

# Value orientation and national identity in Russia: A media effect study on the Holocaust documentary “Night and Fog”



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**ABSTRACT:** After the disintegration of the USSR, nation states formed which until today struggle for value orientation and collective identities. Especially the Russian identity seems heterogeneous and partially correlating with in-group vs. out-group stereotypes. The question arises how historical media communications can shape values and identity in Russia. In particular the breach of civilization by the Holocaust, as central element of European memory culture, offers manifold references. Guiding the research is the model of “Multidimensional-Imparting-of-History” (MIH) which includes empirical indices of (humanitarian) values, national identity as well as European and Asian identification. A media effect experiment carried out with young Russian subjects (Moscow, 2012,  $N = 192$ ) shows that the reception of a Holocaust documentary has limited humanizing effects. Identity-building was ambivalent. Apart from a partial increase in nationalistic attitudes, there was predominantly an increase in cosmopolitanism. The findings in Russia are compared with results of similar studies in Austria, Germany and Israel.

**KEYWORDS:** Holocaust, terrifying images, communicating history, national identity, values



## INTRODUCTION

The visualizing of history in the media consists to a large extent of terrifying images associated with war, catastrophes and suffering (Dayan & Katz, 1994; Brennen & Hardt, 1999; Perlmutter, 1999; Zelizer, 2001; Chouliaraki, 2006). Apparently, we feel the desire and the need to remember negative events, either because we are directly or indirectly affected and these events cause us pain, or because we try to learn lessons for our present through the suffering of others in the past (e.g. how to avoid violence and stabilize humane conditions). However, little is known about how these terrifying images have to be embedded within communications in order to prevent stress-induced audience responses such as anger, depression and rejection, and to facilitate information processing on a deeper level that enables us to draw adequate consequences from the negative historical event (Craik & Lockart,

1972; Ajzen & Sexton, 1999; Craik, 2001; Wicks, 2006). Terrifying images cause shock and empathic distress (Davis, 1983; Davis et al., 1987; Freedberg & Gallese, 2007) which may result in increased attention and may have a potentially positive impact on imparting historical knowledge and moral development in the viewer (Eisenberg, 2000). However, they might also prevent the recipient from gaining knowledge and inhibit the voluntary reception of similar communications or constrain identity construction and create sharp distinctions between us and our enemies.

In this article, a media effects study is presented in which a Holocaust documentary was systematically combined with statements of different types of witnesses to history and with a complex narrative meta-frame. The pivotal hypothesis is that Holocaust images which are brought into a communication context conducive to deeper comprehension may help overcome the boundaries of nationalism and open the mind for cosmopolitanism as well as refine national interpretation patterns referring to the past and the present. This assumption will be tested for young Russians who are the descendants of the victims of Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union and at the same time of the victors who successfully defeated fascist aggression together with the Western allies.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research in Russia is part of a series of international comparative media effects studies regarding the French Holocaust documentary "Night and Fog" (Director: Alain Resnais 1955, cf. Lindeperg, 2007) which were carried out, inter alia, in Austria, Germany and Israel.<sup>1</sup> The studies in these countries led to different conclusions about the educative potential of the film, depending on the respective national context. While watching the Holocaust documentary, the descendants of World War II aggressors (Germans, partly Austrians) showed strong involvement and selective increase of human value orientation, as did the descendants of the Jewish victims in Israel, but the consequences drawn for one's own national identity were different. While German and Austrian viewers reduced narrow-minded nationalist components in their identity concepts (Grimm & Grill, 2013), the Israelis kept these up after the film reception (Grimm, 2014). At the same time, Israeli viewers emphasized the cosmopolitanism in their identity constructions. Based on the results achieved so far, we ask the following research questions with reference to Russian viewers as the descendants of both victims and victors of World War II:

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RQ1: What is the relevance of the Holocaust documentary “Night and Fog” for young Russians today? To what extent does the film get the viewers immersed or involved and to what extent does it induce emotional and/or cognitive resistance?

RQ2: Is there any proof of humanity impairment taking place and does the recipients’ value orientation change after the film’s reception?

RQ3: How does the documentary about the Holocaust affect the Russian viewers’ concept of national identity?

RQ4: How can the Russian results be compared to previous research results from Austria, Germany and Israel?

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND MEASUREMENTS**

Persuasion research (Green et al., 2002; Brock & Green, 2005; Bilandzic & Busselle, 2008) agrees on the assumption that the viewers’ participation during information processing influences the extent to which communication messages are accepted and integrated into one’s knowledge (Brock & Green, 2005). However, the influence of shocking historical images on receptive participation and persuasion is completely unknown. It also remains unclear what impact the audiences’ national identity has on Holocaust reception and what the possible effects on the viewer’s national and supra-national identity concepts might be. Therefore, instruments for measuring four components were developed:

1. Receptive participation: measured as (a) impression forming (emotional strain, informational quality), (b) narrative engagement (illusion of being transported into the narrated reality, cf. Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009) and (c) involvement (amount of references between recipients and communication content) (Krugman, 1966);

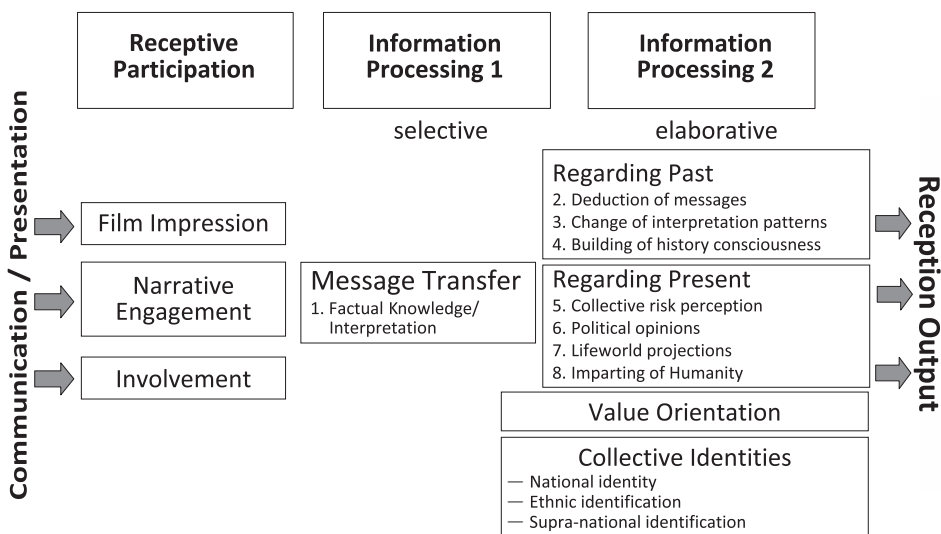
2. Imparting of humanity: divided into the four sub-dimensions (a) prejudice decrease (“group-focused enmity,” Zick et al., 2008); (b) aggression control which becomes manifest in the decrease of reactive aggression as well as the preference for compromise-oriented conflict management (Grimm, 2010); (c) *comunitas* skills which are defined as the disposition for transnational and trans-ethnic community-building; (d) political *humanitas* which is operationalized as tendency towards cosmopolitan problem-solving and commitment for universal human rights;

3. Value orientation: scaled as value importance (a) taken from the Schwartz’ value inventory (Schwartz, 2006) and (b) from the “Value-Hierarchy-Test” (Forum for Methods, 2007);

4. National identity: according to the DNI-Test (Forum for Methods at the University of Vienna) with three dimensions (a) patriotism (bonding with Russia and the people living there), (b) nationalism (constriction of national in-group-bonding combined with devaluation of out-groups) and cosmopolitanism (connectivity of national in-group-bonding referring to out-groups). Further-

more, ethnic identification and supra-national identification (Europe, Asia) are measured.

The theoretical-methodological frame for this measurement is provided by the model of “Multi-Dimensional Imparting of History” (MIH) (Grimm, 2012) which is based on theories of information processing ( Craik & Lockart, 1972; Craik, 2001) and persuasion ( Knowles & Linn, 2004) combined with theories of social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The MIH model contains eight dimensions which mark levels of information processing and whose significance for the output effect of history presented in visual, print and online media can be read off dimension-indicators with a higher or lower range of alteration between the measurement before and after media exposure (Figure 1).



The term *imparting of history through the media* as employed here includes: a) the presentation of factual information and interpretations offered by the media, b) selective acquirement of history on the basis of media representations, and c) elaborative information processing of history depictions in the media by the recipients including active derivation and forming of judgment for the past, present and future.

Figure 1. Process model: Multidimensional imparting of history

Source: author.

The MIH model brings together variables of receptive participation and levels of information processing (in the inner circle: one selective, seven elaborative levels). Factual knowledge and historical interpretations within the communication can be selected or ignored on the first level. On levels 2 to 8, viewers elaborate inferences from the media content for past-and present-oriented worldviews. This begins with the active deduction of messages which are derived from the media content without being explicitly mentioned. The next step is the comparison with an established historical interpretation pattern which leads to either correction or

affirmation of these patterns. The building of historical consciousness rounds up the past-related process of imparting history with the sub-dimensions: (a) active search for further historical information, (b) abstraction of generalised historical images (e.g., “history contains mainly violence and wars”) and (c) the construction of historical identity (we are what we became through history as Germans, Austrians or Russians).

At the threshold between past- and present-related history appropriations, the dimensions 1 through 4 exert influence on their own and/or in combination on the interpretation of the present, which first affects collective danger awareness (level 5) and political opinions (level 6) linked to the past. The focusing on risk perception and political opinion formation can theoretically be explained by the fact that collective memory and social awareness are influenced by dangers and traumata lived through by oneself or by earlier generations.

Life-world projections (Schutz & Luckmann, 1973/1983) of history (level 7) mark a special case in the MIH-model, as the past-related reconstruction of collectively relevant questions, which forms the starting point of all history references and in principle implies an open time frame, is put in an individualized life-world context. With this, a restriction of the time frame of historic events to biographic life spans is connected; at the same time, imparting of history is being opened for a whole number of individual appropriation options and access to historical material is being made easier.

Imparting of humanity (D8) and life-world-oriented history appropriations are insofar similar as both contain abstract idealizations of historic events and interpretations, which potentially (not necessarily) converge. Especially in the transnational expansion of history perspectives lies the opportunity to use traumata, wars and destructive conflicts of the past productively to enhance the civilizing process (Elias, 2000), which reproduces on a collective level the harmony and social integration the individual needs in his everyday world. Imparting of humanity is divided into four sub-dimensions within the MIH-model: (1) prejudice decrease in the sense of a decrease in “group-focused enmity” (GFE, cf. Zick et al., 2008) and (2) aggression control which becomes manifest in the decrease of reactive aggression and violence legitimation as well as the preference for compromise-oriented conflict management (Fahrenberg et al., 1994; Grimm, 1999). In an expansion of these defensive variants of imparting humanity, (3) *communitas* skills and (4) political humanity are equivalent to dispositions which foster the individual’s intention to actively stabilize social conditions of (relative) humanity or to realize them in the future. *Communitas* skills are defined as the disposition for transnational and trans-ethnic community-building. Political *humanitas* includes by definition the tendency towards cosmopolitan problem-solving (Nussbaum, 1997, 2001; Hare, 2009; Higgins, 2009), with the three components: (1) willingness to give humanitarian help independent of geographic and cultural closeness, (2) commitment for the politically persecuted



up shoes, heaps of cut-off hair and emaciated bodies in concentration camps; in one scene an excavator shoves corpses of murdered Jews into a ditch. To these core sequences of documented terror, a narrative meta-frame was added in G1. The meta-frame is part of the original version of “Night and Fog”; it consists of a sequence with a train passing through the area of a former extermination camp while an off-commentator quietly and poetically talks about present and past in general and about terror and suffering during the war. In the film version of G2, this narrative sequence was left out. The viewers in this group saw only the terror scenes without commentary. Groups G3, G4 and G5 saw the core sequence like everyone else plus added statements by victim and/or perpetrator witnesses to history. The interview scenes were provided by the Austrian public television broadcaster ORF, which had collected TV interviews with victims and perpetrators of the Nazi regime over a period of several years. For our experiment, interviews with a Jewish and a Roma survivor of the Holocaust were selected. The statement of a perpetrator as witness to history was by Nazi leader Rudolf Hess and had been recorded during the Nuremberg Trials: He shows no remorse and states at the end that he has nothing to regret.

Sample: Altogether, 192 participants were recruited, of which 85 per cent were students and 15 per cent non-students. All subjects with only one exception were of Russian nationality, 82 per cent of the subjects were also of ethnic Russian origin.

## RESULTS

### Receptive participation

Immediately after watching the documentary, the participants were asked to give an overall evaluation of the film using semantic differentials on an 8-point scale regarding their emotional and cognitive impressions. Table 2 shows that the subjects in all experimental groups assessed the film to be highly frightening and tragic, both variables approaching the highest possible value of 8 in group G3. Based on these three items, the index of emotional strain was constructed, where the results of the three emotion scales are combined as agreement percentage (scale 1–100 per cent).

The Russian viewers of the Holocaust documentary were under high emotional strain. A complex narrative embedding (see G1, Table 2) somewhat reduced the stress reaction. Also, victims in the role of witnesses to history seem to make the terrifying images within the film slightly more bearable for the recipient (G4). As a consequence, the use of Holocaust survivors talking about what they lived through would ease access to these terrible events for later-born generations. However, this is only the case if no additional perpetrator-witness is included, as this increased emotional stress in Russian viewers (G3, G5). It is quite remarkable that the most stress-inducing version with a combination of victim-and perpetrator-

Table 2. Impression forming

N=192; G1=48 G2=38 G3=40 G4=41 G5=25 Scale 1–8	G1 NN + narrative frame	G2 NN without narr. frame / witnesses	G3 NN +Victims +Perpe- trator	G4 NN +Victims	G5 NN +Perpe- trator	Between G2-G5	Total
Semantic differentials	m	m	m	m	m	Sign	m
reassuring–frightening	6.9	7.1	7.6 <sup>!G2</sup>	6.8	7.2	!	7.1
funny–tragic	7.3	7.5	7.9 <sup>!G2</sup>	7.2	7.6	!	7.5
numbing–touching	4.9	5.3	5.8	5.3	5.7		5.4
<i>Emotional strain ES (in %)</i>	76.4	80.6	86.7 <sup>!G2</sup>	78.0	83.4	!	80.7
uninteresting– interesting	5.9	6.5	6.5	5.7 <sup>!!G2</sup>	4.8 <sup>!!!G2</sup>	!!!	6.0
well-known–novel	5.2	5.4	6.1	5.9	4.8		5.5
tendentious–objective	5.9	6.4	6.0	5.7	6.3		6.0
<i>Quality of information QI (in %)</i>	66.8	72.8	74.0	68.2	62.1 <sup>!!G2</sup>	!!	69.2

Sample period: September 2012, Moscow. Indicated are means referring to the semantic differentials (right pole represents the high value). Difference between film groups (G2-G5): !!!=highly sign., p<0.01; !!=sign., p<0.05; !=trend, p<0.10. Difference to mean value in G2: !!!G2=highly sign., p<0.01; !!G2=sign., p<0.05; !G2=trend, p<0.10.

Source: author.

witnesses made also for the highest information value. Apparently, there is a conflict of aims between the use of stress-reducing factors and the cognitive quality of presentation.

In addition to the emotional strain, the three items “uninteresting–interesting,” “well-known–novel” and “tendentious–objective” constructed the index of information quality (scale 1–100 per cent). Table 2 indicates that there is a highly significant difference between all groups on the 1 per cent-level computed with ANOVA regarding the item “uninteresting– interesting.” The German perpetrator and Jewish victims fulfil the stereotype and therefore do not seem to be interesting and novel. In the case of a combined presentation of victims and perpetrator, the viewers’ interest increased above average. A possible explanation for this is the higher complexity of the film version in G3 and the renunciation of one-sided communication. Only in G2 with the focus exclusively on the historical atrocities is the interest-value similarly high. This supports the interpretation hypothesis that the interest of the viewers is primarily stimulated by the content and can be diminished if the mediation activity is too obvious and obtrusive, be it because of simple stereotyping, be it because of one-sided communication.



Regarding the index QI “Quality of Information,” a significant difference between groups on the 5 per cent-level can be observed. The overall quality of information is highest in G2 and G3. This implies that narratively embedding the story (G1) or showing only victims or perpetrators (G4 and G5) decreases cognitive impression forming. The findings in the table prove that the emotional strain and the quality of information co-vary among all groups. Both indices are highest in G2 and G3: these versions cause the highest emotional stress by trend and the information quality is significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) assessed as important. Individually presented victims or perpetrator-witnesses as well as extensive narrative framing reduce emotional stress and the quality of information. It seems surprising that there is no contradiction between stress and information transfer, but a conflict of interests between stress reducing communication techniques and the cognitive quality of presentation. We see this as an indication that a careful use of terrifying images may be conducive to historical education. The results suggest that the inducing of stress can be tolerated up to a certain level, if cognitive attraction and deeper information processing are to be gained for the viewers in the process.

Nevertheless, it remains to be clarified which effects the different version of the documentary have on the audience’s receptive participation. We have known for quite some time from physio-psychological research (Yerkes & Dodson, 1908) that attention and cognitive performance are increased with physiological arousal if it does not exceed a critical level. An organism generally strives for an optimal arousal level and what transgresses or falls below this level results in uncomfortable emotions (Hebb, 1955). One could therefore assume that receptive participation should be higher in the groups G1, G4 and G5 with their slightly lower stress induction than in the groups G2 and G3. The analysis will show that this is not valid in any way for the existing data.

Table 3 shows the results of the indices of receptive participation referring to “narrative engagement” and “involvement” (see above). The indices are calculated as agreement percentage of the possible maximum sum value with regard to the respective individual items and are also projected in a scale from 0 to 100 per cent. Narrative engagement in Russian viewers in total is higher than in Austrians and Germans. However, involvement in Russian subjects (bi-directional relation between the historical situation and the recipient’s personal environment) is lower than narrative engagement and lower than involvement in Austrians and Germans. The difference in receptive participation between the countries can be explained by a) the resistance which particularly German and to some extent also Austrian viewers put up in the role of descendants of the Holocaust perpetrators. Their readiness to become narratively engaged, e.g. to feel “transported” into the story was limited under these conditions — more than that of the Russian viewers who had no moral identity conflict. On the other hand, b) the higher consternation of Austrians and Germans led to more complex information processing by comparing the past and the present reality (in terms of involvement) in relation to the less affected Russians.

Table 3. Narrative engagement and involvement

N=192; G1=48 G2=38 G3=40 G4=41 G5=25 Agreement%, Scale: 1-100	G1 NN + nar- rative frame	G2 NN without narr. frame /wit- nesses	G3 NN +Victims +Perpe- trator	G4 NN +Vic- tims	G5 NN +Perpe- trator	Between G2-G5	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	p	%
Narrative understanding	69.0	73.0	66.9	62.0 <sup>!G2</sup>	66.7		67.5
Attentional focus	86.7 <sup>!!G2</sup>	93.4	80.7 <sup>!!G2</sup>	88.6 <sup>!G2</sup>	68.8 <sup>!!!G2</sup>	!!!	84.8
Emotional engagement	67.1 <sup>!!G2</sup>	77.6	78.3	70.3 <sup>!G2</sup>	64.8 <sup>!!G2</sup>	!!	71.8
Narrative presence	45.6 <sup>!!G2</sup>	51.5	55.5	43.7	39.0 <sup>!G2</sup>	!!	47.6
<i>Narrative engage- ment (total)</i>	67.1	73.8	70.4	66.1 <sup>!!G2</sup>	59.7 <sup>!!!G2</sup>	!!	67.9
Situational involvement	34.8	43.2	40.6	30.7 <sup>!!G2</sup>	39.2		37.4
Personal involvement	16.0	20.7	29.7 <sup>!G2</sup>	21.6	22.3		21.7
<i>Involvement (total)</i>	25.4	32.0	34.9	26.1	30.8		29.5

Sample period: Sept. 2012, Moscow. Indicated are percentages of agreement with the statements allocated to an index of narrative engagement resp. involvement. Difference between film groups (G2–G5): !!!=highly sign., p<0.01; !!=sign., p<0.05; !=trend, p<0.10. Difference to G2: !!!G2=highly sign., p<0.01; !!G2=sign., p<0.05; !G2=trend, p<0.10.

Source: author.

A complex narrative embedding as well as witnesses to history may undermine narrative engagement in the Holocaust documentary for Russians as well as for Austrians and Germans. The highest score of narrative engagement was found in the group with only the atrocity facts in G2. This emphasizes again that the terrifying images taken from the historic reality are the strongest factor in stimulating receptive participation. The lowest scores refer to G4 and G5 in which types of witnesses to history were presented individually. Apparently, the one-sided mediation by victims or perpetrators diminished the full imaginative immersion into the historic reality. In the case of a combined presentation of victims and perpetrator, the impeding effect on immersion decreased.

The effects of witnesses to history on involvement are divergent: mostly they led to a decrease, apart from G3 (combined use of victims and perpetrator as witnesses), where the Russian viewers' involvement increased. Among Austrian and German viewers, we found that witnesses to history mostly increased involvement. In Russia, this only applied to G3 where also narrative engagement, emotional strain and valued information quality was relatively high. Apparently, Russian viewers were the

most affected by the Holocaust, including all aspects of receptive participation as well as cognitive and emotional activation, when confronted with a complete dyad of both perpetrators and victims. If only perpetrator or only victims were shown, involvement and other affective reactions decrease. One possible explanation for this result is that the isolated presentation more than the combined one enables the viewers to activate their own specific Russian interpretation patterns of World War II (that they are acquainted with from television) which are probably not focused on the Holocaust but on the victory over Hitler's army. But either way, it can be shown that historically objective processing and global understanding of the Holocaust today can most likely be achieved in Russia if victims and perpetrators are presented together and if there are only few options for distracting interpretations.

Surprisingly, the lowest score of involvement occurs in G1 in which a meta-narrative prepared the viewers for the terrifying images to come. We can only speculate about the reasons. It might be that Paul Celan's humanitarian claim and his lyrical idiom were not compatible with the character of "typical" Russian documentaries on World War II, which are dominated by national pathos and the victorious battle against Hitler's army.

Besides, the results indicate in general that the choice of witnesses to history and the use of complex narratives greatly influence the potential of a Holocaust documentary to immerse or involve the viewers in different ways.

### **Imparting of humanity**

Table 3 contains data on the first two sub-dimensions of imparting humanity, which are described by "group focused enmity" (= index for prejudices towards foreigners, minorities, homosexuals, etc.) and "aggression control" consisting of statements regarding reactive aggression and conflict behaviour. Again, all indices are calculated as the relative share of agreement in relation to the respective items and expressed as a percentage of the possible maximum value (scale: 0–100). The scores represent differences between the measurement before and after watching the film (see above the description of the pre-post-design). Positive scores indicate that the agreement with statements related to the indices increased, while negative scores show a decrease of agreement.

We found no change of prejudices after the film reception in the overall sample (see *Group Focused Enmity*, table 4). But there are significant divergent effects between the film groups. Surprisingly, witnesses to history increase prejudices (G3–G5), while in groups without witnesses prejudices decreased (G2). The meta-narrative in G1 has a zero effect. Thus, the gain in humanity on the prejudice dimension only becomes effective if we refrain from any mediation activity, be it with regard to witnesses or to a narrative meta-frame. This demonstrates that the terrifying images themselves contain the potential for a critical scrutinizing of prejudices which can be damaged by improper mediation.



the descendants of the perpetrators, maybe they associated their own engagement for human rights with the role of Russian soldiers in the war against Hitler's army.

However, the *communitas*-index shows no significant effect in the total sample. The split of humanity transfer regarding *humanitas* and *communitas* might be a consequence of partially divergent emotional and rational information processing. Similar to Germans and Austrians, also the Russian Holocaust-recipients did not increase their desire to celebrate with people of different nations and different cultures or to help people in need regardless of their nationality.

Table 5. Impact on *communitas* skills and political *humanitas*

N = 192; G1 = 48 G2 = 38 G3 = 40 G4 = 41 G5 = 25 Change of Agreement, post- pre	G1 NN + narrative frame (Orig)		Between G1 / G2	G2 NN without narr. frame and witnesses		G3 NN + Victims + Perpetrator		G4 NN + Victims		G5 NN + Perpetrator		Between G2-G5	Total	
	pp	d%	p	pp	d%	pp	d%	pp	d%	pp	d%	p	pp	d%
If I see a victim, I do help in any case, regardless of race and origin of the person concerned.	*	-5.4			-1.5		1.4		-5.1	**	-9.7		**	-3.7
I like to party with people from different cultures and backgrounds.		-3.6			-1.9		0.0		3.2		3.4			-0.2
I prefer to party with my own kind. (-)		4.8			0.0		5.0	*	6.1		3.6		**	4.0
I will stand up for someone who is being threatened violently, even if I must take a risk.		1.5			-0.4		-1.8		2.1		-1.1			0.2
I would defend a stranger in my own country if he is attacked.	**	5.7			3.5		-0.7		2.5		-1.1		**	2.3
I have got a friendly relationship to the nations on earth.		5.1		*	5.0		2.9	**	8.6	**	8.9		**	5.8

<i>Communitas-Index</i>		-0.2		0.5		-0.9	0.9		0.2		0.1
I stand up for human rights.		1.2		0.0		3.6	2.6		-1.2		1.4
I show commitment for people in need.		4.0		4.8		-1.4 **	7.0		0.6	**	3.1
I donate to starving children and adults all around the world.	**	8.8		1.5		0.7	3.2		2.4	**	3.6
I stand up for politically persecuted people and fight actively against torture.		0.6		1.2		1.4	0.0		-0.6		0.6
I get actively involved with the peace on earth.	*	5.7	*	6.9		6.4 **	6.1		6.3	***	6.2
<i>Humanitas-Index</i>	**	3.8		2.8		2.1 **	3.7		1.9	***	3.0

Sample period: September 2012, Moscow. Indices for *communitas* and political *humanitas* created by sums of agreement with the statements above (with the exception of item 3 in the *communitas* section which was not counted). Indicated are differences between pre- and post-measurements which are all based on percentages of agreement (scale 0–100). d%=column of pre-post-differences (scale: -100 until 100), pp=column of pre-post-significance: \*\*\*=highly sign., p<0.01; \*\*=sign., p<0.05; \*=trend, p<0.10. Difference between film groups (G2–G5): !!!=highly sign., p<0.01; !!=sign., p<0.05; !=trend, p<0.10.

Source: author.

The differences between the film groups are marginal. Neither the *communitas* nor the *humanitas*-index, nor single statements show a significant between-group effect. This implies that the humanity transfer (or the lack of it) takes place relatively independent of the added mediation by witnesses to history or narrative meta-frames. The exception to this trend is the significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) increase of *humanitas* in G1 and G4. Both the narrative embedding and the mediation by victims led to an essential increase of human rights engagement. We interpret this as an indication that far beyond the experienced emotional strain and information quality (which were low in these groups, see above) the humanitarian message conveyed by the poetic reflection and the empathetic concern for victims was brought across to the Russian viewers. However, the shocking breach of civilization shown in the Holocaust documentary did not stimulate transnational and transcultural forms of *communitas* in any film group, neither in Russia nor in Germany, Austria or Israel. This points to principle limitations regarding the imparting of humanity by a documentary on the Holocaust.

## Value orientation

In the social sciences, it is generally assumed that value orientations are steady dispositions of individuals that change, at best, in the long run of society development (for Russian value research, cf. Magun & Rudnev, 2010). The results of our study show that media communications on historical events may have an immediate impact on value orientations. Usually, historical communication does not affect the viewer's value system as a whole, but has an impact on the estimated relevance of individual values which are associated with the "message" the recipients draw from the communication. These individual-value effects might transform into a more sustainable value shift if other communications reproduce these effects time after time.

Using Schwartz's concept with 10 values (Table 6), there was no value effect in the total sample, but only in G5 with the perpetrator in the role of witness to history. In this group, the post-receptive "conformity" value was significantly lower than before the reception. Possibly, the Russian viewers saw in the German perpetrator a personification of uncritical conformity, which should be rejected. As a consequence, conformity lost part of its attraction for the viewers.

There is also a between-group effect ( $p < 0.05$ ) regarding the perceived importance of "security." This value increased under the conditions of victim-perpetrator presentation, but decreased if only the perpetrator-witness was shown. Possibly, the combined presence of perpetrator and victims gave the Russian viewers a particularly intense feeling of insecurity to which they reacted with a stronger need for security and higher appreciation of security values. This would be another indication that value shift caused by historical communications is more a result of "negative learning" (Grimm, 2010) in the sense that aversive situations are being avoided by using suitable values rather than that a role model and its values is being emulated.

Also, the last example of significant value change, namely the increasing importance of "tradition" in G1, could be understood as a consequence of "negative learning." Under the condition of the meta-frame with memory reflection, the viewers were more motivated to switch their attention between present and past than in the other groups. As a result, they were more likely to think about the breaking of traditional, civilized rules during the Nazi regime with regard to the world today and to reflect upon how to stabilize traditions which prevent the relapse into barbarism in the future.

Regardless of whether that one interpretation is correct or not, two things have become sufficiently clear: First, communicating history has provable effects on single values. Second, the impact of such communication is moderated by witnesses to history and narrative embedding. This implies not necessarily a fundamental and durable change of the recipient's value system (there is no one-time communication that could possibly have such an impact), but the measured short-term effects can

Table 6. Impact on values I: Schwartz's value categories

N = 192; G1 = 48 G2 = 38 G3 = 40 G4 = 41 G5 = 25 Change of Importance, post-pre	G1 NN + narrative frame (Orig)		Between G1 / G2	G2 NN without narr. frame and witnesses		G3 NN + Victims + Perpetrator		G4 NN + Victims		G5 NN + Perpetrator		Between G2-G5		Total	
	pp	d%	p	pp	d%	pp	d%	pp	d%	pp	d%	p	pp	d%	
Power		2.7			-2.4		3.6		-1.1		-7.5			-0.2	
Achievement		-1.5			-0.4		-3.2		-1.5		-3.7			-1.9	
Hedonism		4.9			-1.2		1.4		-2.2		6.0			1.6	
Stimulation		-2.2			2.3		1.1		1.1		-2.4			0.1	
Self-direction		1.2			-1.2		1.8		0.4		3.6			1.0	
Universalism		0.5			1.2		1.1		0.9		0.4			0.8	
Benevolence		1.8			3.1		3.2		2.6		-1.9			2.1	
Tradition	**	6.0	!		-1.9		-0.4		3.3		-7.1			0.8	
Conformity		0.0			-2.3		-3.9		2.6	**	-9.3			-1.9	
Security		0.6			-3.9	*	5.0		1.5		-5.4	!!		0.1	

Sample period: Sept. 2012, Moscow. Scale of value importance (0-100). Indicated are differences between pre- and post-measurements. d%=column of pre-post-differences (scale: -100 until 100), pp=column of pre-post-significance: \*\*\*=highly sign., p<0.01; \*\*=sign., p<0.05; \*=trend, p<0.10. Difference between film groups (G2-G5): !!!=highly sign., p<0.01; !!=sign., p<0.05; !=trend, p<0.10.

Source: author.

be seen as an indication for possible long-term value change accumulated over time in case of repeated use of identical or similar communications.

In addition to the values according to Schwartz's concept, we constructed an extended version of 25 individual values assuming that the individuals' value orientation can be understood as a consequence of value-hierarchy which is adjusted continuously to different situations. By using the "Value-Hierarchy-Test" (VHT), we hope to be able to measure the potential value impact of the Holocaust documentary in a more differentiated way. Instead of calculating the value assessments directly taken from the original interval-scale, we calculated the value hierarchy for each individual scale (1-25). Table 7 outlines the changes in ranking with respect to the individual values. In contrast to the other tables, a positive sign means that agreement with the value has decreased after the reception; a negative sign indicates an increase in agreement.



The most interesting result in Table 7 is that the relevance of values which were heavily violated during the Holocaust — e.g. “equity” and “solidarity” — rose after the reception. Apparently, the communication of values resulted in a dissociation from morally condemnable actions. In accordance with the Schwartz inventory measurement, the result of the VHT-Test in G5 affirmed the effectiveness of receptive resistance against Nazi value violations in the film: After the reception of the version with perpetrator-witness Rudolf Hess, Russian viewers significantly increased the value “justice” (the Holocaust broke all the rules of justice and the perpetrator was brought before the Nuremberg Trials) and lowered the ranking of uncritical “conformity” expressed by the unreasonable Nazi leader with the ostentatious (“I don’t regret anything!”).

Table 7. Impact on values II: Value-Hierarchy-Test (VHT)

	Value Ranking	G1 NN + narrative frame (Orig)		Between G1 / G2		G2 NN without narr. frame and witnesses		G3 NN + Victims + Perpetrator		G4 NN + Victims		G5 NN + Perpetrator		Between G2-G5		Total
		pp	dRpl	p	pp	dRpl	pp	dRpl	pp	dRpl	pp	dRpl	p	pp	dRpl	
Societal 1: Solidarity	Solidarity		-0.4			-0.8		-1.3		-1.1		-0.8		*	-0.9	
	Trust		-0.7			0.1		0.1		0.1	*	-2.0			-0.4	
	Harmony		0.5			-0.9		0.9		0.6	*	-1.8			0.0	
	Love		0.5			-0.9	**	1.3		-1.0		-0.4	!		0.0	
	Fidelity		0.0			0.0		1.2		-1.4		1.0			0.1	
Societal 2: Order	Justice		0.3			-0.4		0.8		-0.8	**	-1.7			-0.2	
	Equity		0.1		*	-1.5		-1.5		-1.2		-1.0		**	-1.0	
	Security		0.4			1.5		-0.9		-0.2		1.2			0.3	
	Order		0.3			0.0		0.6		1.4		0.8			0.6	
	Right and Law		-0.7			0.7		-0.5		1.3		0.9			0.2	
Mediation Individ/Society	Conformity		0.2			0.1		1.4		-0.4	**	2.1			0.6	
	Tradition		-1.5			0.6		-0.5		0.0		1.1			-0.2	
	Tolerance		0.1			-1.1		-0.2		-0.3		1.4			-0.1	
	Achievement		0.7			-0.2		1.6		0.8		1.0		*	0.8	
	Homeland		1.0			0.0		1.6		0.0		1.3		*	0.8	

Individual 2: Self-development	Freedom	-0.5			1.1		-0.5		-0.1	*	-2.0			-0.3
	Power	-0.3			1.1		-0.6		0.5		0.0			0.1
	Knowledge / Skills	0.7			-0.2	*	1.3		0.9		1.5		**	0.8
	Beauty	-0.2	!	**	-2.2	*	-1.8		1.1		0.1	!!		-0.6
	Health	-0.8			-0.1		-0.9		0.4		0.9			-0.2
Individual 2: Gratification	Fun	-1.4			0.3		-0.7		0.5	*	-2.1			-0.6
	Success	0.9		*	1.5		-0.2		-0.4		-1.5			0.2
	Wealth	0.5			0.9		-0.3		0.0		-1.0			0.1
	Stimulation	0.7			-0.3		-0.1		0.5		0.9			0.3
	Leisure	0.4			-0.4		-0.3		1.0		-1.4			0.0

Sample period: September 2012, Moscow. Indicated are Pre-post-differences of ranks, minus=higher ranking, plus= lower ranking after film reception. Rpl=column of pre-post-differences of ranks (scale: -24 until 24), pp=column of pre-post-significance: \*\*\*=highly sign., p<0.01; \*\*=sign., p<0.05; \*=trend, p<0.10. Difference between film groups (G2-G5): !!!=highly sign., p<0.01; !!=sign., p<0.05; !=trend p<0.10.

Source: author.

The values “knowledge/skills,” “achievement” and “homeland” became less relevant after the reception, which may be a hint that the experience of the Holocaust documentary led to a more open-minded and cosmopolitan point of view and reduced individualistic striving for power and in-group fixation (e.g. feeling deeply rooted in one’s region of origin) among the Russian audience.

Summing up, the influence of mediating factors on value orientation is weak. The only between-group effect refers to the value “beauty” which ranked higher after the reception of the Holocaust documentary in the group with the non-mediated terrifying images (G3). This suggests that the shock triggered by the gruesome pictures and the painfully emaciated bodies caused physical attractiveness to be rated as more important. Again, the effect is due to the viewers’ attempt to create the highest possible distance between historic reality and their own life in order to, through “negative learning,” avoid the horrible state of the past. All forms of meditation, narrative tools, or the use of witnesses, weakened this core effect caused by terrifying historical images.

### National identity

In the last paragraph, we shall discuss how a transnational historical event such as the Holocaust directly affects Russian viewers’ national identity. We understand the

term three-dimensionally: (a) as patriotic bonding with the country and the people living there, (b) as nationalists focusing on superiority, separation and violence (as a last resort for defence) and (c) as cosmopolitan heightened awareness and openness towards self-critical thinking and perspective-sharing with other nations (see above). Furthermore, national identity is embedded in other multiple collective identities, such as ethnic identification and feelings of supra-national belonging to Europe or Asia. The identity patterns in Russia are influenced in many ways by situational factors and development problems of a post-communist society. Due to the vast dimensions of the country, the multicultural heterogeneity, and the awareness of having been the centre of a former empire, the concept of national identity in Russia is more complex than in the other nation states founded after the dissolution of the USSR (Tolz, 1998). Especially the balance between ethnic and state affiliation is intricate, as is the supra-national identification with Europe and/or Asia (Duncan, 2005). As Minescu et al. (2008) point out, the identification with the Russian Federation caused certain in-group versus out-group stereotypes and prejudices which differed from preconceptions stemming from identification with ethnic groups. This leads to discrepancies and tension within domestic affairs. Also, foreign affairs are affected by Russian identity constructions, particularly if identity elements of the former Soviet Union still persist in the present (Sakwa, 2012).

The question is how does commemoration of the Holocaust, which may partly be associated with memories of the Gulag (Ferretti, 2010), influence the identity patterns of young Russians? Do they identify more globally with Europe or Asia? The remembrance of the Soviet Union participating in the anti-Hitler coalition as well as the central position that the Holocaust occupies in European memory culture (Leggewie, 2011) could contribute to young Russians strengthening bonds with Europe in their dealing with the Holocaust. However, it is also conceivable that nationalistic attitudes are reinforced, triggered by feelings of endangerment and/or that a stronger ethnic identification is promoted, caused by the confrontation with Nazi atrocities.

The main effect in Table 8 concerns European identification, which significantly increased after the reception of the Holocaust documentary. In contrast, the national identification decreased in the total sample. This is strong proof that the Holocaust reception enforces supra-national perspectives in Russia, especially in the sense of feeling as part of Europe. The exception is G5 with the German perpetrator in the witness-role. Under this condition, national identification increased. This shows that the general effect of transcending national views is neutralized if Russia's main enemy in World War II appears in a prominent role of the film.

There is a moderate increase of ethnic identification in the total sample which approximates a significant level ( $p < 0.10$ ). The Nazi-witness in G5 in particular contributes to this trend with a highly significant increase-rate of  $d\% = 11$ . No identity shift is bigger. The Russian historical background may explain this insofar, as the ethnic bond was a prerequisite for the enormous national achievement dur-

Table 8. Impact on collective identifications

Identification	G1 NN + narrative frame (Orig)		Between G1 / G2		G2 NN without narr. frame and witnesses		G3 NN+ Victims + Perpetrator		G4 NN+ Victims		G5 NN + Perpetrator		Between G2-G5		Total	
	pp	d%	p	pp	d%	pp	d%	pp	d%	pp	d%	p	pp	d%		
National identification		-3.6		**	-5.6		-2.6	**	-7.5		6.3	!!	**	-3.3		
Ethnic identification		-3.0	!!	*	5.4		-1.1	*	5.0	**	10.9	!	*	2.6		
European identification		4.0		**	7.1		3.2	**	7.9		4.2		***	5.3		
Asian identification		-2.7			0.0	**	4.1	**	4.6		0.6			1.3		
Global identification		-1.2			-4.2		0.0		3.3		0.6			-0.4		

Sample period: September 2012, Moscow. Scale for measurement of each type of collective identification: 0-100. Indicated are differences between pre- and post-measurements. d%=column of pre-post-differences (scale: -100 until 100), pp=column of pre-post-significance: \*\*\*=highly sign., p<0.01; \*\*=sign., p<0.05; \*=trend, p<0.10. Difference between film groups (G2-G5): !!!=highly sign., p<0.01; !!=sign., p<0.05; !=trend p<0.10.

Source: author.

ing the “Great Patriotic War.” Especially the confrontation with the former enemy, personified in the Nazi leader Rudolf Hess in G5, reactivated memories of the defensive battle that the Soviet Union was forced to fight against Hitler’s army. In this case, national and ethnic identification convergently increased. But the increase of ethnic bonding is reduced (and national identification turns into the negative), if we use only victim witnesses (G4) or show the non-moderated version (G2). Under the condition of narrative embedding (G1) and the combined presentation of victim- and perpetrator-witnesses (G3), ethnic identification even decreased (as well as national identity). Apparently, the commemoration of World War II requires explicit images of the enemy in order to evoke stronger ethnic and national group cohesion. All other designs inhibited the thinking in strict in- and outgroup terms, probably because the terrifying images of concentration camp and victim-witnesses raised awareness for the tragic aspects.

The strongest effect in the total sample is the highly significant increase in European identification. The Holocaust reception contributes, proven by the data, towards a pro-European attitude of young Russians. Interestingly, the presentation of only victim-witnesses in G4 increases the identification with Europe the most, as well as with Asia and, to some extent, also with the global world community. The commemoration of the Holocaust (as a central topic of European memory culture) lowers national group bonding in general, but most under a strict victim oriented

mediation. National identification, which might encourage in the viewers the will to defend one's own country and to fight against enemies, lost among the viewers in G4 by exclusive confrontation with Jewish and Gypsy survivors of the Holocaust the biggest part of its power. This interpretation is supported by the fact that we found the same pattern of *trans-nationalizing* also in G3 with victims and perpetrators, but less pronounced. The victims of the Holocaust stimulated the recipients to cross the borders of national identification, while the German perpetrator attenuated this effect. Summing up, the influence of the Holocaust documentary on young Russians is enormous pro-European and anti-nationalistic by trend, but also partly contradictory depending on the mediation design.

According to the DNI-Test, national identity contains three relatively autonomous dimensions: patriotism, nationalism and cosmopolitanism (see above). Similar to value orientation, national identity is assumed to be stable over time, but, in fact, it changed after the Holocaust reception.

Table 9. Impact on National Identity (DNI-Test)

N = 192; G1 = 48 G2 = 38 G3 = 40 G4 = 41 G5 = 25 Change of Agreement, post-pre	G1 NN + narrative frame (Orig)		Between G1 / G2		G2 NN without narr. frame and witnesses		G3 NN + Victims + Perpetrator		G4 NN + Victims		G5 NN + Perpetrator		Between G2-G5		Total	
	pp	d%	p	pp	d%	pp	d%	pp	d%	pp	d%	p	pp	d%		
Patriotism																
Bond with people		-3.0			-2.1		1.3		2.0		5.4				0.2	
Bond with landscape	**	-5.0			-0.8		2.6		-0.9		1.1				-0.9	
Bond with national symbols	***	-8.9	!!	*	-3.1		0.0	**	-3.8		-1.5		***		-3.9	
Bond with democratic system		1.7			-0.2		5.3		-2.0		6.0				1.8	
Bond with history		2.5			2.9		2.2	*	3.8		4.6		**		3.1	
Bond with culture		2.7			0.4		1.8		0.4		-2.3				0.9	
Bond with sportsmen	**	-5.2		**	-4.1		0.7		-1.8		-0.3		**		-2.4	
<i>Patriotism</i>		-2.3			-1.0	*	2.0		-0.5		1.9				-0.2	
General superiority		0.6		**	-6.2		-1.5		-0.7		5.7	!			-0.8	
Readiness for violence		1.5			0.8		3.3		1.5	**	9.1		*		2.7	
Separation		1.1			-0.8		3.8	*	5.5		4.0		*		2.6	
<i>Nationalism</i>		1.2			-1.8		1.9		1.9	**	6.3		*		1.6	
Reflexivity		1.0			3.5		1.6		2.3		-1.1				1.6	
Diversity		2.2		**	6.0	**	5.6	**	2.5		1.6		***		3.6	

Globality	**	3.7		**	6.0		1.8	**	5.5		3.3		***	4.1
<i>Cosmopolitanism</i>	*	2.4		**	5.3	**	3.0	**	2.5		1.3		***	3.2

Sample period: September 2012, Moscow. Measurement of national identity according to the DNI-Test (scale for patriotism, nationalism and cosmopolitanism: 0-100). Indicated are differences between pre- and post-measurements. d%=column of pre-post-differences (scale: -100 until 100), pp=column of pre-post-significance: \*\*\*=highly sign., p<0.01; \*\*=sign., p<0.05; \*=trend, p<0.10. Difference between film groups (G2-G5): !!!=highly sign., p<0.01; !!=sign., p<0.05; !=trend p<0.10.

Source: author.

The striking result in Table 9 is the divergent impact on the different dimensions of national identity (which affirmed the test construction). While patriotic bonding was not affected, nationalistic attitudes increased by trend, which is probably a consequence of the “Great Patriotic War” being deep-seated in the collective memory. It is, however, all the more surprising that the Russian recipients were able to process the historical event in a predominantly cosmopolitan perspective, the increase of which surpasses the weak rise of nationalism by far.

The strongest and highly significant effect in the total sample refers to an increase of the cosmopolitan dimension within the Russian identity — a high increase of cosmopolitanism was also found in Israel. Obviously, the Holocaust documentary supported the acceptance of national diversity and global understanding independent of patriotic bonding and national conflict situations. But the exception to a significant increase in cosmopolitanism was found in G5. The Nazi leader in the Holocaust documentary diminished the cosmopolitan effect and significantly increased nationalistic attitudes among Russian viewers, especially the readiness for violence necessary to defend their homeland. Bearing in mind the offensive of Hitler’s army in the past, this is more than understandable. Young Russians in their history appropriation keep up this defensive stance even in the present — but only if they are explicitly exposed to the former image of the enemy. This verifies our earlier finding that a mediation of the Holocaust exclusively with perpetrator-witnesses to history can be problematic in Russia. The film versions without the witness Rudolf Hess, however, have not caused an increase in nationalism. What is predominant here, is solely and exclusively the increase of cosmopolitanism. Even the combination of perpetrator and victim witnesses together with the terrifying Holocaust images still causes a significant increase in cosmopolitanism and the acceptance of national and cultural diversity.

## CONCLUSIONS

As expected, the Holocaust documentary “Night and Fog” still bears relevance for Russian viewers today. The film induced strong negative emotions in the recipients, including fear, feelings of tragedy and empathetic distress when faced with the vic-

tims' suffering. A narrative meta-frame is crucial for stress-reduction; the influence of witnesses to history, however, is ambivalent. The combined presentation of victims and perpetrator-witnesses caused the greatest emotional strain and, at the same time, enhanced information quality. Thus, stress reduction per se (e.g. when watching documentaries in schools) needs to be handled carefully as this might damage information processing in the context of history impartment.

The imparting of humanity can be observed on several indicators. The documentary created positive effects in Russian viewers concerning aggression control and compromise-oriented conflict behaviour — as it did in Germany and Austria. Also, in analogy with these countries, the Holocaust documentary could not enhance the Russian viewers' willingness for multinational communitization. We see this as empirical evidence that gruesome pictures of suffering and piles of corpses induce feelings of bodily disgust and emotional distraction which can impede our empathic concern and sense of community. Nevertheless, on a rational level of information processing, the terrifying images fostered strong effects on the Russian viewers' commitment for cosmopolitan problem-solving and universal human rights. This gain in humanity is a specific result from the Russian sample and was not found in German or Austrian subjects.

The results of our study show that a Holocaust documentary can change value orientation and national identity in Russia. The short-term effects we found may turn into long-term changes if similar TV programs are screened repeatedly and the effects accumulate over time. Remarkably, the strongest value effects of the Holocaust documentary concern values represented by the German perpetrator or ethics violated during the Holocaust. In this case, the historical event and detestable historical figures that Russian viewers want to dissociate themselves from, give the decisive impulse for value reflection and value change. Also, the impact on national identity depends on non-linear effects and deeper information processing. On one level, Russian viewers increased their nationalist identity components inspired by a specific historical awareness of being both victim and victor in World War II. On a second level, the documentary opened the Russians' identity concept for cosmopolitan enrichments.

Summing up, the MIH model for measurement of history impartment is affirmed in an international comparative research context. The Holocaust documentary "Night and Fog" generally supports human value orientation among young Russians as well as among Austrians, Germans and Israelis — with slight individual differences. Depending on the national context, the appropriation of history affects national identity divergently. While the descendants of the perpetrators significantly reduced patriotic feelings and nationalist constrictions, the descendants of victims and victors in Russia increased nationalist identity components in the sense of a willingness to defend their country by force — attitudes which were historically decisive for defeating the Hitler regime. But, especially Russians (and also Israelis)

more than Germans and Austrians increase cosmopolitanism within their national identity after the Holocaust reception. We conclude that TV formats such as “Night and Fog” might well make a contribution towards preventing future breaches of civilization by endorsing moral values and by promoting the reconcilability of patriotism and cosmopolitanism.

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