by this rather unrealistic coincidence.

The story of Bruno is an example of how well-intentioned protection on the part of the parents comes to a bad end. Holding the truth back from Bruno keeps his naivety alive. His parents, as well as Shmuel, do not tell him about what the Nazis do to the Jews and as the readers only see through Bruno’s eyes they do not get informed either. Thus, although the Holocaust is perceived by a nine-year old boy in the story, nine-year old readers of the book receive a different information than older readers do. Many of the younger readers are not able to detect the unreliability of the narrator and additionally are not capable of reading the book as critically as grown-ups do. Nevertheless, they, at least, get to know that the Holocaust was a very brutal and cruel event, and hence the didactic purpose of the book is fulfilled and one cannot argue that the book should not be read with nine-year old children.

In the Author’s Note (217f) Boyne states that writing about the Holocaust is a controversial issue, and any novelist who dares to write about it has to be sure about his or her intentions before actually starting to write. He moreover argues that authors are responsible for depicting as much emotional truth as possible and thus he tells the story through the eyes of a child; a naïve child that is probably not capable of understanding the terrible things happening around him. Concluding, he is of the opinion that no book can tell the truth as accurately as victims and survivors can do. Those, who have not experienced the Holocaust themselves, are on the other side of the fence desperately trying to understand what is happening.

5.2. *The Diary of A Young Girl* by Anne Frank

5.2.1. Information on the book

The diary, kept by Anne Frank, was first published in 1947 and covers the time from 1942-1944. Anne describes her life when she was hiding with her family in the “Secret Annexe” for two years when the Netherlands were occupied by the Nazis. Through her diary entries, Anne gives insight into her remarkable ordeal. Innocence, on the one hand, and the shocking reality of her descriptions on the other hand, characterise the book and make it special.

5.2.2. How is the Holocaust represented in the book?

“I hope I shall be able to confide in you completely, as I have never been able to do in anyone before, and I hope that you will be a great support and comfort me” (Frank).

By writing this sentence Anne starts her diary. Such a sentence and the fact that she names her diary “Kitty” is typical of a thirteen-year old girl as Anne was when she started to keep her diary. She believes that a diary can be her friend that keeps all her secrets and comforts her. However, during the time of writing Anne grows up and, due to her experiences, becomes wiser. This lets her behave rather like a woman than like a child. Thus not only the way the Holocaust is represented in the book, but also how it changes Anne’s behaviour, her opinions, perspectives, and beliefs will be of particular interest to me.

The Diary of A Young Girl is autobiographic and is told by Anne as a first-person narrator. Although it depicts real-life Holocaust experiences, readers just get insight into Anne’s point of view and her experiences and hence the book merely provides a very individual rather than a broad Holocaust experience. However, I would argue that the Holocaust is presented very realistically in the book as Anne describes in great detail what is happening to her family and herself, and other people who spent two years in the Secret Annexe, which was their hiding place, when the genocide began.

In contrast to Bruno, the protagonist of *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, Anne is well aware of the fact that her family is Jewish and that their religion is the reason for the necessity to leave Germany.

My father was thirty-six when he married my mother, who was then twenty-five. My sister Margot was born in 1926 (...), I followed on June 12, 1929, and, as we are Jewish, we emigrated to Holland in 1933, where my father was appointed Managing Director of Travies N.V. (...). (Frank, 3)

Anne knows who Hitler is and moreover is informed about his plan to exterminate Jewish people. Additionally she is aware to the fact that there is a difference between Jews and other religious groups. The following abstract shows that Anne understands all the rules that have been developed for Jewish people.

Anti-Jewish decrees followed each other in quick succession. Jews must wear a yellow star, Jews must hand in their bicycles, Jews are banned from trams and are forbidden to drive. Jews are only allowed to do their shopping between three and five o'clock and then only in shops which bear the placard "Jewish shop." Jews must be indoors by eight o'clock and cannot even sit in their own gardens after that hour. (Frank, 4)

However, I doubt that she knows that Hitler regards Jews as a subhuman race and wants to create a completely new race. Listing all these points, it seems as if Anne learnt the rules by heart and knows which things are forbidden for Jews and which not. Nevertheless, I am not quite sure to what extent she is really aware of the dangerous situation she is in and what consequences a disregard of these rules can have. Anne, indeed, does not take the rules very seriously: "neither Harry nor I felt like sitting stiffly side by side indefinitely, so we went for a walk, and it was already ten past eight when he brought me home" she writes in one of her diary entries. Her dad, understandably, was quite angry and told her once again that it is very dangerous for Jews to stay outside after eight o'clock (Frank, 11).

As they are still in their house and not yet hiding in the Secret Annexe the situation may seem not too unsafe to Anne, and that is why she still has time to worry about typical teenager problems that everyone else has at her age as well. In the course of reading I found out some points that bother her a lot; one of them are boys.

I expect you will be rather surprised at the fact that I should talk of boy friends at my age. Alas, one simply can't seem to avoid it at our school. As soon as a boy asks if he may bicycle home with me and we get into conversation, nine out of ten times I can be sure that he will fall head over heels in love immediately and simply won't allow me out of his sight. (Frank, 5)

Usually, thirteen is the age when boys and girls start to find out that the respective different gender can also be nice, friendly, and cute, and not just annoying and stupid.

Passages like this perfectly show that the book is not simply a book about Holocaust experience but also a book about growing up. At the beginning of the book Anne describes herself through her diary entries as a cute, bright, and, at least to some extent, carefree girl. Her father even encourages her to live her life as usual: “Make the most of your carefree young life while you can” he said to her (Frank, 13). Even though Anne lives under difficult circumstances she still is a normal thirteen year old girl fighting against the typical problems that arise during puberty.

School constitutes another typical teenager problem. School is the children’s focus inasmuch there is nothing else they have to do. Usually they have no other worries to think about. At the beginning of the diary, Anne’s entries are very general and normal, and thus let not assume the hard times she will have to bear in future times. She writes about problems she encounters at school; everyday problems that other girls of her class might have as well.

I get along quite well with all my teachers, nine in all, seven masters and two mistresses. Mr. Keptor, the old math master, was very annoyed with me for a long time because I chatter so much. So I had to write a composition with “A Chatterbox” as the subject. A chatterbox! Whatever could one write? However, deciding I would puzzle that out later, I wrote it in my notebook, and tried to keep quiet. (Frank, 6)

It is no surprise that girls at the age of thirteen tend to chatter during lessons and annoy their teachers with their constant talking. Getting extra work is also something that most teenagers know and learn the hard way. Anne’s first diary entries therefore are rather harmless at the beginning and just depict a thirteen year old girl trying to cope with problems that seem severe to her at times. However, although she is writing about rather harmless things as well, she never disregards the fact that, due to the Holocaust, life is different from what it had usually been.

Next to boy and school matters, there are some more trivial aspects that bother Anne in her teenager life. In her diary entries, she depicts herself jealous of her older sister Margot. She always has the feeling that her sister is better than her and, moreover, that their parents love her sister more than they love her as she is just rewarded with negative attention. When Anne is writing about schools and the examination results she states “My sister Margot has her report too, brilliant as usual. She would move up with *cum laude* if that existed at school, she is so brainy” (Frank, 12). Although this sentence

could also be interpreted as admiration for her sister as she is brilliant in school and seems to be the perfect pupil, some further statements make clear that she is jealous of her sister which very frequently results in conflicts.

How some people do adore bringing up other people's children in addition to their own. The Van Daans are that kind. Margot doesn't need it, she is such a goody-goody, perfection itself, but I seem to have enough mischief in me for the two of us put together. You should hear us at mealtimes, with reprimands, and cheeky answers flying to and fro. (Frank, 30f)

Reading this paragraph not only jealousy, but also self-pity can be detected in Anne's voice. Her sister receives the appreciation she would like to receive as well and thus seems to be the perfection itself. Maybe this has something to do with her status as the second child of the family. As there is the myth that first born children are favoured and preferred by the parents, Anne might feel disadvantaged as well as disregarded. However, I believe that it is rather common that sisters quarrel with each other and thus Anne's conflicts with Margot are nothing unusual. Her sister, however, is not the only person she feels disconnected from. The relationship to her mother is also a difficult one during her puberty.

Just had a big bust-up with Mummy for the umpteenth time; we simply don't get on together these days and Margot and I don't hit off any too well either. As a rule we don't go in for such outbursts as this in our family. Still, it's by no means always pleasant for me. Margot's and Mummy's natures are completely strange to me. I can understand my friends better than my own mother – too bad! (Frank, 30)

There is a certain time in teenagers' lives where they believe that nobody understands them, no matter what they do. They do not feel the need to explain anything, as they do not expect anyone to understand them. They are of the opinion that their parents are living in a completely different world with completely different problems and have no clue about a complicated life of a teenager. They even forget about the fact that their parents had to undergo this phase of life too and thus know how they feel and are able to put themselves into their positions. Anne is undergoing this phase and feels completely misunderstood as well. Neither her mother nor her sister are important contact persons for Anne during that phase. Those who understand her best are her friends. Unfortunately, during her time in the Secret Annexe she has no friends to talk to. Feeling alone and having no one to talk to makes the stay there even more difficult

for Anne and she is desperately longing for someone who cares for her, who listens to her problems and understands her.

Entries about boys, school, and problems with her mum and sister let her diary seem to be a diary of a normal thirteen year old girl. However, appearances are deceiving. Sooner or later the readers find out that Anne has a completely different and sad fate. Therefore the book cannot only be regarded as a book about the Holocaust, but also as a novel that is concerned with the education, development, and maturing of young people.

As already mentioned above, Anne knows that her family is Jewish and is informed about Hitler's plan to annihilate the Jews. In contrast to Bruno, who does not know anything about the political situation, Anne's family seems to talk openly about it and wants her to know what is going on. Bruno's family, on the contrary, try to hide everything from him and conceal the truth about his father's job and the concentration camp near to their house. Of course it has to be mentioned that Anne is four years older than Bruno and thus is a bit more mature. However, Anne is always up to date concerning information about the current political situation which can be perfectly seen in the following abstract:

Turkey is not in the war yet. It was only a cabinet minister talking about them soon giving up their neutrality. A newspaper in the Dam was crying, "Turkey on England's side". (Frank, 71)

However, Anne is not only aware of the political situation, such as current information on the war, but also knows what is happening to their Jewish friends. In her diary entry on the 9th of October, 1942, Anne writes about their Jewish friends that are being taken away. The Gestapo treats them without dignity and loads them into trucks that bring them to a Jewish camp in Westerbork (Frank, 38).

Westerbork sounds terrible: only one washing cubicle for a hundred people and not nearly enough lavatories. There is no separate accommodation. Men, women, and children all sleep together. One hears of frightful immorality because of this; and a lot of the women, and even girls, who stay there any length of time are expecting babies. It is impossible to escape; most of the people in the camp are branded as inmates by their shaven heads and many also by their Jewish appearance. (Frank, 38)

This paragraph very clearly shows that Anne is aware of the brutal things that happen to Jewish people and that they have no chance to escape or to defend themselves. Anne feels concerned as she has a better hiding place than most of the other European Jews, such as her girlfriend Lies.

Not only Anne's family talks openly about what is going on, but also Anne is informed by the English radio. Anne's diary entries give the readers insight about her life during the genocide, and her life as a teenager caught in the Secret Annexe. The fact that Anne's information is mostly received by the radio lets the reader believe that the Holocaust is represented realistically. Indeed, it is represented in a realistic way, however, it is depicted the way Anne perceives it. It is no neutral description of what is happening at that time, but it is a description that is always connected with her emotions and personal statements. Moreover, I believe that her understanding of the genocide becomes deeper throughout the book and is not fully developed in her early diary entries. At the beginning she behaves more child-like and although she knows what Hitler and his entourage did to the people, I am not quite sure whether she knows Hitler's cruel intent behind his actions.

Honestly, I do not believe that children aged 13 are able to understand Hitler's plans to annihilate Jewish people, the atrocities that are related to the genocide, and the consequences for their families. It is even challenging for an adult to understand why a person can be barbarous and brutal to such an extent; thus it is difficult to explain certain deeds to children all the more. Atrocities like the ones that took place during the Holocaust can probably never be understood reasonably.

Some of Anne's diary entries clearly show a childlike focus. This is also true for the passage where she mentions the Secret Annexe. When she first writes about the Secret Annexe, the hiding in this building seems to be an adventure for Anne. She even draws a plan of it and describes it in great detail in order to let Kitty know where she will live for the next time.

I will describe the building: there is a large warehouse on the ground floor which is used as a store. The front door to the house is next to the warehouse door, and inside the front door is a second doorway which leads to a staircase (A). There is

another door at the top of the stairs, with a frosted glass window in it, which has “Office” written in black letter across it. (Frank, 16)

Her detailed description continues of course as Anne describes everything that can be found in the Secret Annexe. However, Anne does not only explain how the Secret Annexe looks like, but also tells the readers about the first days in her new home.

(...) Daddy, Mummy, and Margot can't get used to the sound of the Westertoren clock yet, which tells us the time every quarter of an hour. I can. I loved it from the start, and especially in the night it's like a faithful friend. (Frank, 20)

Regarding a clock as a faithful friend can be seen as a nice, but naïve and childish statement on the one hand, but also as a hint to missing reliability and the wish for security. In the difficult and hard times Anne has to bear she is probably looking for something she can rely on and something that provides some kind of security. The ticking of the clock comes again and again in regular intervals. Everything else can change unexpectedly. Each day in the Secret Annexe can bring surprises and nobody knows what the time will bring and how long they can stay there without being found. The clock maybe has a calming effect on Anne. However, she does not seem to be too anxious, but rather curious about the new home of her family and her. She wants to feel comfortable in the Secret Annexe and thus also decorates their room, and as she is decorating she is so involved in it that she probably forgets about the reason for being there and perceives the situation as an adventure.

Our little room looked very bare at first with nothing on the walls, but thanks to Daddy who had brought my film-star collection and picture postcards (...) I have transformed the walls into one gigantic picture. This makes it look much more cheerful (...). (Frank, 20)

However, as we shall see later, Anne stays not as carefree as she seems to be. The time in their hiding place changes her and the adventure turns into a hard experience. Living on little space with so many people can very quickly become exhausting. People start to quarrel and annoy each other, but Anne has not thought of this before. When she is already in the Secret Annexe she cannot wait for the Van Daans (a family who shares the hiding place with them) to arrive as she believes that “it will be much more fun and not so quiet. It is the silence that frightens me so in the evenings and at night” (Frank, 21).

That is probably also a reason why she likes the clock so much. Anne is looking for noise and different sounds. That is why she longs for going out of the Secret Annex.

I can't tell you how oppressive it is *never* to be able to go outdoors, also I'm very afraid that we shall be discovered and be shot. That is not exactly a pleasant prospect. We have to whisper and tread lightly during the day, otherwise the people in the warehouse might hear us. (Frank, 21)

Anne feels a discrepancy. On the one hand she wishes to leave the Secret Annexe and lead a normal and free teenager life, being able to walk around freely and not thinking about any danger that could happen to her; on the other hand she has to be so grown-up to recognise that it is impossible since this would endanger not only her, but every single person who is hiding here. This situation can be referred to as a conflict between her childlike and her already grown-up soul.

As already mentioned above, the residents of the Secret Annexe start to quarrel. These quarrels increase with proceeding time.

(...) There was another dust-up yesterday. Mummy kicked up a frightful row and told Daddy just what she thought of me. Then she had an awful fit of tears so, of course, off I went too; and I'd got such an awful headache anyway. (Frank, 38)

(...) Such quarrels that the whole house thunders! Mummy and I, the Van Daans and Daddy, Mummy and Mrs. Van Daan, everyone is angry with everyone else. Nice atmosphere, isn't it? Anne's usual list of failings has been brought out again and fully ventilated. (Frank, 78)

The longer Anne stays in the Secret Annexe the more she realises how wearing and difficult life is. The – at least at the beginning – carefree Anne changes in her behaviour and recognises that hiding in the Secret Annexe is not an adventure any longer, but an emergency that is very difficult to bear for a longer period of time. Her maturity can also be seen in her relationship to Peter. She falls in love with him and the description of her feelings are much more sophisticated than what she first writes about having boyfriends (please see p. 51). Anne is longing for a person to comfort her; a person that protects her, and someone who cares for her when she needs it. There are times in the Secret Annexe when everything is simply too much for her and she is looking for a strong shoulder to lean on. The situation in the hiding place becomes more and more tense and the residents are losing patience with each other (Frank, 156f).

Although Anne changes throughout the book, some of her perspectives and point of views remain the same. The experiences she collects during her time in the Secret Annex may change her perception of the Holocaust, of Hitler, of her family, and the Van Daans, but not her attitude towards school and education. Even though she is surrounded by negative news, a negative atmosphere, and the fear to be captured by the Nazis, she is ambitiously working for school and still has the hope that she will return to school to continue her studies.

(...) I'm terribly busy. I've just translated a chapter out of *La Belle Nivernaise* and made notes of new words. Then a perfectly foul math problem and three pages of French grammar. Yesterday I finished the Assault. It's quite amusing, but doesn't touch *Joop ter Heul*. (Frank, 40)

At the very end of the book Anne states her wish to be able to return to school in September or October (Frank, 245). This wish clearly shows that there is a spark of hope that life will continue the way it had been before. However, there are also situations where readers do not have the feeling that Anne is still hoping for everything to become better.

Again and again I ask myself, would it not have been better for us all if we had not gone into hiding, and if we were dead now and not going through all this misery, especially as we shouldn't be running our protectors into danger any more. (Frank, 242)

This paragraph shows Anne's growing maturity. At the age of 15 she starts to doubt whether it was a good idea to hide in the Secret Annex. A very adult attitude is her fear to run their protectors into danger. Anne experiences what friendship is and that friendship can also mean to risk something in order to help others. Sure, even from the beginning of the book the representation of the Holocaust is realistic, nevertheless her understanding of certain things becomes better and more mature in the course of reading. At the beginning it seems as if Anne is well aware of what is happening as she is informed by her parents or the radio. She knows that she is Jewish and that she has to hide in order not to be captured by the Nazis. Moreover, she understands all the rules constituted especially for Jews by heart. However, she does not take them too seriously as she is not yet aware of the consequences of a disregard.

One could distinguish between the representation of the Holocaust in the book and how the Holocaust is experienced by Anne. The representation of the Holocaust is always

realistic, but is continuously presented in relation to Anne's feeling and emotions. The reader does not get a neutral insight to the life during the Holocaust, but rather gets a subjective point of view. How Anne experiences the Holocaust changes throughout the book. I believe that she develops a deeper understanding for the Holocaust and Hitler's plans (as far as it is possible at all) during her time in the Secret Annex, however, as already mentioned before, I doubt that somebody is able to understand the Holocaust fully as this would maybe exceed the human imagination.

Reading the book in a lower secondary EFL classroom can be done without problems. Students may identify themselves with Anne as teenager problems are the same all around the world, no matter where the students come from. Moreover, they get "insider information" about the Holocaust. However, the students have to be aware of the fact that what they read is a subjective account and that every single victim has a different Holocaust experience. By informing them about the subjectivity, a generalisation of victims and ways of suffering should be avoided.

5.3. *Life is Beautiful* by Roberto Benigni

5.3.1. Information on the film

The film tells the story about Guido, who –at the end of the 1930's – falls in love with Dora, a teacher. In a small town in Tuscany they meet accidentally again and again, and weird accidents characterise their romance. After some years, the Nazis destroy their happiness, when Giosué, their son, and Guido are deported. Dora, even though she is no Jew, follows them into the concentration camp. Guido decides to protect his son from the horrors of the concentration camp and, although he has to bear inhuman conditions, he keeps his esprit, his gladness, and the ability to turn the terrible experience of the concentration camp into a game in order to let his son believe that life is beautiful.

5.3.2. How is the Holocaust represented in the film?

Adrienne Kertzer (n.p.) in her article *Like a Fable, Not a Pretty Picture: Holocaust representation in Robert Benigni and Anita Lobel* states that “Throughout the film, Benigni draws attention to the difference between what the child sees and what the father/viewer sees.” Therefore, the way the Holocaust is represented in the film to the viewers, i.e. the adult point of view, and how the Holocaust is perceived by Giosué is of particular interest.

Generally, the Holocaust is represented in a realistic and an unrealistic way. The film depicts the deportation of Jews in a train, their arrival in the concentration camp, and the terrible circumstances people have to bear in the concentration camps on the one hand. These depictions are realistic as such. On the other hand, it presents the “birthday surprise” of a four year old child who is forced to believe that their journey by train is an adventure, and the stay in the concentration camp is a game with the goal to collect as many points as possible. Benigni adds comical elements to the film which let it appear funny and thus unrealistic as the Holocaust can never be funny. In the article *After Such Knowledge, What Laughter* Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi states that there are two principles related to laughter.

The two principles, then, central to the present exploration of laughter ‘after Auschwitz’ are *distance* from the unholy center and *resistance* to its gravity—that is, cognitive dissonance in the foreground *vis-à-vis* the events enacted in the background. This is a stance informed by a *self-conscious* editing out of unacceptable historical reality, without which it would simply be monstrous and perverse. (...) It is the kind of distance from events that actually allows us to

come close to something quite personal, something that touches the essentials of human experience that can be reconstituted after shock, mourning and a sense of the tragic have been explored. (16)

Maybe it was Benigni's intention to add comical elements to the film in order to let the Holocaust appear less severe and hence make it accessible for children as well. Funny elements, indeed, let the Holocaust appear less horrible and serious, and thus are responsible for an unrealistic and distorted representation. However, making a Holocaust film suitable for adults as well as for children is no easy job and asks for limits with regard to representations in order to protect the child viewers. Even though limits in representation can very often be found in children's films and books, this does not imply that films and literature produced for an adult audience are completely free from any limits.

As already mentioned before, unrealistic and realistic representations are mixed in the film. Those who have read about the Holocaust before may know that it is rather unlikely that there was a possibility to hide a four year old child in the concentration camp in the barracks of men. To pretend that living in concentration camps is a game is a heroic deed of Giosué's father, but very unlikely to be possible since surveillance and control was the Nazis' first priority. Guido tries to protect his son and therefore invents an incredible story to make him believe that life is still beautiful. Although he is surrounded by the brutalities and cruelty of the concentration camp, he still has the strength to act as the happy father who always finds a reason for laughing. When the overseers search for somebody to translate the camp rules into Italian, Guido comes forward and translates the rules completely different from the original content.

SOLDIER: Alles herhören, ich sage das nur einmal.

GUIDO: The game starts now. If you're here you are in, if not you're out.

SOLDIER: Ihr seid nur aus einem einzigen Grund in dieses Lager transportiert worden.

GUIDO: You have to score a thousand points to win. If you do that you take home a tank.

SOLDIER: Um zu arbeiten.

GUIDO: Lucky dog.

SOLDIER: Jeder Versuch der Sabotage wird mit dem sofortigen Tode bestraft. Die Hinrichtungen finden auf dem Hof durch Schüsse in den Rücken statt.

GUIDO: Each day we will be announcing who is in the lead from the loudspeaker there. The one with the least points has to wear a big sign each day that spells the word "jackass" right on his back.

SOLDIER: Ihr habt die Ehre für unser deutsches Vaterland arbeiten zu dürfen und am Bau des Großdeutschen Reiches teilzunehmen.

GUIDO: We get to play the part of the nasty guy so yell all the time. Anybody who is afraid loses points.

SOLDIER: Drei Grundregeln solltet ihr nie vergessen: Erstens, versuche nicht zu fliehen. Zweitens, befolge jeden Befehl ohne Fragen. Drittens, jeder Versuch des Aufstandes wird mit dem Tod durch Erhängen bestraft. Ist das klar?

GUIDO: There's three ways a person can lose his points. That would be as follows: One, turning into a big cry baby. Two, telling everyone you want to see your mama. Three, if you're hungry and want us to bring you something to eat, forget about it.

SOLDIER: Ihr solltet glücklich sein, hier arbeiten zu dürfen. Es wird niemandem etwas geschehen, der die Vorschriften befolgt.

GUIDO: It's very easy to lose points here for being hungry. Just yesterday I was penalised 40 points, because I was so hungry that I had to have a jam sandwich.

(Benigni, 1:04:20-1:05:47)

Guido invents camp rules that fit into the story he told Giosué beforehand. This is rather unrealistic as well as the other men do not really wonder about these awkward rules and do not ask Guido for an explanation. I would argue that Guido is dependent on the others' discretion, especially when they are sitting in the train on their way to the concentration camp. Guido tells his son one lie after the other and continuously has to hope that nobody tells Giosué the truth about the concentration camp. When Guido and his son arrive at the concentration camp, he shouts that they want to have seats on their return journey as the trip to the camp was exhausting and unacceptable. The other men look astonished indeed, but remain silent.

Guido finds an explanation appropriate for children for everything that happens in the camp and does his best to hide the truth from Giosué. One factor that is very important to be mentioned here is trust. No matter what happens, Giosué trusts in his father and believes everything he says. Sure, it is quite common in a parent-child-relationship that children believe everything they are told by their parents. Giosué, however, knows that he can depend on his father what can also be seen when they are still at home. Dora wants his son to take a bath and Guido helps him to avoid that. Of course, Giosué is dependent on his father and hence does what he tells him. Nevertheless what the other children tell Giosué about the concentration camp has no impacts on him. They tell him that there is no tank to win, and that soap and buttons are made out of the people. In fact, he informs his father about it, but eventually believes in what he tells him, even though the other children are right.

GIOSUÉ: They make buttons and soap out of us.
 GUIDO: Ey, what do you say?
 GIOSUÉ: They burn all of us in the furnace.
 GUIDO: Where did you hear that?
 GIOSUÉ: A man, who is crying over there. He said they burn us and make us into buttons and soap.
 GUIDO (laughs): Joshua, come on, you think that's true? You really believe all that stuff? Come now, I presumed you were a kid who is very intelligent. Buttons and soap out of people, that's completely absurd (...) Ha, you really believed that. Just imagine, tomorrow I get up and washed my hands with Bartolomeo (...) then I button up with Francesco ... hu....hu ... hey (the button falls down) Look, I just lost Georgio. (He shows it to Giosué) Does this look like a person or what? Go on, you fail for it. They were just teasing you. Buttons and soap. What more did they say?
 GIOSUÉ: That we get cooked in a furnace. (Guido laughs) They burn us up in the oven.
 GUIDO (laughs out loud): They burn us in the ovens. You're too much. You believe everything they tell you. Come on, I have seen a wood oven, but I have never seen a man oven before. (Benigni, 1:19:28-1:20:39)

Obviously, Guido makes fun about what his son tells him. By doing so he wants him to forget the brutal and cruel things he has heard from the other children. As Giosué believes everything his father tells him, he also trusts him that these cruelties will not happen. Concerning this scene, however, I am not sure whether Guido just pretends to make fun of Giosué's statements or whether he is indeed ignorant of the fact that people get burned in the furnace.

Giosué is the only child that remains in the barracks of men, although there are many other children in the camp. The soldiers see him, but they do not send him away, which is rather unrealistic. The fact that Guido carries and hides his son in a wheelbarrow contributes to an unrealistic representation as well. There are many details in the film that make the film funny and special, but let the viewers also detect some wrong images of the Holocaust. Passing by the radio room where they can easily leave a message for Dora is very romantic, but hard to believe to be true. The fact the Guido himself is depicted as a child as well contributes to the comic elements in the film too. In her article *Games of Disappearance and Return: War and the Child in Roberto Benigni's Life is Beautiful* Kroll argues that

(...) the father's considerable "childishness" (for lack of a better world) is apparent from the first moment he appears on the screen. Guido simply makes the world his own personal playground, teasing and joking his way through situations until he gets what he wants, like a child with an adult's wants and

drives. Certainly Guido is, like most of the characters Benigni plays, a clown; as such, his childish behaviour would be unremarkable in any other context. (2)

Behaving like a child can also be interpreted as a kind of self-protection in order to feel more comfortable when being stuck in a difficult situation. By comfortable I mean that everything becomes a little bit easier, but also blurred. Maybe it is not only helpful for Giosué to see the concentration camp as a game, but also for Guido. He constantly has to keep his invented life with all its lies alive and hence tends to believe his own story that originally had been developed for his son.

Hints about how the genocide was and what really happened in the concentration camps come up again and again in Benigni's film. These hints contribute to a realistic representation of the Holocaust. Dora followed her husband and son into the camp, but there is no chance to see them as men and women are separated. When the women line up for work, Dora finds out that children and the elderly are not allowed to work. They have to stay in the barracks instead. For one moment, Dora is glad since she imagines Giosué to be safe. However, when another captured woman informs her about what is happening to elderly and children, Dora becomes desperate.

OVERSEER: Halt, I already told you. Get back inside now. Old ladies and children don't work. The rest of you, downstairs. Los!

ANOTHER OVERSEER: Let's go girls, quickly, macht schnell.

CAPTURED WOMAN: That one's new. She learned right away. The lady upstairs who let us out, she seemed nice at first, now, she is the worst of all.

DORA: At least she didn't send the old ladies and children to work.

CAPTURED WOMAN: Listen, they don't send old people and kids to work, because they murder them. One of these days you are going to hear someone calling them 'Come on kids, come on let's go. Time for a shower.' They end up in the gas chamber. (Benigni, 1:10:57-1:11:28)

Dora was not aware of the fact that the elderly and children do not have to work in order to give them a break, but to gas them in gas chambers. This example clearly shows how important a distinction between the level of knowledge of adults and the level of knowledge of the child in the film is. Although Giosué and his parents live through the same situations, their perceptions of those are extremely distinctive. At the beginning, however, the whole family is ignorant to a certain extent. During their deportation Guido has no clue where their journey might lead them. Moreover, he does not know that Hitler's plan is to create one race and to gas Jewish people. When Giosué comes

and tells him that all the other children have to take a shower, Guido wants him to take a shower too. Giosué's stubbornness, however, unknowingly saves his life. As time is proceeding, Guido and Dora get informed by other captives and thus detect Hitler's cruel plans (at least to a certain extent) that are carried out in the concentration camps.

Concluding can be said that Guido's and Dora's perception of the Holocaust is characterised by ignorance on the one hand, and growing knowledge on the other hand. Their level of knowledge is nearly the same as Giosué's at the beginning of the story, but their ignorance disappears more and more. Interestingly, Guido – although ignorant of the cruelties that will happen to them – pretends their deportation to be a game as his first priority was to protect Guido in any case. The viewers are able to see the brutalities of the Holocaust and how Guido tries to handle the difficult situation through Guido's eyes.

5.3.3. How is the Holocaust perceived by Giosué?

As already mentioned before, it is essential to distinguish between Guido's and Giosué's perception of the Holocaust since there is a great discrepancy between an adult's and a child's point of view. Therefore, analysing Giosué's perception of the Holocaust is of particular interest to me.

Bruno, the protagonist of *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* and Giosué have one thing in common: They do not know what it means to be Jewish and what impacts this can have. However, although both are ignorant of Jewishness, Giosué encounters anti-Semitic signs in shop windows and in public places. Nevertheless Giosué is not able to find out what it means to be Jewish as his father's intention is to hide back the truth. As already mentioned before, Guido finds an explanation for everything. Hence he also invents a story that justifies anti-Semitic signs in shop windows.

GIOSUÉ (reads): No Jews or dogs allowed.

GUIDO: Come on Joshua (English name of Giosué), let's go.

GIOSUÉ: Papa, how come Jews and dogs aren't allowed to go in that store?

GUIDO: Because they just don't want Jews or dogs to go in. Everybody does the same thing. There's a hardware store (...) They have done the same thing. They won't let Spanish people or horses in their store. Further up ahead you find a drug store. I was with a Chinese friend of mine who had a kangaroo. I said 'may we?' 'No, no, no Chinese or kangaroos here'. Ey, what can I tell you. Some people just don't like.

GIOSUÉ: But we let everybody in our book shop.

GUIDO: No, we are going to put up a sign too. Is there anybody you don't like?

GIOSUÉ: Spiders. And you?

GUIDO: I don't like Visigoths. So starting tomorrow we are going to write "No spiders and Visigoths allowed". Ok, I'm sick and tired of these Visigoths. (Benigni, 0:48:26-0:49:12)

Guido's tireless talent to beautify and blur severe situations enriches the story and characterises the whole film. Starting with a child appropriate explanation for anti-Semitic signs in shop windows Guido lays the foundation for an amazing and partly humorous story. By doing so, a completely new world for Giosué is invented and hence reality is blurred in a way that lets the Holocaust appear less severe than it really was.

As Guido doesn't inform his son about what it means to be Jewish those days, Giosué is not able to understand what is going on when the deportation begins. Guido, unsure

about the severity of the situation as well, tries not to alarm his son and wants him to believe that he arranged the journey on purpose as a birthday surprise.

GIOSUÉ: Will you tell me where we are going now?

GUIDO: What do you mean, where? Come on, you must have asked me a thousand times already. We're going off to ...em ...we are going to that place ...eh... help me (directed to the uncle)!

UNCLE: It's a place ... eh...

GIOSUÉ: Where are we going?

GUIDO (smiles): Wait a second. It seems to me this is a special day for you. Isn't today your birthday? You've always said you wanted to go on a trip (...) and here we are. It took me months to plan this, are you kidding. You know what, you are going to be surprised. I can't tell you. I promised Mummy I wouldn't tell you and you know how she is. She'll get mad, right? And it makes me laugh. You know my father planned something like this for me when I was a little kid like you. (Benigni, 0:54:22-0:55:00)

As a consequence of Guido's protection Giosué does not even get the chance to find out that what is happening is extremely severe. Guido captures his son in an invented world with an extra-ordinary birthday surprise which consists of a big game. Giosué is completely ignorant and lives within a concentration camp without even recognising it. However, he is too young to understand what concentration camps are anyway since he is just four years old.

In her article *Games of Disappearance and Return: War and the Child in Roberto Benigni's Life is Beautiful* Kroll argues that

(...) once inside the camp, Guido will summon all of his best "tricks" to protect Giosué. One of the many imaginative games Guido plays through the course of the film, his tour de force is the tank game, a game Guido invents with the help of his son and his uncle to translate the experience of the camp into something he can communicate, both to his son and to himself. (9)

Giosué is forced to believe that his birthday surprise is participating in a game his father arranged on purpose. Once he has reached 1000 points he is the lucky winner of a real tank. As Giosué is fascinated by tanks, just has a toy tank, and has never seen a real tank before, he is convinced that he should be the one to win the game. In the following I will list some examples of the film that emphasise the seriousness with which not only Giosué, but especially Guido participate in the fantasy game. Sometimes it seems as if Guido believes his own invented story.

When they arrive in the concentration camp, Guido is very enthusiastic about it and wants Giosué to like it too. He wants to convince him that everything is organised especially for his birthday and that he arranged the game to give Giosué the chance to win a real tank.

GUIDO: Hey Giosué, did you see this place? It's really something, isn't it?
(...)

GIOSUÉ: Will you tell me which game, Papa?

GUIDO: Of course! I should have told you this before. The whole thing is a game. It's that game where ... eh ... we are all players, right. You know what I mean? It's all organised very carefully. The rules are the man are over here, and the women are over there. Then there is the guards. They give us our schedules. It's pretty hard and they make it complicated. If someone makes a mistake, will they get sent home right away, right away. That means you have to be very careful. But if you're real clever, you win first prize.

GIOSUÉ: What's first prize Papa?

GUIDO: Well you know, first prize.

UNCLE: A brand new tank, Giosué. (Benigni, 1:00:46-1:01:53)

Speechlessness and shock characterise Guido best when he first enters one of the barracks for men. Nevertheless, he hides his fear and insecurity, but still continues his fantasy story aiming at the protection of the young child.

GUIDO: Look, it's wonderful. What a great place. Well, we better go before they take our beds. Hold on! We got a reservation. (Benigni, 1:02:44-1:02:45)

When Guido comes back to the barrack from his first day of hard physical work, he is completely exhausted and at the end of his rope. However, despair and hopelessness never let him give up. Guido invents explanations even for the saddest and most degrading deeds and continuously keeps smiling.

GUIDO (shows Giosué his pyjama pretending to be proud of it): How about this? Is nice, ha? Don't worry, we're all signed up. I stopped over the office, when I got there guess what the referee pulled me a sign a said "No way, you and your son aren't on the list, your dues aren't paid". Imagine him telling me that. I almost fell over, I was so angry and upset and then this guy says "You can go" and I said "No, *you* go. Joshua and I signed up." I told them, I want my number so of course they gave me one that way and look at this. I had them put it here too to be safe. (Benigni, 1:08:22-1:08:56)

Guido's plan is to convince his son that it is a privilege to take part in this very special game. Pretending that it was very hard to get the permission to participate Guido wants his son to appreciate his achievement. Admirable, but also slightly surprising about the character Guido is the way he tries to integrate the fact that he has got a number for the game. Giving people numbers instead of names is degrading and cruel and it requires

pride to distance oneself from the actual situation and make it a part of the fantasy game. Treating Jewish people like inferior humans inevitably belonged to the Holocaust. As already said many times before, even adults have problems understanding the Holocaust. Thus it is a heroic deed of the father to protect Giosué and not let him know that there is such brutality and atrocity among humans.

Concluding, it can be said that Guido experiences the Holocaust as it really was, and for the purpose of protection captures his son in an invented world where there is no brutality, no racism, no debasement, but also no truth. Giosué is not aware of the fact that the game in which he participates is the systematic extinction of a certain race. Giosué experiences the Holocaust as a game since his father turns the genocide in a fantasy story. Differentiating between the father's and the son's perception of the Holocaust is one of the most important points when analysing the film according to the representation of the Holocaust.

Analysing and not just watching the film is especially important when using it in an EFL classroom. Viewers probably know more than Guido, Dora and Giosué do at the beginning of the story. Having a greater knowledge makes it easier to analyse the film. As already mentioned in the analysis of *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* it is important to teach the Holocaust as truthfully as possible either before or during reading or watching. As the film offers different points of view the Holocaust can be interpreted from a child- and from an adult point of view. This can also be done together with the students; however it is essential to tell them that although the film depicts true Holocaust facts there are still some situations that are rather unrealistic.

PART III

6. Lesson plans

After having discussed several ways of how to best teach about the Holocaust in general and in the EFL classroom, and after having analysed two books and one film dealing with the Holocaust, the third part will be concerned with teaching suggestions. My aim is to provide lesson plans including the material I have analysed in the second part of this thesis and relate the plans to the theoretical part at the beginning of the paper. Each lesson plan is followed by a discussion in which I reflect upon the activities and explain why they are useful in the respective context.

For each lesson plan I assume that the Holocaust has been taught before either in the subjects History, Religious Education or German. Hence, students already know about the Holocaust and can deepen their understanding of it in a foreign language. Each lesson plan contains information about the respective age group and level of the students. As already mentioned in *Teaching the Holocaust* teachers should keep questions of rationale in mind. So they should have a reason for teaching the students the Holocaust and make sure what the students are expected to learn. However, before starting to teach the following questions developed by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum should be considered (USHMM, 1).

Why should students learn this history?

What are the most significant lessons students should learn from a study of the Holocaust?

Why is a particular reading, image, document, or film an appropriate medium for conveying the topics that you wish to teach?

(USHMM, 1)

These questions can be very helpful in terms of finding appropriate aims for the lessons about the Holocaust. Each plan contains a preliminary section in which the teaching goals of the respective lesson plan are listed.

6.1. Lesson Plan I *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*

Age/Level:

4th form lower secondary, 13/14 years

Assumption:

The book has already been read and the students are aware of the fact that it is a fictional story.

Aim of the lesson:

The students are able to discover various perspectives in the book.

The students are able to reflect upon Jewishness and its impacts.

The students are able to talk about the book and summarise the most important points.

The students are able to state at least three examples of Bruno's naivety.

Aids & material:

Book *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*

Handout with questions

Abbreviations used:

T: teacher

S: student

C: the whole class

Time	Content/Activity	Aims	Material	Social Format/ Interaction
	Welcome!			T ⇔ C
15'	<i>The Boy in the Striped Pajamas</i> 1) <u>Discuss the book itself</u> In groups of four the students are asked to talk about the content of the book. They get questions to discuss. Each group has to decide on one speaker who presents their main findings in class afterwards.	Activation of the student's knowledge; do they know the content of the book? Are they able to summarise what they have read?	Book Handout with discussion questions	T ⇔ C S ⇔ S
10'	2) <u>Analysing characters of Bruno and Shmuel</u> In pairs, students analyse certain passages (passages, i.e. page numbers are given by the teacher) of the book and consequently find out about Bruno's naivety and Shmuel's closeness. They take notes.	Students shall find out that Bruno's naivety and Shmuel's closeness are responsible for a blurred picture of the Holocaust.	Book Exercise book	S ⇔ S
10'	3) <u>Presentation of results</u> Afterwards the pairs present their results in	Students get the chance to present what they have	Exercise book	S ⇔ C

10'	class. Bruno's and Shmuel's behaviour is analysed with the whole class. 4) <u>Activity: Silent observer</u> The students pretend to be silent observers. They watch Bruno and Shmuel sitting on either side of the fence. Their task is to write down their thoughts and opinions and what they would like to say to the two boys or ask them. They do it on their own. Those who are not able to finish the task are required to do it for homework.	found out. Students get to chance to think about the book once more. They can organise their thoughts and opinions they have.	Handout with questions	S ⇔ S
5'	5) <u>Revision</u> of the most important points.	Students do not leave the classroom without discussing the most striking points.	Book Exercise book Students' notes	T ⇔ C
	Goodbye			T ⇔ C

6.1.1. Reflection and Discussion

Concerning the assumption that the book has already been read and the students are informed about fictionality, I once again would like to emphasise the importance of differentiating between fact and fiction. "Make a careful distinction about sources of information" is one of the USHMM teaching guidelines and absolutely true. When teaching such a sinister part of history, the students' ability to distinguish fact, opinion, and fiction is particularly important. It is the teachers' area of responsibility to promote the students' independent interpretation with which they are able to analyse different sources (USHMM, 4). Especially with regard to fictionality and factionality, children's books have to be accurate by indicating what is true and what is invented. Therefore many authors inform their readers in their works how much of the text is based on evidence and to what extent it is based on imagination (Kokkola, 2). John Boyne, as

well, informs his readers at the very beginning of the book that his story is a work of fiction in which all incidents, dialogues, and characters are invented.

As already mentioned in *Teaching the Holocaust through Literature* readers get access to the information as authors write about the events. Literature is capable of painting vivid and descriptive pictures of events than ordinary history books are able to, and moreover asks for reflection and discussion. Thus is a good tool to complement teaching. However, especially when reading Holocaust books in an EFL classroom, books should be used to deepen the understanding of the students and should not be read to frustrate them. Therefore, literature that is used in the EFL classroom has to be chosen carefully with regard to grammatical level and vocabulary depending on the respective form. A teacher always has to keep in mind that, for students in an EFL class, reading involves more than just reading and being informed. Due to the fact that they read in a foreign language students have to make sure to understand the majority of words in order to make sense out of what they read. It is essential that EFL students get the meaning right; otherwise they could believe something to be true that is actually wrong.

Ad1) In the first as well as in the second part of this thesis I have already pointed out that students must not be left alone with the reading of books. For that reason, 15 minutes of each lesson are provided for reading the book. The students are asked to jot down questions and comments, which will be explained and discussed afterwards. However, the students should not only read in class, but also at home. When reading at home, they are also required to take notes for discussion. Discussions after each reading phase are essential in order to explain certain aspects of the book and to check whether the students have understood the content as well as the context.

I chose “The Boy in the Striped Pajamas” as it is not too difficult to read and students of a 4th form lower secondary might cope well with it. Sure, no student will be able to understand every word, but this is not necessary in order to get the meaning across. However, before relating the fictional story to true implications of the Holocaust, it is of great importance to discuss the book itself. It is essential to make sure that the students know what the book is about and what the most important points are. In groups of four I

want them to discuss questions on the book. I decided on groups of four as it is challenging to discuss questions with the whole class. By trying to involve approximately 25 students a frequent problem is raised: There are always the same students that talk and give answers, and always the same that stay quiet and try to be invisible in order to avoid answering questions. When there are just four students in a group, every single student is asked to contribute statements to the discussion. However, since I do not want the same students to work in a group each time there is a group work, groups are formed at random. New group constellations require a completely new organisation, such as a new leader. As I want to mix the roles of individual students randomised groups are great. So as to let the students know that the group work is not considered to be nice small talk, but should be taken seriously, I tell them in advance that they have to decide on one speaker whose task it is to present their results afterwards in class. Concerning group works it is advantageous to give the students a task they are required to fulfil. However, a very frequent problem with regard to group works is the fact the students tend to speak German as it is much easier to discuss in the respective mother tongue. Therefore, it is first of all essential that the teacher monitors the students and reminds them of speaking English. Secondly he/she should listen to the single groups carefully, and thirdly, the teacher ideally talks to each group to support them in their findings.

Ad2+3) By analysing Bruno's and Shmuel's characters, I do not want the students to work very scientifically; this would be too difficult at this age. They should simply find out about some characteristics of Bruno and Shmuel inasmuch as their characters contribute a lot to the representation of the Holocaust. By analysing certain significant passages of the book the students (together with the teacher) shall find out about Bruno's naivety and Shmuel's closeness and consequently detect that the Holocaust seems to be less severe than it really was. As analysing passages of the book requires silence and concentration, I want the students to work in pairs. It is much easier to whisper in pairs than to whisper in a group of four or even more people.

As already mentioned before I am of the opinion that group works need to have a task students have to fulfil. They should not have the feeling that these group works are done to no purpose. Therefore, again, students have to present their results after the pair work

is finished. I believe that students can profit immensely by their classmates' ideas and interpretations and thus it is reasonable to share the findings. Students are not exclusively asked to take notes as they are required to present their analysis. Jotting down some keywords is helpful for the following activity as well. However, taking notes is never a waste of time.

Ad4) After having analysed Bruno's and Shmuel's behaviour I want the students to write down some of their thoughts and opinions they have concerning the two boys sitting on either side of the fence. My aim is to give them ample time to reflect upon the characters and what they do to the story. Especially as I want them to think of reasons that promoted the Holocaust later on, it is reasonable to give them enough time to work on certain aspects. As the students might notice that there are just ten minutes left, I tell them that they do not have to hurry and that it is ok if they are not able to finish until the end of the lesson. I want them to do the work carefully and diligently. Thus I do not tell them in advance that they have to finish it at home since they would try to finish it during the lesson regardless to the consequences, which is not desirable.

Ad5) Due to the fact that I do not want the students to leave the classroom without discussing the most striking points, there is a revision at the end of the lesson. Together with the learners I try to summarise important aspects in a few sentences in order to foster and deepen their understanding. Basically, I am of the opinion that revising information is never a waste of time as just by revising and remembering students begin to learn.

6.2. Lesson plan II *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*

Age/Level:

4th form lower secondary, 13/14 years

Assumption:

The book has already been read and the students are aware of the fact that it is a fictional story.

Aim of the lesson:

The students are able to define the terms “racism” and “stereotype” and relate them to the Holocaust.

The students are able to talk about racism freely and think of reasons that promote racism.

Aids & material:

Book *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*

Handout with possible dialogue topics

Abbreviations used:

T: teacher

S: student

C: the whole class

Time	Content/Activity	Aims	Material	Social Format/ Interaction
	Welcome!			T ⇔ C
5'	<i>The Boy in the Striped Pajamas</i> 1) <u>Revision</u> The most important points of the previous lesson are revised in class.	As this lesson is connected to the previous one revising the most important points serves as a good introduction.		T ⇔ C
10'	2) <u>Brainstorming</u> The students should think of racism and stereotypes and tell me what comes to their mind immediately. The terms “racism” and “stereotype” are going to be explained. During the course of the brainstorming and afterwards I might also ask some questions concerning their ideas and relate them to the Holocaust. (What does racism have to do with the Holocaust? Do you think that racism nowadays can promote a	Activation of students' knowledge. Afterwards their already existing knowledge is related to the Holocaust.	Blackboard	T ⇔ C

	<p>cruel event such as the Holocaust? Do Bruno and Shmuel know what racism is? => just to mention some examples) There should be a connection between the brainstorming and the topic Holocaust.</p>			
20'	<p>3) <u>Role play with following speaking activity</u> In groups of three or four students are required to prepare a role play. They should think of situations in which racism plays a role nowadays. Students have 7-10 min. to prepare the role play. Some groups are asked to act out what they have prepared. The rest is asked to pantomime (freeze frame) their situation and the other students have to guess what their role play is about. Thought tracking: If it is too difficult for the other students to guess what the role play should mean, we make use of thought tracking (tap on shoulder and ask the person to say something that represents the person)</p>	<p>Students work independently and learn to organise themselves. They reflect upon "racism". I want them to think of various consequences racism can have. Students practice speaking freely and hopefully have fun.</p>	<p>Blackboard to have a look at some of their ideas that came up during the brainstorming</p>	<p>S ⇔ S</p>
10'	<p>4) <u>Writing a dialogue</u> Students are asked to write a dialogue about a quarrel due to racism and stereotypes, however there should be a positive ending. Some possible dialogue topics are provided and students can choose.</p>	<p>Students practice their writing skills and can think of racism and stereotypes once more in silence on their own.</p>	<p>Handout with possible dialogue topics</p>	
5'	<p>Revision of the most important points.</p>	<p>To foster what they have heard about racism, a</p>	<p>Book Exercise book</p>	<p>T ⇔ C</p>

		revision is essential.	Students' notes	
	Goodbye			T ⇔ C

6.2.1. Reflection and Discussion

Ad1) As the second lesson is connected to the previous lesson about *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* I am convinced that summarising the content of the first lesson is reasonable. The students get the chance to remember the aspects that have been discussed already and thus can start this lesson easier.

Ad2) The brainstorming serves to activate the students' knowledge about "racism" and "stereotypes". I decided on these two terms as they are closely connected to the Holocaust and I want the students to understand this connection. The USHMM too states that – when learning about the Holocaust – students can build up an understanding of the origin of racism, prejudice and stereotyping in a society, and what consequences there are (1f).

As a teacher it is of particular interest to me that the students are capable of defining "racism" and "stereotypes", i.e. they should have a correct definition in mind and not what they believe to be "racism" or "stereotypes". The fact that it is important to strive for precision of language is also mentioned in the teaching guidelines provided by the USHMM. Students should be well aware of the certainty that not all Jews were the same and consequently had different experiences. Thus, it is essential to deal with each victim as an individual. Overgeneralising and distorting facts should be strictly avoided (USHMM, 3f). I am also interested in linking the terms to the book in order to make it easier to understand the context of racism and Holocaust. The questions (What does racism have to do with the Holocaust?) that are posed by the teacher should end up in a conversation with the whole class. Ideally a discussion with the whole class would look like this: I pose a question and a student answers. Then there are other students who are of different opinions and want to state their opinions too. The students talk, listen to each other respectfully and argue reasonably. I know that this can be very difficult since the class has to be extremely disciplined. Therefore, it could be advantageous to give them some guidelines for "Participating in a Discussion". Each time a discussion is

intended, the students should take a quick look at the guidelines. However, as soon as I recognise that the originally planned “conversation” does not work properly, I will think of alternatives, such as asking a particular student, or letting them answer the questions individually followed by taking notes.

Ad3) The aim of the role play is “to develop a more sensitive understanding of a variety of viewpoints whilst sharpening (...) language and movement skills” (Drama Resource, n.p.) and to let the students work independently and organise themselves as well as other classmates. However, though I emphasise working independently, I am of the opinion that there are still some points that should be done by the teacher. As already stated earlier, I want to be the one to organise groups in order to mix up the students. The role play should not only promote independent work, but also free speech. Within a context that can be fun (role-play in opposition to a presentation) students do not have to be afraid of talking. At this point I would like to mention that it is a very difficult task for a teacher to make the students talk. Often they are afraid of making mistakes and hence prefer to remain silent. Thus, I would like to highlight the importance of letting the students make mistakes without immediately correcting them. As soon as the students have the feeling that they cannot talk without being corrected all the time, they become afraid of talking and stop doing it.

As already discussed in *Why teach about the Holocaust?* the curricula for upper secondary school lists one category named “Human and Society”. Students are asked to learn about conflict management, the competence of problem solving, and the education of peace. They shall find out that there are situations in which it is challenging to maintain peace and find appropriate solutions in order to avoid conflicts. By developing scenes in which racism plays a role nowadays I want them to relate the racism that promoted the Holocaust back then to the present time. The students’ creativity as well as seriousness is demanded. The freeze frame serves more as a breaking up of the lesson. “With freeze-frame, the action in a play or scene is frozen, as in a photograph or video frame” (Drama Resource, n.p.). When it comes to “thought tracking”, however, the students have to think of one sentence that describes their situation best and utter their feelings and thoughts (Drama Resource, n.p.). This task can be quite challenging

since the other pupils have to guess what the situation is. Therefore, the sentence chosen by the pupil has to be accurate and precise.

Ad4) In the first part of the paper I had a look at the curricula for lower- and upper secondary and discussed reasons for teaching the Holocaust. The overall aim of teaching English as a foreign language is the development of communicate competence by practising the four skills reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The exercise in which the students are required to write a dialogue first of all serves to promote their writing skills. Furthermore, it gives them the chance to think of racism once more and write down their ideas and thoughts. Writing dialogues with a positive ending should not be done just for fun. I try to promote the students' ability to find solutions for conflicts and disputes. My aim is to show them that very often there are ways to avoid conflicts resulting in cruel actions, and that peace can be maintained.

Ad5) A revision at the end of the lesson serves to deepen the students' understanding. Concerning revisions I would like to mention that there are much more creative ways of revising information, as for example giving the students a crossword puzzle or the like. However, the lesson I have devised does not offer too much theoretical information to develop a crossword puzzle or any other creative and funny revision.

6.3. Lesson Plan III *The Diary of A Young Girl*

Age/Level:

4th form lower secondary, 13/14 years

Assumption:

The book has already been read and the students are aware of the fact that it is an auto-biographic story.

Aim of the lesson:

The students are aware of the fact that what they read is a subjective account and that Holocaust experiences can differ significantly from each other.

The students know that it is not appropriate to compare ways of suffering.

The students are able to summarise the main content of the book.

The students are able to characterise Anne.

Aids & material:

Book *The Diary of A Young Girl*

Handout with questions

Handout with some passages from the book

Abbreviations used:

T: teacher

S: student

C: the whole class

Time	Content/Activity	Aims	Material	Social Format/ Interaction
	Welcome!			T ⇔ C
10'	<i>The Diary of A Young Girl</i> 1) <u>Content of the book</u> In order to continue working on the book and on the topic <i>Holocaust</i> I want to make sure that the students know the content of the book very well. In pairs, they have to answer questions concerning the content of the book. When they are ready, students work in groups of four and compare their results. By telling the students that their answers will be helpful for the next activity, I want to motivate them to work carefully, to take the task seriously and to take notes.	Activation of the students' knowledge; do they know the content of the book? Are they able to summarise what they have read?	Handout with questions	S ⇔ S
15'	2) <u>Characterisation</u> The students are required to analyse Anne's character in the book. The students	Students work independently and are forced to participate	Handout with significant passages	S

	<p>shall find out what the readers are able to discover about the Holocaust through her diary entries, i.e. what does she tell us about the Holocaust. Do the students believe her? I want the students to do the task on their own so that every single student has got the chance to be productive. In order to make it easier for the students, they get some passages from the book that make it easier to find out about Anne's behaviour and some questions that are important to be considered when analysing her character. I tell the students in advance that they are asked to present their results afterwards.</p>	<p>actively. Moreover, working alone ideally means no chatter. In order to give feedback and complement their results, the students are required to present their findings in class afterwards.</p>	<p>from the book that help the students to find out about Anne's character. Additionally they get some questions.</p>	
10'	<p>3) <u>Discussion in class</u> As I am curious what the students were able to find out about Anne, I want them to present their results. Afterwards I complement their findings with important information and make sure that the students get everything right. In order to avoid the feeling of an oral presentation or exam (and thus to avoid excitement), students can remain seated.</p>	<p>Students get feedback and are able to listen to their classmates' findings.</p>	<p>Blackboard, students' notes</p>	<p>S ⇔ C T ⇔ C</p>
10'	<p>4) <u>Write a diary entry</u> The students are required to write a diary entry in which they should reflect upon the book and the situation Anne was in. I want to give them the chance to organise their</p>	<p>In order to give the students ample time to reflect upon the subject I want them to write down their thoughts.</p>	<p>Exercise book</p>	<p>S</p>

	thoughts. They can write about how they feel about Anne, about the Holocaust, and about not having the chance to change anything. 10 minutes is probably not enough time to write a diary entry with about 200-300 words, but I tell the students that they can finish it the next lesson.			
5'	5) <u>Revision</u> of the most important points.	To foster what they have heard about the book, about Anne's character, and her growing-up a revision is essential.	Book Exercise book Students' notes	T ⇔ C
	Goodbye			T ⇔ C

6.3.1. Reflection and Discussion

As already mentioned in the first part of this thesis, Holocaust literature looks for discussions and reflections. Students get the chance to reflect upon social dilemmas, individual fates, responsibility and guilt, and various dimensions of human behaviour (Markman quoted in Millen et al., 147). Moreover, they get to know different roles the people had or seemed to have during the Holocaust: victim, oppressor, bystander, and rescuer (USHMM, 14). *The Diary of A Young Girl* perfectly serves to discover the roles of victims and individual fates. In her diary Anne tells her own personal story and by doing so, students get a realistic insight into her life during the Holocaust. However, it is of great importance to inform the students about the fact that what they get is just a very subjective point of view, an individual perspective, but no broad Holocaust experience. It is the teachers' job to tell the students that there were many different ways of suffering during the Holocaust, and moreover that every single victim had a different fate. Generalisations of pain, but also comparisons of pain should be avoided. Neither the students nor teachers have got the right to decide what the worst and most crucial way of suffering was. Highlighting that every single victim and different ways of suffering should be respected is an essential point in Holocaust education.

Ad1) Concerning my opinion that students must not be left alone with the reading of books, I would like to refer to the first lesson plan. Each reading phase is followed by a discussion in which questions are explained and comments can be discussed. By doing so, the students' understanding of content and context should be assured. Since *The Diary of A Young Girl* is quite a lot to read, there is also the possibility to narrow down the focus and just give them certain passages to read. Of course, the following activities and ideas for class need to be adapted accordingly.

When reading a book in class it is important to first check whether the students know the content of it, and second whether they understand everything. Books are not read for entertainment, but have a pedagogic purpose. Questions concerning the book are provided and the students are asked to answer them carefully. They do it in pairs as two people normally know more than one; so they can profit by each other. Moreover, working in pairs or groups changes the normal course of life and can be fun. The pair work is followed by another group work where two pairs work together. In order to avoid a chaos when it comes to choosing which pairs work together it is simply decided by the teacher. This can be done by distributing cards with symbols and those who have the same symbols share the same group. Especially in lower secondary this is a favoured method to form groups.

Concerning group works there is always the risk that students experience it as funny and enjoyable, and hence forget to take it seriously. Thus, it is essential to tell them beforehand that what they develop during the group work is their basis for the following activities. By doing so, I want to motivate them to work carefully, to take the task seriously and to take notes.

Ad2) By characterising Anne I want the students to recognise how much the readers can find out about her and the Holocaust. However, the students are not asked to do a scientific characterisation of Anne since this would make too great demands on them, especially when they have not yet learned about how to analyse a character properly.

Nevertheless, readers get access to the information by Anne and thus it is essential to have a close look at her. In order to make the characterisation easier for the students,

significant passages from the book and guiding questions are provided. The students should have the same guidelines for a characterisation since otherwise everybody would focus on something different. Another problem that could arise without providing passages and questions is that the students have no idea how to analyse a character and remain unproductive, especially when they have to work on their own. However, I decided on a single work since every single student is forced to reflect upon the book and contribute something to the lesson. Moreover, when students are working alone, the chance to have silence in the classroom is very high.

What I want them to find out is that Anne undergoes a change during her time in the Secret Annexe. During the course of her diary entries she becomes more mature which changes her perception of the Holocaust as well. Depending on the age of the narrator the descriptions and explanations vary.

Ad3) Concerning group works or single work it is reasonable to check on or at least listen to their results afterwards. Students should not have the feeling that their teacher is not interested in their findings or believe that their work is of no value. However, it is not only important to listen to what they have developed, but also to complement it and tell the students what is wrong and what is right. This can be done with the whole class inasmuch as the rest of the class can profit by the teachers' comments as well. In order to avoid the feeling of an oral presentation or even exam, and thus to avoid excitement, students can remain seated. From my own experience I know that many students become extremely nervous when they have to talk in front of the class and consequently are incapable of presenting their findings, although their results are actually great. Therefore, I decided that the students are allowed to remain seated. Nevertheless, there still are lessons in which the students cannot avoid talking in front of the class, since practicing their presentation skills is of particular interest for a teacher. Even though they are talking in a foreign language in the classroom, they can receive useful advice for any kind of presentation in their future lives.

Ad4) In order to give the students ample time to reflect upon the subject I want them to write down their thoughts in the form of a diary entry. I want to give them the time to think about the book, Anne's fate, the Holocaust and its consequences, and about not

having the chance to make independent decisions once again. As the students write diary entries I am not sure whether to collect and correct them or not. What they write is something very personal and intimate and I am convinced that there are many students who would not like to hand in their diary entries.

As already mentioned in *Guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust* reinforcing the objective of lesson plans is necessary. Holocaust education should be able to motivate students and move them from passive to active learners. Ideally, students participate actively and bring their opinions to class. Moreover, the students should be able to reflect upon what they have learned, and in addition think about what this means to them as individuals (USHMM, 8). When students are writing their diary entries, they are forced to think about *The Diary of A Young Girl* once more and reflect upon what has been discussed in class already (characterisation of Anne). I hope that the students are able to express their feelings and ideas appropriately and do not remain passive learners.

10 minutes is probably not enough time to write a diary entry with about 200-300 words. However, students should have the chance to do the work carefully and without time pressure. Therefore they can finish their entries in the next lesson. However, there should be a revision at the beginning of the lesson, since otherwise it could be difficult for the students to continue writing.

Ad 5) A revision at the end of the lesson serves to deepen the students' understanding. Thus, to foster what they have heard about the book, about Anne's character and her maturing a revision is essential. Especially at the end of the lesson it is comfortable for the students when the teacher mentions the most striking points in a short and compact way. Depending on the respective lesson and situation in class the teacher has to decide whether he/she does the revision alone or together with the students. A teacher has to be flexible in his decisions and aware of the fact that it can always occur that what he had planned for the lesson is not suitable or feasible any more.

6.4. Lesson Plan IV *Life is Beautiful*

Age/Level:

7th form upper secondary, 16/17 years

Assumption:

The film has already been watched and the students are aware of the fact that what they see is no Holocaust documentary, but a fictional film.

Pre-viewing activities have been done by the students and while-viewing exercises have been provided. The students are required to search for themes that occur again and again in the film. Moreover they should have a look at the father's and the son's perception of the Holocaust.

Aim of the lesson:

The students are able to critically reflect upon Guido's way of protection.

The students are able to develop an opinion of a humorous representation of the Holocaust.

The students are able to talk about the film.

The students are able to differentiate between the father's and the son's point of view.

The students are able to talk about one theme that occurs in the film.

Aids & material:

Film *Life is Beautiful*

Abbreviations used:

T: teacher

S: student

C: the whole class

Time	Content/Activity	Aims	Material	Social Format/ Interaction
	Welcome!			T ⇔ C
20'	<p><i>Life is Beautiful</i></p> <p>1) <u>While-viewing activity</u></p> <p>After watching the film the students get some more time to work on their while-viewing activity. They get the chance to exchange their information with other students. In groups of five they are asked to develop a poster containing the most important themes and how the perception of the Holocaust differs from father to son. Each group has about 3-5 minutes time to present their poster to the class and the teacher. Since it is of great importance that the students know that there is a great discrepancy</p>	<p>The students learn to develop something on their own. They should learn that information is not always presented to them.</p> <p>Moreover they learn presentation skill and practice speaking in front of the class.</p>	<p>Film</p> <p>Notes they took during the film</p>	<p>S ⇔ S</p> <p>S ⇔ C</p> <p>S ⇔ T</p>

	<p>between the father's and the son's perception of the Holocaust, I try to summarise and emphasise it once more after the presentations.</p>			
15'	<p>2) <u>Being a film-director</u> The students imagine being a film-director. They write a different ending of the film. However, they should not simply write a different ending, but also think of the consequences the ending would have for the film. Are there any new characters? What has to be changed in the original film in order to carry out the new ending etc. They also should think of their intentions for the respective ending. Why do they exactly choose this ending?</p>	<p>First, the students practice their writing skills. Secondly, they are able to reflect upon the film once more. They can decide on whether they want to save Guido's life in the end or not and state their reasons for doing so.</p>	Exercise book	S
10'	<p>3) <u>Differentiation between fact and fiction/realistic and unrealistic scenes</u> In pairs, students are asked to state examples of the film that seem realistic or unrealistic to them. They shall prove their arguments by mentioning explicit scenes from the film.</p>	<p>The students discover that realistic and unrealistic representations are mixed in the film and that it is important to question some scenes critically.</p>	Exercise book	S ⇔ S
5'	<p>5) <u>Revision</u> As a revision the students shall imagine the following situation: they have to inform one of their friends about the film. They have to state at least five striking points that come to their mind concerning the film.</p>	<p>Students do not leave the classroom without discussing the most striking points.</p>	Book Exercise book Students' notes	T ⇔ C
	Goodbye			T ⇔ C

6.4.1. Reflection and Discussion

Ad 1) In the section *The use of film in teaching about the Holocaust* I already discussed the importance of pre-, while- and post-viewing activities. Since it is essential to prepare students for a film I stated in my assumption that the film has already been watched and the students are aware of the fact that what they see is no Holocaust documentary, but a fictional film. Moreover, pre-viewing activities have been done by the students and while-viewing exercises have been provided. The while-viewing activity consists of searching for themes that occur again and again in the film. Moreover they are asked to have a look at the father's and the son's perception of the Holocaust, since there is a great discrepancy in the film. However, while-viewing activities are not solely useful for analysing the film, but also with regard to disciplinary matters. As soon as the students get informed about while-viewing activities they can be sure that the film is not merely watched for entertainment, but has a pedagogical purpose. The students are required to watch the film actively and take notes in order to do the while-viewing and post-viewing activities. After the film has been watched the students get some more time to work on their activities. In groups of five they have to design posters that support their theoretical findings. Concerning the groups I would prefer forming the groups randomly so as to vary the group constellations within the class. Another creative way of forming groups would be to distribute cards with the names of the actors and actresses from the film. Naturally, those who have the same actors or actresses are in the same group. Designing posters is simply done to support their oral presentation that follows. To highlight or emphasise some important points that have been discovered in the group and are mentioned in the presentation, it can be helpful to have a poster as a visual support.

As already mentioned a few times in this thesis, the overall aim of teaching English as a foreign language is the development of communicate competence by practising the four skills reading, writing, listening, and speaking. By presenting their results in front of the class, students practice their speaking and presentation skills. Moreover they learn to work independently and to organise the structure of their presentation and themselves as a group. During the presentations the teacher has a very important role: It is his/her responsibility to make sure that the students understand everything right and correct them, if there is anything wrong or needs to be complemented.

Ad 2) Post-viewing exercises help the students to organise the information they receive. They serve to ensure that the students understand the most important points and are able to talk about striking issues in class discussions. The post-viewing activity I chose demands creativity and imagination as the students are asked to write a different ending of the film (Ansgar;Surkamp, 270). This first and foremost promotes their writing skills. As already stated above, practicing writing skills contributes to the overall aim, namely communicative competence. Secondly, they are able to reflect critically upon the film once more and decide what they want to change. Interesting about this activity is that the students should not merely write a new ending, but think about what their ending would mean to the Holocaust and the whole story. They should think of whether they want to invent any new characters or omit some of them. Moreover they should think of their personal reasons and motivations for choosing exactly this or that ending. The new endings of the students are not presented in class, but collected and consequently corrected by the teacher.

Ad3) The way the Holocaust is presented in the film is not always equally realistic and thus I want the students to find out about realistic and unrealistic representations in the film. In pairs, students are asked to state examples of the film that seem realistic or unrealistic to them. By mentioning explicit scenes from the film they shall prove their arguments. This activity also requires previous knowledge. They have to decide what they believe to be wrong or right, realistic and unrealistic, within the context of the Holocaust. Therefore it is essential that the term Holocaust is explained beforehand so that every student knows what the term actually refers to. Every student must know what happened during this specific event in the 20th century in order to differentiate between fact and fiction (USHMM,2). In order to avoid that the teacher becomes the students' source of knowledge during this activity, there is the possibility of a research project. Within the limits of this project the students can search for information on the internet that supports their findings about realistic and unrealistic representations.

Ad4) With the objective of revising important information I want the students to imagine the following situation: They have to inform one of their friends about the film and state at least five striking points that come to their mind. By doing this, they think

of the film, the presentations, and the discussions once more, and hence recall significant aspects of the film.

7. Conclusion

The over-all aim of this diploma thesis was to raise awareness of the importance of the Holocaust in the context of teaching in general and in the EFL classroom. That the role of history must not be undervalued and its role in education and school must be substantial has been pointed out. However, there is no definite answer to the question of how the Holocaust should be taught. Hence, it is essential– although some guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust exist – that every teacher discovers the best way to teach it for him-or herself. Next to consideration, empathy, motivation, creativity and seriousness, it requires one basic thing, namely historical knowledge in order to provide the necessary background information. No matter the age group to which it is taught, Holocaust education has to be taken seriously.

Basically, my aim was to lead from rather general guidelines that are suitable for various subjects such as Religious education or History, to more concrete teaching tips for teaching the Holocaust in the EFL classroom. Necessary adaptations for the EFL classroom have been mentioned after each general section.

The first part of this paper focused on how to teach the Holocaust. Reasons for teaching about the Holocaust and what impacts it can have on the students have been mentioned. Hence it can be best referred to as Holocaust pedagogy. Not only teaching guidelines have been provided; important factors that have to be considered before starting to teach have been mentioned as well. Additionally, reasons for teaching the Holocaust in general and in the EFL classroom have been stated in the first part. When students are educated about this terrible event they get the chance to think about democracy, the role of individuals, racism, responsibility and much more. Thus, it has been pointed out that learning about the Holocaust involves more than learning dates and historical facts by heart.

How teachers should deal with literature as a part of Holocaust education, and why literature is a good tool to complement teaching has also been covered in the first part. The importance of accuracy of children's books with regard to fact and fiction has been emphasised. When choosing which books to read in class, teachers have to be careful. Books used in the classroom should be appropriate with regard to content, grammatical

level and vocabulary. However, reading the books actively with the students is most important. Teachers should accompany their students during the reading process and must not leave them on their own. Striking issues that occur in the book have to be discussed in class. Moreover, students need preparation and should not start reading without any explanation.

Regarding literature as a tool to complement teaching, one might find out how helpful literature can be in Holocaust education and how students profit by it. Problems authors have to face when writing Holocaust literature for children, and why the genocide is difficult to represent have been discussed as well.

The last point that has been highlighted in the first part of this diploma thesis is the role of films in education. Emphasis has been placed on the fact that films can be motivators inasmuch as they display real content and are vivid. However, using films in school can be a challenge for teachers; they very often misuse them as entertainment. Moreover it has been pointed out that films are rarely an object of pedagogy, as teachers lack the necessary knowledge to analyse films and moreover have no rationale in mind as to why they want the students to see this particular film.

The second part of this thesis has been concerned with the representation of the Holocaust in the books *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, *The Diary of A Young Girl*, and the film *Life is Beautiful* and thus can be referred to as the analytical part. The representation of the Holocaust has been analysed with regard to using the books and the film in an EFL classroom.

I once again would like to emphasise that by differentiating between a realistic and an unrealistic representation of the Holocaust I referred to whether the Holocaust is depicted truthfully or not in the respective books and the film that have been analysed in the second part. Furthermore, when I talked about the representation of the Holocaust, I never referred to the whole Holocaust, but just to fragments of the terrible historical event and to specific Holocaust experiences of individual victims, such as the respective protagonists of the books or the film.

In conclusion it can be said that *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* is not aiming at explaining the Holocaust in the same way as non-fictional stories do. Readers perceive the Holocaust through a nine-year old boy's eyes – an unreliable narrator – who is completely unaware of the political situation and what it means to be Jewish. Thus, the Holocaust is presented unrealistically and it is essential to teach the Holocaust at least partly before reading the book in an EFL classroom. However, it is not always necessary to explain every detail beforehand as reading motivation could decrease and teachers preclude the students from thinking independently and reflecting critically.

In contrast to *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* Anne Frank's work, *The Diary of A Young Girl*, is autobiographic and depicts real-life Holocaust experiences. Nevertheless, it has been emphasised that readers just get insights into Anne's point of view and her experiences. Thus, the book merely provides a very individual rather than a broad Holocaust experience. However, by displaying her feelings, her fears, and her problems she encounters during her time at their hiding place, the Holocaust is presented realistically by Anne in the book.

As the paper has shown earlier, reading the book in a lower secondary EFL classroom should not constitute a problem. It has been discussed that teenager problems are the same all around the world, no matter where the students come from. Thus, readers can identify with Anne. Additionally they get personal and truthful information about the Holocaust. However, the students should always be reminded of the fact that Anne's diary entries are subjective and that every single victim has different Holocaust experiences. That a generalisation of victims and ways of suffering should be avoided by highlighting the subjectivity, has been emphasised in the course of the analysis.

The analysis of the film *Life is Beautiful* complemented the analytical part of the diploma thesis. It has been shown that there is a great discrepancy between the father's and the son's perception of the genocide in Benigni's film. Therefore, the way the Holocaust is represented to the viewers, i.e. the adult point of view, and how the Holocaust is perceived by Giosué, a four-year old boy, was of particular interest to me.

I came to the conclusion that the Holocaust is represented both, realistically and unrealistically in the book, depending on the respective point of view. Whereas Guido lives through the deportation of Jews in a train, their arrival in the concentration camp, and the cruel circumstances people have to bear in the concentration camps, Giosué experiences an extraordinary “birthday surprise”. He is forced to believe that their journey by train is an adventure, and the stay in the concentration camp is a game with the goal to collect 1000 points in order to win a real tank.

It has been discussed earlier that the film offers a lot to work on. Hence, using the film in an EFL classroom first and foremost requires two important steps: to prepare the students before viewing the film, and to analyse it appropriately after viewing. Analysing the film can also be done together with the students; however it is still the teachers’ job to tell them that although the film depicts true Holocaust facts there are still scenes that are rather unrealistic and need to be reflected critically.

The last part of my diploma thesis has been concerned with teaching suggestions. My aim was to provide lesson plans for teaching about the Holocaust using the material that has been analysed in the second part of this thesis. To complement the lesson plans information about the age and the level of students as well as teaching goals, without which teaching would be of little value, have been listed preliminary to each plan. Finally, the plans have been related to the theoretical part of this paper. In the discussions I reflected upon the activities and specific teaching methods, and explained why they are useful in the respective context.

In a nutshell, the aim of this diploma thesis was to mention reasons and give guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust. Second it provided an analysis of several children’s and youth books and a film concerning this highly sensitive topic. Finally, suggestions how these materials can be best used in the EFL classroom have been presented.

Unfortunately I was not able to discuss every aspect that I was actually interested in, as space for diploma theses is limited. Concerning the choice of texts and films I would like to mention that there are lots of Holocaust books and films appropriate either for children or young adults that could be used in the classroom. For younger children

When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit by Judith Kerr would be a proper book since it covers the time before the war and does not actually narrate about concentration camps and the cruelties committed by Hitler. For students of the 7th or even 8th form I would suggest *The Book Thief* written by Marcus Zusak as it is a lot to read and challenging with regard to the way of narration. An extraordinary way of narration can also be found in Martin Amis' *Time's Arrow*. In this very special Holocaust book the whole story is told in reverse which lets the Holocaust appear as a positive event inasmuch as people are created and not murdered. The book offers a lot to analyse and to work on and thus I would argue that it is appropriate for a 7th or 8th form as well.

Concerning the lesson plans I would like to add that there would be much more possibilities of how to use the chosen material in class. What has been presented in this diploma thesis is just a small range of what is possible within the limits of Holocaust education.

With regard to teaching practice there are of course some points that trouble me. First of all, I am afraid that the students might pose questions concerning the Holocaust I am not able to answer, either due to the fact that I lack detailed knowledge or because I simply cannot find the right words. Secondly, I am afraid that I am incapable of transmitting the serious message of the Holocaust. As I have already pointed out many times before, teaching about the Holocaust is a responsible job and, to be honest, I believe that it is challenging to bear this responsibility. However, I believe that being aware of this responsibility and trying to give the best possible is a good starting basis for Holocaust education.

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9. Appendix

Material

Zusammenfassung

Lebenslauf

Material: Lesson plan I *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*

Content questions:

- Why do Bruno and his family have to leave Berlin?
- Does Bruno feel comfortable at Outwith?
- What is Bruno's biggest wish?
- How is the relationship between Gretel?
- What does he see outside the window? What do the people look like?
- What could you find out about the job of Bruno's father?
- Does Bruno make any difference between Shmuel and himself?
- Does Bruno know that people have different religions and beliefs?
- Does he know that Shmuel is Jewish?



Figure 1: The Boy in the Striped Pajamas
<http://www.google.at/search?q=the+boy+in+the+striped+pajamas&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:de:official&client=firefox-a>

Dialogue Topics



Figure 2

<http://www.google.at/images?q=racism&oe=utf-8&rls=org.mozilla:de:official&client=firefox-a&um=1&ie=UTF-8&source=og&sa=N&hl=de&tab=wi&biw=1264&bih=603>

1) Taifun is a 13-year old Turkish boy. He moved to Austria when he was two years old. Because of his father's new job, Taifun has to leave his old school and his friends behind. Some of his new classmates, however, don't like Turkish people and are mean to Taifun. Write a dialogue between Taifun and one of his racist classmates who wants to make him angry. Don't forget to think of a positive ending!

2) Shila, a 14-year old girl from India loves to dance and joins a hip hop dance group. Some girls from the group don't want to have her in the group, because they believe that Shila is not able to dance hip hop. They say that Indian girls and women have a completely different way of dancing that does not look like hip hop. Write a dialogue between Shila and one of the girls from the dance group.



Figure 3

<http://www.google.at/images?um=1&hl=de&client=firefox-a&rls=org.mozilla%3Ade%3Aofficial&biw=1264&bih=603&tbs=isch%3A1&sa=1&q=indian+girl+dancing&aq=f&aqi=&aql=&oq=>

Material: Lesson plan III *The Diary of A Young Girl*

With the help of the following passages from the book, please try to analyse Anne's character!



Figure 4

<http://www.google.at/images?um=1&hl=de&client=firefox-a&rls=org.mozilla%3Ade%3Aofficial&biw=1264&bih=603&tbs=isch%3A1&sa=1&q=anne+frank&aq=0&aqi=g10&aql=&oq=anne+fra>

1) I expect you will be rather surprised at the fact that I should talk of boy friends at my age. Alas, one simply can't seem to avoid it at our school. As soon as a boy asks if he may bicycle home with me and we get into conversation, nine out of ten times I can be sure that he will fall head over heels in love immediately and simply won't allow me out of his sight. (Frank, 5)

2) I get along quite well with all my teachers, nine in all, seven masters and two mistresses. Mr. Keptor, the old math master, was very annoyed with me for a long time because I chatter so much. So I had to write a composition with "A Chatterbox" as the subject. A chatterbox! Whatever could one write? However, deciding I would puzzle that out later, I wrote it in my notebook, and tried to keep quiet. (Frank, 6)

3) Just had a big bust-up with Mummy for the umpteenth time; we simply don't get on together these days and Margot and I don't hit off any too well either. As a rule we don't go in for such outbursts as this in our family. Still, it's by no means always pleasant for me. Margot's and Mummy's natures are completely strange to me. I can understand my friends better than my own mother – too bad! (Frank, 30)

4) (...) I'm terribly busy. I've just translated a chapter out of *La Belle Nivernaise* and made notes of new words. Then a perfectly foul math problem and three pages of French grammar. Yesterday I finished the Assault. It's quite amusing, but doesn't touch *Joop ter Heul*. (Frank, 40)

5) How some people do adore bringing up other people's children in addition to their own. The Van Daans are that kind. Margot doesn't need it, she is such a goody-goody, perfection itself, but I seem to have enough mischief in me for the two of us put together. You should hear us at mealtimes, with reprimands, and cheeky answers flying to and fro. (Frank, 30f)

Useful questions for your characterisation:

- What problems does Anne have with her mother and her sister?
- Can she forget about problems easily?
- How does her behaviour change?
- Do you think that she is more grown-up in the end?

Zusammenfassung

Diese Diplomarbeit thematisiert die Aufbereitung des Themas *Holocaust* sowohl im muttersprachlichen als auch im fremdsprachlichen Unterricht. Die Bedeutung, die dem Holocaust im Unterricht zukommt, soll hervorgehoben werden. Historische Ereignisse dürfen nicht unterbewertet werden und sollen im Unterricht stets eine Rolle spielen, um den Schülern im Rahmen des österreichischen Bildungswesens die Möglichkeit zu geben über den Holocaust zu lernen sowie zu reflektieren.

Engagement und persönlicher Einsatz werden von jedem Lehrer gefordert, wenn es darum geht, den Holocaust zu unterrichten. Die Voraussetzung aber, um diese Materie so wahrheitsgetreu wie möglich unterrichten zu können, ist, dass Lehrer die Thematik gut kennen. Wichtig ist dabei vor allem, dass die Bedeutung und die Tragweite des Holocaust aufrechterhalten bleiben.

Richtlinien, die für das Unterrichten dieses sensiblen Themas von großer Wichtigkeit sind, werden im theoretischen Teil dieser Arbeit angeführt. Zudem werden im praktischen Teil zwei Bücher und ein Film, die den Holocaust behandeln, mit Hinblick auf den Fremdsprachenkontext analysiert. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit gilt der Repräsentation des Holocaust und der Frage inwieweit Literatur und Film beim Unterrichten von Nutzen sein können und wie man sie am besten im Unterricht einsetzt. Vorschläge, wie die verschiedenen Materialien im Unterricht verwendet werden können, komplettieren diese wissenschaftliche Arbeit.

Lebenslauf

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