



The Role of Gender in Commemorating the White Rose

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Abstract

The “White Rose” was a non-violent resistance group that denounced the Nazis’ war crimes through anonymous leaflets. It began with Hans Scholl, a young medical student. Upon his return to Munich, he gathered a group of like-minded students – including his sister Sophie – into what would comprise the White Rose resistance. After the war ended, Hans Scholl was initially the face of the group. By the 2000s, Sophie had assumed that position in memorials and films. This study aims to understand the shift toward identifying Sophie as the primary face of the resistance, and the implications this shift has had on how the White Rose is characterized in German memory. This shift will be analyzed in a decade-by-decade study since the end of the war in 1945 and through interviews with relevant scholars. This research is indicating that the increased demand for women to be represented as agents of history may have played a role by the 1980s and 1990s, the point at which interest in the White Rose grew quickly.



Results

Preliminary results suggest there is a high probability the analysis will yield a favorable outcome for the hypothesis. Sophie Scholl’s rise in commemoration reflects a political trend in Germany toward recognizing the agency of women in resistance; however, it appears the message of the White Rose is not inherently affected. Instead, it is possible that the effects of this phenomenon are not on the message, but rather on the families of the members who did not have the last name “Scholl”. Thus, not only is it important to understand what happened when commemorating the White Rose for the sake of understanding history and its implications, but also to properly pay respect to the families of those who were involved and deserve to know what happened. \

Method

Approach: Qualitative – broad and unrestricted approach

Design: Historical – recapture ideas of the past that affect the present

Sampling Technique: Homogenous purposive – experts on the subject

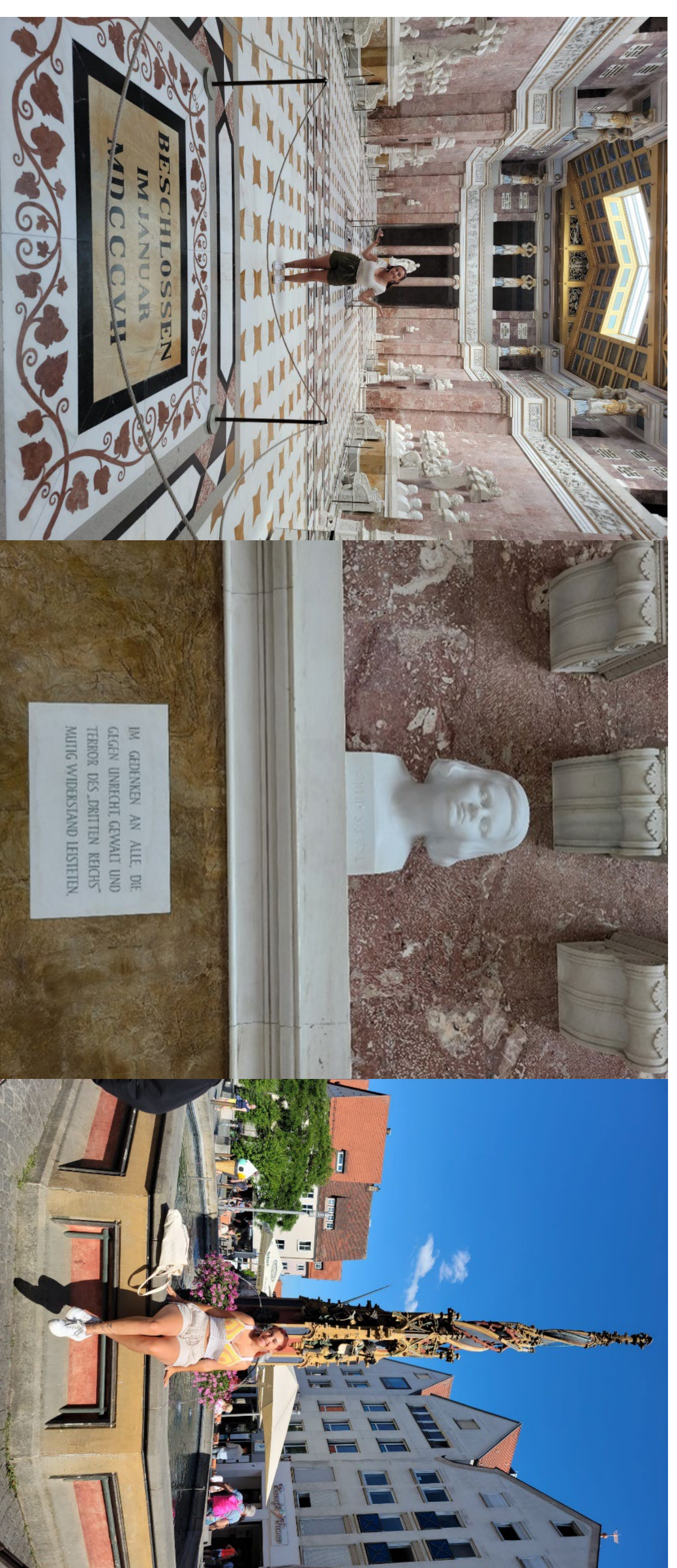
Analysis: Data-driven Coding – indexing text for thematic ideas

Areas of Inquiry:

- 1) The reasons for which Sophie was chosen as the face of the resistance
- 2) The timeline of commemoration efforts
- 3) The impacts these commemoration efforts had on the White Rose’s message

On-site Visits:

- The White Rose Foundation’s LMU Exhibit (Munich, Germany)
- Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Munich, Germany)
- Walhalla Hall of Fame (Regensburg, Germany)
- Hans-und-Sophie-Scholl-Platz (Ulm, Germany)

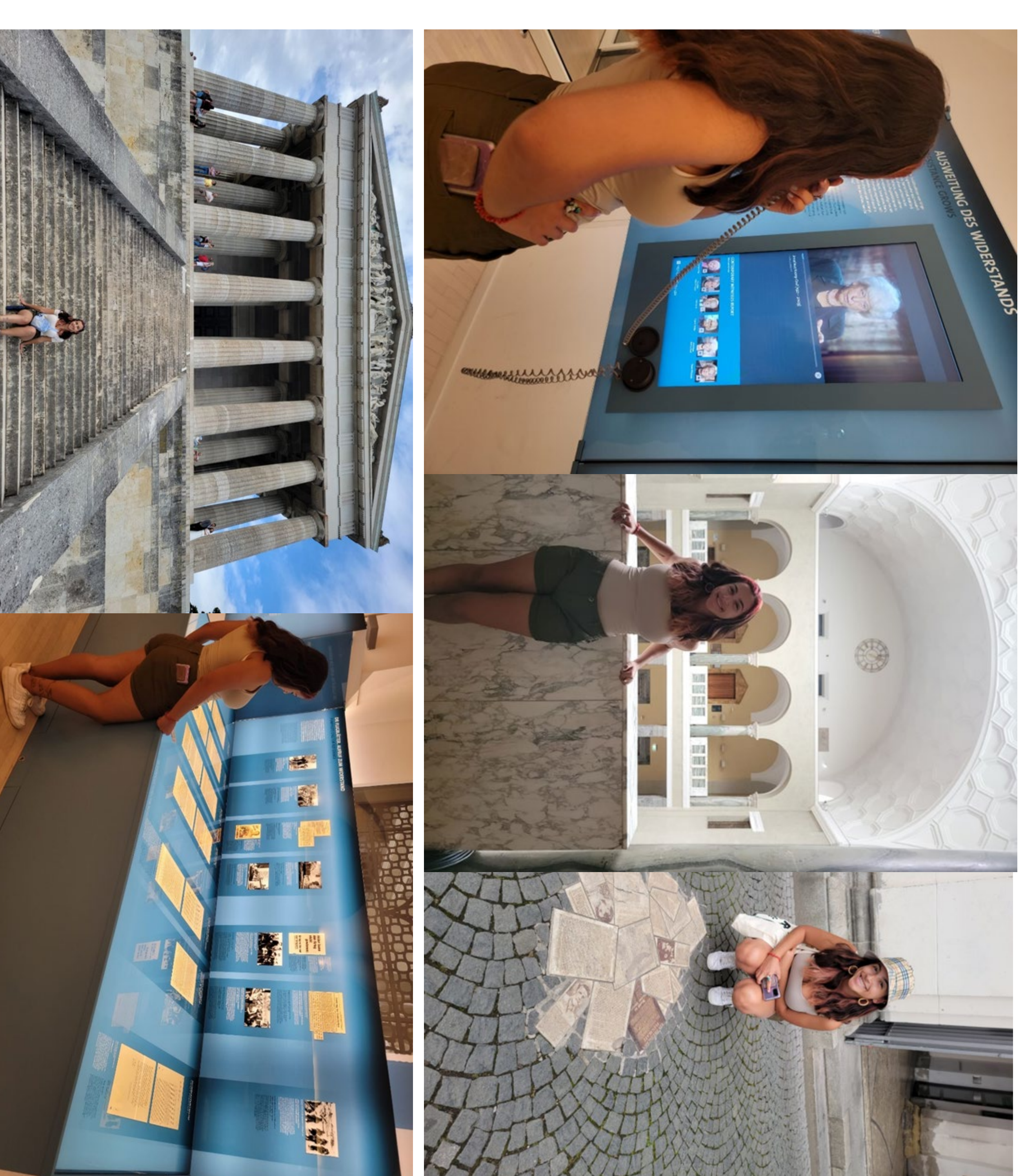


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Conclusion

This study will culminate in the creation of a cumulative written assignment that includes all the materials uncovered throughout the stages of research, along with annotations and sources. The document briefly analyzes theoretical ideologies of resistance, outlines commemoration efforts through the years, observes the history of the White Rose, identifies political trends in Germany, provides a method overview, and analyzes the collected material through coding. The hope is that this study will explain the process by which Sophie Scholl became the face of the movement and what that says about the changing perceptions of gender roles in Germany.



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