

4.2 THE RIGHT TO HISTORY

One of the responses I often hear when I talk about my grandparents is: “How do you know what you would have done in their situation?” Of course, I don’t know, but this shouldn’t prevent me from learning about the past. It is worth noting that people who make a difference, and who have shown civil courage in the face of tyranny, are critical thinkers.

With every right comes a responsibility, and that is the important thing about facing history. If we grasp that right, then we also grasp our responsibility for the future. Perhaps that is the reason some choose to ignore history: the responsibility seems too heavy to bear.

4.2.1 Which episodes in “The Pendulum” to you best highlight the dilemma I encounter in examining the lives of persons whom I would like to respect, and events in a past time which I did not myself experience?

4.2.2 How do you explain Oma’s failure to take responsibility?

4.2.3 Have you ever had a discussion with an older person about the past in which you felt you couldn’t have any say because you weren’t there? Is it right for you to question them and who has the right to history?

4.2.4 What does taking responsibility for history mean to you?