

Why shall we be careful in  
using historical arguments  
and always weigh competing  
explanations?

Microteaching activities, Academic Skills in English, 20200724

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# Introduction:

- Historical facts are scientifically verifiable, stories are not. Stories are made, not found in the historical data; historical meaning is imposed on historical facts by means of the choice of plot-type, and this choice is inevitably ethical and political at bottom.
- Even the most basic beginning-middle-end structure of a story represents an imposition: The historian chooses where to begin, where to end, and what points are important in the middle. There is no scientific test for 'historical significance.'
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/09/obituaries/hayden-white-who-explored-how-history-is-made-dies-at-89.html>

# A task for thinking about the history of Brno

- What historical data change their historical meaning in connection with the fact who, to whom and in which historical frame tell a story of Brno?
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- The demarcation from other "others" is constitutive for nationalism.

# Learning a new topic: Napoleon in Brno and the battle of Austerlitz



# Where is the governorate in Brno?

- Why have the Czechs repurposed this square 1995 and which statues dominate the square now? Which statue dominated the square from 1891 to 1919?
- Which stories are connected with this statues or this commemorative plaque?



Where moved the statues from this square to?



# Is there any monument für the winner over Napoleon in Brno?

- The martyrdom of following Christ became a sacrificial death for the fatherland, with which one could not have a place in heaven, but could be accepted into the pantheon of the nation.
- Who is the actual name of this park? 04. 10. 1818



# Find arguments against Napoleon-cult, not only in Brno

Situation in Brno after the battle

The Impact of German  
nationalism





# Find arguments for commemorating Napoleon in Brno as a beginning of modern times

- Codex civil (Code civil des Français, Napoleonic Code)
- Brno as the Austriaa Manchester



# Conclusion: which stories from Brno do you like and why?



# Obituary, Hayden White, Historian Who Explored How Past Is Created

- “Hayden told us all that we weren’t rooted in some authentic past and that we could make out of ourselves something new, something not beholden to someone else’s idea of who we really were and where we had really come from. We could remake the meanings of our pasts, paradoxically, by seizing opportunities to create our futures.”

