

## **Auf der Suche nach dem Zwischenraum - Audiowalk Workshop**

Von Denise Lee

On the 16th and 23rd of November 2020, Joullanar Wannous, Emir Akköse and I delivered a two-part workshop to students between the ages of 12 and 18 who were part of an audiowalk project titled “Auf der Suche nach dem Zwischenraum” by the Deutsche Nationaltheater. There were three main themes and approaches in the workshops; exploring the participants’ relationships with Weimar through movement and theater exercises, mapping the different zones of the city based on our social and personal uses of them, and thinking about voices and responsibility in storytelling, the last of which I would like to further expand upon.

With the theme of storytelling in the context of an audiowalk, I wanted to introduce the potential of interviews or oral history as an element the students could incorporate in their project. The participants were encouraged to think about whose voices and stories they would like to highlight in this framework of ‘looking for the in-between’, as well as what makes a good interview and a good interviewer. Personally, I have found working with interviews to be a challenging, nuanced and rewarding process in itself. They provide windows into how socio-political contexts affect people concretely and emotionally, and also allow for voices that often don’t have platforms to be heard, which adds dimension and depth to our understanding of the surrounding issues and has the ability to highlight alternate perspectives to the mainstream narrative, allowing people to speak for themselves. This is not only due to the personal nature of the content that can be transmitted through oral history, but also because of the qualities of the speakers’ voices. We can perceive the emotional context of stories through the tone, pace, pitch and articulation of the storyteller’s voice, which simply cannot be interpreted in a text-based medium. The human-ness of the person speaking also becomes undeniable and draws the listener in, making the story more engaging. The implementation of an interview also involves a high level of human interaction and compassion. Exercising empathy, patience and insight are essential in conducting fruitful conversations, which we also spent some time reflecting on during the workshop.

The next ideas we took into consideration in terms of storytelling were those of biased language and the responsibility of the storyteller. Language bias, or the way words are used in the telling of a story or event, can control how the reader, listener or viewer perceives the people and actions involved. The aim was to create awareness about this basic element of media literacy, understand how it may be used to manipulate the opinion of the public, and think about how to use language responsibly in our own work. In the context of this project, choosing soundbites from an interview to include in the telling of a story, or even describing events and history carries a lot of power and responsibility. This discussion about language opened up questions about how people and events should be represented, and what kinds of wording can generate negative, neutral or positive views towards them.

In the end, although the participants all had varying levels of familiarity with the themes, they nonetheless gave them serious consideration and generated good discussions from their own perspectives and experiences. The workshops benefited greatly from the participation and input of the students, and hopefully the workshops will also contribute to their imagining of what the final project will become.

*Dieser Artikel gibt die Meinung des Autors wieder und stellt nicht unbedingt die Position der EJBW dar.*