

RESEARCH PLAN: submitted by **Zuzanna Mitreęa**

PROJECT TITLE: **Searching for a Language to represent the Holocaust –  
The Case of Majdanek**

## **INTRODUCTION**

When the decision to erect the new Yad Vashem museum was made, a great debate about the language of display and the shape of the building emerged. One of the ideas was to leave the old exhibition building next to the new one in order to show how the way of thinking, and the presentation of the Holocaust has changed from the end of the Second World War until nowadays. A similar solution was used at Bergen Belsen where new Holocaust monument was erected next to the old British one. It was thought to show other aspects of the genocide, not the nationality, but the ethnicity of victims. The main goal of applying such a way of representation is to show the complex aspects of the Holocaust and the need for the polyphony of its representation (Cole 2000).

It would be useful to distinguish between the Shoah as a historical event and its representation understood as Holocaust literature, museums, displays or monuments. While the first one is an undeniable historical fact, the second one changes and is dependent on its location, artist interpretation and time of coming into being (Young 1993). Searching for the most proper representation and the language of describing the Holocaust seems to be a crucial problem, therefore it will be discussed in this paper. However there is a concern that “the shape of memory cannot be divorced from the actions taken on its behalf, and the memory without consequences contains the seeds of its own destruction” [Young 1993, p.14]. In other words, without a careful memory project, to use Irwing Zarecka’s term, the past will be forgotten or deformed (Irwing Zarecka 1993).

The Majdanek National Museum was established in November 1944, three months after the liberation, when the gas chambers in Auschwitz – Birkenau were still working. Being the first museum in the world which was thought to show and to be reminder of the genocide made by the Nazis during the Second World War, Majdanek is the best example to that demonstrates how searching for the language of representation works.

Nowadays, the museum’s main goal is the preservation of the memory on the former concentration camp for the future generation as well as educating people about the Holocaust. In this paper, I will discuss the Brama Grodzka’s memory project which uses both the former traditional exhibition and a new narrative one that is called “Elementarz” to teach children

about the Shoah. I will attempt to answer whether one of these presentations has a stronger influence on the young people or whether they both have the same position in the process of framing the awareness of the past and the way of thinking about it. A special emphasis will be put on explaining how both exhibitions affect young people.

In the first part of the paper, I will show how the Majdanek Museum's authorities were searching for the proper language of representation, and next in the second part the results of the research carried out in Majdanek will be presented.

## **SEARCHING FOR A LANGUAGE – THE HISTORY OF THE MAJDANEK MUSEUM**

When the Majdanek Museum was founded in November 1944 the war had not been brought to the end yet. The museum received only a few barracks from the government, because the rest of them were inhabited by the Russian soldiers. The Red Army transformed their barracks to make them more comfortable. The wood from the barracks was also used as fuel or was sold to the local people. These days it happened that, people who came to Majdanek looking for information about their relatives often took some objects or documents as “souvenirs”. At the same time, the local people made burglary and stole chairs, tables or clothes. Since the damages made by people were enormous, the museum's authorities had to put a sign saying “Destroying or taking away the compost of the bones of people murdered by Nazis will be punished by the Court”. Due to damages a special commission, which came to Majdanek in September 1946, stated that 80% of the wooden buildings of the former concentration camp was completely destroyed (Kielboń 2004).

From the beginning of the museum's existence, there was a discussion on how the museum should be developed. After the liberation, a birch cross and the colon with three eagle heads were put next to the crematorium to commemorate the victims. The first project assumed making Majdanek a museum which would collect all proof of Nazi crimes made in Poland. It was not done because of the unimaginable genocide crimes discovered after the liberation of the concentration camp Auschwitz – Birkenau (Kielboń 2004).

The main problem was to define the territory of the museum. As the whole area of the former concentration camp could not be under the museum's protection because of financial reasons, only the prisoners' zone, baths, gas chambers and crematorium were included to the museum (Kielboń 2004).

At the end of 1945, Romuald Gutt presented his commemoration project. He proposed to leave the barbed wire around the camp and renovate the barracks in the third field. The crematorium, above which he wanted to build a mausoleum for the documents and artifacts, was supposed to be the central point of the museum. However, this part of project was never realized. Instead, the designer's other idea which was to plant the trees on the rest of the territory of the camp, was done. "It was supposed to symbolize the cemetery – memory park of which the roots may be found in the Slavic sacred grove" [Muzeum 2004]. Being consistent with the political system, this presentation of the memory project aimed to show the victory of Slavic nations over the Nazis<sup>1</sup>.

The ashes, and bones which were stored in the numerous heaps in the camp area were collected together. This mound was 16 meters wide and 7 meters high. When in the sixties Romuald Dylewski's project was accepted, the human ashes were put into a special mausoleum where they remain until now. Later on, Dylewski wanted to reestablish the authenticity of the place. Therefore, the trees were cut down as many people claimed that "they blocked the view of the barracks, visually decreased the territory of Majdanek and reduced the emotional power of the place" [Museum 2004]. The conservation works were done and the Monument of Fight and Martyrdom was erected. As part of the project 13 barracks were intended to be used for the historical exhibitions, however, they were never used. From that time, Majdanek has not changed.

The first exhibition opened in Majdanek was the presentation of works painted by Zinowiej Tołkaczok after his visit to Majdanek. To improve the impression of the exhibition he put wax figures next to his paintings. The faces of these figures were so horrifying that the exhibition was closed (Wyszomyrski 1946). The exhibition was announced using posters with thousands of skulls and bones. Some of the artist's drafts were printed in the newspapers.

Tołkaczok's way of presentation was not exceptional in that time and similar posters were used to encourage people to give a donation to the Museum. To gain more money, the Museum printed calendars in 1945 and 1946 as well as postcards with some of the camp's buildings. It was also possible to buy stamps featuring Majdanek<sup>2</sup> (Kielboń 2004).

After the war, the language of the representation of genocide was dramatic and realistic. It was the time when the Nazi crimes were still being discovered and investigated, and

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<sup>1</sup> Piotr Sobolewski and Teresa Zagórska in their book "Majdanek za drutami zagłady" in a short chapter "Majdanek as a symbol" wrote. "Majdanek – one of the nation's crosses – a symbol of torture and despair is in the same time a symbol of the most noble idea – brotherhood of nations, the most noble fight – for freedom, and finally it is a great victory of Slavic people over the Nazis; the last step of everlasting way which is thought to liberate the word from the Teutonic phantom and myth of Nibelungs" [Sobolewski, p29].

<sup>2</sup> At one of the stamps we can see baths and gas chambers. Above them the skeleton, that dressed in German suit, pours the cyclone B.

presenting bones, skulls, hair or ashes was a way of documenting and proving what had happened. After some time had past, the politics changed and the new search for a language started. However, since the rebuilding of the Majdanek Museum in the '60 by Dylewski, there has not been any more modifications. Even after 1989 not much has changed *There is no project how to develop it. Everything has changed since that time [the war] When the schoolchildren come they find a completely different world. Neither grandmothers, nor grandfathers tell stories about the life during the war. Now it is another reality. They [visitors, tourists] sometimes come here only if they have a spare time between cinema and theatre [Gosia]*

The permanent exhibition, where the visitors can see the documents, photos, some clothes, and prisoners private belongings, was opened in 1996. This is a traditional way of representing the memory in the showcases. In 2003 was opened the narrative display "Elementarz". Both exhibitions present the Holocaust, but in a completely different way. While the first can be described by using Selwyn's term "cold authenticity", the second one is an example of "hot authenticity" [Selwyn 1996, p. 18-28]. Today both exhibitions are used by Brama Grodzka in their educational program "The Life of the Children in Majdanek".

### **THE HISTORICAL EXHIBITION IN BARRACKS NUMBER 43 AND 44**

The exhibition was opened in 1996. In one of the barracks *there was a model of the Majdanek camp, the plan of zones, a main gate, it was such a map. When we came there we could learn something about the place (Zosia)*. In another barrack the history of the concentration camp, the conditions of the prisoners' life as well as the SS men' role as guards of the camp were displayed. *And in the next barrack there was the exhibition on people. These people were the organizers, they were, I suppose, the German, the soldiers who controlled [the prisoners]. It was a whole barrack, two walls were full of the pictures. There were many, many people. (...) And there was also a corner with the showcases where the objects of the common life were collected. There were the forks, spoons, bowls and cups. There were also the clothes. Simply, it was the life presented (Zosia)*.

The exhibition is divided into a few logical sections. Each of them uses the documents, photos, artifacts as well as maps to present the history of the Nazi crimes in the most comprehensive way. *There was also an daily menu, and such an interesting fact that there was not enough vitamins in the daily food portion. It was like an everyday portion was served in three days. It was marked there that it was impossible to survive without food and water. These people starved to death (Zosia)*. The language used here is clear; it is non-emotional

and attempts to teach about the Holocaust in the most reliable way. This is an example of the “cold authenticity” which must be objective and verifiable by the scientific methods (Selwyn 1993, Wieczorkiewicz 2003). The exhibits aimed are not only for visiting but they are also as proof for those who have some doubts.

Two other barracks, one with clothes and another with shoes, should be discussed when we talk about the historical exhibition. They are a part of it. *In the next barracks, there were the shoes, only the shoes. There were huge baskets with shoes, and clothes. When the prisoners came to the camp, they got another set of clothes and they had to give the old ones to the guards. It was incredible how many clothes and shoes there were. And it was, I think, the saddest part (...) it was really horrible, but so real. I remember also that once I saw with my friend a lock of hair, and that was really horrible. I am not sure if it was really from that time but it was ...* (Zosia). As Tomasz Kranz claims, the artifacts are indispensable for the process of the “materialization of the past in the present”. The significance of their role increases while they are displayed in their original environment, because then they become an integral element of the memory of the place (Kranz 2003, Young 1993).

### **“ELEMENTARZ”<sup>3</sup> – THE CHILDREN IN THE MAJDANEK CAMP’S EXHIBITION**

The narrative exhibition “Elementarz” was opened in 2003. As the autor of the exhibition says: *The most important was to find the language, because such a classical exhibition is very easy to be done. We know how it works, some showcases, put some signs, descriptions, some objects. I wasn’t interested in it at all. I wanted to find a language which the young people will understand. Something which touches you. (...) I was looking for it and quickly realized that I have to think about it as the theatre, the theatre’s language. I grew up in the theatre so, I understand this way of thinking. However, it was easy to say, but I needed the key to achieve such effects* (Tomasz).

Tomasz Pietrasiewicz decided to use a reading primer as the key to tell the story of the children who were imprisoned in the concentration camp. He claims: *The reading primer teaches a child how to describe the world. It is such a book which constructs in the child’s mind the simplest references to the surrounding world. This is a mother, this is a father, this is a house. Pay attention, this world is described in such a way. This is a dog* (Tomasz). It was important that in this first book there is no cruelty and evil.

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<sup>3</sup> Reading primer; a beginner’s book in a school subject.

The display is divided into three parts. The first one introduces the exhibition and inform people about the camp and the children who were transported there. To stress that the fate of the Polish and Belorussian children differed from the Jewish one, after entering the exhibition there are two separate rooms for them, one on the right and the second on the left. *This place (the camp) was an extermination camp for the Jewish children, but for the Poles as a concentration or a transitory camp.(...) It doesn't decrease the suffering because the mortality was incredible there. We talk only about the mechanism. That is why I divided it; no I am wrong it wasn't I who divided it, I only recreated what was done in the camp. I knew I want to show two fates. That they were completely different from the beginning. For Jews it was one way, for Poles and Belorussians another. And you can find it in the exhibition* (Tomasz).

In each room there are four chests of drawers such as in a library or a health center. In the first chest of drawers there are the fragments of the prisoner's stories which describe the different moment's of the camp life: transport, walk to the camp, passing the main gate and life in Majdanek. On the Jewish side, it is also possible to read about the selection and gas chambers. In the second chest of drawer there are the reproductions of the museum's cards with descriptions of the most private items used by prisoners: children clothes, shoes, glasses, books, dolls. The next chest of drawers includes also the reproduction of the museum's cards, but with the description of the buildings which were an integrated part of the camp: barracks, barbed wire, baths, control tower, and crematorium. On the Jewish side there are also descriptions of cyclone B and gas chambers. The biographies with some photos or documents of the heros<sup>4</sup> of the display are in the last chest of drawers.

There are no artifacts on the display besides: some small photos, one cartoon film, and the reproductions of the museum's cards. *Shoes, children's clothes. I said [to the museum's workers who wanted to add some children's items to the exhibition] I don't use them. I understood that if I use them I won't be able to tell my story. Because if you meet the children's shoes or such piece of clothing or any other child's item which is so physical, it influences you. You pay attention to this object, this is true. Look at it, it is true. Nothing else is important* (Tomasz).

In the second and third part of the exhibition, there are no artifacts at all. Only the simple objects made especially for this exhibition. They create two opposite worlds: the "Elementarz" World and the Camp World. Pietrasiewicz is not the first who does not use the artifacts to tell the story. The director of the Diaspora Museum in Tel Aviv did not want to

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<sup>4</sup> A word "hero" in this paper has two meanings: the principal character in a story and a person who has heroic qualities. *Each of these children should have a kind of own monument (..) their stories, it is unimaginable. Those who survived, they become another kind of human beings* (Tomasz).

present the artifacts because he claimed that “No material relicts which, even when assembled, could adequately reflect 2,500 years of Jewish life in the Diaspora” [Golden, 1996, p.229]. The designers of the exhibitions used only the reproductions, supported by audio-visual techniques such as sound, music, light and shapes. All techniques were used to “turn the exhibition into a place of lived ‘experience’” [Golden, 1996, p.229].

The techniques used in the “Elementarz” exhibition are very similar to those applied in the Diaspora Museum. In the “Elementarz” World there is a board with the four names of the heroes of the display written on it. On the desk there are the reading primers in Polish, Belorussian and Yiddish. In the background the voices of the children playing in the school court are heard. *There was a board the same as here* [the interview was carried out in the school, and she showed the board which was in the room where we were sitting] *When I looked at it, it was nothing special, an ordinary desk and board, a place to learn. But a minute later when I understood where I am, in a such place; It touched me so much. These children were defenseless, they died and nobody knows why, they did nothing. Here you had a normal class for learning and there is the crime which will be remembered for ages* (Zosia).

In the Camp World, the Camp “Elementarz” is presented. The clayed boards<sup>5</sup> were put on both sides of the barracks. The reports of the prisoners which define such words as assembly, block, gas chamber, crematorium, number, selection were engraved on the boards. In the middle of the room the frame of a cattle wagon was placed. *These children came here in this wagon. It was their means of transport. They brought their memories from the childhood, their families and went further. This wagon symbolized that they went further or to the other world* (Ania).

Behind the wagon there are five wells. In one of them it is possible to hear a camp lullaby. The words are as follow :

“There was a small Elżunia,  
She was dying alone,  
Because her father in Majdanek,  
And her mother in Oświęcim”

On the piece of paper the girl wrote that her name is Elżunia. She is nine years old and she sings this song using the melody of “Na Wojtusia z Popielnika”<sup>6</sup>. However, nobody knows if Elżunia’s story is real. *Tomasz said that he read about it in a book “Poetry and Songs from*

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<sup>5</sup> *It must have been the clayed boards. The oldest written words which were discovered, they were engraved on the clayed board (...) I put these boards on the floor. I wanted to force people who come there to bow their heads. If people want to read them they have to kneel for example. There is also not much light, that the situation was not comfortable. It is the Camp World. (Tomasz).*

<sup>6</sup> A very common lullaby in Poland.

*the Camp” written by Morawska. There is a text of Elżunia’s song, that it was a camp’s song. It was found not on the territory of the Majdanek camp, but in the embankments, where were the barracks with the clothes from Majdanek. The text was found by a man and I do not remember his name. He found the original, but nobody has seen it and it is impossible to contact this man (Gosia). In the “Elementarz” Word there was a music box with the original version of the lullaby.*

The four remaining wells commemorate four children. Three of them tell the story of three people which were in Majdanek as children. The last well which symbolizes Henio Żytomirski is silent, because the boy died in a gas chamber. *I could squat next to this well to hear. It was really exiting, because they told such details; that she [a person who says the story] lost her shoe or a heel of a shoe or some other details. It really touched me. I really like those wells (...)In my opinion, I could “experience” these individual histories. See how it really looked like, because the photos do not show everything (Basia).*

However, the exhibition gives an opportunity to distance oneself from it. At the end there are small boxes (the similar ones which were in the information part of the exhibition. Those had small doors in them, and if one opened them could see the small photos of the children who were in Majdanek). In the Camp’s World boxes, there are no photos, and behind the doors there are holes by which fresh air enters to the barrack. *Now, I have to say that I didn’t want this exhibition to be a dead exhibition, nothing happens there. Everything is stable forever. I put the photos in front of the window. I put the boxes with the photos in front of the window (...) if light falls on them, they live. If it is dark, the photos are dark, if the sun is shining then you can see how it lights the pictures up. Life enters into these pictures. The faces are not the same as in a normal exhibition where you have the artificial light. At the end of the exhibition you have the same boxes, but there are no photos, you can see through the holes what is outside the barrack. For me, they [victims of the Holocaust] are in the air, in the sun, they are here. But they are a part of this place, at the beginning you see their photos, at the end – nothing. Most of them remain unknown (Tomasz).*

The “Elementarz” exhibition is an example of the “hot authenticity” as the accent is put on the private experience and emotions (Selwyn 1996, Wiczorkiewicz 2003). The absence of the artifacts give visitors an opportunity to use their own imagination to tell the story. The exhibition can be analyzed in different ways, which signifies that the Holocaust was a complex event, and one interpretation will never exist.



## O TALK ABOUT THE SAME HISTORICAL EVENT IN THE DIFFERENT WAY

It has already been pointed out that both exhibitions use different languages. When the first one tries to show the history of the Holocaust in the most objective and scientific way, the second one tries to emotionally contact the visitor with the past. To achieve their aims, both exhibitions use different means of representations: artifacts or reproduction. It was also mentioned that while the first display represents cold authenticity, the second one should rather be described as hot authenticity. The historical exhibition focuses on the written language because it uses the documents and the description, while the “Elementarz” exhibition puts attention on oral expressions. The anthropological research on the oral and written expression shows how such a distinction is important (Ong 1992, Riceaur 2003, Gilson 2003).

A book creates a distance between the text and the audience, which is not possible in the oral culture. Even if we do not agree with what speaker says, it is not possible to deny his words. Contrary, while reading the written word it is possible, as Davis Riesman notes, to change the order of the lecture and to check the author’s knowledge (Riesman, 2003). It seems that what we talk about the Holocaust the objective, scientific approach becomes insufficient today. *The numbers tell a lot, but these are “the empty” words. I preferred to hear the private story. (...) I think [the historical exhibition] must exist, but the texts there are too synthetic. I do not want to read a lot. (...) I think it is worth going to the “Elementarz” exhibition, because if these stories are put down, there is a book. It is not a good way of expression. (..) The teenagers do not read books nowadays (Piotr).*

The oral word tries to cross the time boundaries and force the audience to “feel” the past. The accent is put on the emphatic, collective identification with the discovering phenomenon. *When somebody tells its story and suddenly stops, you at once can see that he hesitates whether say something else or not. He changes his intonation melody, hesitates for a while. So, you think why he does it, you understand that in this moment something very important happened (Ania).* In the oral expression the most important is the effect. It is crucial that the audience remembers, otherwise, the knowledge about the past will gone. That is why some defoliations, admissions, omissions are acceptable (Ong 1992).

It is not possible to answer the question which language is better to present the past as both of them have positive and negative sides. *They are equal because we can not compare somebody’s story with the authentic objects (Zosia).* However, getting knowledge how different languages work, children are motivated to use their imagination to connect the facts. *When she talked [ one of the voices from the well] the filling was as she experienced it one more time, and most of the schoolchildren from my class experienced it with her. When she*

*cried, we all had tears in our eyes, when she was happy, we were all very happy that she managed. She also had to give her clothes to the guards, she also had the shoes. At once I realized that it is possible that her clothes are also displayed on the historical exhibition (Zosia).*

Both analyzed exhibitions present the past by using their own concept of the reality of the past. What differs them is the language used to get impression on the same historical fact – the Shoah. When Ankersmit describes the relationship between the experience and the language, he stresses that while we discover the world, the way of the perception of the reality and the way in which we think about our experience of the meeting with this reality are influenced by the language (Ankersmit 2004, p223 –246). It is worth applying this way of understanding of the role of the language when we talk about the experience of the Holocaust. If the language determines our perception then using the different languages to represent the Holocaust seems to be the only way.

The memory project offered to the schoolchildren during the museum's lessons in Majdanek assumes the use of the different languages. [The museum's work explains how the school visit looks like] *When we are here [in the museum's conference room] schoolchildren work on the prisoner's questionnaire of these four children [ children whose stories are told on display] and it is such a language. One journalist wrote about it in her article "Profession – Child" there is a blank space with the sign "child". This language is objective, detail, I came here that day, with him or her, my mother died in the gas chamber. This is an example of such a personal questionnaire. Then is my language, I tell them about Halina [one of the child from the exhibition] who did not know that she was seeing her mother for the last time, and did not say goodbye to her. I tell this story next to the gas chamber. Then we go to the "Elementarz" barrack. There are also the museum's cards. There is the information: the wooden barrack – very simple language. Then we go to the wells and everything changed (Gosia).* Children are asked to compare the particular languages: questionnaire, exhibition, guide and taped narrative stories, and find the differences between them.

However, there should constantly be a discussion about whether the chosen languages and means of representation are adequate for the Holocaust story. During the analysis of the role of the Holocaust in our contemporary society, Cole refers to the Mosses's analysis on the First World Wars monuments. He stresses that when the memory of the past is remembered by a cold stone monument, the memory of the past separates from the community life and vanishes (Cole 2000). On the other hand, if one kind of representation is preferred (Young gives the example of Germany where many new memorials were established) the society feels free to forget the past (Young 1993). *I used also the pictures and the descriptions of hair*

[interviewer says about the information part of the exhibition where in the chest of drawers it is possible to find the reproductions of the museum's cards]. *I wanted to show that everything became an object, a dead object which is possible to describe. Look at it [he reads] "Human hair – Cut hair of the Majdanek's prisoners. They have different color, they are packed..." Look at this cold description. I only want to show how these things are described. It functions like it. How far it is from the emotions. It looks like it was not human hair (Tomasz).*

The balance and the proportions between the means of representation used has to be carefully chosen. However, if there is no memory project, which is essential to construct the collective memory, the past will be forgotten. If two different languages are used to talk about the history, they have to complement one another. The Majdanek school's lessons seems to be an example of it. *There were two barracks. One was rather dark. We visited whole exhibition. There were the wells, a cattle wagon. The second barrack was light. Everything was properly put to the showcases. We went there to see the objects, read the descriptions (...) I prefer this first exhibition, but I think that the second one is also important, it enrich our knowledge. It was also very interesting, but this ["Elementarz"] impressed me more (Basia).*

## CONCLUSIONS

The authors of the Majdanek school's lesson wanted to show the history of the Majdanek camp's children. Therefore, they decided to use two exhibitions: the historical one and the new "Elementarz" one to show in a more complex way the cruelty of the war and the children's fate. The historical exhibition gives general information about the world war by using the explicit details. It is an introduction to the narrative exhibition which by telling the private story brings closer the Holocaust experience. While the first exhibition inquires from a visitor to get the detailed study on the historical fact, the second one encourages him to analyze his own emotions arising from this foot. *When she was telling her story [Halina Birenbaum, one of the Elementarz's heroes] her voice was so touching. At the end she said "My God I survived". Then I thought that she was happy because she survived that nightmare. She did not know what would happen as the war had not finished yet. She did not know what the future would be, because she lost her whole family. Then I thought that nowadays, when people have problems, they sometimes do not want to live. At one moment I understood that the Holocaust is a history. That it happened many years ago. That there is no war, now. Therefore, people do not want to live. They commit suicide because they think that the life is too difficult. But, that lady was happy, even if she saw so many murders (Zosia).*

The awareness that the present does not include whole elements of the past as well as the will to recover the past is a crucial step forward a historical experience (Ankersmit 2004, p 19). However, there is the problem of the language. Therefore, the way in which Brama Grodzka teaches the Holocaust, by using two different exhibitions.

The memory project assumes using the different languages to tell the Holocaust story in order to make the audience intellectually and emotionally closer to the problem. However, it is not only the question of the language. As Irwing Zarecka said, if we want the memory project to work and help to establish the collective memory, it is important to use many different memory works which she calls “the infrastructure of collective memory” to make the engagement with the past possible (Irwing Zarecka 1993). That is why Brama Brodzka made a website as well as the exhibition catalog where children can find more information.

The project’s crucial aim is to help children to understand that the Holocaust is also a part of their own history. It also seeks to inform children that such a horrible event happened many years ago and encourage them to the reflect on that fact. *I have lived in Lublin for all my life. It was my first visit to Majdanek. It was really very important for me that our teacher organized this excursion. I was really interested in the history of Majdanek, because when I watched the television or read the newspaper I did not think it is so important. This tragedy was, somehow, next to me. Then, when I saw the exhibition, it really touched me. I could experience it, feel what that the people felt. I really understood what that tragedy was. (...) I am a new generation and I think I should remember those people. (...) This tragedy was incredible, and I am strongly convinced I should remember about those people (Basia).*

The Brama Grodzka’s project tries to show the problem from different perspectives. However, as a total educational project with its assumptions and goals, it also determines the way of perception, even if it uses two different languages to describe the Holocaust. That is why the other memory projects which will show some other aspects of the Holocaust by using different languages are important to be established. A total historical experience of the past is impossible, but a different approach can help to reduce the increasing discrepancy between the past and the present.

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## INTERVIEWS

The name of interviewees were changed. All interviews were recorded during the research made in dates 13 – 14 January 2005.

<b>NAME</b>	<b>SEX</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>PLACE OF INTERVIEW</b>	<b>PROFFESION</b>
Tomasz	M	Around 40	Lublin	Brama Grodzka dyrektor
Gosia	F	32	Majdanek	Museum worker
Zosia	F	17	Lublin	Schoolgirl
Basia	F	17	Lublin	Schoolgirl
Ania	F	17	Lublin	Schoolgirl
Piotr	M	17	Lublin	Schoolboy