

POST-HOLOCAUST CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF MASCULINITY IN  
GERMANOPHONE AND JEWISH MEN

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## Abstract

The dissertation demonstrates that the Holocaust has irrevocably linked Germanophone and Jewish men together and continues to influence how they see themselves. Situated in the broader context of Holocaust Studies, Masculinity Studies and Cultural Studies, it explores how Jewish and non-Jewish Germanophone men re-conceptualized themselves and reestablished their place in the emergent society of post-World War Two Europe. It explores issues of the representation of masculinity in the wider context of culture, history and contemporary society in an interdisciplinary manner.

The collapse of Nazi Germany meant that Fascist, militarized masculinity was also defeated. Responding to the crisis of masculinity that followed, I show that new or modified constructs of controlled, softer masculinity were gleaned from screen culture (the American Western as well as *Heimatfilm*), and the sporting, economic, and political spheres. A literary analysis of the memoirs of three prominent, German and Austrian Jewish men provides insight into the interconnectedness of issues such as identity, *Heimat*, nation, personhood, justice and family with constructs of masculinity. Simon Wiesenthal's, Marcel Reich-Ranicki's, and Paul Spiegel's memoirs provide insight into the German-Jewish negative symbiosis that has often characterized the experience of Jewish men living in Germanophone Europe.

Continuing with its comparative analysis, the dissertation also examines the genre of *Väterliteratur* (literature of/about the Fathers) to probe how Fascist masculinity continued to affect familial relationships in the post-Holocaust as well as the current eras. Three representative works of the genre – *Traces of My Father* by Sigfrid Gauch,

*The Man in the Pulpit* by Ruth Rehmman, and *The Himmler Brothers* by Katrin Himmler provide insight into the transgenerational effects of Fascism on the descendants of Nazi perpetrators and complicit bystanders. Two chapters then examine post-Wende German and Austrian film and television productions. As a result, a new paradigm for understanding how Jewish and non-Jewish Germanophone men see themselves and each other is created, namely, one in which they have been unequivocally linked by the Holocaust, the genocide that shattered modernity and ushered in an era of post-Holocaust consciousness.

## **Dedication**

For my parents, Verbena and Gerald Phillips.

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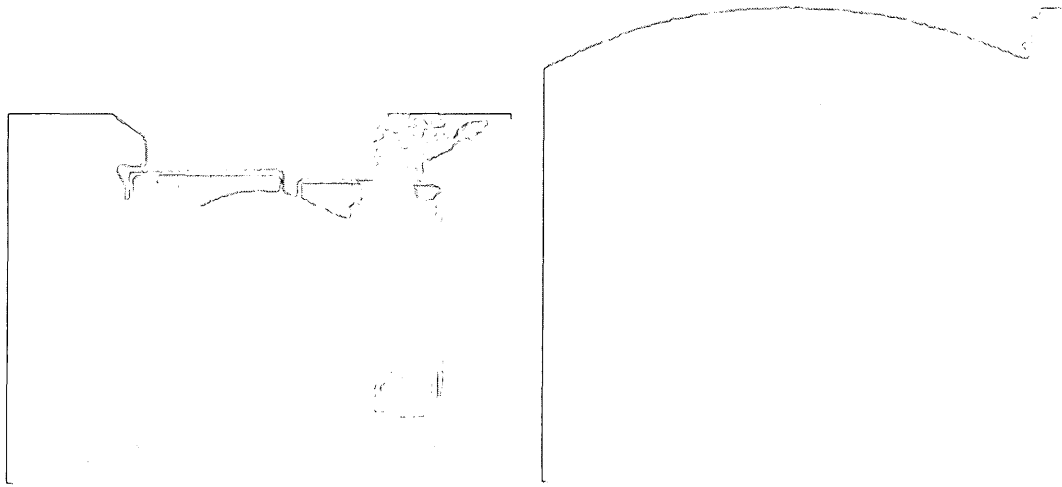
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Introduction:  
Post-Holocaust Conceptualizations of Germanophone and Jewish Masculinity

One should never write down or up to people, but out of yourself.  
Christopher Isherwood



In August 2003, I completed an eight-week internship at the Auschwitz Jewish Center in Oświęcim, Poland.<sup>1</sup> Even before embarking on my travels, I had decided that I would spend ten days in Berlin upon completion of the internship. While my time in Oświęcim focused on researching and learning about the diversity of Jewish life before the Holocaust, it was the promise of discovering Berlin and experiencing first-hand

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<sup>1</sup> The photographs show a Jewish military cemetery located in what was formerly Austrian Galicia, a region that is today in Poland. The cemetery, located in the town of Zakliczyn, Poland (registered as cemetery no. 293) was constructed for Jewish soldiers fighting for Germany and Austria-Hungary during the First World War. The Museum of Tarnow, Poland estimates that of the in all 400 cemeteries in the region, Jews make up 3.7 per cent, approximately the percentage of Jews fighting in the Austro-Hungarian and German armies. It is believed, however, that some of the Jews buried there also include at least some Jewish soldiers from the opposing Russian army. Some unidentified corpses were buried in non-Jewish graves, so that a number of Jewish dead were undoubtedly buried in common graves at non-Jewish cemeteries. The inscription on the tombstone reads: “*Uns Toten ist nur deren Schritt willkommen, die würdig sind der Früchte unserer Siege.*” (To us the dead, only the steps of those who are worthy of the fruits of our victories, are welcome [here].”) It is a powerful reminder of the commitment and link German and Austrian Jews felt towards their homeland. I took these photographs in the summer of 2003.

contemporary life in the land that had perpetrated one of the worst crimes in human history that deeply fascinated me. Indeed, Berlin represented much more to me than the city of former Nazi spectacles, the city in which on May 10, 1933, Reich Minister Dr. Goebbels declared at the infamous Nazi book burning at the Opernplatz: “My fellow students, German men and women, the era of exaggerated Jewish intellectualism is now at an end” (Heiber 108). It was also the city where Christopher Isherwood experienced and wrote about Berlin’s vibrant gay life that around the time of the rise of National Socialism, the city where Marlene Dietrich grew up and began a film career at the famed Babelsberg film studio, and the city where Magnus Hirschfeld pushed the boundaries of understanding human sexuality. It was a city that represented – at least in my imagination – a plethora of cultural freedoms before the rise of National Socialism forever changed the European landscape. It was also one of the cities to which remnants of German Jewry returned following the Second World War and attempted to rebuild a Jewish communal life. Indeed, as Michael Brenner has noted, a number of Jewish communities were officially reestablished in Germany as early as 1945, and “by 1948, more than 100 Jewish communities had been founded, and a total of 20,000 members were registered in the reestablished communities in 1948” (Brenner 3). Like many before me, I was and remain an admiring fan of the vibrancy and richness of Berlin, and by extension Germanophone Europe’s cultural heritage and legacy.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> I use the term ‘Germanophone’ to reference those European countries that share a standard or High German linguistic heritage and also share overlapping cultural standards. This is discussed more fully on page 9.

Later, when I visited a long-time male friend in southern Germany, I experienced firsthand the fragile, problematic relationship that still existed between German and diasporic Jewish men. My friend's father welcomed me into the familial domicile with a firm handshake accompanied by the softly spoken and halting words: "You are welcome in my home, and I want you to know that my father never fought in Hitler's war." The English was stilted, but the words were delivered with sincerity and conveyed a message that the Holocaust and the Second World War still, more than sixty years after the war's end, played a very real part in the dynamics of German-Jewish relationships. There we were, three men: a German male born before the Second World War, whose father had been killed in an accident unrelated to the rearmament of Germany or National Socialism; my friend, who was born several decades after the Holocaust but nevertheless felt the burden of inheriting the legacy of Germany's National Socialist past; and me – a Jewish male, Holocaust educator from the diaspora, enamored with the Germanophone cultural heritage while hearing the voice of one of my Holocaust survivor friends in my head throughout my sojourn in Germany, cautioning me that "Jews have an unrequited love affair with German culture." At that moment, we were three men, each with a distinctly dissimilar relationship to the Holocaust, yet each shaped to some degree by the effects of the genocide of European Jewry. Theory and praxis were illuminated; I knew that I wanted to pursue a project on post-Holocaust conceptualizations of masculinity that could begin to account for how Germanophone and diasporic Jewish men saw themselves and each other.

Situating my work in the broader context of Holocaust Studies, Masculinity Studies and Cultural Studies, I take as my point of departure the crisis of masculinity that engulfed Germanophone Europe at the end of the Second World War. In 1947, Walter Frederking, a German physician and psychiatrist, was among the first to identify and discuss this unprecedented challenge to constructs of masculinity. How men re-conceptualized themselves and re-established their place in the newly emergent society of post-World War Two Europe has been of increasing interest and importance to scholars. “The dominance of the man, which was so strongly emphasized in the Third Reich, has collapsed to a considerable degree... In addition, the male gender is hit harder in its soul by the lost war than the female” (Herzog 86). Taking this as the starting point for my project’s trajectory, I offer multiple analyses of masculinity and the perceptions of masculinity in Jewish and Germanophone men. Beginning with a detailed overview of new constructs of masculinity that emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War, I examine cultural representations of Germanophone and Jewish men in sporting culture, literature and screen culture.

Indeed, my project is particularly well suited for the discipline of Holocaust Studies and offers new scholarship in the field of Humanities, building in particular on the work of Karen Hagemann, Barbara Kosta, Michael Rothberg and Marianne Hirsch. In 2006, Hagemann posited that the historical analysis of images of masculinity required three determinations from women’s and gender studies pivotal to the development of the field:

1. *The analysis of models of masculinity must be historicized.* The meaning and knowledge about sexual differences, which dominates in each respective culture, is part of an all-encompassing social discourse in the sciences, politics, and the media...
2. *Models of masculinity must be analyzed as relational.* Gender history has shown that models of masculinity and femininity as a rule stand in relationship to one another and must be analyzed in a broad range of meanings that includes competing images and ideas...
3. *Images of masculinity, however, also produce meanings that extend far beyond gender order and gender relationships.* They produce ideas of order and form hierarchies and power relationships in all areas of the economy, society, and politics. Women's and gender studies shows that they do not relate just to men, but are used to provide foundation for meaning, order and power gradients far beyond gender order – not least in the fields of politics, the military and warfare (Hagemann 46-47).

The constructs of masculinity discussed throughout this text will be shown to be built on Hagemann's foundational elements while demonstrating the interconnectedness of Germanophone and Jewish constructs of masculinity in Germanophone Europe.

While coming out of the field of Holocaust Studies, my project is firmly situated in the 'third phase' of Masculinity Studies.<sup>3</sup> This most recent development of the field

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3 The field of Masculinity Studies is generally accepted to have experienced three distinct phases of scholarship. The first phase, developed in the 1970s, emphasized understanding how concepts of masculinity were socially constructed, and how they were performed in contrast or opposition to women. The focus was on the 'sex role paradigm' and men's behavior in specific circumstances in contrast to women's behavior. First Phase scholarship also delved into questions of men's behavior having negative or harmful consequences on their health and psychological well-being. The second phase emerged in the 1980s and initially offered a critique of the first phase. A common critique focused on the homogenizing

seeks to ground masculinity in discourses about men and masculinity. As such, Third Phase endeavors are markedly different from earlier work in Masculinity Studies. Early contributions to the field tended to focus on the sex-role paradigm and issues of socialization, behaviour and psychological well-being in reference to masculinity. The second phase, which is indebted to the seminal work of R.W. Connell, developed from a particularly sociological perspective and engaged in critique of the sex-role paradigm. Noted for its pro-feminist stance, second phase Masculinity Studies provided the structure needed to engage with issues such as hegemonic and subordinate masculinities, power relations, and sexuality. Most importantly, second phase projects confirmed the fluid and changing nature of constructs of masculinity while laying the foundation that has enabled the current phase of analytical study to proceed.

As my work falls firmly in the third phase of masculinity studies, it explores issues of representation in the wider context of culture, history and contemporary society. Third phase scholarship recognized the fluidity of constructs of masculinity, exploring issues of how and why these conceptualizations change over time. It is also influenced by poststructuralism and considers how issues of identity, gender, ethnicity and cultural heritage provide important lenses for understanding moments and events in history. Taking the Holocaust as a defining moment for both Germanophone and Jewish men, I argue that the Holocaust has irrevocably linked Germanophone and Jewish men together and continues to influence how they see themselves, and each other. I engage

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effect of the sex role paradigm and how it neglected marginal masculinities and expressions of masculinity that differed according to sexuality, ethnicity and even social stratification. As a result, second phase scholarship that developed from this important critique examined the power that dominant constructs of masculinity held over marginalized constructs.

with the field of Cultural Studies to analyze how these conceptualizations are moulded and presented through literary and visual cultures.

As an interdisciplinary project with a poststructural sensitivity, a specificity of language is demanded that identifies the similarities and the differences of the groups I am discussing. I use the term 'Germanophone' to reference those European countries that share a standard or High German linguistic heritage and also share overlapping cultural standards. Although Germanophone in its broadest sense refers to those countries linked by the German language (Germany, Austria, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, the German-speaking communities of east Belgium and several cities in Romania, Hungary and South Tyrol Italy where German has official language status), I am using it here to emphasize that my study is not only of the Federal Republic of Germany, as is the focus of the majority of German Studies, but rather that Austria plays a substantial role as well. Similarly, I use the term 'Germany' to refer to the contemporary unified German state, and where necessary I use 'West Germany' to reference the *Bundesrepublik* (i.e., from 1949-1990). Recognizing that different cultural, political and economic factors influenced the former East and West German states (Dagmar Herzog, for example, has cogently argued that: "East Germany did develop its own distinctive standards of masculinity and femininity" (Herzog 206), I focus only on the regions in the Western sphere of influence.

Following the course pioneered by Masculinities scholar Harry Brod, I purposely chose to add the additional layer of Jewish masculinities to my project because it is, as Brod succinctly states, "who I am." Additionally, the Holocaust represents for Jewish

men – and women – a pivotal turning point in European and global history. As Brod elucidates:

The current tendency to pluralize masculinities and deconstruct gender is heavily influenced by postmodern philosophical currents that arose after WWII, as well as by critiques by women of color of monolithic white Western feminism. Postmodernism was born, however, not just out of a particular time but out of a particular place as well. That place was Auschwitz. It was there that modernity, humanism, figuratively and literally, went up in smoke (Brod 92-93).

Subsequent generations of Germanophone and Jewish men wrestle with what it means to be a man in a post-Holocaust world while negotiating individual, community and public manifestations of masculinity.

A focus on cultural representations of the Holocaust in literature and screen culture is another unifying thread of my work. In 2000, Michael Rothberg, assessing the state of research, noted:

Although the implications of the Holocaust have not been fully confronted in the mainstream of humanities research in the last half century, insights from research can lead to productive new ways of thinking about the fundamental problems raised by the Nazi genocide. At the same time, the analysis of literary, philosophical and artistic responses to the Holocaust shed new light on many familiar debates of the recent ‘theory wars’ about the status of postmodernism and the political implications of poststructuralist theories (Rothberg 2).

Screen culture provides the opportunity to examine the development and change in representations of the Holocaust, and Jewish and Germanophone constructs of masculinity in a visual medium that is developed for mass consumption.<sup>4</sup> The aesthetics and visual imagery of screen culture not only engage the viewing audience, but also act as a portal to illustrate, at least to some extent, how perpetrator nations have dealt with

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<sup>4</sup> Screen culture is a form of visual media that can reach mass audiences. Print media can also reach mass audiences, but I have chosen to include screen culture because of its visual aesthetic nature that can mimic, exaggerate, normalize or even fetishize depictions of humanity.

the crimes of National Socialism and the Holocaust, and the narrative they are creating for both domestic and international audiences. My analysis of screen culture productions delves into the issues of portraying Jewish and Germanophone masculinity as well as the type of masculinity that is imagined in the present, when imagining the past.

The model of Fascist masculinity has impacted the development of both Jewish and Germanophone masculinities. For Klaus Theweleit, it embodies more than physicality, aesthetics or even racial pedigree. It is the merging of National Socialist ideology with the ideal of the racially pure Germanic male that created the German Fascist male. These two elements are forged together through battle, shedding blood in the name of the fatherland. It is the militarized essence of Fascist masculinity that differentiates it from the controlled masculinity of the footballer. Theweleit further theorizes that Fascist masculinity must be earned, it cannot be bestowed or inherited. Indeed, one may be born with the correct degree of racial purity according to National Socialism, but masculinity is only achieved, writes Theweleit, as a result of rendering itself malleable to Fascism and put in to service to advance the Fascist cause: “the German body has to be stripped of its flesh (and) be encased in leather, Krupp steel or whatever if it is to earn the label German” and only then will it be truly an example of Fascist masculinity (Theweleit 84). This is a construct that transcends individual sexuality and the desires of the singular. “The soldier male is a man who would doubtless be entranced to have his passport stamped ‘Sex’: German” (ibid. 85). Although the physicality of how the German Fascist male is presented, as well as the enduring

allure of Fascist symbols and clothing are components of my analysis, I focus specifically on how alternative constructs of masculinity emerged.

The militarized male was controlled and, with the eventual development and rearmament of the German *Bundeswehr* in the 1950s, the new militarized German soldier was presented as a peace-keeper, a member of a “stabilization force” or an armed relief worker. The image of the German male as an offensive, fighting soldier was discredited by National Socialism and was an image unpopular with large segments of the German populace. As recently as 2006 the Bush administration created an international scandal when it offered the unsolicited advice that Germans and German soldiers needed to learn “how to kill again” (Hammerstein, Konstantin von et al.). Since the end of the Second World War, the German male has been encouraged to be controlled, responsible and reluctant to use power unless absolutely necessary. The new German militarized male was equated with acts of defense and civil reconstruction, but not war. My analysis of the alternative constructs of masculinity addresses both the emergence and development of models as well as the effects of the Holocaust on the construction and performance of masculinity in the contemporary era.

Following the introduction, there are four chapters, each on a specific theme. In Chapter One I explore three leading constructs of masculinity that emerged in West Germany following the end of the Second World War: first, what Uta Poiger has designated as the ‘Western Hero,’ second, the sporting male I designate the ‘Footballer,’ and finally, the ‘Softie.’ I have chosen to focus on these three specific constructs of masculinity because they represent a trajectory in the formation of post-Holocaust

Germanophone masculinities. Moving from the Western Hero – the earliest construct and one that also influenced depictions of masculinity in German *Heimatfilme* – to the Footballer and Softie, one can trace, as Susan Jeffords says, the remasculinization of Germanophone men. In addition, the Footballer and Softie have continued, through the enormous popularity of football and the prevalence of soft masculinity in Germanophone Europe, to influence contemporary conceptualizations.

Each of these three constructs offers multiple points of contrast to the Fascist masculinity. Throughout the trajectory that German masculinity followed in the wake of the Second World War – from the remasculinization efforts facilitated by American Western films, to organic models depicted in the *Heimatfilm*, to the longevity of the masculine model of the Footballer - the spectre of the National Socialist male continued to remind Germans, Austrians and indeed the world, of the potential dangers of militarized masculinity. Cultural productions such as books, films, and exhibitions played an important role in keeping the reality and extent of the Holocaust present in the public sphere.<sup>5</sup> Whether it was early American re-education films such as *Die Todesmühlen* (*The Deathmills*, 1945) or more contemporary historical dramas such as *Der Untergang* (*The Downfall*, 2004), Germanophone Europeans were reminded of the reality of the crimes of the National Socialist period.

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5 One such exhibition and book was the German-produced exhibition, "*Verbrechen der Wehrmacht. Dimensionen des Vernichtungskrieges 1941-1944*" (Crimes of the German Wehrmacht: Dimensions of a War of a War of Annihilation 1941-1945), which toured Germany and Austria from 1995-2005. It deconstructed the national myth of an honourable German army, further reinforcing the dangers of the Fascist, militarized masculinity.

Next, in Chapter Two, I examine the construction and performance of masculinity in the memoirs of three Jewish men who returned to Germanophone Europe after World War II. I chose them because they are exceptional male individuals who not only survived the Holocaust but also contributed to the judicial, cultural and societal development of post-war (West) Germany and Austria. I have chosen from among the many models of masculinity that undoubtedly developed in post-Holocaust Europe three conceptualizations that demonstrate the unwavering commitment that Jews in Germanophone lands demonstrated to their host country and an allegiance that resulted in enormous contributions to Germanophone societies. Indeed, they may be seen as following in the footsteps of such notables as Arthur Schnitzler, Max Liebermann, and Stefan Zweig.

Discussed in chronological order, according to the publication date of their memoirs, Simon Wiesenthal, Marcel Reich-Ranicki and Paul Spiegel – three exceptional, prominent individuals who made significant contributions to civil society – serve as the basis for an investigation in their personal and public conceptualizations of masculinity. I describe Wiesenthal as the ‘Solitary Justice Seeker,’ intent on seeking justice for the murdered Jews of Europe by bringing Nazis to justice. Unlike other Jewish men released from Nazi concentration camps who engaged in sexual relations with German women – either for pleasure or, as Atina Grossmann notes, revenge – Wiesenthal displayed no such interest. Engaging in sexual relations as a means to reassert his masculinity seems not to have been a part of Wiesenthal’s rehabilitation; only the desire to bring former Nazis to justice motivated him, something evident in

Wiesenthal's complicated relationship with his wife, which is also examined. I describe Marcel Reich-Ranicki as a '*Kulturmensch*,' linked to German cultural traditions and values almost at the expense of everything else. Finally, I describe the third protagonist, Paul Spiegel, as a 'bridge-builder' for his unwavering commitment to building not only a Jewish community in Germany, but enhancing relations between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans. When read together in Chapter Two, the memoirs and life experiences of these three individual men create a mosaic-like depiction of Jewish constructs of masculinity that emerged following the end of the Second World War.

Next, the genre of *Väterliteratur* – the subject of Chapter Three – illustrates how some Germans, descended from Nazi perpetrators or complicit bystanders, grappled with their own familial legacy. This genre also provides a significant opportunity to understand how Fascist masculinity, though militarily defeated at the end of the Second World War, expressed itself in the family setting. With its theme of the trans-generational effects of National Socialism on German families, *Väterliteratur* demonstrates not just the lingering effect of Fascist masculinity but also how descendants of Nazi perpetrators and complicit bystanders strive to integrate this legacy into a broader understanding of their family history. In 2005 German historian Moritz Pfeiffer – who works at the infamous Wewelsburg Castle in Germany which was originally built as a residence for the Prince Bishops of Paderborn and then chosen by *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler to be the ideological centre for the elite members of the SS – questioned his own grandfather about his role in the Wehrmacht during the Second World War. When Pfeiffer fact-checked his grandfather's oral history account

with archival records, he noticed numerous discrepancies that became the basis for further investigation with his grandfather. Pfeiffer notes: “Now the problem is that no one is listening to that generation anymore. As a source of information, one’s relatives are largely being ignored, but one day it will be too late” (Crossland –Spiegel article). Pfeiffer’s research culminated in the publication of *Mein Großvater im Krieg 1939-1945* (*My Grandfather in the War 1939-1945*, Donat, 2012) and is a call to other Germans to embark on similar journeys while their grandparents are still alive.

In this chapter I examine the construct and representation of masculinity in three typical works of *Väterliteratur* that provide insight into the familial dynamics and relationships of Nazi perpetrators and complicit bystanders, offer evidence of the transgenerational effects of Fascist masculinity, and demonstrate the complex nature of memory and postmemory: Sigfrid Gauch’s *Traces of My Father* (*Väterspuren*, 1979), Ruth Rehmman’s *The Man In The Pulpit: Questions For A Father* (*Der Mann auf der Kanzel: Fragen an einen Vater*) and Katrin Himmler’s *The Himmler Brothers* (*Die Brüder Himmler*). In doing so, I build on the foundational work of Michael Schneider, who opened up the discourse on *Väterliteratur*, and of Gisela Moffit and Barbara Kosta, who expanded the scholarship on the genre. The texts of Gauch, Rehmman, and Himmler are used to demonstrate not only the continuing legacy of the National Socialist construct of masculinity on the descendants of perpetrators and collaborators, but also how this family history is acknowledged and synthesized by descendants.

Next, in Chapter Four, I turn to three visual culture productions which contributed to the Holocaust being brought into the public sphere in Germany and

Austria.<sup>6</sup> They represent what Michael Rothberg terms the representation of ‘traumatic realism’: “a demand that representations of the genocide be realistic registers the desire for an undistorted documentation of history and the fear that flights of the imagination or of philosophical speculation will trivialize the events, mock the “literalness” of the victims’ suffering, and lend ammunition to the Holocaust negationists” (Rothberg 108). Analyzed in this chapter are Michael Verhoeven’s 1989 *Das schreckliche Mädchen*, a film which utilizes postmodern camera techniques and set design to painstakingly depict the controversy over one town’s reluctance to come to terms with its involvement in National Socialism; Oliver Storz’s 1995 *Drei Tage im April (Three Days in April)*, which solemnly depicts a town’s attempt to distance itself from the victims of the concentration camp system; and Malte Ludin’s 2005 documentary *2 oder 3 Dinge, die ich von ihm weiß (2 or 3 Things I Know About Him)*, which pieces together the painful truth of Ludin’s father, the Nazi German ambassador to Slovakia.

Whereas Chapter Four deals with films produced between 1989 and 2005 that are characterized by depicting the realism of the crimes of National Socialism and the Holocaust, and focuses primarily on the portrayal of Germanophone constructs of

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<sup>6</sup> Commenting on the depiction of German masculinity in contemporary German screen culture in the 2000s, Heidi Schlipphacke has argued that contemporary films “dramatise the schizophrenic split that follows from the attempt to achieve identity without wholeness, without the past or usable models of masculinity (Schlipphacke 30). Schlipphacke, however, concentrates on a specific depiction of masculinity from films that include *Das weiße Rauschen (The White Noise)*, dir. Hans Weingartner, 2001), *Der freie Wille (The Free Will)*, dir. Matthias Glasner 2006), and *Ein Freund von mir (A Friend of Mine)*, dir. Sebastian Schipper, 2006), which she posits “portray German masculinity as either literally or figuratively schizophrenic” (Schlipphacke 30). While her argument is convincing for the specific films she reads, these films represent just one aspect of the visualization of German masculinity in contemporary screen culture. Schlipphacke neglects competing conceptualizations of soft, comedic and action-hero masculinity as depicted, by Alexander Fehling in *Am Ende kommen Touristen (And Along Come the Tourists)*, Warnerbros, dir. Robert Thalheim, 2007), Til Schweiger in *Männerherzen (Men in the City)*, Warnerbros, dir. Simon Verhoeven, 2009), or Mathis Landwehr in *Lasko – Die Faust Gottes (Lasko – The Fist of God)*, Universum, dir. Axel Sand, 2009).

masculinity, the films profiled in Chapter Five represent productions from 2006 to 2011 that deal with both Jewish and Germanophone depictions of masculinity and demonstrate a movement towards the normalization of the depiction of the Holocaust as well as the players – the victims, bystanders and perpetrators. Included are Rosa von Praunheim's provocative and controversial 2006 *Männer, Helden, schwule Nazis (Men, Heroes, and Gay Nazis)*, Stefan Ruzowitzky's 2007 Austrian-German co-production *Die Fälscher (The Counterfeiters)*, and Wolfgang Murnberger's 2010 *Mein bester Feind (My Best Enemy 2011)*.<sup>7</sup> While the image of the militarized Fascist male is discussed in relation to each of these films, it is von Praunheim's depiction of neo-Fascist masculinity that demonstrates the lingering fascination some segments of the men have with both the ideology and the accoutrements of National Socialism.

In 2002, Stephen R. Haynes posed the question "Why, then, has the study of masculinity achieved so little scholarly recognition in the interdisciplinary of Holocaust Studies?" (Haynes 144). Even the scholarship that emerged previous to Haynes' question, (cf. Browning, Bartov, Theweleit) tended to focus on the specific experiences and behaviour of the perpetrators. I contribute to it by looking at the specificity of how Germanophone and Jewish masculinity emerged from the Holocaust, by analyzing a broad range of cultural representations, and by contending that both Germanophone and Jewish masculinities were forever altered by the Holocaust, while at the same time remaining inextricably linked together. As a project that draws on scholarship from a

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<sup>7</sup> Initially launched in German as *Mein bester Feind* in 2010, the English language edition, *My Best Enemy*, was released in 2011 on DVD.

variety of disciplines, a common thread running throughout the work and uniting its interdisciplinary approach is the focus on conceptualizations of masculinity.

The field of masculinities has the potential to transform our understanding of historical events, as well as of how masculinity is constructed in response to the continual ebb and flow of crises it encounters. “Historians,” writes Judith Allen, “have not identified parallel ‘crises in femininity’” (Allen 202). Accordingly, applying the lens of gender, and masculinities in particular, to history, and moments in history, provides new vistas of understanding.

## Chapter One:

### Expressions of Post-Holocaust Masculinity in Germanophone Culture

Without tenderness, a man is uninteresting.  
Marlene Dietrich

The crisis of masculinity that ensued in Germanophone Europe following the end of the Second World War necessitated the development of new conceptualizations of what being male meant. Germany's military defeat and the public awareness of the genocide of European Jewry were integral factors that discredited the dominant model of masculinity. The legitimacy of the militarized Fascist male collapsed. In response to this crisis of masculinity, Germanophone culture sought to redefine societal and gender constructs, shedding the vestiges of National Socialist values. Goebbels' call for "Total War" culminated in the total defeat of Nazi Germany, and the discrediting of its value system. Germanophone culture was particularly malleable to the influences of the Allies during the immediate post-war period.<sup>8</sup> In this chapter I deal specifically with the intersection of Germanophone masculinity and American cultural influences in the immediate post-war period as well as domestic representations of Germanophone masculinity that developed organically. The space of culturally German masculinity became one of the key places through which growing anxieties about nationalism,

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<sup>8</sup> Randall Bytwerk calls Goebbels' "Total War" speech of February 18, 1943 perhaps the single most famous Nazi speech. In the rousing speech Goebbels asked the German people: "Do you agree that above all in war, according to the National Socialist party platform, the same rights and duties should apply to all, that the homeland should bear the heavy burdens of war together, and that the burdens should be shared equally between high and low and rich and poor?" (Bytwerk 137). The widely circulated speech and film coverage created the impression of a nation committed to carrying out the will of the National Socialists, doing whatever was necessary to win the war.

consumerism, Americanism, racism, and domesticity could be resolved (Jeffords 163). It was a sphere in which the structural elements of the past not only could be negotiated, but also influenced by the cultural values and aesthetics that accompanied both the American and Soviet occupation forces. The Western Allies, in particular, sought to inspire new standards of behavior for a new generation of Germanophone men. As this chapter demonstrates, American film, sports and other forms of cultural production played an important role in disseminating new social values to the German-speaking public.

Post-war Germanophone society in Europe faced several noteworthy factors that both exacerbated this crisis and encouraged the construction of new models of masculinity. The collapse of traditional models of power relationships between men and women, the gradual repatriation of Germanophone men from prison camps in the former USSR, and the lingering effects of a generation of youth raised on National Socialist propaganda coalesced and confronted attempts to re-masculinize Germanophone men. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, tremendous pressure brought about by a gendered population imbalance challenged conventional societal norms. Nearly four million German men had been killed in the war, and at the end of the hostilities, 11.7 million German men were held in prison camps (Fehrenbach 95). As a result, the term "*Frauenüberschuß*" (lit. women surplus) entered the German vernacular, implying that the number of women in Germany significantly outnumbered the men. Not only did the proportion of women to men exceed conventional levels, but men present in society were often shadows of their former selves. "In the households in which a man was present he

was often physically or psychologically scarred, unwilling or unable to work, or disqualified from some jobs because of his National Socialist loyalties” (Fehrenbach 95). Not only were gendered constructs of behavior in flux, the effects of war had damaged men’s ability to reintegrate. Germanophone culture was presented with a crisis of masculinity on an unprecedented scale.

In response to this crisis, Germanophone men negotiated new societal roles and defined new codes of acceptable behavior, the parameters of which were influenced by three significant events. First, and perhaps most pervasive, was the change in domestic life. As elsewhere, many Germanophone women had become, often by necessity, emancipated during the war. In the absence of men on the home front, women engaged in work outside of the home to provide for their families, made parenting decisions as single parents, and took control over the financial decisions. Indeed, during the war years many Germanophone households and families had been held together and maintained by women. Upon their return, Germanophone men defeated in battle encountered a much-changed domestic environment.

Second, as the prison camps in the Soviet Union eventually emptied, a new layer was added to the challenge in the form of reintegrating the former soldiers.<sup>9</sup> German men returned home as victims of Stalinist actions, not as defeated warriors of the National Socialist cause. There existed a very real disconnect between this image — and often, familial perceptions of them — as victims and their role, whether collective or individual, in the Nazi regime. Even German soldiers who had not ended up in Soviet

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<sup>9</sup> By 1950 most of the German men held in prison camps in the USSR had returned home. The last surviving German men returned home in 1956.

prison camps often recognized how much they had been changed by their own actions and behavior. That the Eastern Front was a particularly brutal theatre of war is evident in the life-writing — including memoirs, letters and other forms of life-writing documents — of German soldiers on the Eastern Front. One such was Willy Peter Reese, a 23 year-old who survived three years as a German soldier on the Russian front before being killed in 1944 and left behind a series of letters that were published posthumously in 2003 under the title *Mir selber seltsam fremd (A Stranger to Myself, 2005)*. Describing the brutality he had both seen and partaken in, Reese writes: “But after this experience it wasn’t possible for life to go on; no one who had been through this could ever be a human and a son of God anymore. Yet things went on; they had to be borne and gotten over” (Reese 153). The German soldiers who returned home defeated in battle usually bore psychological scars.

Third, young Germanophone males who had survived had often been subjected to the ubiquitously propagandist milieu of Nazi Germany. Over the twelve-year National Socialist regime, they had been indoctrinated through a revamped and Nazified school system, as well as the Hitler Youth with its emphasis on mass events and activities. Although the Fascist male was discredited at the end of the war, eradicating or even changing racist attitudes often proved more difficult. In his 1985 memoir *A Child of Hitler*, Alfons Heck describes his transition from being a leader in the Hitler Youth to a civilian at the end of the Second World War: “I conceded nothing more than military defeat. I hadn’t, as yet, the slightest feeling of guilt. I regretted only that we had lost the war. It took several years of painful re-education to accept, reluctantly, our slaughter of

millions of innocent people whom we had decreed to be ‘subhuman’” (Heck 197). Historian Michael Kater has also described the lingering effects of propaganda on youth: “In the first few post-war years, an appreciable number of adolescents were still exhibiting racist patterns of prejudice, as when a boy with a KLV [*Kinderlandverschickung* (Save the Children in the Country program)] found himself spitting at a displaced Polish worker in Hanover, a captured nurse resented having to work side by side with American Jews, and the physical proximity of black soldiers was reported as being offensive” (Kater 255). The multiple layers to the crisis of masculinity dictated that it would take time as well as education before new models emerged and were accepted.

In this chapter I examine three paradigmatic constructs of masculinity that emerged in post-Holocaust Germanophone Europe. The first model analysed is that of the “Western Hero” derived from American films. Often typified as a morally upright sheriff who sought justice not vengeance, the Western Hero provided a new and respectable model for Germanophone men. Although initially resisted by some as an unwelcome foreign influence, the Western Hero became the archetype of a strong yet restrained male who used weapons only for defensive purposes. As historian Uta Poiger cogently argues, “in the course of the 1950s West German fears increasingly disappeared as more and more commentators assessed Westerns positively. American Westerns that could be interpreted as asserting the power of brave men and of the state made the ‘Western’ genre more respectable in West Germany” (Poiger 156). Building on Poiger’s premise that Germanophone models of masculinity were substantially re-imagined by

American films — notably the Western — I posit that new models of masculinity were mined from manifold sources, both American via the Western and domestic via the *Heimatfilm*, both of which are explored in this chapter.

The second model I explore is that of the “Footballer” as exemplified by the immense popularity of the soccer-playing male in Germanophone Europe.<sup>10</sup> In *German Football: History, Society, Culture* (2006), a definitive link is established between the masculinity of the sports figure, specifically the footballer, and national identity. In post-Holocaust Germanophone Europe the footballer became, for some segments of society, the idealized male. Yet the melding of this model of acceptable masculinity with national identity has not been without angst. Fans have turned soccer games into battlefields with racist and antisemitic slurs hurled at opposing teams. The footballer with his lithe physique may be a liberating representation of masculine strength and power and inspire national pride, but it is also linked with expressions of intolerance. German and European media outlets such as *Der Spiegel* regularly report on such occurrences during soccer matches.<sup>11</sup>

The third paradigm I analyze is that of the “Softie,” which emerged in the 1970s in the former West Germany. The formulation of soft masculinity has been both resilient and stable and as I demonstrate later in this chapter, it is still very prevalent today. Literary theorist Barbara Kosta has noted that: “This particular expression of masculinity

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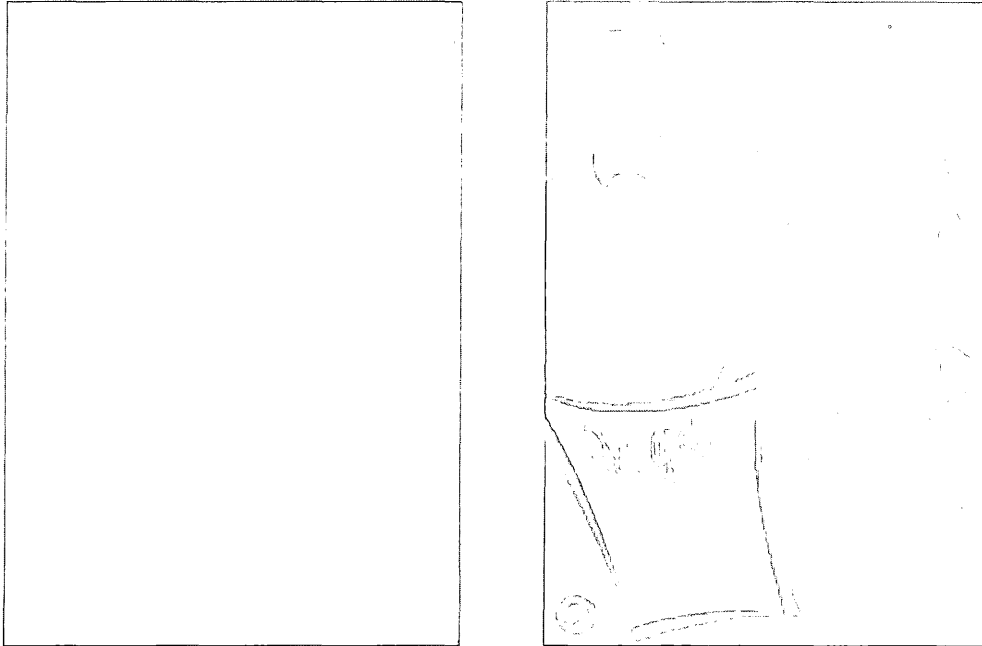
<sup>10</sup> I use the terms football and footballer to correspond with the German (der) *Fussball* and (der) *Fussballspieler* rather than the American translations of soccer and soccer player. The North American usage of the term football bears no similarity with its German equivalent.

<sup>11</sup> Further information on antisemitism in European football has been documented by the European Forum on Antisemitism. <http://www.european-forum-on-antisemitism.org/incidents-and-controversies/view/article/halle-saxony-anhalt-germany-antisemitism-in-soccer-1/>

was cultivated in the 1970s, in response to demands of the women's movement and a raised consciousness of power relations, masculinity/patriarchy came under rigorous scrutiny" (Kosta 224). As this new, supposedly liberal-minded, German-speaking ideal of masculinity emerged, the tension between the spheres of sexuality, nationalism, and masculinity grew, culminating in the now historic visual image of Chancellor Willy Brandt's 1970 *Warschauer Kniefall*. An act of humility to some, controversial to many more, there can be no doubt that this simple but dramatic gesture of reconciliation and repentance at the foot of the Ghetto Fighters' memorial in Warsaw, Poland – a common gesture in certain branches of Christianity – could only have been made by someone who had experienced the tension of masculinity so prevalent after the end of the Second World War and was determined to prevent the Nazi version of militarized masculinity from becoming a dominant expression of masculinity again. By the mid-1980s the Softie construct of masculinity, which sought to redefine the paradigms by which masculinity was both performed and represented, was itself heavily critiqued. The field of psychology was particularly accusatory that the Softie construct had swung the pendulum too far away from traditional expressions of masculinity. Kosta notes that at a 1984 symposium of psychoanalysts in Munich, an overwhelming majority of the participants expressed the need for a new father figure: "We need fathers again, more fathers and stronger ones, that is to say, masculine ones" (Kosta 224). This continued reverberation of factors influencing masculinity and involving fathers is one of the central themes discussed later in Chapter Four. Understanding the development and construction of these three identifiable models of masculinity, which emerged in post-

Holocaust Germanophone culture — the “Western Hero”, the “Footballer”, and the “Softie” —, demonstrates the interconnectedness of history, gender, and sexuality.

## The Western Hero in American Film Comes to Germanophone Europe



American film proved to be an effective vehicle through which new constructs of masculinity, as well as Western values, could be widely disseminated to the German-speaking public. Films began to be screened regularly in the U.S. zone in late July 1945, when film officers permitted twenty theaters to open (Fehrenbach 54). From this point onwards, movie theatre openings steadily increased, particularly in Berlin. Following an increasingly responsive trajectory, American films were offered for public consumption and permeated Germanophone consciousness. Films thought to provide German audiences with the appropriate messages about democracy, freedom and responsibility were approved by American military personnel. American films shown to the German public reinforced images and themes consistent with the values American forces wished to cultivate in Germans. Whether it was musical productions such as *Holiday Inn*

(Paramount, dir. Mark Sandrich, 1942), *Going My Way* (Paramount, dir. Leo McCarey, 1944) or *Rhapsody in Blue* (Warner Bros., dir. Irving Rapper, 1945), post-war German audiences encountered constructs of masculinity that emphasized thinking, compassionate and sensitive men. Even dramatic releases such as *A Stolen Life* (Paramount, dir. Curtis Bernhardt, 1946), *Jane Eyre* (20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, dir. Robert Stevenson, 1943) and *The Valley of Decision* (MGM, dir. Tay Garnett, 1945) reinforced these themes to German audiences. By 1948, as the Marshall Plan for rebuilding Germany was gradually adopted in the British and French spheres of influence, the tone of the Western values had become aligned predominantly with Americanization.

It was the genre of the American Western that presented Germanophone audiences with a lasting prototype for a new conceptualization of masculinity. The Western Hero emerged from the silver screen to reinvigorate Germanophone men. Whether the leading male was an honorable sheriff as in *A Lady Takes a Chance* (RKO, dir. William A. Seiter, 1943) or a respectable cowboy as in *Tall in the Saddle* (RKO, dir. Edwin L. Marin, 1944), masculinity was characterized by the attributes of fairness, justice for the wronged, and a controlled version of masculinity. These were not rogues or outlaws; rather the Western Hero was often a thoughtful, justice-seeking male who only used firearms when absolutely necessary. Among the iconic images of American masculinity, the cowboy has transcended time and place to become an archetypal American hero, the signifier of ideal masculinity (Vettel-Becker 116).

The comedic Western *Destry Rides Again* (Universal, dir. George Marshall, 1939), starring Marlene Dietrich and James Stewart, was immensely popular when it was

released in German theatres in 1947.<sup>12</sup> It presented audiences with an important conceptual framework and images for negotiating new constructs of masculinity. *Destry Rides Again* was the first film Dietrich, an outspoken critic of National Socialism, made after officially taking American citizenship. Dietrich, who had refused all offers to be cast in German films during the National Socialist period, returned to German movie theatres as an American citizen, thereby lending additional credibility to American models of masculinity. One of the first civilians to enter Germany territory after the collapse of the Third Reich, Dietrich was a controversial figure in German popular consciousness.<sup>13</sup> For some she was a traitor who had engaged in entertaining the American troops, raised funds to support the American war effort, and renounced the country of her birth when she took American citizenship. For others, she represented the anti-Fascist movement. “She represented a different vision of Germany: of Germany-in-exile and of anti-Fascist resistance” (*Marlene Dietrich: Her Own Song*, dir. J. David Riva, 2001). Dietrich lent a moral authority to new conceptualizations of masculinity and Germanness. However, *A Foreign Affair* (Paramount, dir. Billy Wilder, 1948), which depicted fraternization between the American GIs and German *Fräuleins*, and American soldiers engaging in Berlin’s thriving black market, addressed this controversial topic through the comedic genre, amidst the rubble of a bombed out Berlin. The film was

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<sup>12</sup> The German language publicity posters shown on the previous page prominently featured the film’s star, Berlin-born Marlene Dietrich.

<sup>13</sup> In *Marlene Dietrich: Her Own Song* (dir. J. David Riva, 2001) Dietrich’s daughter Maria Riva recounts the story her mother often told of when she first entered Germany with the American troops. According to Dietrich, the women of the town were so overjoyed to see her and meet her in person that they pooled their very limited food supplies and baked a cake for her and welcomed her into their homes. It is a seemingly impossible story to believe, and may reflect the manner in which Dietrich would have liked to have been received.

banned from being shown in Germany by the American occupation forces until 1977.<sup>14</sup> *Destry Rides Again* presented Dietrich in a less controversial and less divisive role. Similarly, Stewart's character Sheriff Destry epitomizes the new man, the hero who avoids bloodshed, fights for justice and not material gain, and is confident in his expression of masculinity.

Under its German title *Der Grosse Bluff*, audiences encountered a sheriff reluctant to carry a gun, who preferred dialogue to gunfights and believed in the power of the law to uphold standards of civility. Paramount to this conceptualization of masculinity is the inherent knowledge that Destry is capable of using a gun; he simply chooses not to. As Louisiana-born saloon singer "Frenchie" — a guise producers believed would account for her distinctive accent — Berlin-born Dietrich was the *femme fatale* to Stewart's noble sheriff, the enchantress capable of leading a good man astray, a construct of Germanophone manhood shared by Simon Wiesenthal and explored in detail in Chapter Two. As the holder of power over men, Frenchie must be killed off in the final scene of the film to enable the controlled and responsible male, embodied by

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<sup>14</sup> The controversy generated by *A Foreign Affair* was in fact multi-layered. Although the US government deplored what they believed was the unfavourable portrayal of American GIs, some Holocaust survivors felt that Wilder's use of comedy was inappropriate to the subject matter. In 1952, Herbert G. Luft, a Holocaust survivor and member of the Screen Writers' Guild delivered a scathing rebuke of Wilder in *The Quarterly of Film, Radio and Television* titled "A Matter of Decadence." Luft noted: "The Nazis are seen as double-crossers, yet drawn with much charm and noblesse, living in an atmosphere of comparative ease, with a romantic facade covering up a decade of mass murders. Those praising the guts of the story didn't see the malefic travesty. Our occupation forces appear undisciplined and ill-behaved. It is not funny to see Berlin's citizenry tyrannized by the same clique of Nazis whom we have cursed so often, or to view fräuleins complacently ruling the destiny of American officers, or to realize that a huge black-market exists under the very eye of the military government. Undoubtedly, the frivolous slant of the picture helped to increase animosity against America among those who have lived under the yoke of the Nazis." (63-64). Rob Nixon noted that *A Foreign Affair* did not appear in German theatres until 1977 when it was well received.

Destry, not only to survive but also to thrive and establish and maintain order on the Western frontier. One can but imagine the message that Germanophone audiences derived from this paradigm: Dietrich, coded as female, German and initially powerful but killed was symbolic of weakness, while Stewart, coded as male, American and misread as weak but triumphant in the end was symbolic of strength. A new construct of masculinity, values and behavior was being ushered in.

One can reasonably imagine that the death of Dietrich's character also contributed to the film's popularity with post-war German audiences. Her public persona inside Germany had suffered by her long and continued absence. Film journals such as *Film-Kurier* gradually began depicting Dietrich in less flattering terms. By July 1934, when Dietrich was reported to have called off a Viennese tour, the journal's rancor was evident. "For the first time, 'Marlene' became 'Frau Dietrich' in an article that noted with injury that already last year, 'Frau Dietrich noticeably omitted to grace her German homeland and us unmodern Berliners with her presence'" (Carter 203). When Dietrich did return, it was as an American citizen and entertainer for the American troops.

Two of the biggest American box-office successes of the 1950s, *Shane* (Paramount, dir. George Stevens, 1953) and *High Noon* (United Artists, dir. Fred Zinnemann, 1952) also found extremely receptive audiences in Germanophone Europe. The Western Hero in each film emphasized the power, responsibility and effectiveness of restrained masculinity. In each, the protagonists are responsible men standing up to injustice and protecting their homes and families from outlaws and criminal activity. Both films deliver the moral message that protecting one's homeland and family is of

paramount importance and when needed, the restrained male will act with force to preserve and protect. Unlike the Fascist male, this is not the warrior entrusted with an ideological mission to cleanse Germany of its perceived enemies.<sup>15</sup> George Mosse notes: “Fascism heightened the warrior qualities of masculinity; racism brutalized them and transformed theory and rhetoric into reality” (Mosse 180). In contrast, the actions of the restrained male are always weighted with moral responsibility, a construct of controlled masculinity that permeated Germanophone consciousness.

Although the American Western delivered a positive message for a new conceptualization of maleness, it also unsettled some segments of the German population. Poiger notes: “Some West Germans were increasingly convinced that Westerns played an important role in forming male adolescent identities and led to male over-aggression. In 1950, one review of an American Western found that the audience of male adolescents were indulging in ‘a questionable frenzy of murder and manslaughter’” (Poiger 151-152). The concerns about American Westerns may have been, at least for some West Germans, class-based. In 1953, the sociologist Karl Bednarik closely linked the identity of young male workers, “a new type,” to the consumption of American imports (ibid. 153). Bednarik argues that it was German working-class males who avidly watched the American Western. Whether these young men were seeking adventure through cinematic exploits, were attracted to the exotic locale of the “Wild West” or

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<sup>15</sup> At various times in the National Socialist regime there were competing models of Fascist masculinity. Before the ‘Röhm Purge’ in 1934, the *Sturmabteilung* (S.A.) offered a rough, almost chaotic, street-fighter construct of masculinity. In contrast the *Schutzstaffeln* (S.S.) was an extremely disciplined, elite military corps distinguished by its black uniform. Throughout, the Hitler Youth promoted a sculpted physique, exercise and camaraderie. In characterizing the Fascist male, George Mosse notes: “The new Fascist male was exemplary, battling degeneration and embodying through his comportment the manly purity that had accompanied modern masculinity from the start” (Mosse 160).

were simply bored, Bednarik posits that there was a direct link between the young working-class men, their consumption of the American Western and their likelihood of participating in illegal or criminal activities.

Poiger points out that Bednarick's assumption is inherently flawed. The image of the American West already figured prominently in German culture in the pre-war and National Socialist periods thanks to the writing of Karl May. Working-class youth who stood in opposition to the Hitler Youth movement frequently used symbols of the Wild West as identity markers. In the Rhineland, for example, members of such opposition groups referred to themselves as "Navajos," thus identifying with the American Indians (Poiger 153). This "new type" Bednarick identifies is not, in essence, new. When one considers that the American Indian with whom they identified inhabited the lands long before the arrival of the European settlers, there is a further identification of a true indigenous identity being supplanted by a more dominant but foreign force, in this case National Socialism. One could argue that the working-class saw themselves as the true bearers of Germanic ideals, under assault by the National Socialist Hitler Youth.

The American West was popularized in German culture long before the American Western film was introduced by American occupation forces. The paperback novels of German author Karl May were a childhood favorite for many culturally German youth, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Arguably the most popular German writer of all time, May's books have been translated into more than 40 languages. Since their first publication in 1879, today more than 80 million copies of his work have been sold. May's works continued to reach new audiences with silent film versions of his narratives

produced during the 1920s, and in the 1960s a series of film adaptations enjoyed commercial success. As a testament to the enduring legacy of May's novels, German comedic actor Michael Herbig – who parodied the genre on his television show *Bullyparade* – released a film adaptation titled *Der Schuh des Manitu* (Manitou's Shoe) in 2002.

May's adventure novels of life on the wild American western frontier were avidly read by both sexes. In his memoir *A Drastic Turn of Destiny* (2009), Fred Mann describes his childhood in Leipzig and the popularity of American Western novels to him and his friends: "During this period we were all fascinated with the writing of the German 'Indian' writer Karl May. In his seventy years he had never actually met a real 'Red' Indian, but his writings seemed authentic to us. He wrote some seventy books, of which the most widely read is probably the novel *Winnitou*, the story of an Indian chief and his white friend 'Old Shatterhand.' Reading it made us participants in the life in the West of the great land America" (Mann 24-25). With the image of the American west figuring in the formative childhood years of many Germanophone youth, it is not surprising that the American Western film found such a receptive audience in Germanophone culture.

By the latter part of the 1950s, the negative connotation that the American Western film inspired in some West Germans dissipated and the genre had succeeded in becoming positively received. "The West Berlin newspaper *Der Tag* reported in December 1956 about two psychological studies reporting the effects of movies on young people. Both had concluded that a clear connection between movies and

delinquency could not be proven. The article quoted one study that found that adventure films were indeed important for adolescent development” (Poiger 159). The image of the strong yet restrained masculinity that commentators found in these westerns was likely particularly appealing as West Germans were rearming in the mid-1950s and were struggling to portray the new army as nonaggressive, anti-totalitarian, and staffed by male “citizens in uniform” (Poiger 157). The influence of the responsible, critically thinking male of the American Western on post-war German masculinity was palpable.

## Heimat Film (Re)Constructs an Organic German Masculinity



It would be facile to characterize Germanophone masculinity as being influenced solely by outside or American influences. While the American Western and other cinematic genres were being disseminated throughout German society, a domestic filmmaking industry was also re-emerging. “The most successful genre of the early post-war period has gone on to become one of the most critically disdained types of German films: namely, the *Heimatfilm*, which seemed to relegate the viewer to the cultural provinces” (Fehrenbach 8). As a genre, the *Heimatfilm* focused specifically on dramatic country landscapes and societal structuring, illustrating the connection between the countryside as represented cinematically and national identity. Yet as Stephan Zimmerman notes: “The basic ideas and motifs of this genre derive from numerous influences. One influence is the idealization of *Heimat*, or homeland. This idealization is demonstrated

by characters finding hope, acceptance and balance only within very pure Arcadian environments, usually ‘virgin’ landscapes, where the main characters could find themselves and be left alone by an ignorant society” (Zimmerman 173). Nature, rural landscapes and human relationships characterize this genre.<sup>16</sup> Film historian Johannes von Moltke comments, “Today the *Heimatfilm* has become virtually synonymous with the parochialism of German cinema during the Adenauer era, which more than one scholar prefers to remember as ‘the Dark Ages,’ nothing but *Heimatfilm* and reaction” (von Moltke 22). As von Moltke has shown, the genre is considerably more complex: it provided a site where 1950s film culture could negotiate central concerns with home, space, and belonging in the ongoing process of national construction. Culturally, the *Heimatfilm* represents an important domestic contribution to the construction of post-war German masculinity. Although not immune to the influences of Americanism and the Western Allies, the *Heimatfilm* demonstrated an important and organic development of models of masculinity linked to the German land and values that pre-dated National Socialism.

As a cultural influence, the *Heimatfilm* must not be dismissed nor marginalized. From the regeneration of the *Heimatfilm* genre in the 1950s and 1960s, approximately three hundred films were produced (Zimmerman 175). Among the films which enjoyed commercial and critical success are: *Schwarzwaldmädel* (*Black Forest Girl*, Berolina, dir. Hans Deppe, 1950) *Grün ist die Heide* (*Green is the Heath*, Berolina, dir. Hans

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<sup>16</sup> Zimmerman posits that the *Heimatfilm* is one of the only original genres created in German and compares it to the American Western in how landscape and national identity are intertwined. The *Bergfilm* (mountain film) with its emphasis on dramatic mountainous vistas and purity of the human condition is often considered the predecessor of the *Heimatfilm*.

Deppe, 1951), *Die Fischerin vom dem Bodensee* (*The Fisher Girl of Lake Constance*, Neubach Film, dir. Harald Reinl, 1956) and *Hoch oben auf dem Berg* (*High Up on the Mountain*, Berolina, dir. Géza von Bolváry, 1957). In this section I examine one of the prototypes for the reinvigoration of the *Heimatfilm* genre: *Grün ist die Heide*. Examination of this film identifies the characteristics, paradigms and values that define the genre, particularly in the immediate post-war era.

Although the American Western introduced important models of masculinity for a new era of German masculinity, it alone could not help to re-establish a sense of German identity and what it meant to be a German male in the wake of the Holocaust. Western films could introduce important themes and behavioral constructs with the goal of reintegrating German men and countering National Socialist ideology after twelve years of propaganda, but it took German cinema to make the connection to home and country. As Susan Jefford emphasizes, “There was in effect no ‘Germanness’ to return to, but only a set of familiar locations that had to be reconstructed under conditions of surveillance” (Jeffords 167). And yet, there was a sense of “Germanness” in language and literature, in the history and achievements before the 12-year reign of National Socialism, and certainly in the mythical, if not seemingly fragile, concept of *Heimat*.

Defining *Heimat* has been perhaps more difficult than describing what *Heimat* has come to represent and the intrinsic meanings associated with it. The Austrian-born German-Jewish author Jean Améry reflected on what *Heimat* meant from the perspective of someone who was forced into exile. He defines *Heimat* as a “land of childhood and youth,” in which we have learned and control the “dialectic of knowing and perceiving,

of trust and confidence” (Vansant 36). Taking Améry’s definition of *Heimat*, one can determine that Germanness can be gleaned, at least for the many German men of the post-war period, from an earlier period. Indeed, images of *Heimat* permeate the Romantic and *Bergfilm* genres that pre-date National Socialism. For the men who experienced childhood during the twelve years of National Socialism, these earlier conceptualizations of *Heimat* were integrated into a new understanding of Germanness. The conceptualizations of *Heimat* were imagined, reconfigured and represented for a new era of cinema.

As a domestic product, the genre of the *Heimatfilm* was important for relaying to the German public a construct of masculinity that developed organically. Undoubtedly, American films influenced the development of this genre, but the *Heimatfilm* also demonstrated the continuance of a domestic film industry rooted in German traditions of land, culture and community. Heide Fehrenbach notes: “Film histories consistently tell the story of West German cinema as an extension of World War II, describing military defeat as merely the prelude to a much more serious cultural emasculation by Hollywood. Hollywood’s thrust into the West German market, it has been claimed, stunted the development of a native cinema by monopolizing domestic screen time, shutting West German films out of the international (and especially European) market, and colonizing the consciousness of West German citizens by transforming them into American-style consumers” (Fehrenbach 149). Such narratives neglect the West German agency in revitalizing and re-establishing the genre of the *Heimatfilm*. The masculinity exemplified in the *Heimatfilm* reinforced the concept of controlled masculinity, which

shared similarities with the American Western Hero, yet was importantly linked to the German land and tradition.

Whereas Fehrenbach emphasizes the importance of the German land as portrayed in the *Heimatfilm* as integral to the reconstruction of German national identity, I posit that the genre also portrays an important development in the conceptualization and representation of a new German masculinity. Often characterized by themes of blissful heterosexual domesticity and an idyllic rural lifestyle, the *Heimatfilm* offered the German public a sense of comfort and succor during the tremendous social upheaval during the post-war period. Rather than providing viewers with a sense of escapism, the *Heimatfilm* offered both new constructs of masculine behavior and examples of traversing challenges in re-establishing a German national identity. In *Grün ist die Heide* (*Green is the Heath*) viewers encountered the restorative and regenerative effect of the German *Heimat*: a damaged German father-figure – who happens to be an expellee from former German lands ceded to Poland at the end of the war – is rehabilitated; the male villagers are hard-working proletarian men at home working the land and enjoying simple pleasures such as drinking ale in the local tavern; the game warden is reminiscent of the sherriff in the American Western; and a group of wandering minstrels, who are depicted as country folk and notably not Gypsies, extol the virtues of uncomplicated rural life. In this view, the function of the *Heimatfilm* is not so much to negate the effects of modernity, as critics have suggested, but rather to model compromise solutions: negotiating the encroaching demands of modernity within the spaces of *Heimat*, these films also allow the viewer to imagine post-war reconstruction as a process that

embraces both the traditionalism of *Heimat* and the advances of modernization (von Moltke 120).

During 1951-52, *Grün ist die Heide* was one of the most popular films in West Germany. Awarded the Bambi award for most successful German film, it provided filmgoers with relief from the somber *Trümmerfilm* (rubble film) that focused on the devastation and consequences of National Socialism to post-war Germany. Characterized by a gritty tone and depiction of the realism of bombed-out German cities, the *Trümmerfilm* effectively ceased as a film genre after peaking in 1948 with domestic and international productions like *A Foreign Affair* (Paramount, dir. Billy Wilder, 1948), *Germania anno zero* (Tevere Film, dir. Roberto Rossellini, 1948) and *Berliner Ballade* (Comedia-Film GmbH, dir. Robert A. Stemmle, 1948). *Grün ist die Heide* offered viewers a visual shift aesthetically to the unspoiled countryside. Set against the backdrop of a remarkably unscathed and resplendent Bavarian landscape, the *Heimatfilm* also provided viewers with new constructs of masculinity and femininity.

In *Grün ist die Heide* the central protagonist, Lüder Lüdersen, is a German refugee displaced from his former home in Silesia by the war, and resettled in Lüneberg. The displacement and loss of his estate has unsettled Lüdersen, who has resorted to poaching in the surrounding forest. *Grün ist die Heide* grapples with the somber theme of German refugees integrating into post-war West Germany. Yet the film does not seek sympathy for the displaced Lüdersen; his poaching disturbs his daughter as well as the moral standards of the community and runs the risk of marginalizing him from society, seeing him convicted as a criminal, and displacing him once again from home and

*Heimat*. Once a landowner in Silesia, Lüdersen suffers from the quintessential post-war syndrome of *Heimatlosigkeit*, of which his poaching is clearly a symptom (von Moltke 81). Lüdersen is presented both as a victim of forced migration but also as a man who can control his destiny. He is faced with a clear moral choice. When he discovers that another man has also been poaching in the forest – this time not a displaced refugee but a circus worker who kills deer as food for the animals in his care while pocketing the money designated for the legitimate purchase of food – Lüdersen must decide whether or not to turn the man over to local authorities.

The film takes a decidedly more serious tone when the poacher is discovered to have murdered a man in the forest. Von Moltke sees the importance of Lüdersen's "confronting the poacher-as-murderer" in the fact that "he upholds the law of the community that he himself had been breaking, thus facilitating his own integration into the social order of the *Heimat*" (von Moltke 81). However, these two poachers can also be interpreted as representing the old military order of National Socialism. Encroaching on protected forestlands, they can be seen to represent the German soldiers who carried out the policy of enlarging the Third Reich through pursuit of *Lebensraum* (living space). Their attempt to kill the protected deer is the symbolic representation of the murder of innocents. That the poachers are eventually caught reinforces the post-war outlook of bringing perpetrators of the crimes of National Socialism to justice, freeing the honourable citizens of the towns and countryside from their negative influences. For Lüdersen, the forest and the German *Heimat* transformed him in accordance to the ideals and values of the new, post-Holocaust German man. Not only has he recognized his

personal complicity in poaching, he has also sought to redeem himself through his acceptance and enforcement of the laws of the community.

Lüdersen's redemption is evidenced in a thoughtful speech he delivers to the village men seated around a large table just before his planned departure from the town (DVD 1:08:07):

My dear friends, allow me to say a few words before I take my leave of you. It is not for myself alone, but for the many others who have found a second home among you. When I was in the forest here, often I felt as if I were home again. The natural beauty comforted me and made me forget what I had lost. Through [the] goodwill and understanding that you have shown me, I have found myself again. Whoever has not been compelled to leave his home cannot know what it means to be without one [*heimatlos*].

For this refugee, expelled from a former German territory, redemption and a new construct of masculinity were made possible by forming a deep and personal connection to two necessary elements: *Heimat* and *Gemeinschaft*, community.

A key component of that community were the female protagonists, who represented the new German women, freed from their mother's or grandmother's National Socialist conceptualization of womanhood as well as the immediate post-war reality of *Trümmerfrauen* (rubble women). National Socialism, in theory at least, relegated women's roles to a separate sphere from men. Women's activities, summed up in the slogan *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* (children, kitchen, church), were to be focused largely on the family and the home (Guenther 95). In practice, however, as noted earlier in this chapter, some German women did take on new roles, particularly in social and economic terms.

Upon liberation, Germanophone women's roles shifted again. From 1945-1946, women in Germany and Austria engaged in the harsh, physically demanding work of clearing and removing brick and mortar – often by hand or with rudimentary tools – from the bombed-out buildings of their cities, a scenario depicted in the short-lived *Trümmerfilm* genre. During the later post-war period, however, economic success first in West Germany and later in Austria, shifted women's roles back towards a more traditional paradigm.

In *Grün ist die Heide*, the leading female protagonist, Helga Lüderson, is portrayed as balancing tradition with modernity. She is both a nurturing and supportive daughter to her emotionally troubled father and the sexually pure love interest for Walter Rainer, the local game warden. As such, traditional dirndls were restyled à la Dior's New Look, fashioning Helga Lüderson as the elegant yet family-oriented new German woman. The restorative and resilient effect of home and *Heimat* are central to the narrative; Germanophone men were capable of being rehabilitated while women were re-imagined and modernized. In other words, the central protagonists in the film are presented as resilient individuals who form a community or collective that adheres to a common social code of conduct and morality. Indeed, the protagonists are indicative of average Germans dealing with pressing social issues and perhaps most importantly, able to find solutions by themselves. German men, while not freed from the legacy of National Socialism — for the Nazi period is alluded to but not openly addressed — were presented as adapting to the new social conditions and making moral decisions. The men of the town are presented as equals; there is no sign or discussion of class distinction.

The male protagonists represent a variety of careers — forest ranger, business owner, minstrel and refugee —, and all meet at a *Stammtisch*, a table for regular patrons at restaurant or pub. This new man who emerged was as comfortable in *Trachtenmoden* clothing as he was in business attire. The traditions of the German *Heimat* unite with modernity to fashion a confident, responsible and controlled construct of masculinity as well as of femininity.

This new restrained and controlled model of “moral masculinity” central to the *Heimatfilm* is depicted in a homogeneous German countryside composed solely of non-Jewish Germans. The land and villages are devoid of the presence of any visible ethnicities or minority groups. The touching farewell speech refers only to ethnic German expellees, and there is no empathy or kindred understanding expressed for the German Jews who were isolated and deported from their German homes and *Heimat*. In the post-war era, it seems the newly revived *Heimat* is free from any Jewish presence. There is no mention of the more than 150,000 Jews, who by late 1946 lived in DP camps in the US zone, bringing a Jewish presence to parts of Germany that previously had been home to relatively few Jews (Bergen 239). Nor is there any mention of German Jews deported to concentration camps who returned, nor of the additional 45,000 displaced Jews, who were living in DP camps in the former Austrian territory.<sup>17</sup> Historian Atina Grossmann argues in *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (2007) that considerable interaction took place between Jewish DPs and their German neighbours in the post Second World War period. One might expect these

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<sup>17</sup>Figures retrieved from the USHMM website, February 5, 2012.

encounters to find representation in domestically produced Germanophone films. In the *Heimatfilm*, however, Jews and Germans do not inhabit the same space, nor do they even encounter each other in this homogeneous presentation of post-war German society.

The construct of homogeneous moral masculinity – mirroring that of the Western genre, which was devoid of African-American heroes – is reinforced by the film’s second leading male protagonist, Walter Rainer. A forest ranger responsible for protecting both the forest and the animal species that inhabit it, Rainer represents the role of the Western sheriff discussed earlier in this chapter. Sworn to uphold the law and bring to justice those who disregard it, Rainer exhibits the reflective and thoughtful characteristics of the new Germanophone man. Subsequently, when he discovers that Lüdersen has been poaching animals in the forest, Rainer does not announce his deeds to the general public but rather allows Lüdersen to leave the community.

Rainer’s relationship to Lüdersen’s daughter is also representative of this new construct of moral masculinity. By allowing them to depart the town before it is revealed that there is another, more serious poacher in the region, Rainer demonstrates that he is neither an ideologue nor one who lives by rules and regulations alone. He is the idealized construct of the new German male: sensitive, rational and willing to make decisions on an individual basis rather than blindly adhering to a doctrine. Rainer can also be interpreted as a model of the post-war German male who has achieved career success through a rebuilt country, a moral code through the acceptance of a new set of values and the successful integration into the new society. Through his ability to make decisions in the best interests of his community while upholding the law, he represents the strength of

the post-Holocaust German male. It is a strength grounded in his sense of *Heimat* and evidenced through his moral character rather than through military force.

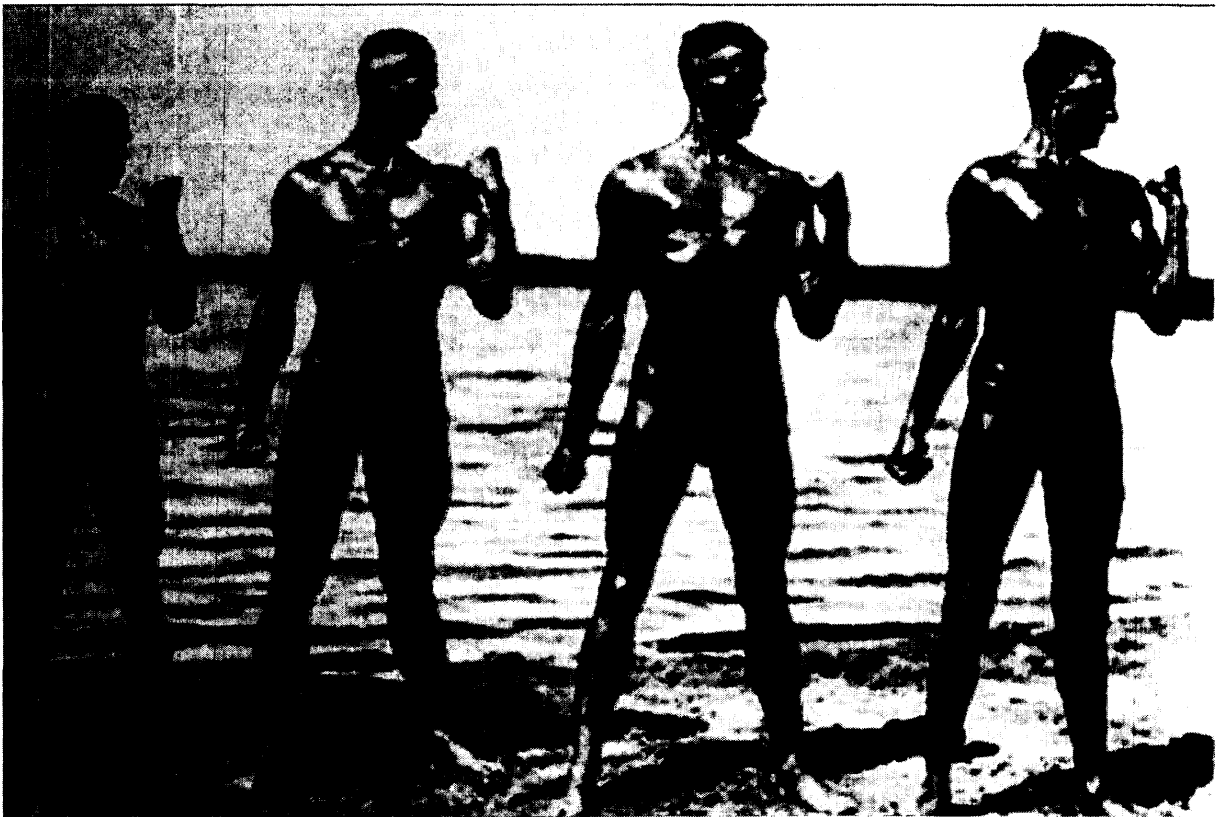
If one considers the forest in *Grün ist die Heide* as a *heimliche* (or hidden) atmosphere, it might equally be described as being *unheimlich*. The poacher-murderer represents the dark and criminal potential, the unspoken *unheimliche* nature of the forest, and subsequently of *Heimat*. Yet ultimately, as Lüdersen makes the moral decision, the forest has healed and renewed him, and he with his new moral code of behavior has redeemed *Heimat*. Lüdersen's personal conceptualization shifts from complicity in National Socialist crimes through his role as the Silesian landowner, to that of victim of displacement, to being the perpetrator of aggression by poaching, and finally to adopting the one model of masculinity that will ensure his future, the controlled and responsible male.

If Rainer is the equivalent to the sheriff in the American Western, then Lüdersen is the cowboy who goes astray but returns to the straight and narrow path with the support of his community and his homeland. The two German male protagonists invoke the positive characteristics often portrayed by the protagonists in American Westerns. The character traits of honesty, responsibility and honor have been integrated into a specifically German cinematic genre. The protagonists embody characteristics that are now firmly connected to the German *Heimat*, thereby enabling the American Western Hero to become German.

In regenerating the genre of the *Heimatfilm*, *Grün ist die Heide* was significant for elucidating the new character of German masculinity. Period pieces such as *Sissi*

(Erma-Film, dir. Ernst Marischka, 1955), which recreated the specificity of Habsburg Vienna, delivered similar elements of egalitarianism, control and independent thinking which would come to characterize the new German model of masculinity. Early in the film when Sissi's family life in Bavaria is illustrated, her father the Baron is portrayed as a purveyor of egalitarianism. The Baron prefers socializing in the unrestricted and open atmosphere of his local tavern, where class consciousness is barely recognized, rather than attending formal society functions. Even in the imperial Habsburg court, Franz Josef and his father are portrayed as responsible, sensitive men. A historical drama, it nevertheless intersects with the *Heimatfilm* in presenting its masculine characters very much in keeping with this construct of the new post-war German male.

### Sport as a Leading Definer of Masculinity in Mass Culture



In comparison to the Western Hero of American films, and the moral masculinity depicted in the *Heimatfilm*, football provided Germanophone men with a concept of masculinity that existed simultaneously alongside them, and reached all segments of society. Whereas film provided visual representations of masculinity, football provided men with the ability to perform masculinity (and I will not neglect the representational aspect in this section: a reading of *Das Wunder von Bern/ The Miracle of Bern* follows). As a sport that enjoyed tremendous mass appeal, it offered men another model of controlled yet powerful masculinity. Additionally, football was an important cultural force and symbol for the West German people following the unmitigated defeat of National Socialism: "...all the normative dispositions that had served as cultural supplier for nationalism were contaminated. Military ideals were especially ostracized to such an extent that West Germans, in their search for a new collective identity, could find no support in the fund of traditional German nationalism with its martial emphasis" (Pyta 8). Football filled an important void in the realm of masculine identity construction.

The lithe sporting male as represented by the footballer was distinctly different from the Aryan male that National Socialism sought to fashion. Addressing the Hitler Youth movement, Hitler describes the Aryan masculinity he wished to infuse into German youth, "... *der deutsche Junge der Zukunft muß schlank und rank sein, flink wie Windhunde, zäh wie Leder und hart wie Kruppstahl*" (the German boy of the future must be slim and trim, swift as the greyhound, tough as leather and hard as Krupp steel) (Dearn 16). The lean, hard body encouraged by the Hitler Youth was in preparation for the role of warrior male. "Physical exercise played a crucial part in forming the Fascist

male; Fascism accepted the by then traditional notion that a fit body was the sign of a manly spirit... The extreme of Fascist manliness mattered, of course, for it brought into sharp relief the warrior elements of masculinity, even while it attempted to direct and channel manly aggression and energy” (Mosse 162). The German footballer was indeed lean and swift, but displayed flexibility, control and sensitivity, characteristics at odds with those of the Fascist male. In the two images at the outset of this section, Bastian Schweinstieger (left image) consols Lukas Podolski after missing a scoring opportunity, while the right-hand image shows the two celebrating a goal. Comfortable with their bodies and expressions of emotion, these postmodern footballers defy National Socialist categorization. The German man, an official National Socialist publication tells us, sees in sport not just the steeling of his body but the fulfillment of his worldview. Man must prove that his words will be followed by deeds: “his body is a gift of God, it belongs to his Volk, which he has to protect and defend; through steeling his will he serves his people” (Mosse 169-170). The sporting male in National Socialism is part of something greater than himself, and his team, he is inextricably linked to the concept of nationhood and *Volksgemeinschaft*, the male body elevated to be a symbol of nationalism.

Patricia Vettel-Becker argues, however, that the competitiveness of athletic competitions is akin to war. As such it is not surprising that athletic masculinity was readily accepted in post-Second World War Germany. Indeed, the successful athlete requires many of the same characteristics upon which warrior masculinity is constructed: courage, stamina, discipline and physical strength (Vettel-Becker 121). Unlike the warrior-soldier, however, the German footballer does not require body-altering

protective equipment. Indeed, the lean, muscled physique of the footballer bears no resemblance to his heavily padded North American counterpart nor to the padded and helmeted player found in competitive hockey leagues. Rather the German footballer relied upon his minimal clothing modifications – shin guards – and presented masculinity as competitive yet controlled, sculpted in physique but not overly muscular, and moving with agility rather than force. This new construct of German masculinity as defined by the footballer was a realistic body image that could be attained by the average male.

Indeed, the body culture of the Germanophone footballer was dissimilar to Fascist aesthetics. This is not the image of the male body infused with strength and idealized beauty codified in Leni Riefensthal's 1938 propaganda films *Olympia 1. Teil — Fest der Völker (Olympia Part 1 - Festival of Nations)* and *Olympia 2. Teil — Fest der Schönheit (Olympia Part 2 - Festival of Beauty)*. Riefensthal's carefully shot and edited productions presented the sporting male as bodily perfection and heir to legacy of greatness that was first established by the athletes of ancient Greece. The athletic bodies depicted in Riefensthal's films are photographed nude, or nearly nude, reminiscent of the body building books of Hans Surén.<sup>18</sup> A photograph of men exercising from Surén's 1932 book *Gymnastik am Endball Seilspringen, Kraft und Freude ins Heim (Gymnastics with Endball Jumprope, Strength and Joy in the Home)* is the bottom image at the beginning to this section. The perfected human form can be interpreted as the symbol for

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<sup>18</sup> Surén's books were immensely popular in Germany and in 1933 he joined the Nazi party aligning his philosophy with that of National Socialism. In *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910-1935*. Karl Toepfe notes that for Surén, exercising nude was a sign of health, strength and beauty; the text implied that people do not open their nudity to the world unless their bodies possess all three qualities (Toepfe 33).

Aryan beauty and masculinity. George Mosse notes: “The male body had to be prepared carefully before it could be offered for public scrutiny. The skin must be hairless, smooth and bronzed. The body would thus be almost transparent; with as few individual features as possible, it would lose any sex appeal” (Mosse 173). The condition of the human body is elevated to symbolic and nationalistic proportions.

The German Footballer construct of masculinity, on the other hand, does not offer any hint of an innate racial purity to be juxtaposed against a supposedly racially impure male counterpart. He is not synergistically linked to any ideology of sexual purity. Unlike the athletes in Riefenstahl’s films or her later photographic work with the Nuba, the German Footballer is not indicative of Fascist aesthetics. Susan Sontag argues: “A utopian aesthetics (physical perfection; identity as a biological given) implies an ideal eroticism: sexually converted into the magnetism of leaders and the joy of followers. The Fascist ideal is to transform sexual energy into a “spiritual” force, for the benefit of the community... Fascist aesthetics is based on the containment of vital forces; movements are confined, held tight, held in” (Sontag 93). Rather, the German Footballer represents a responsible and controlled construct of masculinity predicated on values of teamwork and accountability. Unlike the Fascist warrior, the footballer is competitive rather than destructive and emerged as a positive form of masculine identification in the wake of the discrediting of National Socialism. In the post Second World War period, the sports movement was free from influences of National Socialism that had integrated it into an expression of the dominance of the Third Reich and the new Aryan male.

Football's mass appeal unfolded differently in various regions of Germanophone Europe. From the 1920s in particular, Vienna football found its most fruitful terrain in the proletarian suburbs: this was where it became a mass spectacle, where it had its most faithful and devoted fans, and where its transformation into a modern spectacle began (Horak 27). Undoubtedly, the fact that football did not require expensive equipment or specialized training facilities made it accessible to young men and boys from underprivileged backgrounds. It became a sport that could neutralize the background of its players, providing an opportunity for players to succeed based upon one's individual merit. The lean sporting physique of the footballer depended upon his skill on the field, not on the strength of his armaments or superiority of his tanks and weapons. Nor did it require an expensive education; anyone could play this sport. While football may provide a competitive opportunity analogous to war, it does not carry with it the consequence of life, death and destruction. Football provided the opportunity for a construct of controlled masculinity to develop even before the Second World War, which, in defeat, could be reinvigorated to serve as an organically domestic model of masculinity.

Whereas football established itself relatively early in mass culture in Vienna and indeed throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire, its trajectory followed a different course in Germany. Roman Horak posits that football came to Germany in the late nineteenth century and began as an activity of the bourgeoisie. Initially, the game had no great impact on the masses: it was part of the bourgeois club culture that its early organizers, mostly aspiring office employees, modeled on student fraternities. Yet by the

end of the First World War, football had made inroads across socio-economic backgrounds when returning German soldiers established it as a national sport. It served as a popular group activity among men on the Western Front during non-combatant periods. In November 1918 they brought these experiences back home with them in their rucksacks (Pyta 3). Just as it had after Germany's and Austro-Hungary's defeat in the First World War, which also initiated a crisis of masculinity, football again offered a "new" model that channeled militaristic aggression into sporting competition.

After the First World War, models of militarized masculinity such as those denoted by the *Männerbund* and paramilitary units such as the *Freikorps* coalesced with the culture of betrayal and resentment that accompanied Germany's defeat. The construct of controlled masculinity was just one model that emerged during this period of tremendous social and political upheaval. Some of the men returned with dangerous lessons from their wartime experiences, as Doris Bergen emphasizes: "In other cases, however, they took away different, more dangerous lessons: the notion that only in warfare could a man prove himself a real man; the conviction that the sense of camaraderie between fighting men was the most perfect form of human communion possible; the belief that sheer force was in the end the strongest thing in the world" (Bergen 28). Football provided men with the opportunity to work cohesively as members of a competitive team, experience same-sex camaraderie and demonstrate the pride of a nation without the dangers or aggression of war.

The rise of football in the public consciousness mirrored a significant attitudinal shift amongst Germans: expressing national pride and masculinity became acceptable

through football. A sport without any type of object that could be conceived of as being a weapon — no hockey stick, baseball or cricket bat — football relied upon controlled masculinity and teamwork in order to ensure success. Theweleit argues that such items are not merely accoutrements, rather they form an intrinsic part of the male soldier's being. Guns for Theweleit almost fuse with the physical body of the militarized male, rendering him the ultimate fighting machine: "The soldier does have access to a different type of armor, one that is not destroyed by constant explosions. This second armor is the barrel of his gun or rifle and it provides the model according to which his own eruptions function... the metal of the gun barrels appears almost to take the place of the soldier's body armor; to function then as his 'ego'" (Theweleit 179).

Both the physical appearance and actions of the male footballer's body were fundamental to defining and codifying new constructs of masculinity. Patricia Vettel-Becker succinctly posits that it is the physicality of the bodies of boxers that is integral to constructing a model of sporting masculinity. She writes, "moreover, the construction of hard, large muscles reinforces the phallus as the supreme emblem of power without necessitating focus on the penis, which not only fails to remain hard but carries too great a homoerotic charge" (Vettel-Becker 122). Similarly, I argue that for Germanophone men the sinewy yet supple, lithe yet powerful body of the footballer came to represent the idealized form of the new German male. Whether clothed or partially unclothed — as footballers are notorious for removing their jerseys after scoring a goal — the aesthetic of the German footballer body was coded heterosexual and the ideal of masculinity that influenced generations of young German men. At the same time, football provided an

important homosocial context for men to gather together. It fulfilled not only the desire to compete in an athletic setting, but it also allowed men to gaze upon the physicality of other men's bodies in an acceptable and justifiable manner without the fear or threat of being labeled homosexual. Indeed, homosexuality remained a criminal offence in the former East Germany until 1968, in Austria until 1971 and was only decriminalized in the former West Germany in 1994. Given the societal constraints against homosexuality, the ability of sport to provide a legitimate vehicle from which to gaze upon the male body cannot be underestimated. The construct of German footballer masculinity, like military models of masculinity, developed as assumedly heterosexual, but it permitted the homosexual to gaze within defined parameters.

During the 1950s, the masculine construct of the German footballer took on a new dimension as it began to be associated with very controlled perceptions of renewed German nationalism. Although Horak argues that Wolfram Pyta overestimates the importance of football – as a moment of popular culture – in Germany before 1954, Horak's argument is essentially flawed by three important factors he neglects to consider. Horak, writing mostly about the development of football in Austria, does not consider the importance of football in the regional consciousness of Germany. Regional consciousness survived relatively undamaged during the period of National Socialism and was also available as a *Vergemeinschaftungsofferte* (communal relationship opportunity) after 1945 because it had not been infiltrated by hyper-nationalism (Pyta 9). At the end of the Second World War, the commitment to regions, and regional activities took on a renewed interest.

Second, Horak does not consider that football also grew in popularity, both as a spectator as well as a participant sport, as the *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle) of West Germany leveled the economic playing field (a similar period of economic growth did not begin in Austria until after 1955 when the Soviet occupation forces finally left). With an increase in the economic quality of life for many Germans, men turned to football for social as well as sporting reasons. As Wolfram Pyta states, “the social cohesion of the working class declined visibly as the slogan ‘wealth to everyone’ became honored in the daily life of the German working class” (ibid. 9). As previous class and economic boundaries shifted, football became an important signifier of community and unity. Third, Horak neglects to consider that in the aftermath of the Second World War, there was a tremendous movement of people across Europe. Furthermore, considerable population shifts – the influx of millions of refugees and displaced persons, and (since the 1960s) of foreign “guest workers” (*Gastarbeiter*) – fundamentally changed the structure of the population after 1945 (ibid. 9).

Football became increasingly popular in Germany during the years leading up to the 1954 FIFA World Cup championship, which was a turning point in thrusting footballers to the forefront. Helmut Rahn, known colloquially as *der Boss* (the Boss) for having scored the winning goal in the 1954 FIFA World Cup, became a household name and subsequently a legend in German sports. Similarly the captain of the 1954 German team, Fritz Walter, enjoyed enormous recognition and stature. The footballer model of masculinity was solidified as the symbol that controlled masculinity could be effectively linked to nationalism and pride in one’s country and achievements while differentiated

from the nihilistic nationalism of the National Socialist period. This controlled model of masculinity and national pride continued when Franz Beckenbauer led the West German national team to their second win in 1974. Beckenbauer, nicknamed *der Kaiser* (the Emperor), was also an influential model for the controlled masculinity of the footballer.

In 2003 Sönke Wortmann revisited this model of German footballer masculinity in the film *Das Wunder von Bern* (*The Miracle of Bern*). Gazing backwards, she recreates a cinematic representation of 1950-era Germany and its societal conditions. In doing so, she provides the viewer with an opportunity to imagine visually this construct of masculinity. Although the 1954 World Cup is the axis on which the film revolves, the reintegration of former *Wehrmacht* soldiers released from the Soviet Gulag is no less significant. The theme of redefining German masculinity, as well as exploring the limits and challenges of the patriarchal family structure, structures the film.

Unlike *Grün ist die Heide*, which provides social commentary as events are unfolding, *Das Wunder von Bern* looks back at the past with a reflective, if not nostalgic gaze. In this sense, Wortmann's film is not about restoring constructs of masculinity or imagining *Heimat*; rather it looks back at two significant events in post-war German history and their position in the German national narrative. In this larger narrative it is possible to interpret how German masculinity intersects with football and concepts of *Heimat*. Wortmann's film was enthusiastically received by a Germanophone audience that was accustomed to angst before major football matches, which often unleashed extreme rightist nationalist tendencies. The film's timely release, before the *Fußball-Weltmeisterschaft der Männer 2006* (World Cup of Football 2006) in Germany,

reminded audiences that national pride need not be militarized or linked to violent nationalistic acts.

When the film's protagonist Richard Lubanski returns home from years in the Soviet gulag, he encounters a much changed familial dynamic and German society. He is simultaneously angered by his daughter socializing with American soldiers at the local US military base, unsettled that his family has been maintained by his wife running the family's restaurant-bar, and confused by his two sons, the older of whom admires the egalitarianism of communism and the GDR while the younger sees the German footballer as the ideal father-figure. The narrative reminds the viewer that German POWs returned from the Soviet gulag not as defeated veterans of war who could still claim valor and honor, but rather as victims. Lubanski returns without a soldier's uniform or weaponry, a broken, defeated militarized male. Interpreted through psychoanalytical theory, Lubanski has been symbolically castrated. As a de-phallicized male, he is missing the source that defines both his masculinity and his sense of national identity.

The sense of disconnect between a failed past construction of masculinity and the changed realities of the present societal environment remains the central issue for Lubanski. In constructing a new image of masculinity, Lubanski needs to reconcile changed gender and familial roles with the new expectations and social values that accompanied the end of the Second World War. What distinguishes *Das Wunder von Bern* as a film about German masculinity is what Elizabeth Heineman has described in another context as, "the struggle to establish the right kind of bonds among men"

(Heineman 44). For the elder son, his father represents the National Socialist regime and all that is wrong in German society. The younger son was born after his father had left for war, and there is no perceptible bond between them. The protagonist's relationship with both his wife and daughter is strained, indicating that he cannot adapt to the new social order and the independence of women. Lubanski is positioned as a man whose masculine identity is adrift in a sea of change.<sup>19</sup> The experience of identity loss after the war also results from the fact that joining the warring mass had conveyed a kind of feeling of *Heimat* (Winter 200). Reestablishing this connection to a German notion of *Heimat* then means reconstructing his own sense of German masculinity.

Wortmann's nostalgic gaze back to the 1950s achieves this partially through an exclusively heterosexual environment. The football teams in the film, whether regional or national, are unabashedly heterosexual. The "right kind of bonds between men" in this film are those which are straight, value democracy and demonstrate the appropriate amount of national pride through supporting the men's national football team. "German men don't cry," Lubanski reminds his son repeatedly; however, when the German national team wins the World Cup and Lubanski becomes moist-eyed, his son corrects him declaring "sometimes it's alright for German men to cry." This can be interpreted as Wortmann boldly asserting the more traditionally associated feminine values of emotionality, thereby compensating for their having been removed from traditionally masculine public spheres such as sports. In addition, the tears shed by Lubanski recall the German Romantic ideals that valued intuition and emotion over rationalism and did

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<sup>19</sup> The year 2003 is significant since it signaled that change was underway within the European Union and in 2004 the major eastern European enlargement occurred.

not simply permit men to cry but encouraged them to. Wortmann has positioned the events surrounding Lubanski and his son at the World Cup final as an important rite of passage for constructing a new masculinity. Lubanski discovers this in the image of the athletic, controlled and competitive German footballer, and in doing so re-discovers his own German sense of *Heimat*. Additionally, the event is an important rite of passage for Lubanski's youngest son, who is able to leave aspects of childhood behavior and vulnerability behind, and accept his father.

For the viewing audience in twenty-first century North America, going to war as an initiation into manhood has less relevance than for Western European audiences, for whom mandated military service remained a highly sensitive issue. Compulsory military service was discontinued in the US in 1973; in Canada it existed only during time of war and even then caused much division between English and French Canada; but only on July 1, 2011, did Germany annul compulsory military service for young men. In Austria, compulsory military service for young men – with the option of completing alternate civil service – remains in effect, at least for the time being.<sup>20</sup> For many men, rites of passage related to manhood are increasingly likely to be associated with sports rather than with military service.

The image of the German footballer as a viable construct of new masculinity has remained very real and is arguably one of the most dominant models for young Germanophone men. As R.W. Connell argues, “true masculinity is almost always

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<sup>20</sup> In January 2013 a nation-wide referendum took place in Austria on the future of mandatory military service. The outcome of this vote determined that conscription and civil service programs will remain in place.

thought to proceed from men's bodies – to be inherent in a male body or to express something about a male body” (Connell 45). When the national team of the reunified Germany won the FIFA World Cup in 1990 and hosted the 2006 one, German footballers were again national heroes, front and center in the discourse. It was skill, perseverance, and a competitive spirit that defined them as winning players, and as men, and bestowed a mantle of pride upon the nation.

The construct of the footballer has not only transcended generations, it has also, to some degree at least, transcended ethnicity and served as a site of integration. Two players on the 2006 FIFA World Cup German national team, Bastian Schweinsteiger and Lukas Podolski, were catapulted into the limelight as symbols of youthful German masculinity. Although football had for some time moved along a trajectory that mirrored German society and equalized the field between middle and working class men, it also provided an opportunity to equalize or integrate players from various ethnic backgrounds. Bavarian-born Schweinsteiger quickly became a fan-favorite for his strong performances on the field. Podolski, born in Poland but having lived in Germany since childhood when his parents immigrated to seek better economic conditions, represents German acculturation and integration. Through football he has displayed his comfort and affiliation with Germany and his own sense of German-ness has been accepted by fans. Although it is too early to speak of the emergence, or re-emergence of a Polish-German hybrid identity,<sup>21</sup> and indeed one may never develop in the same manner as it has in

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<sup>21</sup> In his book *Neither German nor Pole: Catholicism and National Indifference in a Central European Borderland*, James Bjork posits that the inhabitants of Upper Silesia negotiated between competing identities of German and Polish. Bjork further argues that the competing national identities often cancelled

North America, football has proven to be a vehicle through which German masculinity has incorporated other ethnicities under the rubric of being German.

Integral to this youthful representation of footballer masculinity is the ease with which these younger players engaged in physical contact with each other and their colleagues. They are not afraid to display affectionate physical contact with each other, a trait that is not commonly expressed in Western culture. Whether on or off the field, Schweinsteiger and Podolski represent the modern, heterosexual male who did not fear being seen as emotional or having playful physical contact in public. German fans and journalists took to describing the pair as “Schweinski” – morphing their two family names together to comment upon the synergy between the two heterosexual men. Essentially, the fraternal nature of the sporting milieu of German football has allowed hegemonic masculine culture to absorb the open display of affection between two heterosexual men. Just as North American pop-culture defines such homosocial relationships between heterosexual men as being a “Bro-mance,” the parameters of heterosexual behavior have also relaxed for the German footballer.

Changing demographics in Germany as well as the introduction of non-European players into the *Bundesliga* has brought ethnic diversity to many of the regional teams. Israeli-born players such as Almog Cohen and Itay Shecter represent a new generation of Jewish male athletes born after the Holocaust who consciously choose to play for German football clubs. Since 2010 Cohen has played for FC Nuremberg while Shecter

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one another out resulting in further loosening of a ‘national’ identity and that it was religion, namely Catholicism that provided a cohesion for the two identities. Nevertheless, this identification differs from contemporary understandings of hybridity.

suits up for FC Kaiserslautern. The construct of Israeli-Jewish masculinity in the European football context will no doubt be the subject of future scholarly considerations. In addition, Turkish and Arabic players also participate in the *Bundesliga*, bringing additional constructs of masculinity to the hegemonic image of the footballer. How these additional constructs of masculinity coalesce with the dominant construct also remains a project for future consideration. So, too, will questions such as the ramifications to masculinity when hybrid ethnicities collide. In 2007, the Iranian German player Askhan Dejagah, representing the German national team under 21 side, “asked the *Deutscher Fußball-Bund* (DFB, German Football Association) not to play a friendly (a non-competitive exhibition match) in Israel” (Avrahami). The DFB approved his request, perhaps establishing a precedent for future clashes of hybrid identified players and challenging a hegemonic expression of German footballer masculinity.

Additionally, the construct of the German footballer as sensitive and modern has also been evidenced by German national soccer players Philip Lahm and Mesut Özil. On September 20, 2008, Lahm was awarded the *Tolerantia-Preis* by the *Initiativgruppe Schwules Weimarer Dreieck* for promoting tolerance and being involved in anti-homophobia education in sports. A heterosexual male athlete of Turkish heritage, Özil was, along with Lahm, an ambassador for the “kickHIV!” program raising funds and awareness about HIV in Africa. Their involvement in these programs demonstrates the integrationist nature in the construct of German footballer masculinity.

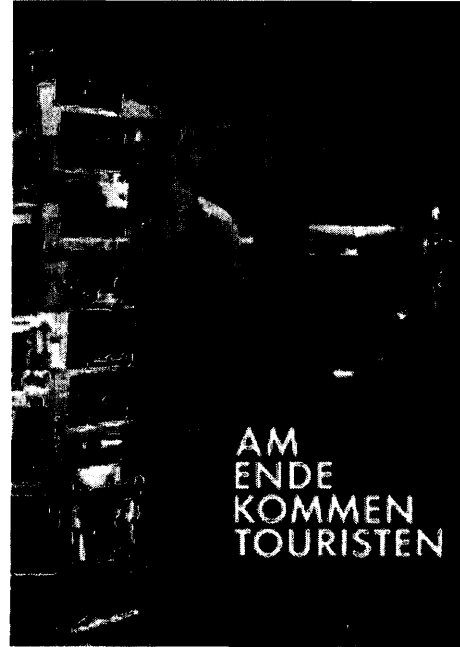
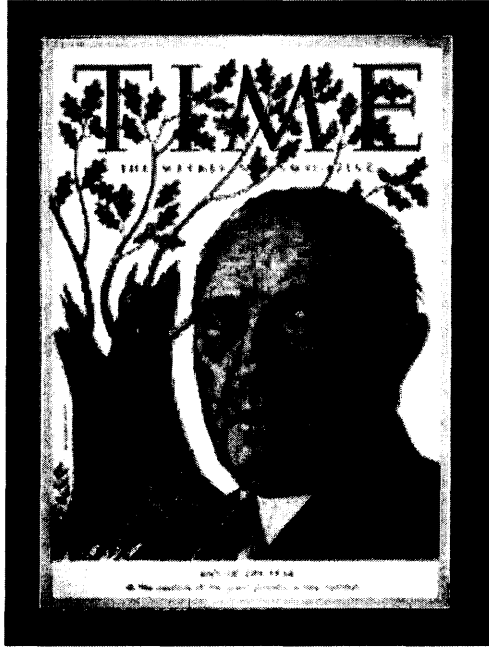
Although the examples of Schweinsteiger, Podolski, Lahm and Özil represent the progressive and adapting nature of German footballer masculinity, it represents only one

polarity. Antisemitism, in the form of verbal taunts and insults, frequently characterizes the atmosphere at German football. Whether it is a chant by football fans of “We’ll build a subway from Chemnitz to Auschwitz...” (Baldauf) or “Berlin Berlin Jews Berlin” (ibid.) designed to insult and denigrate the opposing team, an image that equates Jewish masculinity as aberrant or even weak is being elicited. Although neo-Nazi skinhead fans are occasionally responsible, denigrating Jewish masculinity is not a new phenomenon in German or European culture and forms part of a larger issue of racism in sports. The fact that it continues to occur at and during the site that evidences the new model of controlled masculinity would imply there is a sustained threat to contemporary constructs of masculinity. It may not yet be at a crisis level that would significantly influence the re-shaping of the positive image of footballer masculinity, but it asserts itself in the football environment.

Football fans, who are primarily men, still on occasion envision the Jew as outsider with negative connotations. Antisemitic outbursts at football games have specifically targeted Jewish teams. In September 2006, during a match between the Berlin local teams TuS Makkabi and Altglienicke, fans of the latter shouted antisemitic chants (such as “Auschwitz is back” or “The synagogues must burn”) at the Makkabi players (ibid.). Invoking the National Socialist period in Germany with references to the Auschwitz death camp or the *Kristallnacht* pogrom implies an inherent weakness in the Jewish players. Both of these references are to a time when Jewish men could not guarantee the safety or security of their families, nor function in their role as provider. The image of the Jewish male as weakened victim reasserts itself on occasion, targeting

contemporary Jewish men in Germany. It represents the very real possibility that another crisis of masculinity is not inconceivable as the reassertion of troubling far-right ideologies remain a viable threat. As Pascal Bruckner posits, “ideologies never die, they metamorphose and are reborn in a new form just when they are thought buried forever: failure, far from serving as a drying-out cell, relaunches the drunkenness” (Bruckner 11).

### “Softening” Germany Masculinity – The Vicissitudes of Being Male



The trajectory towards new constructs of masculinity in Germanophone Europe is not limited to representations from the cinematic and sporting worlds. A third force influencing constructions of masculinity emerged from the world of political and business figures, such as Konrad Adenauer, who, when he assumed the role of German Chancellor in 1949 at age 73, exemplified the fiduciary success of the West German model of business and governance and presented an image of the strong, patriarchal male. Characterized by traditional conservative values and gender roles, this construct of masculinity evoked the remembrance of the pre-National Socialist model of paternalistic masculinity. Just as members of the gentry class were replaced in the nineteenth century by businessmen and bureaucrats, so too were the National Socialist leaders replaced a century later by a generation of politicians and businessmen. I use the term “business

masculinity” to describe this blending of business and political constructs of masculinity and men who were guided by essentially conservative social values and the desire for economic success. These previous constructs of masculinity coalesced together at the end of the Second World War and provided a sense of comfort and support to a country seeking solace during a time of transition.

From 1949 through 1963 Konrad Adenauer guided his country through the process of rebuilding, facilitated in no small part by the American-sponsored Marshall Plan. Adenauer was reminiscent of the paternal figures who had safely guided the German nation during previous periods of uncertainty and change. Like Otto von Bismarck and Paul von Hindenburg, Adenauer represented the strong male father figure to the populace. Under Adenauer’s tenure, West Germany experienced the *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle). This robust economic growth allowed Germanophone men to regain a sense of self, accomplishment and institutionalize their positions of power. Masculinity was not only controlled, but synergistically linked to economic rather than military success.

Like the construct of footballer masculinity, business masculinity transcended generations and integrated other expressions of masculinity, and at times marginalized masculinity. It is characterized by the functions it attributes to men: producer, protector and provider. A foundational marker of Germanophone masculinity today, it will be for future scholars to assess its impact on a European hegemonic masculinity or the development of a global hegemonic masculinity. R.W. Connell has proposed that the hegemonic form of masculinity in the current world order is the masculinity associated

with those who control its dominant institutions: the business executives who operate in global markets and the political executives who interact (and in many cases merge) with them (Connell 3).

As in the case of the Western Hero and the footballer, the business model of masculinity was also avowedly heterosexual. Connell argues that: “from the point of view of hegemonic masculinity the potential for homoerotic pleasure was expelled from the masculine and located in a deviant group, symbolically assimilated to women or to beasts” (ibid.196). Certainly when dealing with constructions of masculinity in post-war Germany, homosexuality remained outside the margins of hegemonic masculinity. A rather slow progression towards the acceptance of homosexuality within a legal, socio-political and business framework kept homosexual men on the margin. The relationship between homosexual men was one that was coded as being outside of the law, carrying with it the weight of being an immoral – if not unspoken – behavior. Undoubtedly, this rather slow process of integrating homosexual males into hegemonic masculinity was partially due to the embedded privilege of heterosexuality in societal, cultural and religious institutions. However, a number of events in the coming decades challenged this patriarchal, and innately heterosexual, construct of masculinity.

The first real challenge to business masculinity came with the *68er-Bewegung*, the student movement of 1968 that swept across Germanophone universities. As Connell posits, “hegemonic masculinity has social authority, and is not easy to challenge openly” (ibid. 156). The movement was a reaction against the institutionalized patriarchy of the state and authoritarianism of the government and its leaders. Besides the structural

reforms sought by the students, accountability for past actions during the National Socialist period became a hallmark of the student movement. Indeed, even after the denazification (*Entnazifizierung*) process initiated by the Allied powers in Germany, former Nazis were still working in positions of influence and power. Limited in its attempts to bring former Nazis to justice by the looming Cold War and growing power of the Soviet Union, denazification achieved only limited success in coming to terms with the past. For the generation of German students in universities in the 1960s the time had come for *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, accounting for past actions and crimes during National Socialism and mastering the past. This initial challenge demonstrated that hegemonic business masculinity could be opened up, allowing for the integration of a variety of expressions, including those concerning sexuality.

The student movement of 1968 loosened not only the conservative nature of the country but also initiated the intense interest in the actions of father and grandfathers during the National Socialist period. As Chapter Three demonstrates, the emergence of *Väterliteratur* – literature of and about the fathers – was one result of this quest for, and process of, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Members of the 1968 student generation first believed in the possibility of severing ties and emphatically separating themselves from their parents' generation (Kosta 224). This pivotal event challenged existing norms of masculinity so significantly that it ushered in a new era in how German men saw themselves. Indeed, psychoanalyst Tilmann Moser argues that it was only through the 68ers and the “Softie” movement of the 1970s that men started to hug each other (Roy 54). The massive student movement was the catalyst for softening the patriarchal and

domineering construct of masculinity that prevailed. Although the Western Hero continued the trajectory of patriarchal masculinity, the development of the footballer already began to loosen the constraints that surrounded it. In this new social climate, a softer version of Germanophone masculinity entered the public sphere.



Chancellor Willy Brandt of the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SPD) exemplified this new father figure, a softer image of German masculinity that was not afraid to accept the past or to display emotions. The iconic image of him falling to his knees at the foot of the Ghetto Fighters' memorial in Warsaw, Poland on December 7, 1970, was captured in photograph and graced the cover of December 14, 1970, edition of *Der Spiegel* (see here). The solemnity of the photograph

is broken only by the banner in the bottom left corner with the Spiegel survey-poll question, "*Durfte Brandt knien?*" (Should Brandt have knelt?). In the top right-hand corner of the photograph a curious onlooker captures the moment that a new phase in the discourse on German accountability and masculinity had begun. Brandt's poignant gesture not only consolidated *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in the national consciousness but also opened the way for a new image of the German male. The new German male

had the strength to assume the legacy of the past, was gentle enough to seek reconciliation and not afraid to appear humble.

This softer image of the German male in touch with his emotions was also publically evidenced by Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, when commenting on the German premiere of *Das Wunder von Bern* in October 2003. Even before the premiere, Schroeder admitted that a raw cut of the film had made him cry (Heineman 43). Only shifts in masculinity in German culture since the loss of the Second World War could have permitted such an admission from a German politician.

Illustrating the enduring reality of soft masculinity in contemporary German society is Robert Thalheim's 2007 film *Am Ende Kommen Touristen (And Along Come the Tourists)*. The film is a journey of self-discovery for the main protagonist Sven Lehnert, a 19 year-old German youth doing his civil service – an alternative to mandatory military service – at the Auschwitz State Museum in Oświęcim, Poland. Although he is not of the 68er generation, Lehnert represents the continuity of Germanophone soft masculinity and its manifestations. His is not, however, the business construct of masculinity, as can be interpreted from his reluctance to wear a watch, a symbol associated with the business and political worlds.. Nor is he representative of the sporting male or the politically inspired male. Rather, his conceptualization of masculinity is still in its nascent stage, and still developing. This is a narrative of personal discovery, interpersonal and intercultural relationships, and the tension that results when competing models of masculinity collide. Lehnert's understanding of the events of the Second World War comes through his assignment to Stanislaw Krzeminski,

an elderly non-Jewish Polish survivor of Auschwitz. A story without a Jewish voice, the Jewish victims are present only as names on the suitcases that Krzeminski repairs for the Auschwitz State Museum. One is constantly aware of this presence of absence.

Lehnert's soft masculinity stands in stark contrast to the stereotypes of German masculinity that Krzeminski delights in mentioning. While Lehnert seeks to discover himself and define masculinity on his own terms, Krzeminski remains stuck defining German masculinity with stereotypes about German punctuality, efficiency and regimented behavior. When Lehnert does not know the exact time because he does not wear a watch, Krzeminski mockingly answers "*Na so was. Ein Deutscher ohne Uhr!*" (What is that? A German without a watch!). Paradoxically, the timepiece symbolizes Krzeminski's resistance to see beyond his own limited understanding of Germanophone masculinity and a new generation of Germans just as the lack of a watch represents that Lehnert's is something of an *Aussteiger*, a person unwilling to follow society's conventions. This has implications for his own sense of masculinity as he is a free-thinker who is not bound by society's representations and limits. Lehnert lives in the present and struggles to understand the past, just as Krzeminski lives a life that is steeped in the past and struggles to understand the present. That the presence of the Nazi past is very much in the contemporary consciousness can be seen when one of his elderly friends' comments "*Ein deutscher Chauffeur. Die Zeiten ändern sich!*" (A German chauffeur. Times certainly change!) in response to the young German driving Krzeminski. The character of Lehnert can also be interpreted as continuing the journey of reconciliation that Willy Brandt initiated with his famous *Warschauer Kniefall*. He

represents a new generation of German men who demonstrate cultural and emotional sensitivities, at times naively so.

Lehnert's journey of self-discovery also includes a clash between his youthful soft masculinity and the soft business masculinity of the German management team of a corporation building a factory in Oświęcim. The German management is represented by a woman attired in a business suit reminiscent of Angela Merkel's style. This soft business masculinity requires the "masculinization" of women in order to succeed in the world of business as well as politics. The clash, a reminder of the 68er generation, between Lehnert's youthful idealism and the corporate world of schedules and profit-making, comes to a head over the company's decision to install a small monument honoring the Polish victims of National Socialism outside the factory they are building. Lehnert feels the action is insincere and perfunctory since no real educational programming is included, apart from a routine testimonial speech given by Kzreminski on the day the monument is unveiled. Although the clash between Lehnert's youthful idealism and the German corporation's disciplined bureaucracy is eventually resolved – without a clear winner –, it does indicate that Lehnert's soft masculinity is a continuing influence upon corporate masculinism. In this film, change is slow and methodical, carefully negotiated between the individual and the corporation.

Consequently, widespread acceptance of soft masculinity has allowed the culturally dominant hegemonic masculinity to adapt and integrate homosexuality into its representation of maleness. These openings up of constructions of masculinity have undoubtedly contributed to the success of gay men such as Klaus Wowereit, Ole von

Beust, Michael Adam and Guido Westerwelle assuming high-profile leadership roles across the political spectrum in Germany. In 2001 Klaus Wowereit of the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SPD) was elected mayor of Berlin. When questioned about his homosexuality during the campaign, Wowereit responded with the now famous expression “*Ich bin schwul, und das ist auch gut so*” (“I’m gay, and that’s a good thing”). Wowereit’s openness about his sexuality failed to become a detriment to his campaign. Political success has not only been limited to liberal, multicultural Berlin. In Hamburg, Ole von Beust of the *Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands* (CDU) was also elected mayor in 2001. He remained mayor until his departure from politics in 2010. Even the notoriously chauvinistic Bavarian countryside witnessed the ascendancy of openly gay politicians when in 2008 Michael Adam of the SPD was elected mayor of the town of Bodenmais. Rather than their sexuality positioning them on the margins of society and power, these politicians have discovered that homosexuality can be integrated into the dominant model of soft masculinity. As leader of the *Freie Demokratische Partei* (FDP), and coalition partner with Angela Merkel’s CDU, Guido Westerwelle served as Foreign Minister and Vice Chancellor of Germany from 2009 until his resignation in 2011. Westerwelle was the first openly gay individual to hold either of these positions.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> I have chosen not to include Austrian politicians in this discussion as there have not been as many politicians, or those of similar stature to the German politicians who are or have identified themselves as openly gay. The case of Jorg Haider is complex, and Anton Pelinka notes that Haider’s homosexuality was an open secret. Haider, however, refused to confirm or deny the status of his sexuality. Despite being “outed” by HOSI-Wien, Haider’s identity in Carinthia was often seen as being that of a “metrosexual” who was comfortable with diverse groups of people. His marriage and two daughters also provided a cover that allowed many people to refuse to believe that Haider could have been gay or bisexual. The Austrian politician Ulrike Lunacek, a member of the Greens, is currently in the European Parliament but as a lesbian

The three models of masculinity discussed in this chapter – the Western Hero, the footballer, and the Softie – characterize the trajectory of masculinity that developed in West Germany after the Second World War. The Western Hero played a crucial role in re-ordering Germanophone masculinity after the collapse of National Socialism, eventually serving as a trigger for the development of the construct of moral masculinity depicted in the *Heimatfilm*. The footballer reminded Germans that athleticism could be both a source of national pride and masculinity without being linked to extreme nationalism and sexual purity. The Softie demonstrated that masculinity was increasingly equated with business and economic success and became one of the prevalent constructs of masculinity in West Germany, as well as influencing masculinity in reunified Germany. In a testament to the strength of this softer, controlled masculinity, it has triumphed in the unification of the former East and West German states. “The outcome of this struggle has, to all appearances, already been decided, so that we increasingly have to deal with *one* [italics in original] hegemonic masculinity in the whole of Germany that is oriented to the Western model of middle-class-masculinity concept” (Brandes 193).

One need not look any further than the media campaign for Berlin’s new international “Brandenburg Willy Brandt Airport” (*Der Flughafen Berlin Brandenburg Willy Brandt*) to witness the continuing dominance of this softer, controlled construct of

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falls outside the scope of this project, while the only openly gay male Austrian politician at the time of this writing is Stefan Petzner of the BZÖ.

masculinity.<sup>23</sup> Brandt, whose chancellorship was characterized by his policy of *Ostpolitik* (improving relations with Soviet bloc countries), was chosen to be the iconic figure to welcome visitors to Berlin and to Germany. Like the Brandenburg Gate (*Brandenburger Tor*), Brandt becomes an iconic symbol of not just Berlin, but of reunified Germany. As such, he continues to influence Germanophone conceptualizations of masculinity. In the following photograph, Brandt – seen with his arm around an Asian woman – can by extension be seen to be continuing his policy of *Ostpolitik* by welcoming visitors from the Far East to Berlin.



A second image from this media campaign (below), retrieved from the airport’s media kit, shows Brandt posing for a photograph with DJ and record producer Matthias Paul, who uses the stage name Paul van Dyk. Born and raised in the former East Berlin, Paul

<sup>23</sup> Numerous problems in the construction and cost over-runs of the new Berlin airport have delayed its opening. Originally slated to open November 1, 2011, at the time of writing German media outlets such as Spiegel reported that the official opening was delayed again until October 2013. The series of delays and added costs have embarrassed the Berlin city government as well as airport officials.

achieved international success as a DJ and record producer focusing on House and Trance music. Two models of soft masculinity – Paul, a former East Berliner and Brandt, a former West Berliner – unite in representing not only the reunification of the city, but the continued legacy of soft masculinity that has transcended borders and generations.



The third image from the series (below) depicts Brandt shaking hands with American President Barak Obama. Brandt becomes the face of contemporary Germany, an iconic figure who not only shaped Germany in the past, but who continues to represent the best of German society. Brandt is depicted as Germany's goodwill ambassador and is at ease with a diverse range of people and globalization.



Indeed, the masculinity that Brandt represents is strikingly similar to that in other countries. Connell describes this convergence of constructions of masculinity as “transnational business masculinity” (Connell xxiv). This construct of masculinity represents a contemporary masculinity that is deeply aware and conscious of societal change. Invoking the image of Willy Brandt to welcome visitors to Berlin’s Brandenburg Willy Brandt Airport sends a powerful message that contemporary Germany, while bearing the legacy and responsibility of its National Socialist past, has forged a new, positive conceptualization of masculinity that is at home in the world.

In the next chapter I turn to the expressions of masculinity as performed in one minority culture living in Germanophone Europe: Jewish men. Although Jews had lived in Germany for approximately 1,600 years before the rise of National Socialism, the Holocaust forever altered the Jewish community and the relationship between Jews – whether living in the Diaspora, Germanophone Europe or Israel – and Germany. How Germanophone-Jewish men saw themselves and related to the world around was

consistently challenged by the Holocaust. For those who returned to, or remained in, Germanophone Europe after the Second World War, negotiating new constructs of masculinity was often complex. Jewish men responded to the dominant Germanophone hegemonic masculinity and defined themselves. As the victims of genocidal policies of National Socialism who chose to remain in Germany and Austria, Jewish men navigated a distinctive path.

## Chapter Two:

## Expressions of Post-Holocaust Jewish Masculinity in Germanophone Europe

Bleib bei uns in Deutschland, es wird dir hier  
 Jetzt besser als eh'mals munden;  
 Wir schreiten fort, du hast gewiß  
 Den Fortschritt selbst gefunden.

Stay here with us in Germany,  
 You'll find it not as distressing  
 As before. No doubt, you've noticed  
 How fast we are progressing.

Heinrich Heine – Germany. A Winter's Tale, Chapter XXV  
 (Deutschland. Ein Wintermärchen.)

Jewish men who remained in, returned to, or simply came to German-speaking countries after the Holocaust faced challenging and complex circumstances. In the immediate post-Holocaust period, many official Jewish organizations declared Germany off limits for the re-establishment of Jewish life. In the wake of the genocide, it was believed that Jews should, and would, look to Israel, North America or other countries as a place to rebuild their lives. Indeed, living in Germany as a Jew was not understood or recognized as a realistic option by many representatives of the Jewish communities.

The Ashkenazi Jewry, who formed communities in German-speaking Europe, had developed, since medieval times, communities that existed, even thrived, along the river Rhine. The everyday language used by the Jews was Middle High German, as spoken in the towns or in the country (Gidal 32). Hebrew, however, was the language for religious study and prayer. When the *Haskala* movement (Jewish Enlightenment in the 18th and 19th centuries) moved across Europe, its effects on countries and communities

varied. In German-speaking Europe, the *Haskala* movement promised emancipation and full entry into civil society. Historian Matti Bunzel describes how this quest for cultural normalization was viewed by Jews and non-Jewish Germans in positions of authority: “While Jews were seen as debilitated by centuries of rabbinic solipsism and the harsh life of the ghetto, they could be reformed through *Bildung*, which would render them productive citizens of the German cultural nation. Jews themselves embarked on this process of transformation with great zeal; by the middle of the nineteenth century, they had become fully German” (Bunzel 13). Indeed, many Jews embraced the German language, literature, and cultural and secular pursuits, further aligning themselves with a sense of German identity.

The Jewish Enlightenment contributed to new conceptualizations of how German Jews saw themselves. Benjamin Maria Baader notes the development of “[a] new, scholarly, historical and critical approach toward Judaism that became known as *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (Scholarship of Judaism)” (Baader 11). Some of the proponents of the *Wissenschaft* movement conceptualized the Jews as a *Volk* (people), independent of their religious traditions. Others, however, constructed Jews as a community within the German nation. Michael Brenner notes: “Liberal Jews, though rejecting the concept of a Jewish nation, also employed such ethnic terms as *Abstammungsgemeinschaft* (community of common descent) to express their belonging to a Jewish *Gemeinschaft*... When such acculturated German Jews as Walter Rathenau spoke of a Jewish *Stamm* (and compared it to the Bavarians or the Saxons) to emphasize their Germanness, they clearly departed from the nineteenth-century conception of

Jewish identity as purely religious” (Brenner 37). Jews in Germany developed a sense of identity that linked them to a common German nation and cultural values, yet was differentiated by religion.

Jews remained separated from mainstream, non-Jewish German society by a dominant culture that saw them as well as their religious and cultural traditions as different. Since their arrival in Europe, despite the fact that the Jewish contribution to European life has been enormous (Bergen 7), Jews have been imagined as outsiders. Whether it was their distinctive clothing, religious rituals or dietary habits, Jews were coded as different from the majority populations they lived among. These differences were externally produced as well as a result of Jews supposedly being born with bodily differences. Mosse notes: “The structure of the Jewish body was thought to be different from that of normal men... and that difference was made manifest through precisely those parts of the body that command most attention: nose, feet, neck, and coloration. All of these bodily features project ugliness as opposed to the standard of manly looks” (Mosse 63). Some believed that Jews were born circumcised, adding an additional layer that bodily and sexually differentiated them from their non-Jewish neighbours. Sander Gilman convincingly demonstrates that male circumcision was the most prevalent marker of Jewish difference, at least in the popular perception of the non-Jewish communities Jews lived in: “The centrality of the act of circumcision in defining what a Jew is, made the very term ‘Jew’ in the nineteenth century come to mean male Jew” (Gilman 1993, 49). For Jews, the *brit milah* (ritual act of circumcision) symbolizes the

covenant between God and the Jewish people and is perhaps the most significant markers of identity for Jewish men.<sup>24</sup>

This perception of alterity intensified in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the term “Jew” assumed a racial definition. The social significance of reliance on circumcision as the marker of Jewish difference in European medicine in the nineteenth century can be seen when one realizes that Western European Jews by that time had become indistinguishable from other Western Europeans in language, dress, occupation, the location of their dwellings, and the cut of their hair (ibid. 51). For the community around them, circumcision marked Jews as different, weak and effete. “Even after the Shoah,” writes Gilman, “the sign of circumcision marked a group fantasy about the hidden nature of the male Jew’s body, even when the body in question was uncircumcised in German popular culture in the 1980s” (ibid. 51). Yet simultaneously, the Jewish male was also imagined to be sexually rapacious. As Mosse notes, “Jews, then, were often ‘feminized,’ though for the most part they were pictured with their passions out of control, predators lusting after blonde women” (Mosse 70).

The prevalent view of the Jew as different and as an outsider has continued through to contemporary times. At its first post-war congress, in Montreux, Switzerland,

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24 In the German imagination circumcision occupied a dichotomous place – either inflicted upon the male body as a ritual act, or as some believed, Jewish men were born inherently different and were born circumcised. Yet educated Germans would likely have been familiar with Goethe’s memoir *Truth and Poetry: From My Own Life* published in 1848, in which he speaks positively about his interactions with Jews at festivals and life-cycle events. Goethe states: “I was consequently extremely curious to become acquainted with their ceremonies. I did not desist until I had frequently visited their school, had assisted at a circumcision and a wedding, and had formed a notion of the Feast of Tabernacles.” (Goethe 123) Additionally, in *The Jewish Personal in the European Imagination* Leonid Livak posits that visual artistic representations of Jesus’ circumcision often depicted old, knife-wielding Jewish men and a recoiling Mary and child. Livak notes: “Exegetes begin to view Jesus’ circumcision as the first shedding of blood homologous to the one during his Passion,” further solidifying the place of circumcision in the European imagination about Jews, and Jewish men in particular.

in July 1948, the political commission of the World Jewish Congress passed a resolution stressing “the determination of the Jewish people never again to settle in the bloodstained soil of Germany” (Brenner 66). Jews who returned to German-speaking Europe did so without the blessing of the organized Jewish community and its representative agencies. They, and the communities that subsequently developed, were viewed with bewilderment and, at least initially, were on the margins of the Jewish world.<sup>25</sup> In 1949, further complications arose for Jews who remained in or returned to Germany. As West Germany was emerging from Allied occupation as a sovereign nation, the World Jewish Congress (WJC) decided it was not realistic to completely abandon the Jews who decided to live there. The WJC took the important first step of establishing an office in Frankfurt-am-Main to maintain contact with the Jewish communities in Germany. During the decades that followed, Jewish communities re-established themselves in the lands where, in recent memory, National Socialism had flourished. For some individuals German acculturation provided career opportunities that would otherwise not have been possible. For all, rebuilding a life in German-speaking Europe meant reconstructing models of Jewish masculinity intrinsically interwoven with geographic location and German culture as well as by their personal experience in the Holocaust.

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<sup>25</sup> In *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany*, Atina Grossmann notes that there were approximately 8,000 registered members of the Berlin Jewish *Gemeinde* (community) in mid-1946 (p.97). Of this number, almost 5,500 had non-Jewish partners who had been instrumental in enabling their Jewish partner to survive the National Socialist period. Michael Brenner, in “In the Shadow of the Holocaust” notes that “By 1948, more than 100 Jewish communities had been founded, and a total of some 20,000 members were registered in the reestablished communities in 1948 (p.3). These numbers reflect those communities that would become West Germany and do not include Jews who were living in Displaced Persons camps. Brenner notes that it was not until the mid-1960s that the Jews in Germany felt accepted by the worldwide Jewish community.

In this chapter I examine the memoirs of three prominent Jewish men who returned to German-speaking countries and established themselves there in the post-Holocaust period. Each chose to continue the long-established Jewish tradition of contributing to European life, and each offers insight into the reasons why Jewish men chose to return to German-speaking countries while evidencing the intersection of masculinity with concepts of *Heimat*, community, justice and culture.<sup>26</sup> Simon Wiesenthal remained in Austria after his liberation from the Mauthausen concentration camp, Marcel Reich-Ranicki returned to Germany from Poland in 1958, and Paul Spiegel returned from hiding with his mother in Belgium immediately after the Second World War. Because my focus is their memoirs, I will deal with them in the order that their memoirs were published.

Simon Wiesenthal, born in 1908, was 37 years old when liberated from the Mauthausen concentration camp in 1945. As an adult, he deliberately chose to remain in Europe and rebuild his life in Austria. He settled first in Linz and later moved to Vienna. There was never any doubt in Wiesenthal's mind that Austria was where he would rebuild his life. In his 1967 memoir, *Doch die Mörder leben (The Murderers Among Us)*, he details a life devoted to researching, locating and seeking to bring Nazi war criminals to justice. This commitment to justice for the victims of the Holocaust meant Wiesenthal had to continually interpret and negotiate his own position in Austrian society: as a Jew and an Austrian, and as a husband and a father. For Wiesenthal, these roles often

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26 One senses in each of the three protagonists profiled in this chapter a sentiment at times unspoken, similar to Freud's comments upon his arrival in the United Kingdom after fleeing Austria in 1938. "The triumphant feeling of liberation," he wrote, "is mingled too strongly with mourning, for one had still very much loved the prison from which one has been released." (Website – Freud: Conflict & Culture).

appeared to be in conflict, yet his primary concern always was seeking justice for the Jews murdered in the Holocaust. He represents a construct of masculinity often seen in the Westerns and American dramas discussed in the previous chapter: the lone figure seeking justice – not retribution - for those wronged. I refer to this conceptualization of masculinity as the “Solitary Justice Seeker.”

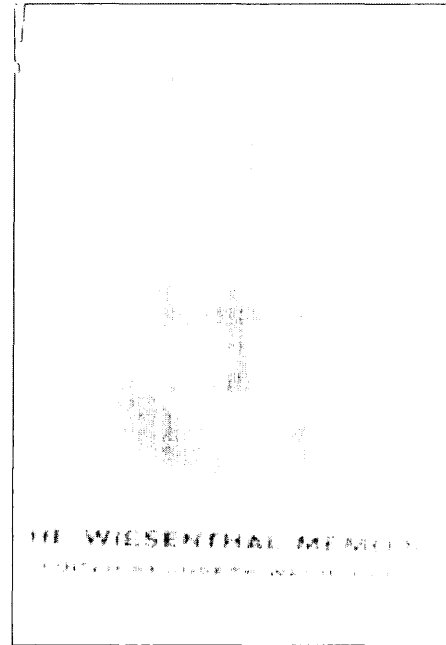
Marcel Reich-Ranicki was born in 1920 in Włocławek, Poland, but spent his formative years from 1929-1938 in Berlin. He documented his life and meteoric career as a literary critic and arbiter of German literary culture in his 1999 German-language memoir *Mein Leben (The Author of Himself)*. After remaining on Germany’s best-seller list for fifty-three weeks, his autobiography was translated into English and published in 2001. This was followed in 2009 by Israeli director Dror Zahavi’s German-language television movie adaptation of *Mein Leben*. Reich-Ranicki’s life, steeped in German literature, epitomizes the intersection of German and Jewish cultures and provides insight into the connections between masculinity, high culture and citizenship. George Mosse described this construct of masculinity as that of the *Bildungsbürger*, the educated bourgeois man of letters. According to Mosse, the Jewish intellectual is the German Jew beyond Judaism, working out his role in society through acceptance of the leveling effect of the Enlightenment promise of equality, at least among intellectuals (Gilman 24). Reich-Ranicki represents a “Jewish bourgeois” masculinity reminiscent of the interwar period in Europe; it is predicated on an exacting knowledge of canonical German literature and other markers of high culture.

The final subject of this chapter, Paul Spiegel, was born in 1937 in a farming community in the Westphalian region of Germany. He survived the Holocaust, along with his mother, by hiding in Belgium. Following a successful career as a journalist, Spiegel was elected President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany in January 2000, a position he held until his death in 2006. Spiegel's 2001 memoir, *Wieder zu Hause? (Home again?)* relates his experiences as a journalist, executive member and eventually the head of the *Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland* (Central Council for Jews in Germany). Spiegel's construction of masculinity is informed by both agrarian values as well as the commitment to building community. I use the term "pragmatic masculinity" to define this conceptualization.

The authors of the memoirs chosen for this chapter are all exceptional. Their stories demonstrate attachments to land, culture and history. They provide, in the case of Simon Wiesenthal, a poignant and compelling account of a life devoted to hunting Nazi war criminals; in the case of Marcel Reich-Ranicki, a glimpse into the guarded and private life of one of Germany's most prolific literary critics; and finally, in the case of Paul Spiegel, an attachment to Germany's rural farming land. An examination of each text elucidates the juncture of models of masculinity, hybrid identities, as well as the intersection of sexuality with cultural, social and religious identity markers of Judaism.

## A Man Who Lives For The Dead: Simon Wiesenthal

“I’m doing this because I have to.” Simon Wiesenthal



Simon Wiesenthal was born on December 31, 1908, in the town of Buczacz, Galicia in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, now the Ukraine. When he was six, the First World War began and his father was called to serve in the Austro-Hungarian army, where he was killed in battle against Russian forces in 1917. During this period of war, Wiesenthal’s mother took him and his brother to the presumed safety of Vienna. The family remained in Vienna until the end of the war when they returned to Buczacz, yet the two years spent in Vienna were formative for Wiesenthal, integrating him into Germanophone culture.

Wiesenthal speaks sparingly in his memoir about his personal and familial life. In order to assess how Wiesenthal separated his personal and public life into two distinct spheres, it is necessary to look to his 1989 memoir *Justice Not Vengeance*,<sup>27</sup> since he is silent about his personal life in *The Murderers Among Us*, in which he succinctly states: “I am married, I have a daughter, I have grandchildren – they mean everything to me, but they are of no interest to the general public. Of interest alone is my life in relation to Nazism: I have survived the Holocaust and I have tried to preserve the memory of the dead” (Wiesenthal 1989, 1).<sup>28</sup> This reveals Wiesenthal’s desire to protect his family and shield them from public scrutiny, but also something of his ego. In a patriarchal manner, Wiesenthal has decided and declared what will be of interest for readers of his memoir: namely, the work and dedication to tracking down Nazi war criminals that made him a household name in Europe and North America (he received numerous awards and honours, including France’s *Chevalier of the Légion d’Honneur*, Germany’s Federal Cross of Merit, the Order of Merit of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, and was made an Honorary Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire, to name but a few). His wife Cyla also survived the Holocaust, and it is reasonable to assume that her experiences in Austria following the Holocaust and her role in supporting her husband and raising their daughter in Germanophone Europe would be of interest to some

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<sup>27</sup> *Justice Not Vengeance* was written in German and translated into English. It was necessary to seek out a quote from Wiesenthal indicating how he saw his wife and daughter because not a single reference is made in *The Murders Among Us*.

<sup>28</sup> Wiesenthal was consumed with bringing Nazi war criminals to justice, and it quickly became his *raison d’être*. Describing his work habits and demeanor, Wiesenthal writes, “My work kept me up all day until late at night. When I went to bed and tried to sleep, things I’d read and heard during the day would fuse with memories of the past. Often, after a bad dream, I woke unable to separate the dream from reality” (Wiesenthal 1967, 59-60).

readers. Wiesenthal's reticence about discussing his personal life while declaring that his professional life alone is of interest to the reader may also be indicative of the manner in which he viewed women's roles in his life as of a secondary or supporting nature.<sup>29</sup>

Simon Wiesenthal's 1967 memoir bears the provocative title *The Murderers Among Us* in English and *Doch die Mörder leben* in German. The title of the English translation evokes the 1946 DEFA film *The Murderers are Among Us* (*Die Mörder sind unter uns*). Wolfgang Staudte's expressionist film was the first film made in Germany after the war and dealt with the crisis of masculinity that resulted from the Second World War. The film's main protagonist, Hans Mertens, is a former Wehrmacht soldier who has witnessed the captain of his platoon deliberately kill Polish civilians. When Mertens recognizes the captain in Berlin, alive and integrating back into German society, his own life becomes a journey to seek first vengeance and later justice for the murdered victims. The Wehrmacht captain is the "murderer among" the German population that Wiesenthal symbolically invokes in his memoir's title.

The original German title creates a more provocative framework. The particle *doch* in Wiesenthal's German-language memoir dramatically emphasizes that the murderers had evaded justice and were at the time of publication still alive, living amongst the local population. Mirroring Mertens, Wiesenthal found little support in his struggle for justice among a population more concerned with rebuilding than seeking to reconcile themselves with the Nazi crimes. Just as Mertens recognized the platoon

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<sup>29</sup> Jewish women and their relationships to German and Austrian men either during or after the Holocaust are noticeably absent from his memoir. It seems they belonged to the private sphere, and Wiesenthal makes a clear distinction between the private and public spheres he inhabited: it was his very public work that monopolized his life.

captain in the civilian population in Berlin, so too did Wiesenthal recognize Nazi perpetrators living civilian lives in Austria. However, unlike the protagonist in *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, who finds a resolution to his quest to bring the captain to justice, Wiesenthal's mission was a life-long journey. One imagines that he not only empathized with the solitary and brooding character of Hans Mertens but may also have been a little envious that Mertens' quest had a definitive end.

Wiesenthal's memoir is stylistically unusual. The Czech-American journalist Joseph Wechsberg, who developed a life-long friendship with Wiesenthal, wrote four chapters profiling Wiesenthal's life. The remaining 22 chapters are Wiesenthal's personal narrative as told to Wechsberg. The English- and German-language versions were published simultaneously in 1967. Since both men were fluent in German and lived in Austria at the time the book was written, it is reasonable to assume that Wiesenthal recounted at least some of his personal narrative in German. However, neither Wiesenthal nor Wechsberg provide any insight into the process by which the writing took place.

Analyzing Wiesenthal's attitudes towards German men, women, and minorities and how he carefully crafted his own image reveals much about the masculine construct of one of Austria's most prominent Jewish men. The male ideal remained unchanged in its characteristics for Wiesenthal, but the SS, which represented the Aryan male, no longer exemplified it. The American G.I., who symbolized power, control, and justice in the post-Second World War era, had replaced them. The crucial moment for Wiesenthal came when he witnessed the interrogation of SS officers by American officers. "Now I

stared; I couldn't believe it," writes Wiesenthal. "The SS man was trembling, just as we had trembled before him. His shoulders were hunched, and I noticed that he wiped the palms of his hands. He was no longer a superman; he made me think of a trapped animal. He was escorted by a Jewish prisoner – a *former* prisoner" (Wiesenthal 1967, 47). The Aryan construct of masculinity Wiesenthal witnessed in the captive SS officer was not only delegitimized, but also dehumanized and criminalized. It was evidence for Wiesenthal that a new era was commencing. Describing the change in his own perception of the SS men, Wiesenthal writes: "I had always thought of them as the strong men, the elite, of a perverted regime. It took me a long time to understand what I had seen: the supermen became cowards the moment they were no longer protected by their guns. They were through" (ibid. 1967 47).

To better understand Wiesenthal's conceptualization of masculinity, it is critical to situate the construct of the Jewish male as defined by National Socialist ideology – which Wiesenthal was subjected to and victimized by - in this wider context. The shift in consciousness from being victimized by Nazi concepts of what it meant to be a man (or less than a man), to constructing a new masculinity that allowed him to integrate back into society, would have been a transformative experience for Wiesenthal. Klaus Theweleit's theories of masculinity that focus on the connection between Fascist consciousness and the male body, discussed in the Introduction, provide an important framework for understanding this transformation. When Wiesenthal witnessed a former SS guard – once the epitome of Aryan masculinity – being escorted by a former prisoner, had a transformative effect upon how he viewed himself and his former

persecutors. “We are free men now,” writes Wiesenthal, “no longer *Untermenschen*” (ibid. 1967 48). This is the defining moment that allowed Wiesenthal to create a new construct of masculinity. As this chapter elucidates, Wiesenthal’s model borrowed from the strength of feminized models, not only from women but also from children and marginalized males, such as working-class Americans and homosexuals.

The hierarchical order of masculinity was completely redefined with the liberation of the Mauthausen concentration camp where Wiesenthal was held. The American G.I.s who controlled the camp assumed the position of the dominant *Alpha* male, at the top of the social order, while in defeat, the Aryan male became the *Omega* male, submissive not only to his captors but also to his former prisoners.<sup>30</sup> Forming the new *Omega* category, they were at the bottom of the social order and subordinate to all others. The recently liberated inmates – previously the *Omega* males - became *Beta* males and assisted the G.I.s with translation, interrogation and by escorting the now prisoner German males to their barracks. Second in the hierarchical order, they moved into a position of trust with the higher positioned *Alpha* males. The power dynamic that emerged with the liberation of the camp remained essentially unchanged, but the players had shifted places.<sup>30</sup> This in itself had a dramatic effect on Wiesenthal.

A key characteristic of the new *Alpha* males, like the ones they replaced, was that they were unequivocally heterosexual. US servicemen discovered to be homosexual were dishonorably discharged during the period. For Wiesenthal, to be male was to be

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<sup>30</sup> My analysis posits that in the concentration camp structure as described by Wiesenthal, the *Alpha* position is inhabited by Nazi men, the *Beta* position by Nazi men of subordinate rank, and the *Omega* position by inmates. After liberation the *Alpha* position is inhabited by American soldiers, the *Beta* position by the former inmates, and the *Omega* position by the Nazi men.

coded as heterosexual; homosexuality seems to have played no role in his discourse, even though homosexuals were interned in the Mauthausen concentration camp. In 2004, one year before his death, Wiesenthal wrote a letter of support for the *Homosexuelle Initiative Wien* (HOSI-Wien) campaign for restitution and medical expenses for gay victims of National Socialism. In his letter, Wiesenthal stated that gay men and women who were persecuted by the Nazis because of their sexual orientation were not likely to identify themselves and there was therefore a danger that they would not get what they deserved, perpetuating the discrimination (Segev 319). It was a significant endorsement for HOSI-Wien since Wiesenthal's favorable reputation was well ensconced in Austria by this time. It is also a significant development in how Wiesenthal integrated homosexuality into his understanding of hegemonic masculinity. After a lifetime of seeking justice for the murdered Jews of Europe, Wiesenthal's "Solitary Justice Seeker" masculinity defined him as an individualist who stood for justice. Consequently he was able to integrate homosexuality into a broader framework of masculinity.

Yet despite the assumed heterosexuality of the American GIs, Wiesenthal does not code them as invincible. These heterosexual men were still susceptible to the wiles of beautiful and charming women – a motif reminiscent of the biblical narrative of Samson and Delilah and the story of Adam being tempted by the feminine guile of Eve. From his memoir, one gets the impression that Wiesenthal imagined Germanophone women capable of stealthily defeating the American military male. As the de-nazification process continued into 1946 and 1947, Wiesenthal noted that the Americans taking part in the interrogations and background checks either did not know or were not interested in

speaking German. Many of these American GIs were not the same ones who had fought in the Second World War or liberated the camps. Although they wore the American uniform, they were recruits and GIs who had replaced the soldiers when their tours of duty ended. Wiesenthal writes that their reliance on interpreters, usually young German and Austrian women, made them susceptible to their female charms and unfocused in their task of seeking justice: “They often became victims of the Nazis’ best secret weapon – the *Fräuleins*,” writes Wiesenthal. “A young American was naturally more interested in a pretty, complaisant girl than in one of ‘those SS men’” (Wiesenthal 1967 58). Wiesenthal equates masculinity with strength, honor and heterosexual virility, and femininity with temptation. Although Eve is not intrinsically evil, she is easily led astray and perhaps more seriously, can tempt Adam into doing her bidding.

Wiesenthal’s immunity to the real or imagined influences of the “*Fräuleins*” is not unrelated to his concept of Jewish masculinity. Nearly 38 years of age when liberated, Wiesenthal would have been keenly aware of the years of Nazi propaganda that depicted Jewish men as feminine, yet also as sexual predators.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, his immunity can be interpreted as a desire to counter the negative stereotype of Jewish men as being sexually lascivious. Unlike some of the male subjects in Margarete Feinstein’s 2009 *Holocaust Survivors in Post-War Germany, 1945-1957*, who saw sexual relations with German and Austrian women as a type of revenge, Wiesenthal never mentions any

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<sup>31</sup> In his 2010 text *The Jewish Persona in the European Imagination*, Leonid Livak demonstrates the long history in the European imagination of coding Jewish men as feminine. Describing this conceptualization he writes: “Pursuing luxury and pleasure, ‘the jews’ are thus homologous to women, the ur-symbol of sexuality and carnality in the eyes of the Church Fathers. The association works both ways. As the weak link in the divinely sanctioned community, Christian women are more likely than most to ally themselves with ‘the jews.’ On the other hand, ‘the jews,’ their gender notwithstanding, can acquire qualities marked as female” (Livak 40).

such desire on his part. Feinstein notes: “Revenge through sexual relations with German women also occurred. Few Jewish DPs committed rape against German women, but those who did were motivated by revenge. More commonly, Jewish men bartered their rations for sex. Years of Nazi propaganda celebrating the German woman as the feminine ideal and denigrating the Eastern European man as a beast had encouraged a form of ‘revenge’ and desire to taste the forbidden fruit. At the very least such sexual contact turned the Nazi racial order upside down, demonstrating its defeat” (Feinstein 116).

Although Wiesenthal viewed young Germanophone women, the *Fräuleins*, with suspicion, he appreciated their techniques, the ones he associated with feminine wiles. Later, he utilized some of these methods in an attempt to portray himself as healthy and redoubtable. Liberation provided Wiesenthal with the opportunity to recover and adjust to life in the post-war period. His first priority was to regain his health and much needed bodyweight. When the Americans initially turned down his request to help them with interrogations, it reinforced for him the premise that masculinity is evidenced by the male body but that power can reside with women, something he may not previously been aware of. In his memoir he recounts being told: “Wiesenthal, go and take it easy for a while and come back when you really weigh fifty-six kilos” (Wiesenthal 1967 48). Ten days later when Wiesenthal again requested to assist the interrogations, he left nothing to chance: “Now I put on some make-up. I’d found a piece of red paper and used it to redden my pale cheeks” (Wiesenthal 1967 48). In his efforts to create an image of health and stamina, Wiesenthal turned to make-up – something associated with femininity and

can be used to convey power, but also with the theatre and cinema - to convey a robust, healthy image of masculinity.<sup>32</sup> Wiesenthal is establishing the framework of his life's work. He recognizes the importance of presenting an image that will show him in the best possible light.

Wiesenthal was very much aware of the importance of visual aesthetics to defining one's construct of masculinity as well as the impression it created for others. When he attended the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, Wiesenthal suggested to the prosecutor, Gideon Hausner, that Eichmann, one of the primary architects of the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question," should be in his SS uniform, just as he appeared during the Holocaust. The trial would make a greater impression if Eichmann looked more like a Nazi criminal (Segev 151). Indeed, had Eichmann been dressed in his SS uniform, his masculine performativity would have been that of the Fascist male. Wiesenthal recognized, of course, that it was not be possible to have Eichmann appear before the court in his SS uniform. Such a tactic would have been seen as staged theatrics and might have given the trial the ambiance of a circus. It demonstrates, however, that Wiesenthal recognized that the aesthetics of masculinity is vital to the performance of masculinity, and how one is seen by the world.

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32 Wiesenthal's attention to the accoutrements of image (make-up, clothing) may be interpreted as a reference to the importance of the physical process of crafting or alternatively concealing masculinity. His specific reference to the use of women's make-up to create a healthy appearance, thus appearing more masculine, seems to indicate that Wiesenthal is not only aware of how masculinity is perceived, but also how it is performed. His actions indicate that he is enlist whatever tools are needed in his performance of a robust, healthy male. In the same chapter he describes a conversation with a friend who saw him apply the cheek make-up: "A friend asked me whether I was going out to look for a bride. "Some people won't like that bride," I said." (p.48) One can interpret this as a veiled reference to homosexuality or even drag, and Wiesenthal incorporating traditionally marginalized forms of masculinity into a broader discourse on masculinities.

Once Wiesenthal regained strength and his sense of independence, he then moved to the *Alpha* male category in his own right, becoming the “Solitary Justice Seeker” who tracked down criminals of the National Socialist era. Unlike traditional warriors or hunters, Wiesenthal did not carry a gun or weapon, and so there is a fragility that surrounds this conceptualization of a hunter. His success in hunting was dependent on his ability to gather and collect information. He relied on his research and detective skills, and his belief in the justice system to demonstrate that the pen is the mightier weapon. Wiesenthal’s career required that he listen to, and document, countless personal testimonies from survivors of the Holocaust, who experienced Nazi atrocities. His memoir is permeated with numerous accounts of victimization from individuals who sought his counsel. One senses that these personal accounts weighed heavily on Wiesenthal, who realized that it was impossible to obtain justice for most of them. Wiesenthal describes the rather unusual position that being the keeper of these narratives placed him in through a conversation he had with a former SS-officer: ““You would tell the truth to the people in America. That’s right. And you know what would happen Wiesenthal?’ He got up slowly and looked at me, and he smiled. ‘They wouldn’t believe. They’d say you were crazy. Might even put you into a madhouse. How can anyone believe this terrible business – unless he has lived through it?’” (Wiesenthal 1967 335).

It is not surprising that Wiesenthal should cloak this fragility in the guise of the traditional Harris Tweed jacket. He is not the warrior-hunter in military fatigues or body armour, but a hunter of clues and evidence necessary to bring war criminals to justice. Wiesenthal’s uniform, his tweed jacket, serves as his only body armour, a constant visual

aesthetic amid a turbulent life. Describing his work in locating Adolf Eichmann, Wiesenthal describes the search for Eichmann as “not a ‘hunt,’ as it has been called, but a long, frustrating game of patience, a gigantic jigsaw puzzle” (ibid. 1967 99). His weapons, those of intellect, perseverance and investigation, characterize another aspect of his construct of masculinity. Puzzles and games are most frequently associated with the activities of children, but avenging those murdered in the Holocaust was not a game for Wiesenthal – it was a mission requiring intellect, perseverance and the ability to think strategically.

Indeed, Wiesenthal’s construct of masculinity relies on an ongoing performance of his role as a Nazi hunter. Wiesenthal was often photographed wearing a traditional hound’s-tooth jacket or conservative three-piece suit. Although it may be in keeping with his upbringing and his early career as an architect, it also elicits the image of the hard-boiled detective of American cinema. In *Holocaust Survivors in Postwar Germany, 1945-1957*, Margarete Feinstein states that clothing the body was one significant way in which Jewish men, and women, reclaimed their sense of masculinity or femininity. “Many secular survivors adopted the military fashion of pants tucked into riding boots and military-styled jackets” (Feinstein 111). She posits that some Jewish men did so in unconscious imitation of the aggressively masculine Nazis, providing further evidence of the structure of power remaining the same while the players shifted, and the longevity of the influence of the dress code of Aryan masculinity.<sup>33</sup> Wiesenthal’s crafted image and

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<sup>33</sup> Feinstein also argues that the re-growth of hair was another signifier of masculinity. “In occupied Europe the Nazis attacked Jewish men wearing traditional beards and *payes* (side curls) and tried to force

unique role in post-Holocaust Europe recalls American detectives portrayed by Humphrey Bogart such as Sam Spade (*The Maltese Falcon*, Warner Bros., dir. John Huston, 1941) and Philip Marlowe (*The Big Sleep*, Warner Bros., dir. Howard Hawks, 1946). Through his quiet sense of toughness and devotion to seek justice rather than extract revenge, Wiesenthal's construct of masculinity re-imagines the American detective of *film noir* as a Jewish Nazi hunter. Like his film counterparts, Wiesenthal is a self-confessed workaholic, who approaches his work with a sense of duty, righteousness, toughness, and endurance.<sup>34</sup>

This construction of the noble, solitary seeker of justice for the victimized who cannot speak for themselves, is evident in other American cinema of the period. Film productions such as *12 Angry Men* (United Artists, dir. Sidney Lumet, 1957) and *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Universal Pictures, dir. Robert Mulligan, 1962) presented male protagonists – Henry Fonda as “Juror Number 8” in *12 Angry Men* and Gregory Peck's lawyer Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, – driven by an overwhelming sense of rightness in their position. In each film the central male protagonist is positioned as the moral authority, a man who is steadfast in his belief system even when faced with ostracism from the community he inhabits. Unlike Wiesenthal, however, these men did not begin as outsiders; their moral commitments rendered them such. Wiesenthal can be seen as taking his cues from a contemporary form of American masculinity. Wiesenthal's construct of masculinity did not evolve in isolation. It was initially inspired

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them to shave...men and women had been shaved in the concentration camps” (Feinstein 111). For some Jewish men, being able to grow their hair signified a return to both Jewish identity and masculinity.

<sup>34</sup> One of the characteristics often attributed to *film noir* is the tendency towards a tragic or bleak conclusion, which often includes the death of the hero. In reality, one can interpret aspects of Wiesenthal's marriage as corresponding to the bleak conclusion that it took tertiary status to Wiesenthal's work.

by the American soldiers who liberated the Mauthausen concentration camp and also by the image of the independent thinking, moral individualist presented in American cinema.

In addition to this American influence, Wiesenthal also took cues from traditional Jewish values when constructing his identity as the “Solitary Justice Seeker.” In describing his position on the collective guilt of a nation or people, he succinctly notes: “A Jew who believes in God and in his people does not believe in the principle of collective guilt” (Wiesenthal 1967, 12). For Wiesenthal, adherence to the moral code of ethics grounded in Jewish principles played an important role in how he hunted war criminals, and why he believed in justice through a court system rather than revenge killing. Wiesenthal distinguished between bystanders, *Mitläufer* (those who ran with the crowd), and those who committed crimes against humanity, and sought justice against the latter.

Not surprisingly, the values and moral code Wiesenthal adhered to clashed with those of the people he sought to bring to justice. When he attempts to describe to a former SS officer the value that Judaism places on human life and why revenge killing is not in accordance with this Jewish value, the man replies, “Aren’t you sure, Wiesenthal, that it wasn’t just weakness?” (ibid. 1967 261). Wiesenthal was certain, however, that his belief in Jewish ethical principles was what shaped and defined his construct of masculinity and what differentiated him from the failed, Aryan male. When a colleague pondered exacting revenge upon Eichmann by kidnapping his two sons living in Austria, Wiesenthal again invoked the moral code as a point of difference between his construct

of masculinity and that of the Fascist male: “We Jews are not Nazis... we don’t wage war on innocent children” (ibid. 1967 108).

Given his experiences in the Nazi concentration camps, the question of why Wiesenthal chose to reside in Austria remains. Indeed, many of his family members and friends were victims of National Socialism and, as his memoir attests, life was never easy for him in Austria. Yet it must be remembered that Wiesenthal was born in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, and his father fought and died in the Austro-Hungarian army during the First World War. In 1915, Wiesenthal attended public school in Vienna, the imperial capital of the Habsburg Empire. This bourgeois Austrian way of life, where he grew up speaking German, was both home and heritage for Wiesenthal. Yet, more decisively, the decision to remain in Austria was intrinsically linked to his desire to bring Nazi war criminals to justice: “Having made up his mind during that early post-war period to start a search that he had no hope of ever completing, Wiesenthal used his architect’s training and began to build from the foundations” (ibid. 1967 12). Methodically, Wiesenthal began preparations for his documentation centre, collected and catalogued affidavits from victims of National Socialism, and established a network of eyewitnesses, informants and volunteers. Austria was home for Wiesenthal, but perhaps more importantly, it was where he could actively seek out and bring to justice the murderers among the populace.

Living in Austria came to represent for Wiesenthal what it meant for him to be both an Austrian and a Jewish man after the Holocaust. Austrians had enthusiastically welcomed Hitler at Vienna’s *Heldenplatz* following the *Anschluss*, they had participated

in the structural organizations of National Socialism at the highest levels, especially given their relatively small population in relation to that of Germany. Although Austrians accounted for only eight percent of the population of the Third Reich, about one third of all people working for the SS extermination machinery were Austrians; almost half of the six million Jewish victims of the Hitler regime were killed by Austrians (ibid. 1967 189). Wiesenthal believed that his presence was needed to prod Austrians to come to terms with their involvement in National Socialist crimes: "In Germany, my efforts are appreciated," he writes. "In Austria, they are unhappily tolerated, and that's why I am going to stay here" (ibid. 1967 193), even in the face of danger. While in Linz, the family was confronted with a telephone threat to their daughter's life, and Wiesenthal's wife suffered a mild heart attack. This resulted in Wiesenthal questioning his masculine roles of family provider and protector with his professional role as justice seeker and detective. It also, perhaps for the first time, made him question his assumption of women's strength and power: "For the first time in my life I was not sure whether I should go on – whether I had the right to go on. I don't mind taking a risk but I couldn't expose my family to danger" (Wiesenthal 1967 22). In the end, however, Wiesenthal was compelled by his own moral conviction to bring war criminals to justice: "It was no use, I had to go on," he writes. "I remember I held my head in my hands, saying to myself, 'I cannot stop, I cannot stop'" (ibid. 1967 22).

Wiesenthal's life mission consumed not only his working hours, but his personal life as well. His pursuit of Nazis made his wife's life miserable; for both of them, it was almost like self-punishment (Segev 307). Like her husband, Cyla Wiesenthal, née

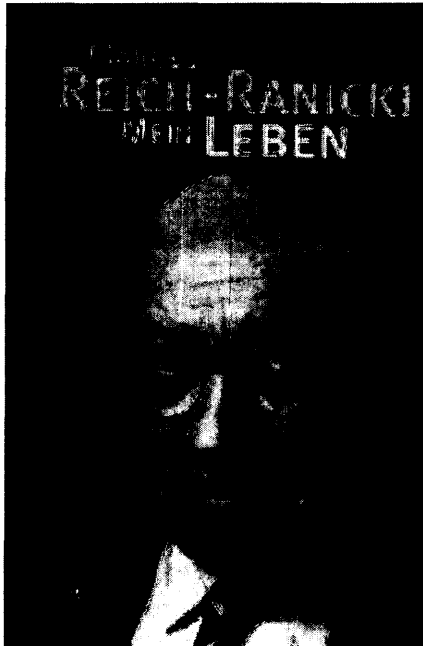
Müller, had also been born in Buczacz, Galicia in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. She and Wiesenthal married in 1936. The two met while in school, and when Wiesenthal's widowed mother remarried, Wiesenthal went to live with Cyla's family. During the Holocaust, he secured papers that allowed her to pass, and survive, as a non-Jewish Pole. Wiesenthal rarely mentions her apart from the circumstances of the telephone threat and that she was sedated by the time he arrived home.

In his biography of Wiesenthal, Tom Segev describes Wiesenthal's decision to raise his family in Linz as cruel, even perverse. According to him, Cyla Wiesenthal resigned herself to coming second to her husband's quest for Nazi war criminals, placing her in a cycle of perpetual unhappiness. Yet she never left, nor separated from Wiesenthal: "I am not married to a man. I am married to thousands, maybe millions of dead," Segev quotes her as saying (Segev 186). In his text, she is the long-suffering wife who places her needs and desires behind those of her husband. Indeed, Segev portrays Cyla Wiesenthal as a sickly, depressive woman, who lived a generally unhappy existence in Austria and saw the outside world as hostile and antisemitic (Segev 305).

To sum up, Wiesenthal believed that Austria was the right place to be, coupled with a personal mission to hunt Nazi war criminals, his wife and daughter felt only isolation. By relegating his roles of husband and father to secondary or even tertiary status over his commitment to his work, Wiesenthal demonstrated that he was willing to sacrifice them for his overriding sense of acquiring justice for those murdered in the Holocaust. Indeed, all of his relationships came second to his commitment to bringing Nazi criminals to justice.

### The Kulturmensch: Marcel Reich-Ranicki

“ I am half Polish, half German and wholly Jewish.” Marcel Reich-Ranicki



Marcel Reich-Ranicki was born in Włocławek, Poland, on June 2, 1920, the youngest of three siblings. His German-Jewish mother guided his childhood education, ensuring that her youngest son was educated at the local German-language Protestant school in their hometown. Struggling to maintain a marginal middle-class lifestyle in Poland, the family moved to Berlin when Reich-Ranicki was nine years old. Recalling the significance of the move to Germany, Reich-Ranicki notes: “Before leaving, so my mother believed, I had to say goodbye to my teacher, and I shall always remember the words with which she sent me out into the world... ‘You’re going, my son, to the land of culture.’ I did not quite understand what this was about, but I was aware of my mother nodding approvingly” (Reich-Ranicki 12). Nor could he have imagined that his future in

Germany would include expulsion by the National Socialists, and intellectual celebrity in West and later reunified Germany.

On October 27, 1938, the Reich-Ranickis were among the Jews with Polish citizenship living in Germany who were deported by the National Socialist regime and abandoned near the Polish border town of Zbaszyn, Poland when Polish authorities refused them entry. Later, confined to the Warsaw Ghetto, Reich-Ranicki experienced Nazi German expulsion a second time when his parents were deported to the death camp of Treblinka. Yet throughout, Reich-Ranicki maintained an unwavering attachment to German literature and culture that even the murderous effects of Nazism could not shake. When he defected to Germany from Poland in 1958, it heralded the beginning of a literary career that saw him become one of Germany's most influential literary critics.

Marcel Reich-Ranicki seems to have inherited the mantle of highly intellectualized *Kultur Mensch* masculinity exhibited by scholars such as Freud. In 1925, describing his own sense of identity, Freud wrote: "My language is German. My culture, my attainments are German. I considered myself German intellectually, until I noticed the growth of anti-Semitic prejudice in Germany and German Austria. Since that time, I prefer to call myself a Jew" (website- Freud: Conflict & Culture). Although he shared a similar educational background to Wiesenthal, rather than becoming a detective, hunter of clues and seeker of justice like Wiesenthal, Reich-Ranicki developed into a *Kultur Mensch*, a man of arts and letters and creativity. His 1999 memoir *Mein Leben (The Author of Himself, 2001)* is the basis for this section, in which I examine the relation between Reich-Ranicki's almost unparalleled passion for German literature, the

relationships that guided his conceptualization of masculinity, and how milestones in his life shaped his responses to situations.

For each edition of his memoir, a specific photograph has been used on the jacket cover to portray a carefully crafted image of Reich-Ranicki to the reading audience. The original German-language text bears a contemporary photograph of a stern-faced Reich-Ranicki, an image with which German television viewers would be quite familiar. His television program, *Literarisches Quartett*, aired from 1988-2002, and his frank and often withering literary critiques made Reich-Ranicki a household name in Germany. The jacket cover delivers the message that the memoir is a frank, no-nonsense account of his life; hence the title *Mein Leben*, literally My Life. The English-language cover jacket hints at a more nuanced and slightly nostalgic self-portrayal. A 1946 sepia-toned photograph of Reich-Ranicki taken in Berlin is used to depict the author. The image of a pensive looking young man, a solitary figure with an urban backdrop behind him, conveys the message that this memoir will take the reader through Europe's dark past. A young Reich-Ranicki – bespectacled, wearing a high-necked trench coat and carrying a portfolio – communicates an intellectual image and reinforces the English-language title, that this man has written his own destiny in life. It also calls to mind the familiar trope of the Jewish man as one who requires eyeglasses. Thus, it provides the viewer with a hint of the Holocaust context of this memoir. For English-language audiences unfamiliar with the impact Reich-Ranicki has had on the German literary scene, readers are immediately confronted with an image of European masculine intellectuality and determination.

Reich-Ranicki's memoir offers insight into the factors that determined not only his construct of masculinity, but also the interconnected markers of nationalism, identity, family, and culture. Even during the National Socialist period when German soldiers and Nazi policies subjected him to humiliation, hunger and persecution, Reich-Ranicki maintained his belief that National Socialism had hijacked the true values of Germans and Germany. In 1937 Thomas Mann, living in Switzerland, described the regime as "Despicable powers which are devastating Germany morally, culturally and economically" (Reich-Ranicki 69). Reich-Ranicki heard the article read aloud at a secretive literary circle he belonged to in Berlin in 1937, and it solidified his unwavering belief in what true German values and culture were. He describes his reaction to Mann's words: "That dark evening in Grunewald, hearing the words of Thomas Mann and continuous beat of the rain against the window panes and the breathing of those present being audible in the silence - what did I feel? Relief? Yes, certainly; but more than that - gratitude" (ibid. 69). Mann's missive served not only to inspire Reich-Ranicki, it validated his worldview and all that he realized he had come to hold dear.

Thomas Mann's literary works had a formidable influence on how Reich-Ranicki negotiated his place in the world: "I esteemed Heinrich Mann, especially his *Professor Unrat* and *Der Untertan* [*Man of Straw*]. But I admired and revered Thomas Mann after reading his *Buddenbrooks*... I have time and time again referred to the central idea of that letter. *They - meaning the National Socialists - have the incredible temerity to confuse themselves with Germany! At a time when, perhaps, the moment is not far off when the German people will give its last not to be confused with them*" (ibid. 68-9,

italics in original). The ideas and cultural heritage that Reich-Ranicki cherishes are derived from and validated by the men of German literature and the values they espouse. More importantly, Mann provided a moral legitimacy permitting Jews to return and live in Germany.

Reich-Ranicki's passion and commitment to German literature earned him the reputation of being Germany's "*Literaturpapst*" (literature pope). Yet much like his consciously constructed hyphenated surname, Reich-Ranicki saw himself as a blend of cultures and heritages. In 1958, after he defected to West Germany, Reich-Ranicki apparently asked his friend Hans Schwab-Felisch, Arts Editor for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, how he should sign his published articles. As he describes the episode in his memoir, "I told him that in Poland I had always used the pseudonym Ranicki but that my real name was Reich'... His answer was prompt. 'Why don't you do as I have done and adopt a double-barreled name'" (ibid. 282). The hyphenated surname exemplifies two distinctive features of Reich-Ranicki's heritage but not a third which surfaces in another episode that took place in 1958 that is recounted in *The Author of Himself*. Günter Grass questioned him on how he self-identified:<sup>35</sup> "He, Günter Grass from Danzig, wanted to know: 'What are you really – a Pole, a German, or what?' The words 'or what' clearly hinted at a third possibility. Without hesitation I answered: 'I am half Polish, half German, and wholly Jewish.' Grass seemed surprised, but he was clearly

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35 Grass asking this question says as much about his own issues of self-identification as it does about Reich-Ranicki's succinct response. Born in the Free City of Danzig, Grass' father was a Protestant German and his mother a Roman Catholic of Kashubian-Polish heritage. Coupled with this is Grass's own involvement as a student *Luftwaffenhelfer* (anti-aircraft helper) and later in a SS-Panzer division that was deployed on the Eastern Front. In Reich-Ranicki's retelling of the story it is not surprising that Grass is delighted with his response, since he too draws upon a, at times conflicting, mélange of heritage.

happy, even delighted, with my reply. ‘Not another word. You would only spoil this neat *bon mot*’” (ibid. 3).

Reich-Ranicki’s blended family background forms an integral part of his identity as a Jewish man. His mother Helene (née Auerbach) Reich, a German Jew, who was born in Prussia and moved to Poland only upon her marriage, instilled in her son from an early age the importance of learning to speak and read German. When the family moved to Berlin in 1929 to improve their economic prospects, Reich-Ranicki immersed himself in school, an experience he describes as follows: “Quite quickly I fell under the spell of German literature, of German music. Fear was joined by happiness – fear of things German by the happiness I owed to things German” (ibid. 17). Berlin was a city of contrasts and perplexities for the youthful Reich-Ranicki. Having been brought up with the idealized notion that Germany was the land of culture and that culture equated superiority and refinement, he was shocked to witness corporal punishment being meted out by a male teacher to a fellow male student: “Should schoolchildren receive such harsh treatment in the land of culture? Something was not right here” (ibid. 17). For the first time, Reich-Ranicki encountered the harshness of Berlin as depicted by Hans Fallada, when he had only known the idealized Berlin taught to him by his mother. Accepting these two disparate images of German society and culture was difficult for Reich-Ranicki, but the effect was as if he encountered an epiphany and realised that the world of literature did not have to imitate reality.

Reich-Ranicki’s early relationship with his Polish-Jewish heritage was also ambiguous. As the primary influencer on his education, his mother was not interested in

anything Polish – except her Polish-born husband – and expressed little interest in Jewish traditions or religious customs. Born on August 28, Helene Reich believed that sharing a birth date with Goethe was a symbolic reference to her place in the world and that through German cultural tradition she would achieve her ambitions. Reich-Ranicki portrays his mother as a woman to whom life dealt a continual series of disappointments, particularly her marriage and the lack of economic success her husband achieved. Reich-Ranicki pointedly summarizes his mother’s description of her husband with: “If her husband had manufactured coffins, she used to say, people would have stopped dying” (ibid. 11). Helene Reich emerges from Reich-Ranicki’s description as a woman defeated but not broken, melancholy but not bitter, and one who sees her husband as weak and ineffective. She lives for the future accomplishments of her three children, particularly the youngest of the three, Marcel.<sup>36</sup> Describing his mother’s reaction to her birth date he writes, “When every year. I wished her happy birthday on 28 August, she asked me if I was aware of who else had that day as his birthday. She was born on the same day as Goethe. This she liked to think was in some way symbolic” (ibid. 5). The close identification of Reich-Ranicki’s mother with Germany and Goethe, a giant of German literature, tropes German as phallic, despite the female gender of his mother, – and therefore strong, virile and valuable – while Polish is troped as feminine and therefore weak, passive and lacking value on account of Reich-Ranicki’s father David, who, in contrast, played an extremely limited role in the formation and development of his son’s

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<sup>36</sup> Reich-Ranicki was named for the Roman Catholic saint Marcellus whose saint day, June 2, was the date of Reich-Ranicki’s birth. Reich-Ranicki believes the name was suggested by a Roman Catholic servant or nanny who worked in the household, and not one that his parents chose because it was the name of a Roman Catholic saint.

hybrid construct of intellectual masculinity. A terminally unsuccessful business entrepreneur, who described himself as an industrialist, David Reich was viewed as a failure by both his wife and his youngest son.<sup>37</sup> Reich-Ranicki writes of his father that “Application and energy were not among his virtues. His life was marked by weakness of character and a passive disposition” (ibid. 11).

When the family moved to Berlin in 1929, Reich-Ranicki continued to see his father as a passive and ineffective paternal figure.<sup>38</sup> Describing the one attempt David Reich made to introduce Jewish learning to his son by hiring an Orthodox Jewish tutor, Reich-Ranicki notes: “...at that moment my mother appeared and immediately intervened: I was, she said resolutely, too young for tuition. The disappointed teacher was sent on his way with the promise of employment at some future date. This was my father’s first attempt to intervene in my education; it was also his last” (ibid. 9). Later, after the ascent of National Socialism had curtailed social activities for Berlin’s Jewish community, David Reich encouraged his son to accompany him to synagogue services: “Having attended synagogue with my father a few times I simply refused to go any more... weak and benevolent as my father was, he accepted this” (ibid. 35). Unsuccessful in business and passive in nature, David Reich did not represent a type of masculinity to which Reich-Ranicki could relate.

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37 Reich-Ranicki’s description of the dynamics between his parents is eerily reminiscent of Raul Hilberg’s description of his parents. In his 1996 memoir *The Politics of Memory* Hilberg describes a scene in Vienna in which his mother shouted at his father “*Du bist ein Niemand!*” (You are a nobody!). Hilberg’s parents had a similar German and Polish background as Reich-Ranicki’s. See pages 31-32 of Hilberg’s memoir for more details.

38 It is reminiscent of the conditions that brought the Freud family to Vienna when the paternal business in Freiberg in Mähren, Moravia failed.

Reich-Ranicki's impression of his father was not improved by their expulsion by the German National Socialists to Poland in 1938: "Later too, when we were living in the Warsaw ghetto, my good-hearted and good-tempered father was a failure...I did feel a sense of shame in front of my colleagues because, at the age of twenty, I had to try and find a miserable job for my father, then aged sixty" (ibid. 35). Although he does not use the term in his memoir, and there is no reason to believe that Reich-Ranicki ever uses Yiddish idioms, his portrayal of David Reich is that of the Yiddish *schlimazel*, a born loser.<sup>39</sup> The weakness of Reich-Ranicki's father is in stark, dichotomous contrast to the Germania-like image with which he depicts his mother.

Yet despite this seemingly dichotomous portrayal of his parents, Reich-Ranicki is able to unite them when he depicts their deportation from the Warsaw ghetto *Umschlagplatz* (collection point) to the Treblinka death camp. Although Reich-Ranicki's German proficiency had secured him a role as an interpreter for the administration, he was unable to offer any security or protection for his parents. He details the final moments before his parents embarked on the journey that took them to their deaths: "I showed them where they had to queue. My father looked at me helplessly, while my mother was surprisingly calm. She had dressed carefully: she wore a light-coloured raincoat which she had brought with her from Berlin. I knew that I was seeing them for the last time. I still see them: my helpless father and my mother in her smart trench-coat from a department store near the Berlin *Gedächtniskirche* [Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial

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39 Added to this complex gender troping is the conceptualization of Masculine: German, intellectual, dominant and vigour, Feminine: Polish, Yiddish, Jewish, weakness and passivity. In regard to Reich-Ranicki's parents, it his mother who ascribes to the masculine gender trope, and sees his father in the feminine gender trope, thereby inverting their biological genders.

Church]” (ibid. 182). They faced deportation to Treblinka – a “choiceless choice” as defined by Lawrence L. Langer – in the same manner in which they lived their lives: David Reich with a sense of helplessness, and Helene Reich with her quiet, German-Jewish bourgeois resolve. Physical resistance against the well-armed German military was not a possibility for the 60-year-old bourgeois Jewish couple from Berlin. Instead, Reich-Ranicki chose to depict them as going to their deaths with dignity, as awaiting certain death united in their spiritual defiance of the dehumanization National Socialism imposed on them.

From his description, this scene at the *Umschlagplatz* must have been seared into Reich-Ranicki’s memory, for it severs the connection to his familial past. He is everything that they are not. Unlike his father, Reich-Ranicki is intellectual and energetic, and unlike his mother his ambitions are fulfilled in Germany. Reich-Ranicki’s depiction of his parents’ deportation omits any discussion of the chaotic and brutal conditions that memoirists such as Calel Perechodnik have emphasized in describing deportations at Warsaw’s *Umschlagplatz*: “Eighty thousand men, women, and children crammed between houses, sitting on the ground for days and nights. Every little while, a salvo of shots falls on that crowd. Ukrainians are shooting for the sheer pleasure of killing. They are also shooting so that Jews do not recover from the state of deadness and will not respond with some act. Frequently, in the dark of night, a series of shots falls; every moment one hears a drawn-out cry of pain. The wounded who were not finished off moan” (Perechodnik 105). One senses that Reich-Ranicki has repressed or sanitized

much of the horrific memory of events that he witnessed in the Warsaw ghetto in order to live with the losses inflicted upon him by Nazism.<sup>40</sup>

When Reich-Ranicki was deported from Germany to Poland in 1938, it caused him to experience a sense of *Heimatlosigkeit* (loss of home). Describing the loss he writes: “So now I was back in Poland - the land of my birth - which had become my place of exile” (Reich-Ranicki 113). The disconnect he felt from the land of his birth lessened over time, but Reich-Ranicki never displayed the passion for Polish literature and culture that he did for German. Poland was equated with being *heimatlos*, and only the return to Germany could remedy the loss. With the German invasion of Poland and eventual creation of the Warsaw ghetto in October 1940, Reich-Ranicki experienced additional losses. In his memoir he depicts selling his grandfather’s gold pocket watch in the ghetto, a highly symbolic episode that shaped his life and his construct of masculinity.<sup>41</sup> When Reich-Ranicki and his wife discovered she was pregnant, they were immediately fearful of the consequences. To avoid an almost certain deportation that the pregnancy might have instigated, the gold watch was sold to terminate the unplanned pregnancy: “There I had to sell this beautiful old-fashioned watch, much as it hurt, because I needed money urgently - to pay for an abortion” (ibid. 93). Having received the watch upon the death of his grandfather, an Orthodox rabbi, it is symbolically the

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40 Similarly, Tom Segev comments upon Simon Wiesenthal’s occasional exaggerating of his Holocaust era experiences in an attempt to cope with his losses. Segev states: “Exaggerating his suffering and spinning fantasies around his survival may have made it easier for him to push out of his consciousness the real atrocities he had experienced. Whether it was repressing the reality of the Warsaw ghetto as exhibited by Marcel Reich-Ranicki, or exaggerating events as Segev claims Simon Wiesenthal sometimes did, both are coping mechanisms to deal with extreme trauma and loss.

41 The story that Reich-Ranicki recounts about the significance and loss of the gold pocket-watch is reminiscent of O. Henry’s short story *The Gift of the Magi*. The story takes on almost mythic proportions and is laden with symbolism.

only tangible link Reich-Ranicki had to Jewish tradition and his religiously observant grandfather. The sale of the watch signifies the severing of the last remaining connection Reich-Ranicki had to Jewish tradition. Just as the watch severed Reich-Ranicki's link to Jewish tradition, so too did it sever a Jewish life.

Reich-Ranicki never indicates any conflict between the German identity he cultivated and his family's treatment by the Nazis. On his return to Berlin in 1946, he offers a hint at how he managed to reconcile his concept of Germanness with the loss of his family in the Holocaust: "I would have had every reason to gloat, indeed to feel deadly hatred. But there was no question of that. I was incapable of hatred – and this surprises me a little to this day" (ibid. 233). This glimpse Reich-Ranicki offers of returning to the city he loved so much, and to the country that had enacted genocide upon his family once again confirms the complete separateness with which he is capable of making between his Germanness – *Bildung* and the actions of National Socialism. Reich-Ranicki created a model for returning to live in Germanophone Europe that emphasized canonical German literature, literary achievement and high culture, which contrasts dramatically with Wiesenthal's reasons for remaining in Austria. He seems able to compartmentalize any and all negative experiences into neat categories that fall outside this *Bildung* ideal. Although the Holocaust destroyed his German-Jewish family and annulled the Emancipation of Jews, it did not dampen his passion for *Bildung*. It did, however, make him aware of his separateness from the country and people whose classic traditions and culture he loved so much. It was a sentiment he shared with others, such as Yehudi Menuhin. In recounting a visit to China where he accidentally met Menuhin,

Reich-Ranicki reflects: “I asked him what he was doing there. He answered briefly: ‘Beethoven and Brahms with the local orchestra.’ And what was I doing? ‘I’m giving lectures on Goethe and Thomas Mann.’ Menuhin was silent but not for long: ‘Ah well, we’re Jews of course... that travel from country to country, spreading German music and German literature, and interpreting it – that’s good and how it should be” (ibid. 376).

German male literati had inspired the development of the Jewish bourgeoisie and intellectualism in Germanophone Europe with both their works and Enlightenment values. This was a masculinity of intellect and humanism, where men engaged in cultural production as well as critique. Reich-Ranicki’s construction of masculinity personifies the image Stephan Zweig described: “The real determination of the Jew is to rise to a higher cultural plane in the intellectual world... Subconsciously something in the Jew seeks to escape the morally dubious the distasteful, the petty, the unspiritual, which is attached to all trade, and all that is purely business, and to lift himself up to the moneyless sphere of the intellectual” (Zweig 11). While Zweig believed this transcends class, it was a very specific representation of intellectualist masculinity, and exemplifies Reich-Ranicki.

The realm of German literature provided Reich-Ranicki with role models from which to draw upon in forming his construct of intellectual masculinity. The connection to classical German literary ideals and cultural values cemented Germany in the imagination of many, Jew and non-Jew, as the land of poets, writers, philosophers and thinkers (*Land der Dichter und Denker*). A teacher-mentor, Reinhold Knick, assisted Reich-Ranicki in the process from merely reading German texts to understanding the

personification of values they represented and attempted to instill. Reich-Ranicki describes the immensity of the influence Knick had on him as follows: “To none of my teachers during the years 1930-1938 do I owe as much as I do to Dr. Knick... he was an enthusiast, one of those who believed that life had no meaning without literature or music, without art or theatre, and, to older students he was known as ‘the blond romantic.’ He was marked by the poetry of his youth – by Rilke, Stefan George, and by the early work of Gerhart Hauptmann” (Reich-Ranicki 30). From this teacher-mentor, he claims to have acquired what he believed was the *German Bildung* ideal of engaging in a passionate search for truth, developing self-knowledge and harmonizing emotion with reason: “Reinhold Knick was the first person in my life who represented German idealism and personified that which, until then, I had only known from literature: the ideals of the German classics” (ibid. 33). It was not his Polish-Jewish father, nor his rabbi grandfather whom Reich-Ranicki saw as his mentor. Neither was it his mother, although she was the conduit through which he connected to his German-Jewish heritage. Rather, it was this male German teacher who personified for him the best of the German humanist tradition that credited all individuals with unique talents and characteristics; therefore individuals needed to live in communities and with others that provided a natural complement.

The other main influence in Reich-Ranicki’s life, his wife Tosia (Teofila) Langnas, also encouraged him to valorize *Bildung* over his Polish-Jewish heritage. In Warsaw, Reich-Ranicki married Langnas, who exemplified his conceptualization of a woman, wife and mother, modeled from German classical literature. Refusing an offer to

be smuggled out of the ghetto to the Aryan side where her physical appearance and fluent Polish would allow her to pass as a Pole, Langnas exhibited a love of German poetry, classical literature, theatre and music that echoed the fears, and hopes, of the characters Reich-Ranicki encountered in German literature, characteristics that Reich-Ranicki recognized and idealized. He was at once captivated by her refusal to save herself: "For a woman to risk her life in order to save her friend, lover or husband - that was a theme I was familiar with from operas, ballads and short stories. I experienced it for the first time in reality in the Warsaw ghetto" (ibid. 179).

In 1958 when he made the critical decision to flee communist Poland for West Germany, Reich-Ranicki returned to his cultural *Heimat*. Reflecting on the transition from Poland to the former West Germany, he writes: "I have never thought of myself as Polish, not even as half-Polish, as I said to Grass in *Grossholzleute*" (ibid. 275). He quickly established himself in literary circles, including the renowned *Gruppe 47*, and his literary reviews, radio broadcasts and television programming made him a household name. At a time when intellectual Jewish men in North America were often represented in screen culture as effete and weak, Reich-Ranicki successfully merged intellectualism with masculinity by tying it to the specifically German literary tradition and bourgeois masculinity: "Between the 1940s and the present," writes Sander Gilman, "the representation of the 'smart Jew' in the mass media has taken up the figure of Monroe Stahr, and the idea that Jewish superior intelligence compensates for Jewish physical weakness has remained" (Gilman 1996, 178). Stahr, the fictional character developed by F. Scott Fitzgerald based on the Hollywood film producer Irving Thalberg, who was

born in America to German Jewish parents, strongly influenced the perception of the American Jewish male intellectual within the dominant culture. Reich-Ranicki, however, evoked a long-standing tradition of male Germanophone intellectuals, something to which he credited his success: “Consciously or unconsciously I adopted a tradition that was officially outlawed in the Third Reich, a tradition which colleagues abandoned after the Second World War... I learned a great deal from the great German critics of the past, from Heine and Fontaine, from Kerr and Polgar, from Jacobsohn and Tucholsky” (Reich-Ranicki 309-310). Undoubtedly, Reich-Ranicki reminds Germans of the very best aspects of their history and culture, defining and lending legitimacy to his re-imagined construct of Jewish bourgeois masculinity.

Embracing cultural values while still being set apart from the dominant culture was something Reich-Ranicki had recognized during his childhood. For Reich-Ranicki, it was his Jewishness that distinguished him from non-Jewish Germans. When he first attended German school, his classmates saw him as an outsider: “They saw in me, not surprisingly, the foreigner, the stranger... my clothes were a little different from theirs, their games and pranks were unfamiliar to me. Hence I was isolated. In other words, I was not one of them” (ibid. 17). This situation with the school environment can also be interpreted as a gender construct. Reich-Ranicki is an outsider from Poland and therefore troped as feminine, rather than a German/ masculine. It is not until he was thoroughly acculturated, linguistically and culturally, and therefore troped as masculine that he found acceptance in his all-male school environment, and even that was temporary.

This realization of separateness, embracing a set of cultural values and ideals while still being set apart from the dominant culture, manifested itself during significant episodes of Reich-Ranicki's life in Germany. Although clearly empathetic with the German Student Movement, which called for far-reaching reform of the German educational system, Reich-Ranicki did not participate in any of the demonstrations: "I certainly did not take part in any 'sit-in', 'go-in' or 'teach-in', I never experienced any 'happening,'" comments Reich-Ranicki; "I never attended a single meeting or demonstration, I never joined any march" (ibid. 328). The physical demonstrations reminded him of the National Socialist period and were far removed from his cultural interests in German literature. No matter how sympathetic he might have been, this was a fight he left to non-Jewish Germans. Although Reich-Ranicki enjoyed enormous popularity as a literary critic in Germany, his position of prominence can be interpreted akin to the Court Jews who served the German princes and Austrian court in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Reich-Ranicki's success and prominence was not indicative of the greater Jewish community, and as a symbolic, intellectual Court Jew, he was aware that political matters were beyond his involvement. In essence, it is a type of disempowered masculinity.

Willy Brandt's now famous genuflection at the Warsaw Ghetto Fighters Memorial in Warsaw, Poland on December 1970, discussed in Chapter Two, reinforced Reich-Ranicki's unwavering belief in cultural fidelity to Germany and his decision to gain German citizenship. "I saw the photograph of the German Federal Chancellor on his knees," writes Reich-Ranicki. "I thought that my decision to return to Germany in 1958

and to settle in the Federal Republic of Germany had been the right one” (ibid. 390). The *Kniefall* reinforced Reich-Ranicki’s personal construct of intellectual masculinity and symbolized for him that one could indeed combine the intellectual with the pragmatic – Brandt’s own construct of Softie masculinity intersects on this point with Reich-Ranicki’s.

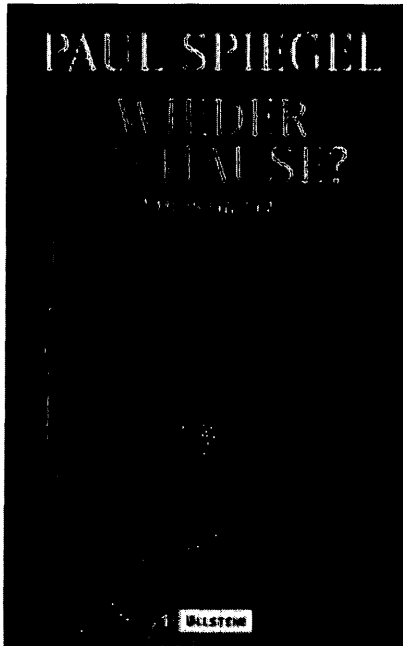
Similarly, Reich-Ranicki did not feel compelled to become involved in the *Historikerstreit*, the German historians’ dispute about interpreting the Holocaust in German history. From 1985 through 1989, when the genre of *Väterliteratur* was peaking, the *Historikerstreit* erupted as the clash between left- and right-wing intellectuals. Reich-Ranicki remained silent, making only one reluctant foray into what he considered a cultural debate in the autumn of 1985. When Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s play, *Der Müll, die Stadt und der Tod* (*The Garbage, the City and Death*) was to premiere at Frankfurt’s *Kammerspiel*, Reich-Ranicki unsuccessfully attempted to dissuade the Frankfurt Jewish community from protesting the event: “Even so I regard it as typical of its time,” comments Reich-Ranicki, “however awkwardly and brutally, it explores a Federal German problem – the German attitude to the Jews” (ibid. 383). The play held no literary or artistic merit for Reich-Ranicki, but it held the possibility of generating informed intellectual debate on German attitudes towards Jews and their role in the country. Rather than prevent the play from being performed, Reich-Ranicki felt that what was needed was a full debate in German society, something Fassbinder’s play might initiate. Although he did not succeed in having the protest stopped, Reich-Ranicki was, not surprisingly, not in synergy with the opinion of the Frankfurt Jewish Community at the

time. Yet despite these public happenings, nothing occurred to dissuade Reich-Ranicki that his decision to (re)settle in Germany had been incorrect: “Fassbinder’s play [*The Garbage, the City and Death*], the historian’s dispute...all of them important symptoms of the spirit of the age have since done nothing to change my mind” (ibid. 390).

One must be careful, however, not to assume that Reich-Ranicki’s position on the Fassbinder play was the result of internalized antisemitism or his having broken from the Jewish community. Recently, Reich-Ranicki spoke out against a poem condemning Israel by his sometime friend and antagonist, Günter Grass. Titled *Was gesagt werden muss* (What Must Be Said), the poem was published in Germany’s *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on April 4, 2012. Using language similar to his critique of Fassbinder, Reich-Ranicki renounced Grass’s poem as “disgusting, and without any literary merit” (Spiegel Online -*Reich-Ranicki attackiert Grass*, 07.04.2012). In one of his rare political comments, Reich-Ranicki clearly felt that Grass had crossed the line from literary discourse and civil commentary to outright condemnation not only of Israel but of all Jews: “Iran wants to wipe Israel off the map and has repeatedly said so and Gunter Grass turns it into a poem. It is a vile thing to publish... The poem is a planned attack not only against Israel but against all Jews” (ibid.). Loath though he may have been to comment on political situations, Reich-Ranicki’s response was in keeping with his role as Germany’s literature pope, and as a man who describes himself as “half Polish, half German and wholly Jewish.”

Paul Spiegel – Brückenbauer und Versöhner, A Builder of Bridges and Reconciliation

“My home—come what may” – Hugo Spiegel



Unlike the first two memoirists presented in this chapter, who were adults when they chose to remain in or return to Germanophone Europe, Paul Spiegel was a child when he returned to his hometown in Germany after the Second World War. As an eight-year-old child, it was his parents’ – primarily his father’s – decision to rebuild their life in Germany. Born in 1937, Spiegel was schooled in the German educational system and made the conscious decision as an adult to remain in Germany and assist in reestablishing the Jewish community there. At the end of the Second World War, Spiegel’s mother emerged from hiding in Belgium and began preparations to immigrate to the United States. It was only when she discovered that her husband, Hugo Spiegel,

had survived three years in various Nazi concentration camps, including Auschwitz-Birkenau, that her plans changed. Hugo Spiegel was adamant that the family return to their hometown of Warendorf, Westphalia, where the Spiegel family had roots in traditional farming going back several hundred years. Like many of the *Landjuden*, country Jews, they thrived as cattle-traders. The Jewish presence in the cattle trade was so ubiquitous that Yiddish expressions had worked their way into the local German dialect used in the commerce. Spiegel recalls, "I remember in the 1950s, when occasionally after school I accompanied my father to the cattle markets. I heard how he and his Christian business partner, and other non-Jewish cattle dealers were talking among themselves using their traditional German-Yiddish idioms" (Spiegel 12). The deep connection to the physical land, rather than a philosophical or esoteric imagining of *Heimat* or home, coupled with the rural lifestyle, played a significant role in the conceptualization of masculinity for Spiegel. Jewish men in Spiegel's family were tied to the agricultural development of the German land over several generations, providing Spiegel with examples of pragmatic, country masculinity.

*Wieder zu Hause? Erinnerungen (Home Again? Memoirs)* was published in German in 2001 and has not yet been translated into English.<sup>42</sup> Its cover photograph is a headshot portrait of Spiegel, a man, like Reich-Ranicki, familiar to many in Germany from his high-profile position as the head of the Central Council of Jews in Germany.<sup>43</sup> In 2005 he followed up his memoir with a second work that also awaits an English

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<sup>42</sup> All translations for "*Wieder zu Hause? Erinnerungen*" are my own.

<sup>43</sup> Spiegel's death in 2006, at the age of 68, elicited statements from leading figures in Germany. German President Horst Köhler described the Holocaust survivor as a "German patriot" and Chancellor Angela Merkel issued a statement calling him "an impressive personality who fought passionately and with all his might to give the Jewish community in Germany a good future."

translator, aimed at familiarizing the German populace with the Jewish minority living there. *Was ist Koscher: Jüdischer Glaube – jüdisches Leben* (*What is Kosher? Jewish Beliefs, Jewish Life*) demonstrates Spiegel's commitment to having the majority population understand the Jewish community living in Germany. Spiegel's memoir allows readers to understand his personal narrative, while his second book explains to German readers Judaism as a living religion.

In *Wieder zu Hause?* Spiegel depicts how his life goals and construct of masculinity were shaped by a formative experience of which he has no personal memory. The account was retold to him on numerous occasions by his mother, Ruth. To escape Germany, his mother had bribed an SS-officer to smuggle them into Belgium. The escape involved crossing a river and Spiegel was hoisted onto the shoulders of the SS-officer as they waded across the river. Spiegel lost his balance, fell into the river and was rescued by the SS-officer, who carried him safely to the other side. "An SS man saved your life, Paul. God will not forsake you" (ibid. 34). The symbolism of the passage evokes the biblical hero Moses; Spiegel is rescued by a person connected to the persecuting regime, symbolizing that he is destined to achieve greatness in his life. Spiegel introduces this narrative early in his memoir, laying the foundation for the reader that predetermined survival meant he would achieve a specific goal that he expected to carry out. This is not an account of survival by a miracle or luck; Spiegel's narrative implies that he survived for a specific reason. It is also strongly coded in Christian

imagery.<sup>44</sup> It invokes the popular legend of St. Christopher bearing, on his shoulders, the Christ child across a dangerous river. Recognised as the patron saint of travelers, medals depicting the Christ child on the shoulders of St. Christopher in German bear the expression “*Gott schütze dich*,” God protect you. Spiegel confirms his belief in his mother’s narrative by continuing “To date so far, it has been proven right” (ibid. 34).

Spiegel not only survived the Holocaust; he survived to be a man with a purpose to fulfill; Spiegel became a *Brückenbauer*, literally a builder of bridges, playing on the word *Bauer* (farmer as well as builder). The boy rescued from the river – the son of a farmer and cattle-trader – as an adult assisted the integration of Russian Jews into the wider German Jewish community, and also built metaphorical bridges of understanding and reconciliation between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans. Whereas Wiesenthal’s *raison d’être* was hunting Nazi war criminals and Reich-Ranicki committed himself to advocating and spreading *Bildung* in post-Holocaust Germany, only Spiegel worked to progress Germanophone and Jewish communal relations so that Jewish and non-Jewish Germans would know each other as citizens committed to the same nation.<sup>45</sup>

In his memoir, Spiegel describes his father Hugo as an important and positive role model. The pragmatic paternal figure shaped his son’s sense of commitment to both

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<sup>44</sup> The image of the child being carried aloft by a strong male figure is also reminiscent of the ogre in Michel Tournier’s *The Erl King*. Tournier’s male protagonist rides on horseback through the German countryside recruiting boys for the military. Initially he is convinced that he is bringing the boys to a better life, and protecting them from harm. His belief is called into question however when he discovers the real fate that awaits the boys and how he is called “The Ogre” by the people of the country for his role in scooping up children, taking them away never to be seen again. Although this image provides a powerful counter balance to my analysis, I have chosen not to focus on it in a substantive manner as I believe it places the emphasis on the bearer of the child rather than the child. In addition, Spiegel is clear that his protector was motivated by money, not by any sense that he was bring the child to a better life.

<sup>45</sup> Spiegel’s tenure as head of the Central Council of Jews in Germany made him a well-known figure in German political circles. His chairmanship was distinguished by his tireless campaigning against antisemitism and work for reconciliation between Germany and its Jewish community.

the land and to the people, both Jewish and non-Jewish: “Hugo Spiegel was not a philosopher. He had a clear head and Westphalian stubbornness. He had been born a German and felt so his entire life – even in Auschwitz. It was unshakable for him: Warendorf is my home—come what may” (ibid. 85). Hugo Spiegel exhibited a construct of masculinity indicative of his rural upbringing. He longed for neither sophisticated living nor literary intellectualism and sought only to live in harmony with the land, his local Jewish community, and the wider German community. Spiegel’s memoir is an extension of this desire to live in harmony with one’s neighbours, not as foreigners or strangers but as equals whose customs and beliefs are known and understood by the non-Jewish German majority. The focus of this remaining section of Chapter Three analyzes Spiegel’s adulthood involvement in Jewish communal life, while elucidating the impact his pragmatic father had on his life and concept of masculinity.

Spiegel’s construct of masculinity was formidably influenced by his father and grounded in a love of the rural lifestyle. Despite this sense of belonging and connection to the German countryside, however, Spiegel was acutely aware of being different from other Germans: “I was, after the war, the only Jewish child who grew up in Warendorf” (ibid. 286). This longing for a sense of camaraderie and “sameness” remained with Spiegel until he moved to Dusseldorf at the age of twenty-one.<sup>46</sup> In his reaction to the move from the countryside to an urban environment he also took his cues from his father: “For my father, despite the grief and sorrow, Warendorf steadfastly remained *Heimat* and home. It was likewise for me” (ibid. 286).

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<sup>46</sup> This longing for sameness and camaraderie was a sentiment expressed by Reich-Ranicki, particularly during the immediate post-Holocaust period in Berlin.

Hugo Spiegel exhibited the traditional, paternalistic paradigm of the male being producer/ provider/ protector for his family. After re-establishing his family in their home, Hugo Spiegel ensures that his young son will be safe in the village school. The situation was particularly fragile for Paul, who emerged from hiding in Belgium speaking only French and had to re-learn German. Describing the tension in their hometown at the end of the Second World War, Paul Spiegel writes:

On my first day at school I was insulted during recess by a boy as being a 'dirty Jew.' Although I could speak almost no German, that word was quite clear to me. I threw myself on him. A friend came to his aid. In the end, I crept home like a whipped dog. I told my parents nothing. But my scrapes and bruises were just as obvious as my depressed mood. My mother comforted me. When my father heard of my disgrace that evening, he was red with anger. 'That will never again happen to my son!' He promised. He kept his word (ibid. 94-95).

Enlisting the aid of the British military police stationed in the town, Hugo Spiegel ensured that his son was never threatened again.

This construct of masculinity sought fairness, justice, and authority, characteristics Hugo Spiegel passed on to his son. During this early period following the family's return to Warendorf, Hugo Spiegel learnt from sympathetic friends who amongst the residents were Nazi sympathizers or perpetrators. Hugo Spiegel's reaction was not to seek revenge, but to simply avoid contact with them, as if they did not exist. Paul Spiegel describes his father's reaction as one of pragmatic realism: "They told father in disgust, guilt, and certainly for other reasons, who had been a Nazi. He avoided these farmers and traders, and as he told me later, even though he had done good business with them previously. My father harbored no resentment, revenge was alien to

him” (ibid. 86-87). This controlled, non-confrontational expression of masculinity was the foundational model for Paul Spiegel’s *Brückenbauer*, bridge-builder, construct.

The events of the Holocaust remained very real for both Hugo and Paul Spiegel. In his memoir, Paul Spiegel revisits two episodes frequently, reminding the reader how he and his father were shaped by them. He was too young to possess his own memories of the *Kristallnacht*pogrom, but it was a pivotal event recounted to him by his father that he internalized. In 2001, when Spiegel accepted an honorary citizenship from his hometown of Warendorf, his thoughts went immediately to his father, who had nearly been beaten to death during the November pogrom: “He was intimately familiar with this, his German homeland and its people. Until they beat him nearly half to death November 9, 1938” (ibid. 286). *Kristallnacht* became for Spiegel the symbolic representation of the German attack not just on Jewish businesses and synagogues, but also on Jewish men and masculinity. Jewish men could no longer guarantee the safety of their families or their properties; the pogrom was an assault on the traditional masculine construct of the male as provider and protector. In doing so, it reinforced the pernicious stereotype of the Jewish male as weak and powerless.

In addition to the retelling of the *Kristallnacht*pogrom, Spiegel recounts another foundational narrative that permits him to see the goodness in people, and to distinguish between Germans and Germans sympathetic to National Socialism:

Father had scarcely arrived in Warendorf, he met Henry Baggerör. The leather goods dealer knew him slightly from the prewar period. At the end of May 1945 when my father returned to Warendorf, he [Baggerör] sought him out immediately and took him, without asking, to his house. Herr Baggerör had silently witnessed the desecration and destruction of the synagogue on Freckenhorster Straße - but he had not remained idle. This merchant succeeded in preventing the storm troopers from

completely wiping out the memory of the Jews in his city. On the night of the 10th November 1938, after the storm troopers had withdrawn from their destructive work, Herr Baggerör snuck into the vandalized Jewish synagogue on Freckenhorster Straße and collected several heavy parchment bibles and prayer books. He hid the Torah scroll in his basement. Herr Baggerör was certain that the Nazi crimes would not be the last word of history or the end of the Jews of Warendorf (ibid. 85).

In this narrative, Herr Baggerör exemplifies pragmatic masculinity for Paul Spiegel. Although Baggerör recognises his limitations against the sheer physical force of the Storm Troopers, he also recognizes that he can take an individual stand against the collective force. Thus, he is able to help by hiding sacred Jewish texts from the synagogue in his home.

A further recurring narrative event is the arrest, deportation and eventual murder of Paul Spiegel's older sister Roselchen. Her memory is invoked at every milestone and celebration in the family's life. She is the spectre whose very presence of absence is apparent at every family gathering, such as in 1962, when Hugo Spiegel was awarded the honour of *Schützenkönig* by his shooting club. The extent of what an honour Hugo Spiegel considered being named *Schützenkönig* — the first time that any Jew in Warendorf, or indeed *Münsterland*, had received this tribute — is revealed by a photograph of him dressed in *Trachtenmoden* and sporting a large ceremonial necklace. Yet the celebration is related as being marred by the memory of the loss of Roselchen: "When we were finally alone after all the hubbub, he, who never spoke about the past, said to mother and me: 'Do you see! It was right to return to home to Warendorf.' And then, almost falling silent: 'If we could see Roselchen'" (ibid. 130). This narrative of familial loss is passed from father to son, becoming one of the foundational events in the Spiegel family.

Although portrayed in terms of love and kindness, Ruth Spiegel is depicted as being less present in the upbringing of her son. She is absorbed in her own pain and guilt of not being able to prevent the deportation of her daughter during a Nazi roundup. Describing memories of his mother's incessant chain-smoking when he was a child, Spiegel writes: "I did not yet know, of course, that my mother would never be able to overcome mourning for her child. The nicotine probably helped her to numb the pain. At the same time smoking was self-destructive on the 'installment plan.' Before Rosa's deportation my mother had never touched a cigarette" (ibid. 21). Consequently, Spiegel's father becomes the primary parenting figure, assuager of his wife's self-imposed guilt, and nucleus of the Spiegel family.

Spiegel's conceptualization of masculine identity, like that of Wiesenthal and Reich-Ranicki, embodied traits that were often associated with women. Unlike the characteristic definition of business hegemonic masculinity discussed in Chapter Two that emphasized the paradigm of produce-provide-protect to describe traditional male responsibilities, Spiegel has incorporated elements often coded as the task of females in a culture. He is able to mirror the nurturing qualities his father displayed throughout a childhood in which his mother was minimally involved. His fond memories of accompanying his father to synagogue services in Münster prepared Spiegel to be a carrier of this tradition. Describing his bar mitzvah ceremony, Spiegel writes: "It was the first bar mitzvah in the Münster region, indeed in all of Westphalia after the Holocaust... The men were over the moon with joy that life should go on in their city and their land... I, however, remained calm. Apparently I inherited from my father, who watched the

event with pride, a balanced temperament” (ibid. 116). As the primary parental figure, Hugo Spiegel passed on to his son a sense of family and community that incorporated both masculine and feminine attributes.

The experience of serving on the executive of the *Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland*, the Central Council of Jews in Germany, emerges as a central theme in Spiegel’s memoir. Describing his role as both bridge-builder and German Jew, he comments: “I am the representative of the Jewish communities in Germany and when touched, I address not only our immediate interests, but also if there is a threat to freedom, human dignity, and democracy I rise to speak clearly” (ibid. 279). Spiegel distinguishes himself from his more intellectual and sophisticated colleagues by his down-to-earth manner, a trait that assisted him in what he saw as his role as bridge-builder. When he became President of the Council, he remarked on this difference: “I was not Ignatz Bubis and I did not want to be him. But I wanted to follow his direction: to consolidate the German Jews, not only through the integration of our fellow-believers but also with the non-Jewish society” (ibid. 207). Bubis, the person Fassbinder attacked with the character of ‘the Jew’ in his play discussed in the previous section on Marcel Reich-Ranicki, was a successful real estate entrepreneur in Frankfurt. He was well known for his Orthodox Jewish beliefs and politically conservative views. Bubis was representative of the paternalistic, conservative masculinity of the German era he in which he was born.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ignatz Bubis was born in 1927 in Breslau, Germany and became a successful business entrepreneur and real estate developer in West Germany. As leader of the Jewish community Bubis was often outspoken and involved in a number of controversies including his very public lack of support for Reform Judaism and

During his tenure as President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Spiegel's self-reflexive construct of masculinity also allowed him to speak in support of other subordinate and marginalized groups in the dominant culture: "This conciliatory attitude does not mean that I'm willing to overlook anti-human action or thought, regardless of whether it relates to Jews or others. Humanity and human dignity are indivisible – if we do not understand this, we will experience unpleasant surprises. Today it goes against the disabled, tomorrow against homosexuals and foreigners, the day after that against Jews and by the weekend finally all democrats are in the pillory. Therefore, we must all vigilantly defend our freedom" (ibid. 250). Spiegel purposefully includes the reference to two groups traditionally marginalised in hegemonic masculinity: gay men and foreigners. Spiegel's position and construct of masculinity is representative of a minority group living in a dominant culture in that he moves within two distinct spheres. Whereas Spiegel represents hegemonic masculinity within his Jewish community, in the wider non-Jewish German community he represents a subordinate masculinity since he is not part of the dominant culture. However, Spiegel's status as a survivor of the Holocaust provides him with special status in the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant culture. He is able to speak on behalf of a group traditionally marginalized by society, ensuring that they included in the discourse of citizenship, politics and masculinity. Here again, the image of St. Christopher from Spiegel's childhood emerges, this time, however, with reversed roles. Spiegel is not one in need of assistance or support; rather, he provides strength to those in need of support.

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female rabbis. He is often remembered for declaring, a few weeks before his death in 1999 that Jews could not live freely in Germany. As per his request, Bubi was buried in Israel.

The child in his mother's narrative, who was carried across the river by the bribed SS officer, has become the bearer of others.

Spiegel is not motivated by greed or financial gain, but only wants to improve the overall conditions of the society he lives in. In 2000, speaking at the annual *Kristallnacht* commemoration at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate, Spiegel said: "We must fight against right-wing radicalism, antisemitism and xenophobia. For it is not just about us Jews but also for Turks, blacks, the homeless, and for gay men. When it comes to this country, it's about the future of every single person in this country. Do you want one day to be governed by skinheads and their mentors? That is the question at issue really. Not, how many foreigners can this country tolerate" (ibid. 286). In the German text, Spiegel uses the term *Schwule* to refer to gay men, and it is a significant word choice. One would expect him to use "*Lesben und Schwule*" if he was referring to lesbians and gay men, or the slightly less politically charged "*Homosexuelle*." However, because gay men have been the target of persecution by right-wing skinheads in Germany, and were also targeted by National Socialism, Spiegel includes this often marginalized form of masculinity by the colloquial term *Schwule*.

Similarly, Spiegel confronts the issue of *Leitkultur* with the same sense of passion and responsibility to speak for those marginalized or subordinate. The discourse around *Leitkultur* deals not only with issues of immigration and integration in Germany, but with the very essence of who can be considered German. "What is the talk about the sole dominant culture?" writes Spiegel, "Is it about German culture, to hunt foreigners and light synagogues on fire, to kill the homeless?" (ibid. 267). This time Spiegel

references not only the *Kristallnacht* pogrom, but also contemporary issues of attacks on immigrants and the homeless. In answering his own question, Spiegel says, “The dignity of human beings - all human beings - is inviolable, not only those of the Central European Christians!” (ibid. 267). As a survivor of the Holocaust, Spiegel and his family experienced the annulment of these values by the National Socialist regime. It has provided him with the moral authority to speak out on issues in the same manner in which biblical era prophets spoke. Their words were meant not just to warn, but to shepherd along a path of correct moral and ethical behavior. So, too, does Spiegel’s construct of masculinity enable him to act as bridge builder, and when needed, modern day prophet.

As R.W. Connell argues, marginalization is always relative to the authorization of the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant group (Connell 80-81). Spiegel used his position – as subordinate within the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant culture and his deeply personal connection to the *Kristallnacht* pogrom – to include marginalized groups in the discourse on topics ranging from sexuality and citizenship to the rearmament of Germany. Spiegel describes his faith and trust in the direction taken by post-Holocaust Germany policies: “In the nearly five decades of its existence the *Bundeswehr* has proven that it is neither a state within the state nor is it the continuation of the older German militarism by another means. Rather, it is part of our constitutional democracy” (Spiegel 285). Spiegel’s confidence in the German state underscores the *Landjuden* masculine construct he developed from his father. Along with Wiesenthal and

Reich-Ranicki, Spiegel saw his role as one that contributed to the nation state he chose to re-build his life in.

### **Observations About Jewish Men in German-Speaking Europe**

I have often heard Holocaust survivors living in North America attempt to understand the desire of Jews to return to German-speaking Europe during the post-war period. For many, it is incomprehensible that Jews would want to, much less actually return to countries that had stripped them of their citizenship, deported them and finally implemented genocidal policies to annihilate their very presence. “Jews,” I have been told, “always seem to have an unrequited love for Germany and German culture.” It may be indicative of the unique synergy between these two distinct mores.

The three texts discussed in this chapter demonstrate that just as Germanophone Europe provided a fertile environment for Jewish culture, religion and intellectualism to flourish – at least until the twelve-year period of National Socialism –, Jews were, and continue to be, societal and cultural contributors shaping the communities in Germanophone Europe in which they live. Similarly, Jewish masculinity was imagined and shaped by the land, culture and society in which they lived. The three protagonists profiled in this chapter are remarkable, prominent Jewish individuals who shared a commitment to Germanophone Europe. Although the decision to remain was individual and their experiences diverse, each saw his future intrinsically linked to the lands in which Jews had lived for centuries before the Second World War.

It would be an error and an over-simplification to suggest that life in post-Holocaust Germanophone Europe was easy for the three men profiled in this chapter. Simon Wiesenthal put aside personal happiness and sought justice for the murdered Jews of Europe by hunting Nazi war criminals often in the very communities to which they returned. For Wiesenthal, seeking justice in the land of the perpetrators was integral to his construction of masculinity. Marcel Reich-Ranicki was compelled by *Heimatlosigkeit* to return to the country that was his spiritual and intellectual home, despite having witnessed the deportation of his parents to Treblinka. His conceptualization of masculinity transcended the twelve year reign of National Socialism and was rooted in the masculine ideal of German *Bildung* and culture. Although Paul Spiegel's return was determined by the decisions of his parents, he remained committed to building a community for Jews in Germany and building bridges of understanding between religious, cultural, and social communities. Spiegel is the only one of the protagonists profiled whose construct of masculinity was shaped positively by his father.<sup>48</sup> Just as Hugo Spiegel saw his future in his homeland of Germany, so too did Paul Spiegel shape his conceptualization of masculinity in terms of a German homeland for Jewish and non-Jewish Germans.

In their own, individual ways, however, each of these three men challenged the wider Germanophone population to come to terms with the National Socialist past of their countries. These three protagonists faced enormous obstacles in establishing his life

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<sup>48</sup> Wiesenthal was seven years old when his father died fighting in the First World War, and Reich-Ranicki viewed his father as weak and unsuccessful. Spiegel alone was raised by a father who was active in his schooling and upbringing. As a positive role model for his son, it is not surprising that Paul Spiegel was influenced by his father's love of the land and German communities and traditions, integrating them into his own construct of masculinity.

again in places that were not always welcoming, and in communities whose Jewish population had been annihilated in the Holocaust. Each became a moral authority over the quality of life for Jewish communities in Germanophone Europe and, at times, a moral compass of the general Germanophone population.

In the next chapter I turn from the Jews to examine how non-Jewish Germans grappled with their own proximity to the collectivity of the perpetrators as demonstrated in the genre of *Väterliteratur*. Delving into the familial past became a necessary activity for many Germans, whether their family members who high ranking Nazi officials who enacted policies, clergy who stood complicit on the sidelines, or middle-ranking Nazi officers who attempted to reenact Aryan masculinity in the domestic sphere.

## Chapter Three:

*Väterliteratur*: Probing Conflicting Constructions of Masculinity<sup>49</sup>

After decades of repressing if not denying its past (Geschichtsvergessenheit),  
 Germany has become a country obsessed with its past  
 (Geschichtsbesessenheit).  
 Frederick Lubich

It is not a coincidence that the genre of *Väterliteratur* (literature about the fathers) emerged after the 1968 unrest that rattled universities across West Germany and much of Western Europe. This civil unrest revolutionized Germany's self-perceptions and propelled a re-thinking of societal roles and function. It was also a stimulus for the adult children of former German Nazis to embark upon their own personal journeys of self-discovery and reconciliation with the past. Integral to this process was the demand that their fathers or grandfathers be held to account for, and accept responsibility for, their wartime actions. In German this process was and remains known colloquially as "*die Abrechnung mit den Vätern*," the act of demanding accountability from paternal figures, which marked a departure from the more traditional "*Bewältigung der Vergangenheit*" or mastery of the past. It represented a turning point in the public consciousness of both German participation in and accountability for their National Socialist past.

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<sup>49</sup> In this chapter I explore the complex process by which the authors not only confront their familial past, but also their attempt to integrate it into a fuller understanding of their own identity, legacy and familial narrative. Thus, in speaking of reconciling conflicting constructions of masculinity, or of reconciling the past, I am referring to the entire process the author undertakes. More than simply acknowledging or admitting the past, it is the desire to integrate it into a deeper sense of self.

The genre of tormented *Väterliteratur* emerged during the 1970s and 1980s and found a receptive audience in the former West Germany.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps due to the relatively late re-conceptualization of Austria's involvement in the Second World War – from 'first victim' to 'shared responsibility' – a similar literary movement did not develop in Austria.<sup>51</sup> The poignancy of the personal narrative combined with a quest for accountability compelled a new interest in family narratives focusing on the Nazi past and, specifically, the intertwining of the roles of men as father(s), brothers and husbands with complicity in the crimes of National Socialism. The question of German culpability had been raised at least as early as 1947 when the philosopher Karl Jaspers published a series of lectures he had given shortly after the end of the Second World War titled *Die Schuldfrage: Von der politischen Hoffnung Deutschlands* (The Question of German Guilt). Jasper questioned the guilt and responsibility of the German nation collectively for allowing the Holocaust to have happened and represented an important starting point for discourse in the immediate post-war period.

Several decades later, this discourse continued with the emergence of *Väterliteratur*, which focused solely on the actions, or inactions, of the family patriarch. Reconciliation demanded a resolution to conflicting conceptualizations of militarized and traditional paternalistic models of masculinity, something which has often proven to

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50 The terms Germany, and West Germany, will be used indicating the political period being discussed. Since *Väterliteratur* began primarily as a West German phenomenon, yet continues into the post-unification period in Germany, using both terms becomes necessary.

51 In an attempt to differentiate Austria from a greater pan-Germanic identity, and to firmly establish a bulwark against the spread of Communism, the Allies wrote into the Austrian constitution that Austria was the first victim of Nazism, symbolically neutralising the approval Austrians gave to the *Anschluß*. Although the Waldheim Affair in the 1986 was a pivotal event for challenging this conception of Austrian victimhood, more time may be needed until the arrival of numerous Austrian contributions to *Väterliteratur*.

be a challenge and which continues to the present day with contributions by the grandchildren of perpetrators. Although many of the *Väterliteratur* works were only published in their native German, a handful of powerful and poignant books have been translated into English, such as Paul Kersten's *Der alltägliche Tod meines Vaters* (*The Everyday Death of My Father*; 1978); Christoph Meckel's *Suchbild: Über meinem Vater* (*Image for Investigation About My Father*; 1980) and Ludwig Harig's *Ordnung ist das ganze Leben: Roman meines Vaters* (*Order is the Essence of Life: Novel of my Father*; 1985). In *Folgeschäden: Kontext, narrative Strukturen und Verlaufsformen der Väterliteratur 1960 bis 2008 Bestimmung eines Genres* (2010, *Collateral Damage: Context, Narrative Structures and Forms of Development of Väterliteratur from 1960 to 2008*), Mathias Brandstädter catalogues and surveys 85 titles that he ascribes to *Väterliteratur*. However, he utilizes a considerably looser definition of the genre and includes works of fiction as well as non-fiction in his review.<sup>52</sup>

The early examples of *Väterliteratur* shared a decisive impetus that compelled adult children to question their paternal figures' actions during the National Socialist reign in Germany: the death of the father figure, whose passing shattered the silence that had enveloped the National Socialist period. In her 1993 literary analysis of *Väterliteratur*, Gisela Moffit argues that "death dethrones the omnipotent figure of the father and lifts the powerful injunction against family secrecy" (Moffit 3). Indeed, one can argue that works of *Väterliteratur* are the final act of mourning by the second (and

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<sup>52</sup> Brandstädter includes works of fiction, poetry and historical fiction that reflect qualities of *Väterliteratur*. I ascribe to the more conventional definition of *Väterliteratur* as argued by Michael Schneider, Barbara Kosta, Gisela Moffitt and others, who refer only to works of non-fiction that combine personal memoir with historical analysis and biography.

third) generation of writers for the actions of their individual father figures as persons. These texts are laced with guilt and shame for the past actions (and inactions) of the father figure, as if they are mourning the victims of their fathers' actions. The acknowledgement of their dubious status as the child of a Nazi sympathizer or perpetrator seeks not the pity or compassion of the reader, but rather a sense of reconciliation with the victims of their parent.

As a nascent genre of German literature, *Väterliteratur* has evoked numerous scholarly responses. Michael Schneider, one of the first literary critics to analyse the genre in 1984, posited that “many authors have taken it upon themselves to write biographies of their own fathers” (Schneider 4). Yet the genre is much more than the biography of a parent who had some involvement in National Socialism. Indeed, texts representative of this genre are part personal memoir, part biography and part historical analysis. Although the narrator’s personal experiences and relationships are integral to the story, it is the paternal figure that forms the core of the narrative discourse. In addition, the attempt to reconcile the legacy of the National Socialist period with the context of one’s family permeates the text. Barbara Kosta uses the term “personal histories” when describing the *Väterliteratur* genre, a term I also utilize: “First, the term *personal histories* encompasses the transcription of personal experience into language from a subjective viewpoint, which creates a narrative of the self” (Kosta 19). Secondly, the term allows for personal experiences of individuals to be given voice. Thirdly, these texts are frequently characterized by a condemnatory tone regarding patriarchy. As such,

*Väterliteratur* also reveals the intrinsic *Selbstständigkeit* (self-reliance and independence) and personality of the author.

At times the genre embodies a reflective writing style, characterized by deeply personal insights into the dynamics of a complex family life. It is also characterized by painful recollections about past experiences but in which the paternal figure was centrally involved. The maternal figure is rarely mentioned in *Väterliteratur*.<sup>53</sup> As the texts examined in this chapter demonstrate, *Väterliteratur* privileges the author's relationship with their father figure and permits the author to become the sole authoritative voice of matters concerning the familial past. "The sons and daughters challenge the father's prerogative of telling the story and writing (his)tory by dismantling his version and offering their own narratives" (Moffit 6). In each of the texts, it is the narrator who bears the responsibility of chronicling a narrative that is not wholly their own, yet one in which they are deeply invested emotionally. The author deals with issues of historical records, of oral history accounts about their paternal figure and of vicariously experiencing the past – for the actions and scenarios they depict are not usually ones they witnessed but ones that have heard about in the familial milieu. Works of *Väterliteratur* often compel the reader to become engaged in this vicarious past: sharing the personal, angst-ridden and at times dysfunctional relationship between the author and their parent. The narrative expresses a deeply personal journey, an attempt

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<sup>53</sup> There is a separate genre in which women figure prominently: *Mütterliteratur* (literature about the mothers). It examines the specific roles German women – mothers and grandmothers - played during the Nazi period.

towards understanding the past predicated on the legacy of the father's National Socialist past.

Even as new models of masculinity eventually replaced the patriarchal, militarized male in post-war German society, *Väterliteratur* shows that older constructs of masculinity continued to be present. However, as Barbara Kosta notes, "critical analyses of this genre of father literature have seldom explored the private as gendered and rarely have they looked at complex relationship of masculinity and history" (Kosta 221). Indeed, the genre compels scholars to acknowledge the historical interconnectedness of masculinity and how it is performed. The texts I examine and the analysis that follows in this section demonstrate the importance of the father-daughter or father-son relationship, gendered responses to familial histories, and the transgenerational effects that National Socialism has had on Germanophone families.

Central to "*die Abrechnung mit den Vätern*" discourse is examining the relationship between the father with a Nazi past and his adult child. The father-son and father-daughter perspectives of the author are central to analyzing these texts. Sons who embark upon writing *Väterliteratur* see their adult self in their paternal figure and are compelled to ponder if they would have acted in the same manner as their father. Conversely, daughters who write *Väterliteratur* do not see themselves in their father, although they may see their son(s) mirrored in the actions of the paternal figure. They do, however, question the idealized image they previously held of their paternal figure. "The German daughter memoirs identify the relationship to the father as the decisive experience of the daughter's life, since it is the daughter-father relationship that defines

her (sexual) identity and determines to a large extent the nature of all subsequent relationships to men as well as women” (Moffit 17).

Psychoanalysis is useful in expounding on these works and contextualising an understanding of the *Väterliteratur* genre. I frame my analysis with the psychoanalytical theories of Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich, and Klaus Theweleit, and the cultural theories of Sander Gilman. The seminal work of Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich, *Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern (The Inability to Mourn, 1975)*, has stood as the pre-eminent foundational premise on which analysis of *Väterliteratur* has been constructed. “Where loss has been suffered, mourning follows, and where an ideal has been tarnished, where face has been lost, the natural consequence is shame” (Mitscherlich 25). The Mitscherlichs write, however, that Germans collectively, as a nation, never went through this process. A direct consequence of the “economic miracle” that took place during the rebuilding of the country allowed Germans not to reflect on the past, choosing instead to ignore, or bury the past so that any possible resolution about the past was avoided. The natural process, as outlined by the Mitscherlichs, of mourning, shame, and reconciliation never took place when, or as it should have.

Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich further hypothesize that after the defeat and unconditional surrender of the German armed forces in the Second World War, the German nation instead of undergoing a period of mourning as elucidated by Freud, moved immediately into a stage of denial. Such a massive psychological shift that affected such a large number of people was unconscious, suggest the Mitscherlichs. Any personal or familial involvement in heinous acts, persecution, and atrocities was

categorically repressed as the result of a psychological, unconscious, self-defence mechanism.

This rejection of inner involvement in one's own behaviour under the Third Reich prevented a loss of self-esteem that could hardly have been mastered, and a consequent outbreak of melancholia in innumerable cases (ibid. 26-27). Indeed one could even argue that the denial started long before the war ended in Germany's defeat. Numerous Germans ignored, or did not wish to see; the removal of Jews from their neighbourhoods, towns, and cities while others actively participated in the crimes of the Holocaust.

Even more provocatively, the Mitscherlichs surmised that post-war Germany suffered collectively by attempting to avoid the pain of melancholia due in essence to the loss of their idealized leader Adolf Hitler. Having worked in psychoanalytic private practice in Germany with patients who could not come to terms with their own, or their family's, Nazi past, the Mitscherlichs sought to apply what they gleaned from individual patients to the German nation collectively. Their work with individual cases had convinced them that the Freudian concept of melancholia<sup>54</sup> was very much at work within the populace. In *Inability to Mourn*, they write:

Germany changed from a reactionary, aggressive nation under National Socialism into one that was apolitical and conservative. This is relatively easy to demonstrate on the basis of the lack of curiosity: although rationally speaking, it should have been the

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54 In his essay "Mourning and Melancholia" Freud wrote that 'In mourning we found that the inhibition and loss of interest are fully accounted for by the work of mourning in which the ego is absorbed. In melancholia, the unknown loss will result in a similar internal work and will therefore be responsible for the melancholic inhibition. The melancholic displays something else besides which is lacking in mourning-an extraordinary diminution in his self-regard, an impoverishment of his ego on a grand scale.' For a detailed analysis on this, see Freud's essay "Mourning and Melancholia" in *The Freud Reader*, edited by Peter Gay. New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1995.

most burning problem in their minds, Germans have shown a minimum of psychological interest in trying to find out why they became followers of a man who led them into the greatest material and moral catastrophe in their history. They have shown a minimum of interest in the new ordering of their society. Instead, with a spirit of enterprise that arouses general admiration and envy, they concentrated all their energies on the restoration of what had been destroyed, and on the extension and modernization of their industrial potential- down to, and including, their kitchen utensils” (ibid. 9).

The Mitscherlichs theorized that the German nation, by being engrossed in consumerism and the ‘economic miracle’, by transferring allegiance to the Americans and other Allies who occupied post-war Germany, and by seeing themselves as Hitler’s first victims, was exhibiting collectively symptoms of melancholia. The psychoanalysts regarded melancholia not merely as a crippling psychic debility but also as a more primitive or archaic moment in mourning: a state arising from the loss of identifications so profound as to be constitutive of one’s self, and a state which must be worked through in order to establish the sense of separateness that enables one to relinquish what one has lost.<sup>55</sup> Even today Margarete Mitscherlich continues to work with, and refine, these same principles in her Frankfurt practice with German clients in psychotherapy.

Each text discussed in this chapter represents a powerful account of the author’s personal journey to come to terms with being the descendant of a Nazi perpetrator or complicit bystander. Each represents a different dimension of the *Väterliteratur* genre by authors with deep and abiding personal connections to their topic. The books are discussed in order of their original publication in West Germany, from the earliest to the most recent. The first narrative examined, Sigfrid Gauch’s *Väterspuren (Traces of My*

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<sup>55</sup> Additional information on the continued relevance of the work of Alexander and Margarete Mitscherliche can be found in Greg Forters’ article “Against Melancholia: Contemporary Mourning Theory and the Politics of Unfinished Grief” in “Differences” (2003) 14 (2): 134-170.

*Father*), was first published in German in 1979, and the English translation followed in 2002. It was a groundbreaking text in offering an unmediated voice calling to account a parent's active role in the Holocaust. Although other texts, as outlined by Brandstädter, pre-date Gauch's in questioning parental roles in the Holocaust, they tended to adopt fictitious or metaphoric styles. Gauch's was the first to use concrete dates, names, documents, and narratives to reveal the role his father played. Quietly seething with anger, it exemplifies the attempt to reconcile and integrate into the larger family narrative, the actions of a morally flawed paternal figure, an unrepentant Nazi until his death, with his racist and malignant past actions as a Nazi ideologue. Born on March 9, 1945, Sigfrid Gauch typifies the postmemory that *Väterliteratur* involves, as he did not personally experience National Socialism yet lived with a sense of a vicarious past.

Next, I discuss Ruth Rehmann's *Der Mann auf der Kanzel: Fragen an einen Vater* (*The Man In The Pulpit: Questions For A Father*), which was also one of the earliest of the *Väterliteratur* texts. First published in German in 1979, the English translation followed in 1997. Rehmann presents a methodical, if not reluctant, account of her quest to understand the actions and inaction of her clerical father. Rehmann was pressed by her children – particularly her son Thomas – to embark upon a journey to ascertain definitively the actions of their grandfather during the National Socialist period. Rehmann's father died in 1940, long before her own children were born. The temporal distance between the period of National Socialism, the death of her father and Rehmann's actual writing is reflected in the style of her narrative.

Although deconstructing the historical patriarchy of Wilhelmine Germany provides little solace for Rehmman, it does provide an important contextualization of the gender roles and masculinity of the period. Additionally, Rehmman's text offers important insight into the dynamics of the father-daughter relationship during the National Socialist period. Rehmman's father is revealed to be a product of both his upbringing and environment. Her book is atypical of the genre since Rehmman, who was born in 1922, experienced the National Socialist period as a teenager and young woman. The questions she poses of her father are reflective of her own experiences both as an eyewitness to the events of the Nazi years and as the daughter of a complicit bystander. Indeed, given that Rehmman was a young adult during the latter part of the National Socialist era in Germany and might therefore be considered a complicit bystander adds an additional layer of complexity to this text. The inability of her bystander father to question the effects of National Socialism and to rise above his own limitations clearly haunts Rehmman and puzzles her children. This, then, is the poignancy of Rehmman's text: the ability to see the average person reflected in the narrative of her father.

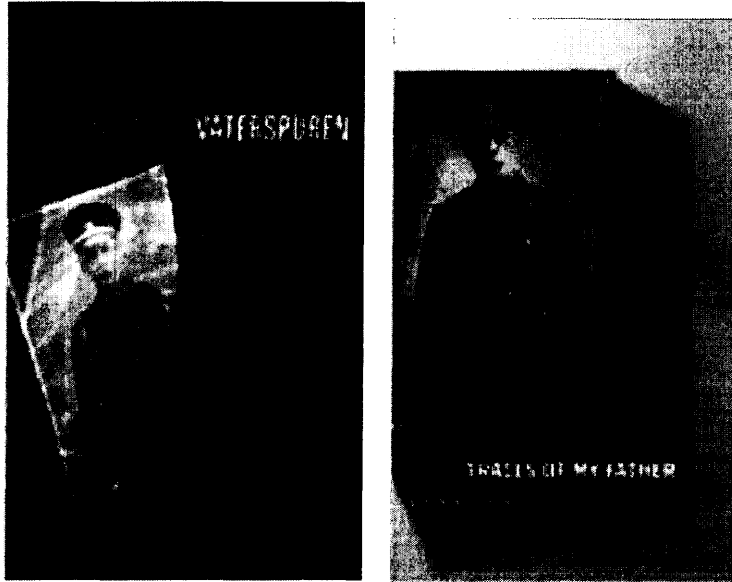
Katrin Himmler's haunting *Die Brüder Himmler (The Himmler Brothers)* completes the triad of texts analyzed. Published originally in German in 2005, the English translation followed in 2007. It is the result of a mother's wish to provide an accurate historical account for her son of her grandfather's actions as a member of one of Nazism's elite German families. Katrin Himmler, who is married to a Jewish Israeli man, describes the impetus to embark upon the book as follows: "I am still afraid of the moment when he will learn that one side of his family made every effort to wipe out the

other. The only thing that makes it easier for me to contemplate that moment is that it will be possible for me to answer his questions and give him clear information on the extent of the guilt and responsibility of my forebears” (Himmler 307–308). Himmler’s narrative is significant for several reasons. Not only does its late entry into the genre of *Väterliteratur* demonstrate the continuing legacy of National Socialism for grandchildren of perpetrators, her desire to discover the truth about the actions of her grandfather Ernst Himmler demonstrates the trans-generational effect of National Socialism on Germanophone families. Born in 1967, Himmler represents the third-generation descendants of Nazi perpetrators, who attempt to reconcile familial accounts of the past with historical records. Secondly, as the great-niece of Heinrich Himmler, Katrin Himmler’s narrative delves into the actions of one of the most prominent Nazi officials, and families, in the Third Reich. Thirdly, Himmler’s text demonstrates the complexities and complications that can arise when the grandchildren or descendants of Nazi perpetrators interact (or in the case of Himmler even marry) the grandchildren or descendants of the victims of the Nazi genocide. Himmler felt compelled by her marriage to a Jewish Israeli and the subsequent birth of their son to accurately place her familial history in the broader history of National Socialism. She expresses the importance of being able to dispel or confirm through archival research and historical record, the familial myths that had developed around the behavior and actions of her grandfather and his brothers.

Each of these unique and compelling narratives of *Väterliteratur* shares this objective. Each demonstrates that the legacy of National Socialism – and Fascist

masculinity – continues to impact contemporary expressions of Germanophone masculinity as Germanophone men and women seek to come to terms with their traumaladen pasts.

### Sigfrid Gauch: Interrogating the Father as Nazi Perpetrator



*Traces of My Father* (1996; *Vaterspuren*, 1979) is one of the earliest examples of the *Väterliteratur* books. Its intense anger-filled pages have come to define the genre. The text is permeated with the raw emotion of a son seeking answers to his father's past, elucidating the complexities of a father-son relationship that bears the scars of National Socialism. Gauch delves into the very personal, deeply painful, and tortured nature of the relationship he has with Hermann Gauch, his father. The cover of the German text, as well as that of the English language translation, immediately reveals the Nazi affiliation of Hermann Gauch. The cover of the German edition (above left) depicts overlapping images of the same portrait photograph of the elder Gauch. The dual image refers to the dual personality constructs of Hermann Gauch: that of father and unrepentant Nazi. The photographs appear to be floating in water amidst delicate white blossoms, as if discarded or thrown into a stream to be carried away with the current. Discarding or

freeing oneself from a problematic past is a central theme elucidated in this text. The dual photographic image creates an out-of-focus effect, indicating that everything is not as it seems. The English translation uses a similar solitary portrait of Hermann Gauch (previous page, above right) in full dress uniform. A closer look at the photograph reveals that the glass in the picture frame is cracked, with small fragments missing. The starkness of the photograph in a frame with cracked glass immediately brings to mind the *Kristallnacht* (Night of Broken Glass) pogrom. It is impossible to look at this book cover without wondering what role Hermann Gauch played in the events of *Kristallnacht*. A second and no less ominous interpretation of broken or cracked glass is based on the folkloric belief that glass cracks when it absorbs evil that was intended to harm a human being. In both cases, the book covers prepare the reader to experience a narrative of pain and suffering connected to the National Socialist period in Germany.

Born in 1945 in Offenbach, Hesse, Sigfrid Gauch established himself as a writer, essayist and literary advocate. From 1988 until his retirement in 2010, he headed the Department for the Support of Literature and Library Science (*Referat für Literaturförderung und Bibliothekswesen*) for the Ministry of Culture in Rhineland-Palatinate. He is an active member of the German PEN Center (*PEN Centrum Deutschland*) and served on their board of directors from 1998 to 2004. From 2007 to 2009 he was the Vice President of the German PEN Writers in Exile program. Yet despite Gauch's impressive accomplishments, he reveals little of his personal or literary life in *Traces of My Father*. The text does not follow a chronological order of narration; rather, it weaves back and forth, recounting memories of Gauch's childhood and his

father's personality. This flood of memories is interwoven with the three days Gauch spent organizing his father's funeral, which creates a narrative distortion of time. In the preface to the book, Antony Copley describes Gauch's writing method as "elliptical" motion, for there is always something left out of the dialogue or of the context, compelling the reader to make the necessary connections. One imagines this to be similar to Gauch's own childhood with a father who, as discussed later in this section, told half-truths about his involvement in National Socialism and remained emotionally distant from his son while simultaneously dominating the familial home and the father-son relationship.

At the core of Gauch's writing is the trauma he internalised due to his relationship with his Nazi father. Through writing, Gauch attempts to integrate the two disparate conceptualizations he holds of his father: that of the committed Nazi ideologue and party stalwart, who exerted dominance over his spouse and children and demanded complete obedience from them long after the defeat of National Socialism; and the image of a father as protector, mentor and nurturer that Gauch recognized in the father-son relationships of his friends. It is a disturbing combination of personal journey, attempt at reconciliation with his father's actions, and political attack upon Nazism, motivated by the overwhelming desire to demystify a man previously held in a position of esteem by Nazi supporters: "I recall the long solo car journeys when I would think about my father: the *Oberfeldarzt* (retired), the *Reichsamtsleiter* in the SS, the adjunct to Heinrich Himmler, the author of *New Foundations for Racial Research*, the man described by the chief prosecutor in the Eichmann trial as a 'desk murderer,' the man I

knew: my father” (Gauch 5). With this one sentence, one discovers the roles Gauch saw as defining his father’s sense of masculinity and affecting his relationship to his son.

As a retired lieutenant colonel in the medical corps of the Germany military, a department head in the SS, a former adjunct to one of the highest ranking Nazi officials and the author of racial ideology that was congruous with the ideals of National Socialism, it becomes clear that Hermann Gauch was not an ordinary, rank and file Nazi. He was an ambitious man whose dreams of moving up the party hierarchy – for reasons implied but never explained – were never realized and who acted out his unfilled ambitions in the domestic and family spheres. *Traces of My Father* represents Sigfrid Gauch’s ‘re/claiming’ of his own identity separate from, emerging from the long shadow cast by his father, and attempting to reconcile with his father’s Nazi past.

Before beginning his narrative, Gauch opens his book with a poignant and dark poem that lays the foundation for understanding the complicated relationship that existed between father and son. The poem precedes the preface and table of contents and is the reader’s first contact with the tone of book and its themes of father-son conflict and reconciliation with the past. Titled ‘Father Almighty,’ the poem is permeated with bitterness. Gauch’s sharp imagery and emotional poetic style instantly propel the reader into the complex, angry world that Gauch inhabits with his father.

#### FATHER ALMIGHTY

Fish on concrete:  
The air he took from us  
And for which we begged  
I would give him a thousandfold!  
His refusal, called emphysema.  
Himself a doctor.

With the fingers  
That he earlier pushed back  
The air caressed above him  
That he clutches  
("Should I become a child killer?")  
I him.  
What he needs: can't be wished for.  
Father as a synonym.  
To cut the cord: to be able to talk about that.  
To remain tied: to have to stay silent on that.

On through the streets  
Wind in hair  
Unbridged.  
Bitterness not only in grimaces.  
To lie there with never the air  
For survival:  
Fish on concrete;  
Himself a doctor.

### **Fater almahtigan**

Fischsein auf beton:  
die luft, die er uns früher nahm  
um die wir bettelten  
ich hätt sie tausendfach!  
Sein weigern, emphysema genannt.  
Er selber arzt.  
Mit fingern,  
die er zurückstieß früher  
die luft gestreichelt über ihm  
nach der er greift  
(>>soll ich zum kindersmörder werden?<<)  
Ich ihn.  
Was er braucht: kann nicht wollen.  
Vater / in einem synonym.  
Abnabeln: darüber reden können;  
abhängen: darüber schweigen müssen.

Durch die straßen  
den wind im haar unüberbrückt.  
Bitterkeit nicht nu rim mienenspiel.

Daliegen und nicht einmal die luft  
zum überlegen:  
fischsein auf beton;  
er selbst arzt.

The opening phrase ‘Father Almighty’ can be read as an inverted form of a prayer invocation. The title and evocative imagery allude to Christian prayers such as “The Apostle’s Creed,” which begins with the phrase “I believe in God, the Father Almighty,” and “The Nicene Creed,” which opens with “We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty.” In the original German text this invocation to a patriarchal deity is written in the Middle German dialect that his father knew growing up in the village of Einöllen in Rhineland-Palatinate. Here Gauch, like Rehmann to be discussed next and Paul Spiegel, invokes the concept of the *Landesvater*, which connects patriarchy directly to the German land. Ironically, it is revealed later in Gauch’s narrative that his father had little regard for Christianity and was a proponent of neo-pagan *völkisch* beliefs. Describing Sigfrid Gauch’s understanding of his father’s religious beliefs, Antony Copley writes: “He sees his father as an extremist, fanatically committed to a wholly German, non-Christian state<sup>56</sup> and disaffected by the seeming compromises of the Nazi party in power. He had, for example, radical proposals on restructuring the calendar according to his pagan beliefs” (Gauch xiv). Similarly, the opening lines, “Fish on concrete: The air he earlier took from us, And for which he begged, I would give him it a thousandfold!” (ibid., inside page) portrays the shocking image of a dying fish writhing and gasping for

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56 Copley’s assertion is based upon Hermann Gauch’s early writings by where he expressed his hope for a return to pre-Christian, Germanic rituals and customs based upon a connection to the soil and land. There is nothing in Sigfrid Gauch’s text, however, to suggest however that the elder Gauch continued to believe in this idea either during the latter stages of the National Socialist era, or in the post-war period in Germany.

air on a slab of hard concrete. A traditional symbol of Christianity and Jesus, the fish also represents Christian baptism by water.

Indeed, this connection to water is paramount to understanding Gauch's use of the image in his poem. Fish live in water – and must be immersed in water in order to survive; they do not drown. Hermann Gauch, however, is depicted as a fish out of water, gasping for air, spiritually dead and physically dying. This direct reference to the lingering death that the elder Gauch endured provides insight into the complex father-son relationship between Hermann and Sigfrid Gauch. Integral to this is the son's difficult and lifelong journey to emerge from the shadow cast by his father, a journey that finally ended in success for the son with the death of his father. Such pained descriptions do not attempt to elicit sympathy from the reader; rather they serve as powerful reminders of the frailty of all bodies in general. In particular, Gauch reminds the reader that the ageing and frail body of a once powerful Nazi perpetrator was the same individual who advocated racial science and racial purity. The image of the dying fish can also be read as a juxtaposition of the fragile health of Hermann Gauch with his once powerful and influential status. Similarly, the fish out of its natural element of water, gasping for air and dying, can be interpreted as Hermann Gauch being out of his worldly element, just as National Socialism had been defeated during the Second World War according to the classical elements.<sup>57</sup> Deprived of its racist and antisemitic essence, he too lies dying. However we choose to interpret this short yet powerful phrase, it challenges the reader to

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<sup>57</sup> Gauch's use of the elements is reminiscent of the classical elements - earth, air, fire and water - of Greek thought. The pagentry of National Socialism is frequently associated with the classical element of fire, and sometimes earth, yet Gauch's use of the element air is a metaphor for Gauch the unrepentant Nazi who can not find a place in post-Nazi Germany.

examine the complex and troubling relationship between father and son in human terms and to acknowledge that life has a new sense of value in post-Holocaust society.

When consulting the original German text, one is immediately struck with the unusual word conjugation, *Fischsein* in the opening line. Certainly if Gauch meant to reference only the physicality of the fish he could have simply have used the noun “Fisch”. The choice of using an invented compound word, *Fischsein*, invokes a German philosophical tradition. In the tradition of “das [heideggersche] Dasein” there is a deep connection with the human being and an emphasis upon the importance of “Being” and “the question of Being” for understanding and interpreting the world.<sup>58</sup> *Fischsein* also invokes the German “*das Bewusstsein*,” philosophical awareness or consciousness. Fish are not known to possess a linguistic ability nor to be capable of articulating or vocalizing thoughts or concepts. So too does the elder Gauch demonstrate “*die Unfähigkeit, irgendwas zu artikulieren*,” the inability to articulate anything. The personal and the past remain, for him, unspoken and unaccounted for. Even before emphysema made breathing and communication difficult, Hermann Gauch represented the antithesis of *Dasein* and *Bewusstsein*. Instead he is *Fischsein*, unaware and unconscious. Although he is cognizant of the crimes of National Socialism as well as his own involvement in it, Gauch senior remains the unrepentant Nazi who refuses to account for his past.

Rather than nurturing or protecting his son, Hermann Gauch is a paternal figure who takes air away from his own son, depriving him of the very essence of life. The

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<sup>58</sup> Invoking this concept adds to the complexity of the imagery and the history of Gauch’s narrative since Martin Heidegger was affiliated to National Socialism, becoming a party member in 1933. This affiliation has made Heidegger a controversial figure, raising questions about the relationship between his philosophical and academic thoughts and his connection to National Socialism.

elder Gauch is depicted as a powerful, controlling patriarch, literally ‘Father Almighty.’ Yet despite the abuse imposed on Sigfrid Gauch by his father, he maintains an elemental connection to his paternal figure. The father-son relationship is inverted to one whereby the son desires to give the necessary life-giving air to his father. Thus, the son becomes not just a caregiver to his father, but as is suggested in the poem’s opening stanza, Sigfrid Gauch desires to be the giver of life to his father.<sup>59</sup> It stands in ironic contrast with Hermann Gauch’s own acquiescence to the murder of children.

Similarly, the invocation of Father Almighty can be interpreted as Sigfrid Gauch’s desire to draw a differentiating parallel to his biological father and a spiritual Father in heaven. In doing so, Gauch raises the underlying question of his narrative “How do I live as the son of a cruel father?” While Gauch does not offer an answer to this question, he does reference twice the advice he receives from a long-time friend living in the United Kingdom. “‘Free yourself of him,’ said Herbert on the telephone when he heard about Father’s death” (ibid. 87). Repeated again as the last line of the text, it speaks to the fact that for Sigfrid Gauch, life can only begin for him once he has freed himself totally from his father. How to live as the son of a cruel father is the dilemma that Sigfrid Gauch has struggled with his entire life. Faced with cutting himself off from this father, as he is often advised by friends and other family members, he would have gained a measure of freedom as illustrated by the line, “To cut the cord: to be able to talk about that” (ibid. inside page). However, Gauch chose not to cut himself

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59 Interestingly, Sigfrid Gauch does not provide insight into his personal view on either organized religion, or belief in a deity. One senses in Gauch’s writing a skepticism towards belief in a higher power or deity, but he remains silent on this aspect.

off from his family, and as such has to live with the resulting inner turmoil: “To remain tied: to have to stay silent on that” (ibid. inside page). Here Gauch obliquely references the writing of a work of *Väterliteratur* that must wait until the death of his father.

Through the expression of this inner turmoil, Gauch is able to call his father to account for his actions during the Holocaust. The simple three-word phrase “Himself a doctor” gets at the heart of the matter (ibid. inside page). Gauch wittingly evokes the image of physician for a dual purpose. First, he is referring to the implied ethical standards expected by society from a physician, and those he will later criticize his father for not exemplifying. As Henry Friedlander and Robert Jay Lifton have shown, physicians were central to the successful implementation of the T-4 Euthanasia in Germany and Austria, and played a principal role in the Nazi concentration camp system.<sup>60</sup> Secondly, it forces the reader to encounter the image of the physician as powerless over his own ill health. In an ironic twist, the once prominent Nazi doctor, who at the apex of his career was Himmler’s personal physician, is facing death alone, dependent on his son for assistance when his other children have long since abandoned him. Hermann Gauch has become the helpless fish, the victim in someone’s net. Out of his natural element – the ‘water’ of National Socialism - he is left gasping for air, like so many of the victims of Nazi death camps and “euthanasia” program gassings his Nazi ideology endorsed.

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<sup>60</sup> Henry Friedlander’s 1995 seminal work, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution* documented the centrality of physicians to the T-4 Euthanasia program and subsequent involvement in the Nazi concentration camps, and Robert Jay Lifton’s *The Nazi Doctors* (1986) detailed the extent of physicians’ involvement in medical mass murder in the Nazi concentration camps.

The narrative itself opens with Sigfrid Gauch making the preparations for his father's funeral service. Gauch consciously shifts between time periods, utilizing both present and past tenses while invoking his bitter, often terse memories with such rapidity that time becomes almost indecipherable. In the opening chapter, Gauch, reflecting on his father's experiences during the First World War, recalls stories and comments he heard from unnamed townsmen: "You were in reality a shirker – so it was said. In the trenches you knew only fear, pure fear. You clung to your old companions, never left their heels when distant shells were heard, when waves of explosions neared. You looked for father figures in the older soldiers, whimpered for dear life. You would, though, have condemned without mercy, cowardice in others" (ibid. 8). Elaborating on the stories that depicted his father as a shirker, Gauch continues: "I knew who it was who said it, but there was no need for you to know. The comment stuck in my mind. I was about eleven years old then. You never denied it, were not able to deny it, because you never knew of it. But you never invalidated it by telling me more about yourself" (ibid. 11). The dysfunctional relationship between father and son is characterized by a lack of communication. As a child, Gauch is powerless to initiate a change in the dynamics of the relationship between him and his father, while his father reveals only enough about himself to maintain the illusion of patriarchal power and control. These are not the memories or experiences the elder Gauch shared with his son, yet they form a core of the relationship between father and son. Coupled with the elder Gauch's expectation that his son live up to exactly high standards – ones that the son knows his father never

attained – the disparity between his father’s actions and self-perception is something the son has clearly needed to work through.

Throughout the text, Gauch junior is engaged in a constant struggle to separate the private and public personas of his father as well as the difference between his perceptions of his father and how his father saw himself. The result is a jarring, agonizing attempt at integrating these competing images. Within the family home, the elder Gauch exerted complete control over his family, the running of the household, and all decisions. Rather than provide money directly to his wife to run the household, Hermann Gauch arranged a credit account with one of the local stores. The family’s food purchases were recorded, approved by Gauch senior, and then paid for by him at the end of the month by cheque. Sigfrid Gauch describes the conflict in perception over how the household finances were handled: “What we thought was humiliation you thought was a brilliant idea. You saved, kept your money together, wished to keep a close eye on all expenditures” (ibid. 66).

Control over running the household extended to the minutiae of all aspects of what went on within the family home. In one of the rare instances when Sigfrid Gauch discusses his mother, he depicts a scene in which mother and son were humiliated, while his father reasserted his dominance over the household: “One day a man who lived in an alm house and was supported – with his wife and six children – by the parish, brought a large basket of freshly picked raspberries. He wanted a mark for them. Would the Frau Doctor buy them from him? She took pity on him and told him she would send him the money as soon as you got back home. She was delighted, washed the raspberries, and

was about to cook them. I still remember the scene she made, how she wept and wept. But I had to take them back to the man and say, 'My father says no.' The man nodded and took the raspberries back. Without a word" (ibid. 66-67). Here Gauch depicts his mother humiliated by her husband, not even allowed to make a decision of buying fruit from a needy townsman. Similarly, Sigfrid Gauch is powerless, and must accept his father's bidding.

Gauch's narrative tries to show by means of realism what it was like to live in the same household with someone who did not deny their Nazi past, nor relinquish his Nazi ideology, nor place the needs of his family first. Describing how his father profited from the currency changeover during the post-war period, Gauch writes: "When the currency was reformed, you got compensation in deutsche marks for the obsolete reichmarks: a windfall, for we were living at the time in a converted sheepfold near Bremervörde, in which you also ran your medical practice. You were still wanted by the French, who had renewed their warrant for your arrest and were searching for you. The money could have paid for things we really needed... For the 945 new marks you brought home a high-quality microscope and two oil paintings showing the Devil's Moor near Worpswede. That was better use of the money than on clothes that would soon get worn out, you explained" (ibid. 67). The juxtaposition of owning oil paintings when the family is living in a sheepfold depicts Hermann Gauch as both insensitive and neglectful as a provider for his family.

For the elder Gauch, one of the greatest difficulties came from living in a world where he had to conceal his Nazi past – something he was proud of – in order to avoid

prosecution. Sigfrid Gauch describes his father's actions during the Eichmann trial: "While the trial went on, Father had meetings at autobahn rest stops with Nazi survivors (including the widow of a concentration camp commandant), shook off real or imaginary pursuers, and carried a loaded pistol in his trousers. When the newspapers all reported that the chief prosecutor in the Eichmann trial described Father as one of the 'desk murderers' responsible for what had happened, for days on end he no longer went out of the house. 'The Israeli Secret Service will hunt me down and kill me now' he said" (ibid. 91). The elder Gauch inhabited a realm in which Nazism lived on, despite having lost the Second World War. In his home, he could re-enact his role as patriarchal authority steeped in the values of National Socialism. There is no remorse, no mourning, and no melancholia attributed to the elder Gauch at any time in the book. This is a task left entirely to Sigfrid Gauch.

Similarly, when his father is cleared via a denazification process, Gauch again reveals the very different private and public personas of his father. He depicts the scene utilising a direct address writing style that is pivotal in establishing contact with his deceased father.:

You were classified by the main Denazification Committee for Stade District as belonging 'to the discharged group'. The cost of the proceedings was fixed at DM 20. As treasurer of a local Nazi group, you would not have dared dream of such a decision... You said, with a smirk, that you had not lied. In the famous denazification questionnaire you had written in large capital letters and had begun with the harmless organizations such as the National Socialist Doctor's League. The lines were full and you were able to leave out the rest with a clear conscience (ibid. 53).

Sigfrid Gauch can find nothing to be proud of in recalling his father's actions or behaviour. He is disgusted that his father consciously chose to elude justice, and

disgusted further by a political process that made it so easy for his father to evade justice and for a time allowed his father to continue in his role as a Nazi official. In the aftermath of the Allied occupation of Germany, Hermann Gauch applied to the British for a military function as a means of eluding prosecution as a Nazi criminal:

In Verden-on-the-Aller you were made a troop doctor with the Waffen-SS units that were quartered there by the British and were, in part, armed... Later, for understandable reasons, the fact was covered up that the British, for fear that the Russians might plan an incursion over the occupation border, deployed SS troops in a deliberate raid against the Russians. They retained complete administrative autonomy and lived as if they had not lost the war (ibid. 54).

Sigfrid Gauch defines his father as an opportunist and unrepentant Nazi who was able to turn most situations to his advantage. Even with Germany's defeat in the Second World War, Gauch senior was able to find opportunities that allowed him to continue his National Socialist ideologies without having to reform or repent. For Hermann Gauch, who managed to find a posting in post-war Germany as a SS troop doctor in a scheme organized by the British to thwart the advance of communism, and who successfully finagled his way through de-Nazification process without repercussions, it is only fitting that the next scene for his controlling and manipulative behaviour was within his own domicile.

From an early age, Sigfrid Gauch experienced his father's controlling and dominating personality. The elder Gauch exerted an unusual amount of control over his son's life, including over his education and social activities. "Others had friends and playmates; I had you, a father who watched over me" (ibid. 22). This is not the watchful eye of a parent concerned about danger or harm affecting their child. Rather, it is the overbearing, suffocating dominance exerted by a patriarchal figure whose personal and

career ambitions remained unfulfilled. The highly controlled environment manipulated by his father became normal for the young Sigfrid: “It wasn’t until much later that I learned it was possible not to watch over one’s son’s like this. I thought of how you would react if I were dead, if I hanged myself and you saw my body. I shall never manage, I shall never learn, I thought. I bent over my Latin vocab book and dreamed of freedom” (ibid. 22). The eerie death-centered letter is evocative of Franz Kafka’s 1919 missive *Brief an der Vater* (Letter to His Father; 1966). Kafka wrote the letter condemning his father’s authoritarian and abusive behavior towards him. While he does not make any specific reference to Kafka, Gauch did receive a classical education in the German school system and would likely have studied Kafka as part of the German literary tradition. A similar father-son relationship emerges from the text of both writers.

The constant struggle between fidelity to a biological parent, whom Gauch feels responsibility towards as well as the desire to receive love from, continues into adulthood. There, it is weighted against the darker side of his father’s past actions, continuing Nazi beliefs and over-riding desire to continue exerting control over his son’s life. Evidence of the continuing pressure exerted on the adult father and son relationship is when Hermann Gauch threatens suicide the evening before his son is to depart on vacation to the United Kingdom. It is the one instance in which Sigfrid Gauch reveals his relationship to the rest of his unnamed family members and how his relationship to his father is unique in the family. When he locates the other family members and tells them of his father’s suicide threat, he is met with disbelief and anger: “They didn’t believe you had really been desperate. I understood well – though I didn’t say as much – that your

suicide attempt was symbolic, a cry for help. ‘You’re mental,’ one of them said, ‘you should be locked up.’ ‘You’re an old scoundrel, a desk murderer with millions of Jews on your conscience,’ said someone” (Gauch 33). Sigfrid Gauch depicts himself as the sole relative who succumbs to his father’s control and manipulations, the sole family member who cannot break free of his father’s machinations. The adult child still craves his father’s blessing and approval. Gauch does not offer the reader any reasons as to why he accepts this role in relationship to his father; however, Copley suggests that it was the age at which Hermann Gauch became a father, combined with the German tradition of respectability, that drove Gauch junior to accept his father’s behavior: “If the father is the role model and the means by which the son resolves identity, then in the case of Sigfrid, born on 9 March 1945, this problem was compounded by having an elderly father, forty-five years old at the time of his birth” (ibid. xviii). As the eldest born, to a father older than those of his peers, Sigfrid Gauch seems to have felt that he owed his father unwavering loyalty.

In this book permeated with pain, bitterness, and anger, there is no reconciliation with Hermann Gauch’s war and post-war actions – including those carried out as part of his role as father figure. Each version of Hermann Gauch’s so-called accomplishments is rebuked. Whether it was his role as Himmler’s adjutant, district doctor, state-employed doctor or senior staff doctor, Sigfrid Gauch recognizes the darker side of his father’s personality: “As Himmler’s adjutant you were, you asserted, in the position of a general, with considerable powers...but after a year you were decommissioned – because of lack of expertise and friction between higher staff members, according to what you wrote in

your military C.V.” (ibid. 51). The disconnect between the image Hermann Gauch holds of himself – that of noble warrior, loyal citizen of a National Socialist state and member of the Aryan race – and the image his son discovers in documents and through the oral history accounts of his father’s peers further cements the irreconcilability of their father-son relationship. In the post-war period his father sought political office for the *Deutsche Reichspartei* (DRP). Again, Sigfrid Gauch reveals his disgust for this father’s beliefs and actions:

Fifteen years after the war you believed that the neo-Nazis could seize power... You wrote about the extermination of the Jews, in which you tried to prove that the figures given for the murdered Jews must all be lies; you calculated with your slide rule that given the size and number of gas chambers in the concentration camps (their total in square meters), only a fraction of the official number of Jews could have been gassed, even if one assumed that they were piled into them body onto body and that the gas chambers were in operation day and night (ibid. 43).

For a son who only wants to love and be loved by his father, to respect and be respected, the embarrassment and shame of having an unrepentant Nazi as his father must have been horrible, and compounded by the stories Gauch heard from the townsmen who described his father as having been a shirker during the First World War.

As I have demonstrated in this section, there is not one redeeming quality or characteristic that Gauch uses as a thread to reconcile his paternal figure with his actions as a Nazi and as a father. He sees his only recourse being to free himself from the dominating figure of his father, and from his memory. Gauch concludes his narrative by reflecting on an imagined conversation with the friend whom he spoke with at the beginning of the text. The two have often discussed the different roles their fathers played in the Second World War and Gauch knows too well the supposed response of his

friend when he writes, “How would he have reacted? Perhaps he would have said, ‘Unlike you, I can be proud of my dead father, whom I clung to as you did to yours.’... And then he would have said once more, ‘Free yourself of him’” (ibid. 130). In his imagined conversation Gauch has his friend say what he himself cannot. It is a message that Sigfrid Gauch has heard from his friend on numerous occasions: “It does me good to hear Herbert’s voice, even though he does not lessen the guilt that I feel: guilt by proxy” (ibid. 88). The son has taken upon himself the guilt for the sins of National Socialism that his father never acknowledged. As long as Hermann Gauch remained alive, his son was plagued with this sense of vicarious guilt – for actions he was not responsible for. Only through the death of his father was it possible for Sigfrid Gauch to be truly free. Unable to reconcile the parent role with his father’s role as an ardent Nazi, there was nothing left for Gauch to do except free himself from the haunting memory that lingered on within him. A primordial relationship in any man’s life is his relationship with his father, and the realization that this relationship must cope with the ramifications of the parent being an unrepentant Nazi is more than the relationship can bear. For Sigfrid Gauch there is only mourning for the loss of a parent, and the freedom that leaving this relationship in the past can bring.

### **Ruth Rehmann: Examining the Father as Complicit Bystander**



Rehmann's *Der Mann auf der Kanzel: Fragen an einen Vater*, 1979 (*The Man in the Pulpit: Questions for a Father*, 1997;) is inscribed with the simple but poignant dedication: "For my children." Indeed, Rehmann's three children – Thomas, Johanna and Elisabeth – are the motivation for her writing this *Selbstfindungsbuch*, book of self-discovery. Having never known their maternal grandparents, they pressed Rehmann for details on what it was like growing up as the daughter of a Lutheran minister during Germany's National Socialist era. Rehmann's narrative elucidates the complex relationship between father and daughter, and mother and son.

Central to the narrative is the theme of organized religion as a cultural, societal and personal influencer in the world, something reflected in the cover images. The original 1979 German language edition (above left) depicts a solemn Protestant clergyman in traditional attire leading a group of young men along a country lane. The photograph resembles one from a family album, hinting at a personal narrative. The

image harkens to a period before secularization diminished the stature of Christian clergy to their flock. The English-language translation, in contrast (previous page, above right), uses a dark sepia-toned illustration of a church steeple surrounded by dark nimbostratus clouds. These low-level clouds create a foreboding image for the reader and hint at a threatening or ominous element in the narrative.

At the centre of Rehmann's writing is her internal conflict with the local myth that has developed around the memory of her father. Indeed, the dual representation and conflict associated with her father – as both pastor and paternal figure – is indicated by the title of Rehmann's text: *The Man in the Pulpit: Questions for a Father*. The public myth stands at odds with her own private recollection of her father being a complicit bystander during the National Socialist period in Germany. Confronting her familial past means confronting her own actions, some of which she has long repressed, as well as those of her father. Concern for the emotional wellbeing of her children is another identifying theme. As she embarks on the emotion-laden journey, Rehmann appears particularly concerned by how the revelations of her father during the Nazi period might affect her son Thomas. Illustrating the difficulty in relating her father's, and ultimately her own, past to her children, Rehman writes:

How do you talk about fathers who were neither Nazi criminals nor resistance fighters? How do you maintain their living individuality in the process of grinding them through the mill of generalizations and sweeping judgments?... How do you explain the difference between the actual experience and a retrospection of the past without falling into the sickeningly apologetic tone, that tone of I-was-too-young, I-never-saw-anything, I-had-no-part-in-it? (Rehmann 14).

Inhabiting neither end of the paradigm – for he was neither Nazi ideologue nor Nazi resister – Rehmann’s father represents the vast swath of men in the middle, whose silence and inaction is at the very least indicative of complicity.

Rehmann seems to understand herself as a conduit that connects her son to his grandfather, and in her son she recognizes characteristics of her father. In describing the function of a desk that belonged to her father and now serves her son, Rehmann writes that the “two-piece desk with an upright cabinet that, once had been chock-full of theology but is now used by Thomas to store his Marx, Engels, and Lenin, the drawers still retaining a whiff of pipe-tobacco smoke” (ibid. 9). The desk, like Rehmann, inhabits both the world of her father – with his emphasis on traditional Christian Lutheran theology, as well as the world of her son – who adheres to communist ideology and agnostic, if not atheistic belief. Just as Rehmann’s relationship with her father was a pivotal experience of her childhood, the bond to her children – in particular her son – defines her adult life. This is particularly so given the absence of any mention of a husband, partner or father of her children throughout Rehmann’s text. By avoiding focusing on her personal relationship status, Rehmann seems to be constructing this as a journey that she alone is navigating, coming to terms with her familial past for the future of her children.

Rehmann’s predicament of explaining her father’s actions during National Socialism to her son is further complicated by Thomas’s particularly skeptical view of the clergy. When her son asks what his grandfather thought of Pastor Niemöller, Rehmann explains, “ ‘He was an apolitical person,’ I say. ‘He acted according to his

conscience.’ ‘And, if one may ask, how did he manage that?’ ‘By accepting every morning the command of the Bible and the daily devotion of the Moravian Brethren of Herrnhut’... Thomas does not understand how a ‘superconscience’ could get through the period of the brownshirts without ending in a concentration camp” (ibid. 10). Like the nimbostratus clouds of the book’s cover, the pragmatism of her son’s question and response foreshadows how challenging and painful accepting familial history can be.

The people of Rehmann’s childhood village of Auel remember her father as the ideal minister, who tended to the spiritual needs of his congregation and served as a moral beacon for the citizenry. An encounter with an elderly villager reveals the longevity of this perception: “That was just like him, she said: a man of understanding and harmony, a peacemaker blessed by God. As long as he was the minister at Auel, Catholics and Protestants had not quarreled, and there had been no conflict between the church and the state either” (ibid. 11). Yet, Rehmann is also reminded of the another side of her father, one that is at best a complicit bystander and a worst a *Mitläufer*, one who ran with the crowd and chose not to stand on personal ethics or convictions. The same elderly villager describes a fond memory of Rehmann’s father: “...the Reverend standing next to his Catholic colleague and the mayor, a storm trooper, on the platform, which was festively decorated with swastika flags. In moving words he thanked the Lord of all history for the happy turn of events – the very picture of the patriotic church and the Christian state” (ibid. 12).

Herein lies the conflict for Rehmann: her father, a beloved clergyman to villagers and parishioners alike, was also complicit in the legitimization of Nazism by his tacit

approval given by not speaking against them and by allowing himself to be photographed with Nazi officials at various functions. He may not have committed criminal acts, but his silence empowered the National Socialist regime. *Väterliteratur* then provides an important opportunity, not only for the adult child to attempt to come to terms with the past behaviour of the paternal figure, but by reconstructing a memory of the events to become closer to the parent. As I demonstrate in this section, Rehmman's journey provides her with a new and complex understanding of her father and of herself, while not absolving him of personal responsibility.

Pivotal to this internal struggle is Rehmman's memory of her family home, in particular the study in which he father worked, studied and entertained his guests. Indeed, the study is synonymous with her father: "Like no other part of the house, it is his realm, his mysteriously ordered world that appears chaotic to everyone else..." (ibid. 17). In (re)constructing a memory of the study, Rehmman depicts it not only as an important room in the family home, but also as a stage on which her father performed his tasks and acted out his role as pastor when not in the pulpit: "Like a stage, on which the scenery and props for the entire plays are always in view but are highlighted only in essential parts for each act, the study is arranged in three temporally rather than spatially defined areas: the 'morning study,' the 'noonday study,' and the 'evening study'" (ibid. 17). While the remainder of the family home is under the jurisdiction of Rehmman's mother, the study is the outside world of her father brought inside the home.

In describing the contents of the study, Rehmman notes several objects: a crucifix, an enlarged photograph of her paternal grandfather who was also a pastor, a woodcut of

Martin Luther, and a portrait of Kaiser Wilhelm II – each emblematic of patriarchal authority and power. The crucifix indicative of the God the Father (*Gott Vater*), the Kaiser representative of the father of the country (*Landesvater*), Martin Luther synonymous with the Church Fathers (*Kirchenväter*) while his father, also a pastor, represents the head of the family (*Familienvater*).

When a small bust of Hitler is introduced into this sacrosanct study by a female deacon and threatens to destabilize the traditional patriarchal imagery, the result reveals the dynamics of Rehmann’s community and the church in which she was raised: “For a short while a small bust of Hitler, made of reddish clay, appears on top of the gas heater. It was brought by the deaconess in a furtive attempt to bring together her two dearest favourites – her pastor and her Führer” (ibid. 19). The bust is removed and smashed by Rehmann’s mother, in one of the few scenes in which she depicts her mother. Although the study is established as the sole domain of her father, it is her mother who ultimately throws the Hitler bust out of the familial home while Rehmann’s father remains a approving bystander to the episode.<sup>61</sup>

Just as the forest in the *Heimatfilm* – discussed in Chapter Two – is both a place of safety and danger, so too is Rehmann’s *Vaterzimmer*. Gisela Moffit describes Rehmann’s father: “Sheltered in the *Vaterzimmer*, the minister keeps his focus on the ‘eternal’ things and thus cannot notice and react to the social and political reality outside” (Moffitt 85). If Moffit’s depiction of this room as being a sheltering space removed from the travails of the world - indeed *heimlich* – is to be accepted, then it follows that the

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<sup>61</sup> The episode is also significant since Rehmann depicts her father as a man who refused to take a stand either for or against an action, and whose silence she interprets as reluctant approval.

room must also be considered for its *unheimlich* qualities. The study is the place where Rehmman remembers her own childhood and her responses to National Socialism as well as those of her father. One of the most painful recollections that Rehmman depicts, which is indicative of the parallel *unheimlich* quality of the *Vaterzimmer*, is her father's refusal to render assistance to a friend facing deportation: " 'You must be mistaken,' Father says. 'There's a lot of talk. You mustn't take it personally.'... 'Maybe others,' he says, 'but surely not you, a much decorated veteran!' The visitor's voice continues in a long monotone which Father interrupts vehemently: 'No, I simply can't believe that!'" (Rehmman 169).

Recalling this memory works as an epiphany for Rehmman. It not only shatters the last remnant of innocence with which she saw her father and represents a shift in thinking of her father as being blindly obedient in the actions of National Socialism. By turning away the villager seeking help on the grounds that he could not imagine a First World War veteran being subjected to Nazi persecution – no indication is ever made that the man could have been Jewish – Rehmman now sees her father as someone who was aware of what was happening, refused to believe or question governmental directives and turned away from the reality of what was happening around him.

Attempting to reconcile with the past also means that Rehmman must face her own actions, some of which have long been repressed. When she is confronted by a former schoolteacher known for his communist leanings about her own turning away from a classmate whose father was Jewish, Rehmman is compelled to ask herself why she chose to remain indifferent to the suffering of others: "You were not too young to notice

some of those things and to ask him about them? Why did you not ask him what he planned to do when Hitler's henchmen came to drag away Herr Heilmann, little Hanna's father, from his sickbed, where he lay with a serious liver ailment? You knew all about that" (ibid. 149-150). At first Rehmann denies the teacher's account of events, yet the memory returns to haunt her, " 'I never heard that name.' And as I said these words a membrane ruptured in my head and a face appeared in my memory..." (ibid. 150). Reconstructing memories of the past reminds Rehmann that she too was a complicit bystander herself and faces her own accountability. As the 'child' in the narrative of her former teacher, Rehmann was eighteen – old enough to question, or to make her opinion heard in her household. As an adult writer reconstructing her memory of the past, Rehmann finds herself having to acknowledge her role of complicit bystander, just as she has accused her father of being one.

Rehmann's writing is characterised by a quietly intense pain, and at times silence in acknowledging that her father's behavior in choosing not to take a political stand against Nazi aggression and the erosion of civil liberties was in fact in line with his own German nationalistic sentiments. Accordingly, Rehmann places her narrative in the greater historical context of German nationalism. She describes her father's relationship with German history: "Even Bismarck had said, 'As for the Germans, their love of country requires a Prince on whom they can focus their devotion.' Only a ruler legitimised by God would be capable of bringing out the best qualities of the Germans. Now he was happy to be able to serve his Führer" (ibid. 11). For Rehmann, her father's silent acquiescence to National Socialism and Hitler is rooted not only in the belief of

one central authority figure, but also in the German tradition of ruling by divine ordinance. It is similar to the mindset of Hermann Gauch, profiled in the previous section of this chapter.

Throughout the narrative, Rehmann reconstructs memories and reflects on encounters with her father and other adults who knew her father, which allows her as an adult to better understand the paternal figure she grew up with. Rarely does Rehmann mention her siblings or her mother during this process. Depicting a conversation with her eldest brother Gerhard about their father's attitude toward war, the failed Weimar Republic, and authority provides additional insight into the beliefs of her father, and also her own position in the family structure: "I visit Gerhard, the older of my brothers, a country parson carrying on the family tradition that the others have more or less abandoned – especially the youngest, the one who is called 'the child,' 'the kid,' or 'the brat' by her brothers and sisters" (ibid. 66).

In listing the expressions that her siblings used to describe her, Rehmann refers to herself in the emotionally distant, third-person. She questions her brother on whether their father actually believed some of the church teachings she read in her father's ecclesiastical journals published by the Institute of Protestant Theology and refers specifically to the patriarchal paradigm of ruling by divine right and the interconnection between the *Familienvater*, *Landesvater* and *Gott Vater* described earlier in this section. She quotes specifically: "Democracy is a rebellion against God's commandment... political parties are contrary to the spirit of the Protestant Church" (ibid. 68-69). It is a paradigm that Rehmann has turned away from, while her own son has embraced

communist thinkers and activism during his university studies. Rehmann's brother is depicted as replaying the older brother from childhood, and treats his sister condescendingly. Evading her questions by explaining that she, as a non-believer, is incapable of understanding theological perspectives, he finally describes their father as: "German in the tradition of Luther and the sacred obligation that came with Luther's commitment to the divine purpose and function to the state, no matter how such a state came into being or what particular form it took" (ibid. 68-69).

Rehmann's father is both a believer and victim of his belief in patriarchal power structures. He cannot fathom utilizing the existing religious structure to invoke change; his morality is rooted in the old social order that said rule was given by Divine right. From one of her former schoolteachers, Herr Limbach – a man with Communist political leanings – Rehmann discovers that her father would never have agitated for governmental change under any conditions: "Romans 13 kept him from doing that: 'Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.'" And, according to Schlatter, "higher powers" refers to "any actual and existing power" that "has been placed above us in God's order." A Christian must obey "all those who have been empowered to govern, regardless how such government is structured or defined" (ibid. 113). For Rehmann, the pieces finally fit together and create an image of a father who believes that his government is ruling by divine right and that it was not his place to intervene.

It is this patriarchal power structure and belief system that seems to have challenged Rehmann throughout her life. Rehmann writes that this turning away from the patriarchy of her father began early in childhood. To find relief from childhood

nightmares – which Rehmann ascribes to her father’s study – the family physician prescribed valerian and lemon balm, but to no avail. What provides relief are prayers to the Virgin Mary. Rehmann describes this memory in the third-person narrative mode to provide her with an emotional distance from a deeply personal, buried memory: “The child has her own prescription, which she keeps a secret: after saying her prayers and kissing her mother goodnight, she stealthily climbs out of her crib, looks under it, makes the sign of the cross, feels sinful because only Catholics cross themselves, kneels in front of her crib like a Catholic, and prays to the Catholic God and the Virgin Mary to keep the bad dreams away. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn’t” (ibid. 26). Unlike her father, Rehmann seeks solace by turning to the comforting female icon of Catholicism, the Virgin Mary. The seeds of skepticism towards organized religion are sown early in Rehmann, who acknowledges that her actions only worked sometimes.

Rehmann further expands on the conflict she has, reconciling the image she has of a clergyman being a moral leader of his community with the failed actions of her father by recalling the *Kirchenstreit* (church struggle) that took place during the National Socialist period. She depicts her father as devastated when he discovered that the Confessing church (*Bekennniskirche*) – which was at odds with the Nazi quest to align the German Protestant churches with the National Socialist agenda – was meeting in secret with his parishioners. Rehmann depicts her father’s reaction to his congregants: “‘Have I not always dealt with you forthright and openly?’ he asked, as the elders sat with their eyes cast down. ‘Have I ever given you a reason to believe that my work was not guided by Scripture and faith? Have we not always cooperated in holding the

congregation together and leading them on the path following Christ? Now all of a sudden you agitate for dissent, divide the flock, conduct Bible readings in public houses and private apartments, drive to other communities for religious services, issue secret membership cards and communicate by secret letters” (ibid. 135). Such dissension was diametrically opposed with her father’s belief in the divine right to rule, obedience to church teachings and leadership, and the role of the church in relation to the government. Describing her father’s belief in Christian passivity, Rehmann recalls her father saying: “When the worldly powers violate the law, the Lutheran Christian is only allowed to suffer for ‘Christ’s’ sake, he must not rebel, nor resist” (ibid. 116). In adulthood, although she cannot find reconciliation in her father’s moral compromises, she is able to contextualize the ideological expanse separating daughter and father which began during her childhood her father as being a product of his time and upbringing. As such, we witness Rehmann absorbing the repressed mourning and trauma the Mitscherlichs identified by breaking with her past, with adherence to organized religion and with the town in which she was raised. She is determined that her children, the third generation, will be cleared of the guilt and shame.

Rehmann’s narrative provides the reader with an understanding of the broader history of the Protestant church in Germany, as well as the ideological framework that prevented it from responding to Nazi aggression. This framework not only elucidates the ecclesiastical masculinity of German Protestantism, but also the manner in which it affected familial relationships, the father-daughter relationship in particular. Discussing her father’s acceptance of the relationship between church and state in Germany,

Rehmann writes: “The Church was conceived as the servant of the German state, and of the German people. God demands patriotism as and in the obedience towards his created order, which manifests itself in the people, the nation, and the Fatherland. Protestantism and Christian identity are one” (ibid. 110). Rehmann depicts her father as accepting the removal of civil rights from civil society, the Nazification of schools and educational institutions, and the removal of First World War veterans who happened to be Jewish from the town.

When his own church succumbs to the Nazification process, her father accepts this as an inevitable outcome of things that he cannot act against. Rehmann recalls the changes that her father’s church underwent and how he was gradually pushed into accepting retirement: “The ‘Aryan Paragraph’ is passed by a two thirds majority: a person can only be a pastor if he is ‘totally committed to the national state and the German Evangelical Church, and be of Aryan descent’...the regional church of Saxony spells it out even more bluntly: ‘Pastors who are unable to prove that they will commit themselves totally to National Socialism and the German Evangelical Church may be retired from active service’” (ibid. 120). While he does not personally like any of the actions he witnesses, Rehmann’s father refuses to act in defiance of them, even though he was well liked and popular amongst his congregation. Instead, Rehmann’s father saw his role as one of accepting the actions of the governing leadership, as it was in accordance with the leader’s Divine Right to rule. No remorse, mourning, or melancholia was ever exhibited by Rehmann’s father, only passive acceptance, and so it falls upon her to undertake the process of reconciliation with the past.

Some feminist writers have criticized Rehmman for adhering to patriarchal power structures by forgiving her father. Barbara Kosta, for example, notes how "...she creates a monument of her father and a mausoleum for her memories. The narrator has inherited her father's selective vision. In the end, she remains caught within the room of the fathers, too fearful to cross the threshold she was taught to respect" (Kosta 120). Gisela Moffitt goes further in criticizing Rehmman: "Her lack of anger, her reluctance to judge and criticize, and her tendency to locate blame elsewhere indicate that she is still the dutiful daughter with whom her father and the (male) critics can be well-pleased. Rehmman wanted to tell the truth about her father; however, her explanation is not an honest answer but a loyal answer" (Moffitt 113). In addition, both Kosta and Moffitt see the *Vaterzimmer* as a place of patriarchal comfort and indoctrination. To them it is a place where *heimliche* events take place reinforcing the patriarchal power paradigm. Yet, as I have shown, the *Vaterzimmer* was also a place of the *Unheimliche*. It is the room that permeated Rehmman's childhood nightmares, and where as a teenager she witnessed her father turning away a villager threatened with deportation. As much as the *Vaterzimmer* was a place of comfort and male dominion, it was also a place associated with trauma.

One must also keep in mind that Rehmman, whose father died during the war, wrote her narrative 39 years after his death. This temporal distance from the events must not be underestimated. The distance of time has allowed Rehmman to process events and see her father, his upbringing, and Christian-Lutheran beliefs within the context of history. This perspective has allowed Rehmman to write with a soft, reflective anger

rather than a visceral, immediate one. Although Rehmann has seemingly distanced herself from organized religion, there is no reason to believe that she does not value forgiveness. In describing how she has come to see her father at the end of her journey, Rehmann writes: “There may be a special kind of loneliness in which a person – in spite of the most careful daily scrutiny of God’s word and commandment – could become guilty without being aware of it, because the perception of certain sins assumes a knowledge that comes from seeing, hearing, and understanding, not from dialogues in the private realm” (Rehmann 203). Her narrative is an empowering account of a daughter, through the process of writing the memoir, becoming the authoritative voice for her family’s history. By integrating the historical past with her own and her father’s personal past, Rehmann has established the definitive account for her children, whose independence, ability to question and act provide her with a source of pride.

Katrin Himmler: Reflecting on Grandfather and Great-Uncle as Nazi Perpetrators



Katrin Himmler's 2005 text *Die Brüder Himmler* (*The Himmler Brothers* 2007) is among the most recent of the *Väterliteratur* books. It demonstrates the longevity of both the genre and the legacy of National Socialism and the Holocaust. Like Rehmann's, Himmler's personal quest to account for familial behaviour during the period of National Socialism involves both the father-daughter relationship, as well as the mother-son relationship. Initially, it was due to the request of her father, who sought archival information about the family past that Himmler became interested in her family's historical past. Later, the interest was cemented when Himmler decided that she must set the record straight about her family's involvement in the Holocaust for her own son, who

is still a small child at the time. For both father and daughter, understanding their familial legacy meant questioning long-held beliefs and myths, constructed in the wake of Nazi Germany's defeat. More than sixty years after the end of the Second World War, the woman who is great-niece of Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, and granddaughter of Ernst Himmler, an SS stalwart, can no longer ignore her legacy nor the connotations associated with the Himmler family name that she has inherited.

The German edition and English-language translation both use the same archival, family photograph on the front cover (pictured on the previous page). The three Himmler brothers, in a photo from their pre-Nazi childhood, are a portrayal of everyday ordinariness. Indeed, each of the German texts presented in this chapter has a family photograph on its cover that provides a powerful entry point to discovering the *Familiengeschichte* contained in each text. The photograph used for *The Himmler Brothers* reveals fresh-faced, well-attired boys, who are the picture of respectability and contented family life. Gebhard Himmler, the eldest, is seated and appears confident and self-assured, attired in a dark suit. Heinrich Himmler, the middle child, stands between his eldest and youngest brother with a serious facial expression that looks into the distance. Finally, Ernst offers the slightest hint of a smile, befitting his status as youngest, and still a boy compared to his two older brothers.

The archival photograph is haunting since the three boys could be anyone, but the book's title makes it clear that they are not: these boys are the Himmler brothers, a name associated with the Nazi elite and National Socialism's 'Final Solution.' The haunting effect is reinforced by the epigram that precedes the book's prologue. Taken from *On*

*Human Diversity* by the Franco-Bulgarian philosopher Tzvetan Todorov, it reads: “If we had been in their shoes, we might have done the same” (Himmler inside page). The choice of epigram mirrors the current discourse about Nazi perpetrators put forth by historians Christopher Browning, Mark Roseman and Moritz Pfeiffer. Nazi perpetrators are seen today in more nuanced terms, rather than as monsters, the image that was prevalent in the immediate post-war period. The idea that ordinary individuals have chosen to carry out heinous crimes is a much more daunting reality for human beings to grapple with. The photograph and epigram remind the reader of this.

Beyond her familial connection to the Himmler dynasty, Katrin Himmler reveals little about her personal life and experiences. A headshot of her is on the inside cover page with a description on the opposite page that reads: “Katrin Himmler is the great-niece of Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, Gestapo and leading organizer of the Holocaust. She was born in 1967” (ibid. inside cover). Much more, of course, defines the identity of Katrin Himmler; wife, mother, physiotherapist, archival researcher and student of political science are just a few of her pursuits. Yet for this book she allows herself to be defined almost solely by her family name and relation to some of National Socialists’ most notorious male leaders.

Unlike the previous authors Sigfrid Gauch and Ruth Rehmman, Himmler writes about relatives she never met. Her narrative is constructed, not from personal interactions and memories as was the case with Gauch and Rehmman, but from interpreting and analysing archival records, family letters and documents, and photographs. However, she does not consider her quest to come to terms with a past she did not experience and

whose protagonists she never encountered to be anything remarkable: “For my generation that is nothing unusual. Many husbands, fathers and grandfathers never came back from the war” (ibid. 7). The tone of her book is laconic, focusing on the historical events that define her familial name, until near the end of her narrative, when she has established the historical accuracy of Ernst Himmler’s legacy to his descendants, when she adopts a more personal tone.

Although her name had connected her to the Himmler legacy since childhood, Katrin Himmler’s desire to account for the familial history took on a renewed resonance with her marriage to a Jewish Israeli living in Berlin. With the subsequent birth of their son – to whom Himmler dedicates the book – Himmler wanted her son to have a truthful record about the past and the Himmler side of his family: “I am still afraid of the moment when he will learn that one side of the family made every effort to wipe out the other. The only thing that makes it easier for me to contemplate is that it will be possible for me to answer his questions and give him clear information on the extent of the guilt and responsibility of my forebears” (ibid. 308). Bridging the connection between her own son and the legacy that he too will inherit helps her to reconcile herself to her family name: “When I was young I also wished I could get rid of my name... As a child I had often comforted myself with the thought of how lucky it was that my sister and I were girls – later we could marry, and get rid of the terrible name... At some point or other I came to accept my name. My son has been spared it” (ibid. 302). The daughter who carried her father’s familial name chose not pass it on to her own son, thereby allowing

him to be freed from its negative connotations, while having an account of the historical events as a result of his mother's research.

Despite the emphasis on the historical, Himmler's narrative is devoid of the anger and unresolved encounters with the paternal figure that characterize Rehmman's and Gauch's texts. Indeed, Himmler has the support of her father (Ernst Himmler's son), her immediate family members, her husband and her in-laws in researching and writing her text: "I have probably undertaken this search for the past under the most favourable conditions imaginable when, investigating the history of one's own family - namely with the agreement of my close relatives. No obstacles were put in my way, no one refused to talk to me, no documents were kept from me" (ibid. 306). Instead of unresolved anger, Himmler focuses on the angst of growing up and living with the family name of Himmler. It is the realisation that her family name differentiates her from her classmates while linking her to one of the most murderous acts of the twentieth century with which Himmler begins her text: "When I was fifteen, one of my classmates suddenly asked during a history lesson whether I was related to '*the* Himmler.' I managed to stammer a 'Yes.' There was a deathly hush in the classroom. Everyone was tense and on the alert. But the teacher lost her nerve and went on as if nothing had happened. She missed the opportunity of getting us to see what connection, if any, there still was between us, the new generation, and those 'old stories'" (ibid. 1). It was the old stories and familial myths of her grandfather being a reluctant Nazi and influenced by his elder brother that Himmler's archival research shattered.

Himmler's research forced her and her family members to confront a new sense of the past – one which acknowledges that her grandfather, the youngest of the three Himmler brothers was indeed an ardent supporter of National Socialism and complicit in crimes against humanity. As she relates: “At my very first perusal of the material I made the unsettling discovery that most of the stories I'd heard about him [Ernst Himmler] at home did not correspond to what was contained in the thin files. From very early on, it appeared, Ernst Himmler had been a convinced Nazi who, in return for a helping hand in his career from his brother Heinrich, the *Reichsführer* SS, carried out dubious tasks for him” (ibid. 2). Indeed, the information she uncovered was so dissimilar to the family narrative that developed after the Second World War that she is compelled to continue her research to construct a new and accurate family history. In her immediate family, the narrative had been constructed that Ernst Himmler, her grandfather, was the reluctant Nazi, lured if not pressured into joining the SS through the influence of his older brother Heinrich. In seeking to differentiate their branch of the family from Heinrich Himmler's, Ernst became the hapless foil to Heinrich's passionate embrace of National Socialism and genocidal policy. The archives, replete with documentary evidence, revealed a much different account.

The pivotal moment in Katrin Himmler's journey comes near the end of her archival research when she discovers an appraisal letter her grandfather wrote to his brother Heinrich in May 1944, which confirms his complicity in Nazi crimes. Katrin Himmler's grandfather knowingly provided a damaging assessment of a Major Schmidt – classified as a *Mischling* but protected by a high-ranking Nazi official – to enable his

brother Heinrich to remove Schmidt from office. Reading the letter, Katrin Himmler writes, “I still found Ernst Himmler’s language disturbing, what Victor Klemperer had called the *lingua tertii imperii*, the characteristic language of the Nazis that veiled some things and revealed others. My grandfather showed himself to be a master in its use to veil what he had to communicate to Heinrich” (ibid. 214). Ernst Himmler’s letter could have resulted in a death sentence for Schmidt, or at very least deportation to a concentration camp. Realizing that her grandfather had indeed been an ideological Nazi irrevocably changed Katrin Himmler’s world. “Neither my grandfather’s callous decision nor his language, steeped in Nazi ideology – even making allowances for the fact that it was an official letter – were those of some non-political hanger-on. He had made a decision determining a man’s fate that he did not have to make” (ibid. 215).

Himmler discovered that language, cultural and verbal forms of expressions can be a touchstone for coming to terms with the past. In recounting an episode during which her husband described a German man, based on his rigid and unyielding behavior, as a ‘bloody Nazi,’ Himmler seethes at what she perceives to be the misappropriation of vocabulary and historical context. Such events evidence the divide between Himmler and her husband in their individual sense of reconciling the past – a past that simultaneously links them together, yet drives them apart: “Under normal circumstances we felt we were comfortable in dealing with it. When conflict arose, we were suddenly reduced to being the offspring of oppressors and victims, a German and a Jew” (ibid. 304). For Katrin Himmler, reconciling with the past was an essential step in building a healthier future for her own family as well as establishing a historical truth about her familial past: “It was as

if I were making my way through a thick fog consisting of vague facts half understood, glossed over, reinterpreted and even falsified. This fog had its attractions; in the end it made everyone to a greater or lesser extent complicit in maintaining the family myths. Despite my determination to clear things up, I took a long time to free myself of those myths. When one is investigating the history of one's own family, it is difficult to overcome the blind spots caused by the closeness to one's subject" (ibid. 306). Yet this is exactly why the genre of *Väterliteratur* is so compelling for the reader and so necessary for the descendants of those complicit in the crimes of National Socialism.

## **Coming to Terms with the Past, Shaping the Future, and Living with the Present**

As a genre, *Väterliteratur* predates recent critical attention to the constructions of masculinities. The examination of gender issues since the 1970s was traditionally bound to Women's Studies (Kosta 227). Even in academia today, issues of gender, masculinity and sexuality are often still associated with this field. Indeed, the *Väterliteratur* genre, noted as a journey of self-discovery for the author or *Selbstfindungsbuch*, challenges scholars to encompass if not embrace fluid constructs of masculinities<sup>62</sup> into their own fields of discourse. Analyzing the three texts discussed in this chapter assists in decodifying the constructs of masculinities, while unveiling the crisis that arises when attempting to integrate opposing constructs of masculinities. While each shares a commonality of being a *Selbstfindungsbuch*, each is unique in how the author-protagonist attempts to reconcile a traditional construct of masculinity – of the father figure as protector, moral authority, and role model – with the opposing construct of perpetrator or complicit bystander with Nazism.

In the decades following the end of the Second World War, German men and women broke their silence about the actions, and inactions, of their paternal figures and the often complex relationship between masculinity and National Socialism. This continuing endeavor, of seeking to account for the past through life-writing activities, continued into the third generation descendants, the grandchildren of Nazi perpetrators.

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<sup>62</sup> I suggest “masculinities” and not the singular form since it is integral to recognize that there is not one monolithic model, behaviour, or construct of masculinity. The conceptualisation is fluid across cultures, time, and mutable within one's one lifetime.

For Katrin Himmler, living with the family name of one of the architects of the Final Solution impacted her daily life. She became the first member of her family to embark upon the journey to compare narratives of the familial past with historical record. In her analysis of the study of masculine identities in post-war Germany Barbara Kosta writes: “the project remains incomplete if the interplay of masculinity – that is gender as a significant marker of identity – and German history is not taken into account. This must happen without succumbing to the repetitions of the traditional paternal narrative” (ibid. 239). For Himmler, it was the mother-son relationship that compelled her to discover the truth about her family members’ activities in the National Socialist regime. Some members of this third generation have done what the second generation was unable to, and in doing so succeeded in ending the transmission of intergenerational trauma that can accompany not knowing the truth about the familial and historical past.

Through the *Väterliteratur* genre, these authors have given voice to shame while contributing to our understanding of new models of masculinity based upon fluid and indeed porous concepts, images and constructs reflective of a post-modern society (ibid. 227).<sup>63</sup> As the next chapter will demonstrate, this desire to account for, if not master the past, became transmedial in form as film embraced the subject matter. Incorporating these representations into the greater narrative of Holocaust and post-Holocaust history, literature, and gender studies is an important component for understanding contemporary expressions of masculinity.

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<sup>63</sup> Kosta says German men; however, we can now say definitively that it is both German men and women engaging in these books of self-discovery.

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**Chapter Four:  
Depictions of Germanophone and Jewish Masculinity in Germanophone Screen  
Culture: 1989-2005**

Today, films are the cultural calling cards of a people. We of all people, who have been so heavily discredited, should undertake the serious attempt to use film in order to show the world who we truly are.

Wolfgang Liebeneiner

When the American-produced television mini-series *Holocaust* (Titus, dir. Martin Chomsky, 1978) appeared on German and Austrian television in 1979, it coincided with the emergence of *Väterliteratur* and contributed to the awakening of a new public consciousness about the Holocaust. The sphere of visual media resources such as film and television productions proved to be a powerful force for change. By January 1979, *Westdeutscher Rundfunk* (WDR) had broadcast the series in the Federal Republic (FRG) to an audience of 20 million, roughly one-third of the West German population, and one-half of the adult population (Dreibach 76). Indeed, screen culture – just as it had in the immediate post-war period, as discussed in Chapter One – played a significant role in shaping and defining the meaning of the Holocaust for many in Germanophone Europe. Since the 1980s, integrating the Holocaust into the national consciousness and attempting to reconcile it with the behaviour of average Germans during National Socialism has arguably been at the forefront of West German, and later a unified German, self-identification. Film and television productions not only contributed to the shaping of Holocaust memory, but also to how Jewish and Germanophone masculinity was conceptualized for public consumption. In this chapter I explore how Jewish and

Germanophone men have been represented in pivotal Germanophone productions from 1989 – 2005, the cultural significance of these conceptualizations and how they have been shaped by memory cultures.

Underpinning the analysis of the films and television productions are questions that are at the core of understanding masculinity both during and after the Holocaust. These include questions such as: “What does it mean to be a man in the environment shaped by National Socialism?” “To what extent is one man responsible for another?,” and “How is the memory of one’s past actions accounted for, and depicted, in the present?” Depictions of masculinity and the relationships between fathers and sons, in particular, have been an important facet of Germanophone visual culture extending back to the era of Weimar cinema. As Thomas Elsaesser notes: “...what initiates the story and drives the narrative in German cinema has often to do with sibling rivalries, overpowering father figures, absent mothers, problematic ‘princesses’ or impossible object choices. Typical conflicts arise from struggles with established authority in which the place of the father and the place of the son are particularly heavily marked, but that of the woman (as a sexual being and object of desire) is far less clearly defined than in comparable Hollywood films” (Elsaesser 73). Indeed, Weimar cinema produced numerous films that depicted this masculine struggle, including *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, Decla-Bioscop AG, dir. Robert Wiene, 1920), *Nosferatu* (Prana-Film GmbH, dir. F.W. Murnau, 1922), *Metropolis* (Universum Film (UFA), dir. Fritz Lang, 1927), and *Die Büchse der Pandora* (*Pandora’s Box*, Nero-Film

AG, dir. Georg Pabst, 1929). Even the *Heimatfilm*, as we saw in Chapter One, placed a particular emphasis on the portrayal of masculinity.

The screen culture productions discussed in this chapter have developed out of the influences of Western modernity and the post-war milieu of the German-language regions of Western Europe. American cultural historian Maurice Berger, describing how cinematic and television portrayals of Jewish men are shaped by the dominant culture, comments on: “the tenuous status of Jewish masculinity itself, an identity shaped by the historical vicissitudes of fear, jealousy, assimilation, and antisemitism” (Berger 104). While Berger is commenting specifically on American media representations from the 1950s to the contemporary era, the point is applicable to understanding the construction of Jewish masculinities in the post-Holocaust era.

In choosing to focus on six pivotal German-European productions over the course of two chapters, I elucidate how contemporary filmmakers represent the complex and fluid manifestations of Germanophone and Jewish masculinity. While this chapter does not attempt to offer a comprehensive trajectory documenting the development and representation of the masculine in German cinema, a cinematic arc emerges that links each through the lens of memory studies and culture. Throughout the analysis I build on Marianne Hirsch’s concept of postmemory as a means to understand the portrayal of both the Holocaust and conceptualizations of masculinity. Describing the concept of postmemory, Hirsch states: “that the descendants of victim survivors as well as of perpetrators and of bystanders who witnessed massive traumatic events connect so deeply to the previous generation’s remembrances of the past that they identify that

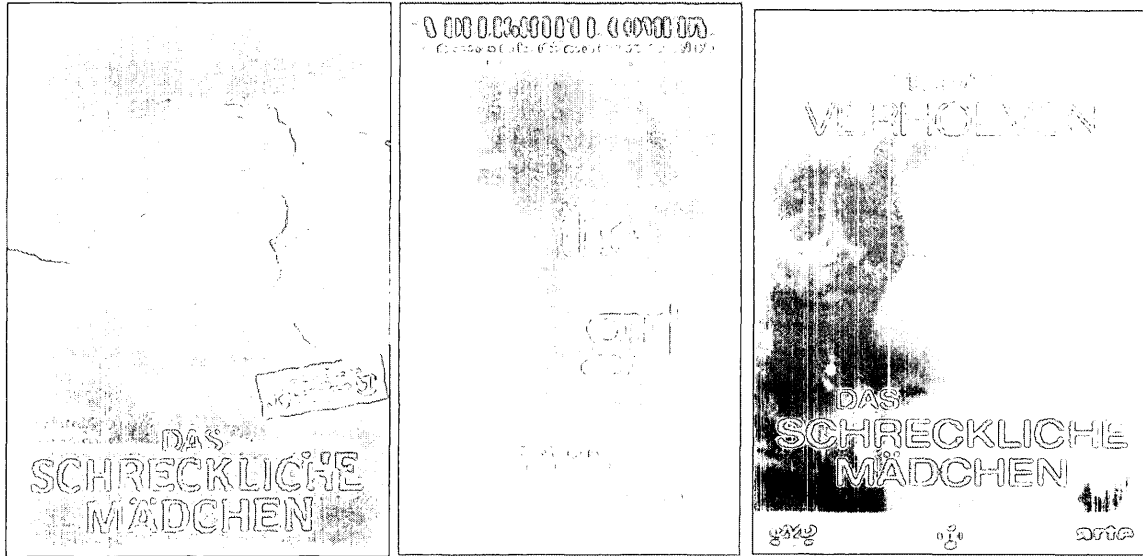
connection as a form of memory, and that, in certain extreme circumstances, memory can be transferred to those who were not actually there to live an event” (Hirsch 3). For Hirsch: “Postmemory characterizes the experience of those who grew up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can neither be understood nor recreated” (ibid. 22). Hirsch developed the concept in response to the memories and experiences of the children of Holocaust survivors but also believes that: “it may usefully describe other second-generation memories of cultural or collective traumatic events and experiences” (ibid. 22). I build on Hirsch’s theory, which she uses specifically with the descendants of Holocaust survivors, and apply it to the memory narratives of and about descendants of Nazi perpetrators.

The analysis begins with German director Michael Verhoeven’s seminal production *Das schreckliche Mädchen* (1989; *The Nasty Girl* 1990). Appearing in cinemas approximately a decade after the arrival of the first of the *Väterliteratur* texts, it represents an important breakthrough in cinematically grappling with the issues of retrieving buried memory, constructing new and historically accurate narratives about the National Socialist period, and reconciling with the past. Both highly controversial and influential, *Das schreckliche Mädchen* garnered nine film awards including the Silver Berlin Bear for Best Director at the 40th Berlin International Film Festival and the New York Film Critics Circle Award. Verhoeven’s postmodern film techniques subvert time and space while commenting on the societal roles of men and women, and the perceived decay of certain segments of German society.

The second production discussed is *Drei Tage im April* (*Three Days in April*), Oliver Storz's 1995 haunting depiction of a small Swabian town's encounter with the Holocaust. Storz draws on the genre of the German heritage film while also invoking the lenses of accountability, memory, denial, citizenship and gender. Produced for German television, it garnered several awards in 1995 including a Bavarian TV Award, a Telestar Germany Award, and the Prix Europa Special Award. Jewish men are alluded to, but they are never seen in this provocative account. Both films highlight the tension between historical accountability and denial, and demonstrate the familiar trope of "forgetting the past" that characterized the period before *Väterliteratur* and the television mini-series *Holocaust* pierced public consciousness.

Malte Ludin's 2005 documentary "*2 oder 3 Dinge, die ich von ihm weiß*" (*2 or 3 Things I Know About Him*) is the third film in the triad analysed in this chapter. This is a documentary about coming to terms with a father who was a Nazi ideologue and a perpetrator. Ludin explores the enduring impact of National Socialism on his immediate German and extended family and grapples with the private vs. public manifestations of accountability and memorialisation among the descendants of a high-ranking Nazi official executed in 1947 for war crimes. It may be seen as *Väterliteratur* expressed through a visual medium and as such functions to visualize the literary genre discussed in the previous chapter.

“Is Wiesenthal Your Model? – No, My *Oma* Is My Model”:  
*Das schreckliche Mädchen* (1989; *The Nasty Girl*, 1990)



Michael Verhoeven’s 1989 *Das schreckliche Mädchen* (*The Nasty Girl*, 1990) is loosely based on the real-life story of Anja Rosmus’s experience documenting the Nazi history of her town – Passau. Yet Verhoeven emphasizes the universal nature of the film’s subject as applicable to all of Germany. In the opening scene, viewers encounter three sequential images that situate the film within the context of the Second World War and the Holocaust as well as announce the film’s condemnatory tone. First, printed text on the screen displays the director’s personal message while a voice-over narrates: “I am not concerned with any particular German town, but rather with the truth about all German towns. My film is set in Bavaria because that is where I live” (*Es geht mir nicht um die Geschichte einer bestimmten Stadt in Deutschland, sondern es geht um die Wahrheit aller Städte in unserem Land. Mein Film spielt in Bayern, weil ich selbst hier lebe*) (DVD 00:21). Second, and to further augment the film’s connection to Germany

history, Verhoeven immediately follows this message with the emotional and nationalistic laden words of the first stanza from the German epic poem, the *Nibelungenlied*: “*Uns ist in alten mæren wonders vil geseit von helden lobebæren, von grôzer arebeit, von freuden, hôchgezîten, von weinen und von klagen, von küener recken strîten muget ir nu wunder hæren sagen* (We’re told in tales of old of many wondrous deeds, of celebrated heroes, of mighty toil, of joys, festivities, of weeping and wailing, of the combats of warriors bold. May you now hear these wonders told). Educated Germans would immediately recognize the words of the *Nibelungenlied* with its Germanic hero motifs and expect the protagonist to avenge a wrong of great magnitude, just as the Germanic heroine Kriemhild did, and indeed, Verhoeven is positioning his protagonist, Sonya Rosenberger, as the heroine who will, against seemingly insurmountable odds, avenge those who have been wronged.

The third image is that of a large-scale church with a workman furtively attempting to remove spray-painted graffiti from one of its sizable, white walls. The sprawling German text reads: “*Wo wart ihr zwischen 39-45? Wo seid ihr jetzt?*” (Where were you between 39-45? Where are you now?). Verhoeven’s triad of images is complete, solidifying the film’s placement in the National Socialist period while relaying that the film’s message is of historic proportion. In doing so, Verhoeven also connects German and Jewish histories with the *Nibelungen*, demonstrating the interconnectedness of the two histories.

In *Das schreckliche Mädchen*, the protagonist Rosenberger probes archival records and the oral testimony of living witnesses of the National Socialist era in

Germany to establish an accurate account of her town's past under the Nazi regime. Indeed, the original German-language publicity poster (beginning of section, upper left) includes a torn document as the background against which a female statue is prominently featured. The statue is one of the many cultural items that Rosenberger encounters on a trip to Paris and symbolizes her awakening knowledge of not only the cultural life that exists outside her village, but also a sense of responsibility for the past. The subscript "*Der neue Film vom Team der 'Weißen Rose'*" (the new film by the team of the 'White Rose') provides an additional hint at the film's subject matter. Verhoeven's 1982 film detailed the White Rose resistance movement led by a group of university students in Munich during 1942-1943. Eventually caught and executed, the members of the White Rose resistance movement defied Germany's National Socialist regime and agitated for change.

The 1990 English-language publicity poster for *Das schreckliche Mädchen* (beginning of section, centre), loses all such nuanced imagery. Instead, a sexualized portrait of the protagonist – with bare shoulders, red lips and tousled hair – proclaims the film as "a delightful comedy." Although the film was highly controversial in Germany, English-language audiences were reassured that the film was comedic in nature, while an endorsement from *Time International* printed at the top proclaimed that "it deserves to be the next international hit." Indeed, the poster is more in keeping with a romantic comedy or soft pornography.<sup>64</sup> With all traces of German and European historicity

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<sup>64</sup> This sexualized connotation is further reinforced by the colloquial use of the word "nasty" in English to refer to the sexual act.

removed from the English-language poster, and the sexualized portrait as the focal image, the result is a de-contextualization of the film.

The 2001 edition of the German-language DVD (beginning of section, upper right), in contrast, carefully returns the protagonist to the specificity of German history and the Holocaust. The inquisitive female protagonist, who has discovered the etched Hebrew lettering on a concrete slab, engages with the tactility of a lettering that she is unfamiliar with. This etched Hebrew lettering recalls the profundity of Jewish life in Germany that dates back to medieval times. Indeed, during that period the cities of Speyer, Worms and Mainz in what is today the Rhineland-Palatinate region were the centre of European Jewish life and the cradle of Ashkenazi Jewry. Collectively they were known as the 'ShUM' cities. The term ShUM derived from the first letters of their Hebrew names: Shin for Speyer, *Vav* for or Worms and *Mem* for Mainz. In addition, viewers are reminded that Verhoeven's film is not just about a past historical event, but also about the personal journey of one person uncovering the forgotten past of a town and its inhabitants.

Verhoeven sets his film in the years 1976-1984, when Dr. Karl Carstens was prominent in German politics. President of the Bundestag from 1976-1979 and President of the Federal Republic of Germany from 1979-1984, Carstens' legacy as a National Socialist party stalwart is never directly addressed in the film. While referenced periodically in the film either through the use of his photographic portrait or named as part of an event, Carstens is discussed only as the sponsor of a Europe-wide contest for school students on the topic, *Freiheit in Europa* (Freedom in Europe). In this way, he

becomes the iconic figure against which the character of Sonja Rosenberger is developed. Certainly when the film launched in Germany in 1989, viewers would easily have made the connection between Carstens and his lack of transparency about his past Nazi activities and Rosenberger, who will stop at nothing to get to the truth. Rather than making this a film about the accountability of individuals, however, Verhoeven addresses the issues of collective responsibility that is brought to the forefront by a determined individual.

This emphasis on collective responsibility and the role of the churches is evocative of Ruth Rehmman's depiction of patriarchal institutions in *The Man in the Pulpit* discussed in the previous chapter. It is notable that in each case the main protagonists are women and when examined through the lens of psychoanalysis they do not present an Oedipal conflict. Describing his theory of the Oedipal conflict, Freud explains: "...he regards his father as a disturbing rival and would like to get rid of him and take his place" (Freud 672). Women, on the other hand, can be agents of change and challenge the patriarchal power structures without assuming authority for themselves. When Verhoeven's protagonist, Sonja Rosenberger, sets out to write an essay detailing her town's role in the history of the Third Reich, she is consistently and repeatedly thwarted by the town's leaders, who represent the patriarchal power structures. The politicians, representative of the *Landesväter*, refuse Rosenberger access to the town's archives and actively discourage her from delving into the history of the town. The priests, the *Kirchenväter*, try to maintain a position of neutrality and suggest that the past should be left alone. The men, the *Familienväter*, in their roles as fathers and wage-

earners, steadfastly discourage any activities that may disrupt the tranquility of the town and the amiable version of history that has been passed down. Yet Rosenberger perseveres.

The film offers a scathing social commentary on the corruption of male-dominated German civil institutions, such as the mayoralty office, the archives management and even the Catholic Church. Verhoeven depicts the teachers in the school Rosenberger attends – who include Catholic nuns – providing the students of the top donors to the Church and school with the questions that will be asked on upcoming exams. Success, Verhoeven seems to be saying, is not dependent on one's own intelligence and ambition, but also the ability of one's family to contribute financially to the institutions of power. Except for the judicial system, which remains apart from criticism, Verhoeven depicts the civil and religious institutions as corrupt. By 1989, nearly forty-five years had passed since the collapse of the National Socialism, but Verhoeven accuses the institutions of not changing enough. To Verhoeven they are more interested in maintaining the patriarchal power structure than they are with issues of truth, justice and accountability. Only the judicial system – which consistently rules in Rosenberger's favour whenever she appeals to the court – is above reproach. Here Verhoeven unequivocally endorses the *Grundgesetz*, the fundamental set of laws that established the Federal Republic of Germany as a parliamentary democracy after the Second World War, provided the nation with stable jurisprudence and with the unification of Germany in 1990 became applicable to the entire country. To Verhoeven, the *Grundgesetz* is the one constant, untainted convention that is above the corruption of

the patriarchal institutions and the men who preside over them, and the hope for a reunified Germany.

The men in Rosenberger's family – her father, her uncle a parish priest, and her husband – show little interest in reconciling with the past. Kindly individuals, their primary concern is maintaining the peace. When Rosenberger's literary and career ambitions are cut short by her marriage after graduating high school, her father and husband approvingly declare: "She is concentrating on her duties as wife and mother!" (DVD 43:30). Yet Rosenberger chafes under the restrictions and obligations that married life bestows on her. When she decides to start university and resume writing, it is once again the patriarchal representatives who discourage her ambitions outside the domestic sphere. When university courses and research into her town's past history take time previously devoted to domestic responsibilities, Rosenberger's husband complains: "She said it was a matter of social commitment. But what is social commitment when your own husband has to put the kids to bed?" (DVD 1:09). Later, when most of the townspeople react negatively to Sonja Rosenberger's quest and accuse her of bringing shame to the community's image, Rosenberger's husband, Martin Wegmus, decides to return to his hometown of Munich. Verhoeven depicts the parting as a sad and melancholy occasion, rather than one of passion or even anger. Wegmus simply announces to Rosenberger: "I've made up my mind, I'm going back to Munich" (DVD 1:18). The men who are central in Rosenberger's life are thus depicted as preferring to maintain the status quo rather than have dissent or face the truth. They are neither strong nor powerful characters; they simply want to avoid unpleasantness.

If Verhoeven presents patriarchal institutions and their representatives as attempting to maintain power and the status quo, then it is the women closest to Rosenberger that come across as bearers of justice and fairness. When Rosenberger's father disagrees with her decision to sue the town for access to the archives, he is quickly admonished by her mother and quietly defers to her. The father may be the *Familienvater*, the breadwinner and head of the household in this patriarchal family structure, but it is Rosenberger's mother who holds the real power. A pattern that emerges throughout the film is not only the corruption permeating patriarchal institutions, but also how patriarchy maintains and controls gendered behaviour. Yet by invoking the German epic poem *Nibelungenleid* – with its narrative of the unlikely heroine Kriemhild who successfully avenges the murder of husband Siegfried the noble dragon slayer – in the opening of the film, Verhoeven reaches back to the High Middle Ages to remind viewers of the potential power of women to be agents of change.

In *Das schreckliche Mädchen* Verhoeven chooses to focus on women deemed less powerful – younger and older women – and the transference of power from one generation to the next. In Rosenberger's struggles to define her own role in a patriarchal system, her grandmother proves an unlikely role model. Dressed in traditional clothing and large, unfashionable glasses, Sonja Rosenerger's grandmother, it is revealed, had once defied the Nazis in their attempt to remove the crucifixes from the village school. Arrested for preventing the Nazi officials from taking down the crosses, the grandmother is eventually released from custody in order that she may care for her children. As Verhoeven illustrates, those who held power believed that these women could be

controlled, or at the very least coerced into maintaining the status quo. Yet, despite being on the margins of power, both grandmother and granddaughter are able to exert more power than the patriarchal powerbrokers believe possible. Thus, when Rosenberger is questioned about her persistence to discover the truth about the historical past of her village and confronted by a journalist with: “Is [Simon] Wiesenthal your role model?” an astonished Rosenberger replies: “No, my Oma is my role model!” (DVD 53:55). It is a bold confirmation that gender and trans-generational relationships are important factors for initiating change. Rosenberger’s dismissal of Wiesenthal as a possible role model for her actions positions Wiesenthal as a part of the establishment. Certainly, by 1989 he was an established figure in Austria and known internationally. That same year, as we saw in Chapter Two, the television movie *Murderers Among Us: The Simon Wiesenthal Story* (HBO, dir. Brian Gibson, 1989) helped solidify Wiesenthal’s status as a cultural icon known internationally. Still, Verhoeven’s presentation of Wiesenthal as a part of the male establishment is not unproblematic in eliding his Jewishness.

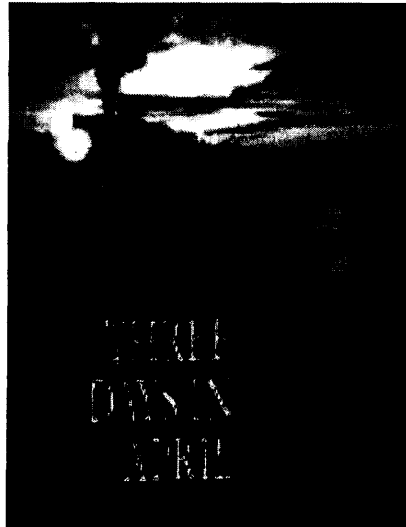
Despite Verhoeven’s adhering to a realistic depiction of the events that are the subject of his film, he also uses eclectically postmodern camera techniques and montage photography to great effect. One example occurs when an over-sized and portly statue of Lady Justice – looming as the backdrop to the judges in one of Rosenberger’s judicial trials to access the archive – suddenly awakens from a deep slumber (DVD 53:28). Straightening her posture upon awakening, she raises her weigh scales high when the verdict in Rosenberger’s favour is announced as if confirming Verhoeven’s fidelity to the *Grundgesetz*.

In the end, Rosenberger is successful in her attempt to access the archives and reveals the legend that had developed about her hometown Pfilzing was precisely that, a fabrication: “Pfilzing was a town like many others. People suddenly had work and they thought, ‘We’ve suffered unemployment and now we have jobs. We don’t care what happens to dissidents and Jews.’ Pfilzing wasn’t really a Nazi town, but a centre of resistance? I’m not so sure” (DVD 1:12). Rosenberger reveals the hidden Nazi affiliations of one of the town’s most respected citizens, Professor Juckenack, yet rejects the role of heroine thrust upon her by a town that has, as if overnight, changed their political and moral allegiances. Verhoeven finds it necessary that Rosenberger’s archival research be supported by the oral testimony of an elderly man imprisoned by the Nazis for being a Communist. In order to bring the truth to light and initiate change within a patriarchal power structure, the female protagonist needs the legitimacy provided by a male supporter, even if he continues to be marginalized by the townspeople for his Communist leanings.

To sum up, Verhoeven’s social commentary is a scathing rebuke on the patriarchal power structure and institutions of the era depicted in his film. *Das schreckliche Mädchen* is a cinematic representation of both the quest to account for the past by a generation born after the events of the Holocaust and Verhoeven’s own sense of frustration and disappointment that German masculinity had not undergone a more comprehensive change. One imagines Verhoeven calling for German men to adopt the noble characteristics alluded to in the *Nibelungenlied*, which opened his film – when celebrated heroes performed wondrous deeds yet experienced both joy and weeping.

Verhoeven seems to be telling viewers that in order to achieve this historically accurate narrative of past events, postmemory is necessary and must be recreated – even when those in positions of power would prefer it to remain buried and forgotten.

**“Choosing to Remember the Past”:  
*Drei Tage im April (Three Days in April, 1995)***



Restoring memory to the historical record is also the focus of Oliver Storz’s 1995 *Drei Tage im April (Three Days in April)*. Appearing five years after *Das schreckliche Mädchen*, this German television production was pivotal, just as the American television mini-series *Holocaust* had been, in bringing the subject of the Holocaust into German and Austrian homes. Notable for its portrayal of the *Unheimliche*, *Drei Tage im April* was invited by viewers into the familial domicile, *das Heim*, by means of the television medium. Unlike cinema screenings where viewers make the conscious decision to leave their homes to view a film in relatively large venues surrounding by strangers, television viewers engage with screen productions in the comfort and familiarity of their personal surroundings. Based on a real-life account of human skeletal remains being unearthed at a train station in a small Swabian-German town fifty years after the Second World War it delivered, like *Das schreckliche Mädchen*, the message of the collective responsibility of

the German nation. The origin and history of the uncovered remains is a mystery to all with the exception of an elderly woman, Anna, who, like the grandmother in *The Nasty Girl*, lived through the event and can act as a role-model for the next generations that did not. She alone remembers, and is willing to make public, the events leading up to the burial of several concentration camp inmates who died aboard three cattle cars diverted to the rural town in April 1945. As the story is recounted through flashback, Anna becomes the main protagonist in a film in which men are the decision-makers.

*Drei Tage im April* is haunting in its stark portrayal of life in Nazi Germany in the waning days of the war it is losing. Storz adheres to a style that Michael Rothberg calls traumatic realism: “traumatic realism develops out of and in response to the demand for documentation that an extreme historical event poses to those who would seek to understand it” (Rothberg 100). It is not a film about the Holocaust or even about Jews. Rather, the theme of the complicity of the average German in the Nazi war effort is the essence of this film. When the Ukrainian guards accompanying the cattle cars desert their posts, induced in part by the promise of bottles of cognac by a transient profiteer, the townspeople must decide how to act towards the human cargo that has been abandoned at their train station. The film ends with the male leaders of the town pushing the cattle car far enough to enable it to coast downhill to another village, away from the advancing Allied Forces. In this way, the film attempts to create a postmemory and integrate German behaviour during the period into contemporary public consciousness.

As seen in the publicity still, above left, the camp inmates are depicted as a mass of suffering and starving men, with one prostrate man presumably dead. Dressed in filthy

concentration camp uniforms, they are not individualized nor even identified as Jews. Rather they represent the un-named victims of National Socialism – in this case all male – whose fate is left to the German villagers.<sup>65</sup> Thus, Storz confronts the average German villagers, who are the subject of his film, with what Holocaust survivor and memoirist David Rousset called *l'univers concentrationnaire*, the concentrationary [camp] universe. The major signifiers of the concentration camp system exist within this frame: the inmate uniform, the emaciated bodies, and the cattle car that transported victims to the camps. The cover of the DVD, above right, however, only alludes to the cattle cars as if reminding viewers that this is a film about German complicity rather than the experience of those victimized by National Socialism.

It is not surprising that Jewish characters, men or women, do not feature prominently in the film. As Omer Bartov commented, “The public discourse on the Holocaust in post-war Germany has, until recently, been largely concentrated either on the social marginality of the perpetrators or on the anonymous forces that made it a reality. The Jewish victims have rarely been featured as anything more than the by-products of this process. So-called ‘ordinary’ Germans appear to have been untouched by or irrelevant to genocide, and arguments to the contrary have been seen and condemned as attempts to assign collective national guilt” (Bartov 794). *Drei Tage im April* shows how the villagers of one German town react to being confronted with the

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<sup>65</sup> The juxtaposition of this image, the mass of box-car prisoners with the solitary figure of blonde, German maiden is jarring, and even Christological. The image of the girl standing with a basket holding only two loaves of bread, -hardly enough to feed the starving prisoners - calls to mind the miracle of the loaves described in John 6: 1-15. The German girl may be interpreted as a figure who not only offers care and nourishment, but also redemption. In this case however, it is the redemption of the German nation that committed the crimes against humanity. The gender divide is enhanced since it is the female who attempts to atone for the actions of the men.

reality of a rail wagon of concentration camp prisoners arriving at the village's railway station. By extension, if one German town could have directly encountered concentration camp prisoners in such a visual manner, then many German villages could have known about the concentration camp system. Storz's film is a striking condemnation of the visceral response to conceal or hide the past, rather than confront and reconcile with it.

This public call to accountability also distinguishes *Drei Tage im April* from the direct familial concerns of *Väterliteratur*. It is a narrative of the complicity of hearth and home reminiscent of Karl Jaspers questioning the collective guilt of the German nation to be discussed in Chapter Four. The main perpetrators in this film are not dressed in *Wehrmacht* or *Schutzstaffel* uniforms; rather they are non-combatant members of German society – clergy, *Deutsche Reichsbahn* officials, group leaders of the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (BDM, League for German Girls) and the town's shopkeepers – and they dress accordingly.

Storz's nuanced portrayal of the Schwabian village illustrates for the viewer a gendered understanding of the events surrounding the dilemma presented by the three cattle cars. The female protagonists exist in patriarchal society yet are able to access power and effect change. Storz demonstrates this negotiation of power and action through his protagonist Anna, a girl of similar age to Verhoeven's protagonist. For Anna, *Führerin* of the local *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (BDM), the desolate wails of the starving inmates aboard the cattle cars are the experience that shakes her formerly resolute belief in National Socialism. Eventually she decides to deliver bread and milk to the starving inmates, aided by the Polish farm-girl assigned to her family. In shifting from a role that

supports the patriarchal system to one that questions and eventually acts in opposition to it, Anna seizes the opportunity to demonstrate power through her humanitarianism. Similarly, help is rendered from a second female protagonist, an entertainer discharged from entertaining *Wehrmacht* troops known simply as Irene. With the promise of bottles of cognac, she persuades the guards who have accompanied the cattle cars to desert their post.

It would be facile to assume that Storz completely exonerates or even sympathizes with the female protagonists in his film. Just as in *Das schreckliche Mädchen*, they pose no Oedipal threat, but here they are positioned as being as responsible for the final outcome as the townsmen. His thematic message is apparent: responses to the crisis were indeed gendered, and the women of the *Reich*'s homefront enabled German men to carry out their actions. As Claudia Koonz writes, "Nazi wives did not offer a beacon of strength for a moral cause, but rather created a buffer zone from their husbands' job" (Koonz 420). Indeed, the arrival of the cattle-cars at the town's train station evidences more than the destructive force of the concentration camps and the Nazi ideology to annihilate Europe's Jews. A microcosm of the lives of average Germans during the Second World War unfolds. Koonz describes how German women dealt with their husbands' involvement in National Socialism: "While Nazi men expanded their German territorial *Lebensraum* and made the nation *judenrein* (literally "purified of Jews"), women chose between ignoring or recognizing their husbands' work. Meanwhile ordinary women decided whether to look away or offer an act of kindness when they knew a friend or neighbour was in danger" (ibid. 418-419). The

female protagonists in *Drei Tage im April* are faced with such decisions and demonstrate the extent to which women on the home-front contributed to the National Socialist cause even if they were not in traditional positions of power or authority.

In the end, it is the men of the village who act to physically move the train along the tracks so that it will end up in another village, thereby becoming someone else's problem. This is, after all, a patriarchal society with separate spheres of influence for men and women. The townsmen demonstrate the power of the patriarchal Nazi society and believe that moving the cattle cars, and maintaining a code of silence about the events, will absolve the village and its citizens of responsibility. Until the buried corpses are unearthed, the event and actions of the townspeople are not integrated into their collective consciousness of remembering the events of the Second World War. It takes the discovery of the bodies to demonstrate that accountability and moral responsibility remain, like crimes against humanity, unaffected by the passage of time or a statute of limitations.

*Drei Tage im April* appeared on German television just as the exhibit *Wehrmachtsausstellung* (War Crimes of the Wehrmacht) toured German cities from 1995-1999, shattering the long-held belief in the virtuous and clean behaviour of the Wehrmacht. The narrative perpetuated after the end of the Second World War stated that the crimes against humanity were solely the responsibility of the *Schutzstaffel*, the SS. The film, *Drei Tage im April* was an important vehicle for opening up the discourse about the extent of knowledge that average Germans had about the crimes of the National Socialist regime. In addition, it contributed to an understanding that knowledge

about the concentration camps, and the treatment of prisoners, was indeed within the realm of the average German citizen – whether they were a party stalwart or a villager.

**“A Typical German Story” – Malte Ludin: *2 oder 3 Dinge, die ich von ihm weiß* (2 or 3 Things I Know About Him, 2005)**



In his 85-minute documentary *2 oder 3 Dinge, die ich von ihm weiß*, Malte Ludin embarks on a personal quest to establish a valid and historically accurate memory of his father’s Nazi past. It offers viewers a cinematic portrayal of *Väterliteratur* and provides revealing glimpses into the private and public representations of his father, Hanns Ludin – the last Nazi ambassador to Slovakia. Hanns Ludin was arrested after the war and tried in Pressburg (Bratislava) for crimes against humanity. He was sentenced to death and hanged in 1947. The image and memory that developed around the family patriarch is not one that is grounded in historical accuracy, and Ludin’s depiction is often at odds with the recollections and opinions of at least two of his elder siblings. Ellen, the middle of the three surviving Ludin daughters, describes her association with her father: “I can’t

say he wasn't a criminal, but for me he definitely wasn't. My conviction is that I'm not the child of a perpetrator" (DVD 105:43). Barbel, the eldest daughter expresses a similar sentiment, declaring: "I see myself as a victim of that terrible time...I do think he was better than I am, and maybe even better than you [Malte Ludin]" (DVD 106:42). Even Andrea, the youngest of the sisters, adheres to a sanitized version of their father's actions, commenting: "Mother told me when I was small...She told me that he fell in battle. He would have preferred that" (DVD 3:00). Ludin's documentary is an important contribution in opening up the discourse about reconciling familial accounts of behaviour with historical records and archives, and the trans-generational effects of trauma, memory and the Holocaust on descendants of Nazi perpetrators. It also provides an important alternate perspective to Harald Welzer, who commenting on his own research noted: "It documents a clear tendency on the part of grandchildren to rewrite their grandparents' histories into tales of anti-Nazi heroism and resistance" (Welzer 2). Through the emotionally laden family interviews, the gendered dynamics of sibling relationships and the impact of trans-generational relationships are revealed.

The title and cover photo for his documentary are also indicative of the nature of the quest Ludin embarked on. The colour photograph immediately strikes one as that of a perpetrator. Commenting specifically on the role of photographs in the process of descendants remembering the actions of their forbearers, Hirsch posits: "Photographs in their enduring 'umbilical' connection to life are precisely the medium connecting first- and second- generation remembrance, memory and postmemory. They are the leftovers, the fragmentary sources and building blocks, shot through with holes, of the work of

postmemory. They affirm the past's existence and, in their flat two-dimensionality, they signal its unbridgeable past" (Hirsch 50).<sup>66</sup> The photographer in this case was likely a National Socialist colleague or sympathetic family member. In commenting on the significance of the Nazi gaze, Hirsch notes: "the identity of the photographer – perpetrator, victim, bystander, or liberator – is indeed a determining element in the [a] photograph's production, and that, as a result, it engenders distinctive ways of seeing, and indeed, a distinctive textuality" (ibid. 133). The viewer thus encounters Ludin Sr. as he appeared to his colleagues at an outdoor party rally. Swastika banners are visible in the background, and a close-up photograph reveals a smirking Ludin, in his brown-shirt uniform, who appears both comfortable and proud of his involvement with the rally. The portrait is inset inside a fragmented cut-out of what appears to be a roughly shaped map of Western Slovakia, providing a hint at where Malte Ludin's journey will take him. Above the photograph is the caption "*Die Gegenwart der Vergangenheit in einer deutschen Familie*" (the presence of the past in a German family), revealing that the documentary will be one of accounting for, and living with the past, in which a paternal figure was closely connected to National Socialism.

Throughout, Ludin constructs an image of himself as a modern, independent man, who, raised without a father, is capable of critically addressing the issues of the past and creating masculinity on his own terms, in direct opposition to his father. "For a long time I put off confronting my father's past," narrates Ludin. "I contented myself

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<sup>66</sup> Here Hirsch is clearly referencing Henri Raczymow's 1994 article "Memory Shot Through With Holes". Commenting upon his own sense of cultural loss and disenfranchisement that resulted from the Holocaust, Raczymow described as a memory, or even an imagination that was "shot through with holes".

with heresy. There was little in that, but in post-war Germany it tended to be approving” (DVD 28:33). Using radio recordings of his father’s speeches from the *Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv*, family photographs and letters, interviews with Jews deported from Slovakia or who went into hiding, with Slovak historians as well as with his own family members, Ludin is able to recreate a complex image of his father in a variety of spheres. The fragments come together, much like the pixels in digital photography, to create an image that is limited in its representation and can represent so much since the protagonist is not alive to speak for himself. Ludin admits waiting until the death of his mother before embarking on this journey to reconcile with his familial past history. It was not possible for him to make this film while she was still alive as the possibility of hurting his sole parental figure was too much a responsibility for Ludin to manage. In the absence of a paternal figure, it is Ludin’s mother who became the sole authoritative familial voice and presence.

Another woman, equally significant in his life, was also responsible for the film getting made. The impetus for Ludin’s journey to attempt to come to terms with the past is his Czech-born wife, Iva Svarcova. Ludin states: “Her view of Nazi history was that of the victims” (DVD 29:31), a concept that appears to have been strikingly bold and unfamiliar to Ludin. Svarcova pressed Ludin for answers about his family’s involvement in the National Socialist past. In post-war Germany, where history and national myths could and at times were interpreted to designate the German population as the first victims of Hitler and National Socialism, the realization of the true victims of National Socialism reveals itself as an epiphany to Malte Ludin. His marriage to a Czech national

– whose ethnicity was not included in the *Volksgemeinschaft* crafted by National Socialism – propels Ludin to account for his father’s past. Although Ludin admits that he hoped to find something in the archives that would exonerate if not redeem his father, he fails in this aspect.

In a film that emphasizes gendered and trans-generational relationships, the father-son dynamic holds a particularly important place. Born in Bratislava, Slovakia in 1942, Malte Ludin was not yet five when his father was executed for war crimes. Ludin admits to having almost no memory of his father. Describing the evolution of his perception of his father, he claims, “As a young boy my father seemed like a hero, a martyr. Then in the 60s he was just another Nazi for me, like the other Germans who belonged to the German past” (DVD 28:49). The absence of memories or other tangible connections to this father makes it difficult for Ludin to be able to engage in any personal discourse about his father. He is, however, able to engage and at times provoke his sisters: Barbel born in 1935 in Stuttgart, Ellen born in 1937 in Stuttgart, and Andrea born in 1943 in Pressburg – which he successfully does throughout the documentary.

The bones of the siblings’ contention come from photographs locked away in the “*Kummerkiste*” (trunk of sorrows), which reveal a man revelling in the pageantry and ceremony of SA rallies, a man proud to be chauffeured to events, and a confident soldier in a SA uniform, who is pleased to be photographed with Hitler, Himmler and other party functionaries. The familial name for the trunk is symbolic since the word *Kummer* refers not only to sorrow but carries with it an intensity of feeling indicating distress, heartache and grief. In letters written to his wife, we encounter further evidence of Hanns

Ludin's unequivocal support for National Socialism and Hitler. His letters reveal a man impressed by the fundamental elements of National Socialism: the masculine ideal of the SA troops, the dynamic personality of Adolf Hitler, and the pure Germanic culture and values with which Hitler wants to refashion Germany.

In a 1933 sound recording of Hanns Ludin addressing SA troops that Malte Ludin discovered among his deceased mother's possessions, the elder Ludin enunciates the characteristics associated with the masculinity nurtured within the SA. In the recorded speech Hanns Ludin declares: "Obedience, loyalty and willingness to sacrifice for the *Sturmabteilung* group Southwest should now and henceforth have only one great goal before its eyes: the liberation of the German nation. In the hard work of ourselves, in the constant struggle against everything non-German, this goal must be achieved. Let our honour be to serve this goal. When German farmers, workers and soldiers stand as one man in the fight, then no power on earth can render our slavery eternal. To move forward on this path is the greatest joy of my life" (DVD 13:38). As an ideological Nazi, Ludin Sr. is also representative of the form of militarized masculinity that is empowered to protect hearth and *Heimat* at all costs. In another sound recording of a speech to SA members, Ludin Sr. says: "It is of no consequence who one day falls as the culmination of our struggle. What is crucial is that we live bravely." For Ludin Sr. then, the struggle against all things 'non-German' would come to define his behavior and decision-making throughout the National Socialist period.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Hanns Ludin does not however appear to exhibit the vulgarity, or brutality Claudia Koonz describes as characteristic of the Stormtroopers. In the SA *versus* SS paradigm Koonz posits, Ludin appears to be much closer to that of the SS. He values a more restrained, manly ideal and places more emphasis on planning,

Naming the film *2 oder 3 Dinge, die ich von ihm weiß* (2 or 3 Things I Know About Him) imparts an impression in the German original that Malte Ludin learnt these things directly from his father.<sup>68</sup> The use of the dative preposition “*von*” implies that his father shared his past with his son rather than being information that was acquired about his father, as in the English translation. In the original German title one senses that the temporal framework of past and present overlaps for Malte Ludin and that it is through archival material such as letters, photographs and documents that he feels his father imparting, if not speaking directly, to him. This sense of an overlapping of past and present, of living daily with a sense of a vicarious past that one was not part of yet inherited, is much more in evidence in the original German title.

Throughout the course of the documentary, Ludin constructs an image of his father that commences with his early embrace of the ideological writings of Adolf Hitler during his enlistment in the *Reichswehr*. Drawn to Hitler’s pursuit of purging ‘un-German’ influences from the country, an image emerges of a man who fears modernity and the changing gender and societal norms that accompany it. Ludin’s party membership card, acquired in 1930, was in direct violation of his responsibilities as a *Reichswehr* soldier, and he was subsequently tried for treason. After his conviction at a trial at which Hitler appeared as a witness on his behalf, Ludin spent a year in a German

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intellectual preparation and networking. Perhaps it was his experience as a career soldier in the *Reichswehr* that instilled this sense of discipline in him. The SA however provided Ludin with the male camaraderie that he longed for, even if he did not conform to the characteristics Koonz ascribed to them. Ludin’s demeanor and apparent closeness to exhibiting the characteristics of the SS, no doubt contributed to his rise to the rank of Ambassador after the Röhm Purge’ in 1934.

<sup>68</sup> Ludin’s choice of a title for his documentary is reminiscent of Jean-Luc Godard’s 1967 documentary ‘2 or 3 Things I Know About Her.’ One wonders if Godard’s dramatization of the emotionless lives of his Parisian characters in the 1960s served as an inspiration for Ludin.

prison. National Socialism was both an ideological and pragmatic home for Ludin Sr. He admired and embraced the militarized male and camaraderie of the SA perhaps as much as the new version of Germany Hitler pursued. It is indicative of the cultural milieu of the German *Männerbund* which pre-dates National Socialism. Here male friendship was invested with nationalist virtues, as it was associated with communal sense, charismatic leadership, militarism, and self-sacrifice (Oosterhuis 243).

Yet despite the archival evidence Ludin incorporates, clearly positioning his father as a Nazi ideologue, he initially expresses the hope that his father joined the *Sturmabteilung* (SA) to “escape the army of the jobless” (DVD 15:05). An almost childlike hope is evident in the early narrations; Malte Ludin clearly wanted to admire and respect his father, but: “I never knew my father. As a child, I didn’t even know what that is, a father” (DVD 04:55). This stark admission authorizes Ludin as an impartial observer, a neutral party who can get to the truth of his father’s National Socialist past. He establishes himself as someone without an emotional attachment to the main protagonist, and as someone who does not even know what the role of father entailed in a familial setting. Ludin believes his neutrality provides him with the credibility to present a constructed but honest portrayal of his father, something his older siblings cannot claim. Yet it also reveals that Ludin’s own construction of masculinity has developed in opposition to a long-dead father figure. His sense of being an independent man, free from the shortcomings of his father, is reinforced by the postmemory from the *Kummerkiste*. The archival documents provide the evidence that Hanns Ludin exists, much like a spectre, and inhabits only the memories of his elder siblings.

Pivotal to the documentary is a visit Malte Ludin makes to his early childhood home, from birth to two years of age, in Pressburg (today Bratislava), where his father was the German Ambassador to the clerical-Fascist satellite state of Slovakia. Born in what archival documents show to have been an Aryanized villa, he juxtaposes opposing memories of experiences there for the viewer. His elder sisters remember the villa as a place of tremendous happiness, of servant girls in traditional Slovakian costume, of sitting in a chauffeur-driven car, and of a petit-salon where their mother entertained. This memory of an idealized childhood contrasts with the one presented in an interview with Dr. Juraj Stern, a surviving son of the original owner. Stern describes his childhood after his familial home, which became the Ludin residence, was Aryanized, his parents' assets seized and the family forced to go into hiding in eastern Slovakia. Sheltered by a farmer, Stern survived by hiding in a feeding trough for barn animals and emerged at liberation with a serious speech impediment. Presenting this contrast in remembered experiences of childhood during National Socialism reminds the viewer that Malte Ludin has accepted his familial past in a very different manner than his three siblings have.

Malte Ludin also includes in his documentary excerpts from an uncredited 1978 video-recorded interview with his mother Erla Ludin, (née von Jordan). The interview was conducted in the Ludin family home, presumably by a television moderator. In one poignant excerpt, Erla Ludin painstakingly recounts an episode that took place sometime in 1942. The wife of the Swiss ambassador in Pressburg had boldly told her that she had taken in a Jewish child to save her from being deported to Auschwitz. Erla Ludin narrates:

And I asked [her] what is Auschwitz and she said 'You know perfectly well' but I had no idea. She said 'You are just pretending' and I said 'No, please tell me what it is'. Then she said 'It's the place where the Jews are gassed' and I didn't really understand what she meant by gassed but then she said killed. And I said defiantly 'We should have locked them all up, those who live abroad damage us so badly with their propaganda.' Then I went home and there was a man from Berlin sitting with my husband...I indignantly told them what I had heard. It is really very stupid that I have no idea who he was, someone with a function in Berlin. He said "Auschwitz is a munitions factory, the Jews work there.' My husband and I believed him, that was that (DVD 47:12).

Erla Ludin's oral narration is slow and deliberate, as if she is weighing the impact and potential meaning of each word. In addition, her body language – drooping shoulders with her head looking down – is closed and submissive. Rarely does she make face or eye contact with the male interviewer. Instead, she looks downwards, as if focusing on a minute object on the floor, while at other times her eyes closed. A sense of shame radiates from Erla Ludin, leaving viewers wondering if she even believes her own words. Still, Ludin cannot engage with any criticism about his mother.

Such excerpts are important as they demonstrate how Malte Ludin develops the construct of masculinity with which he depicts his father. Hanns Ludin is presented as a father-figure and high ranking Nazi official, who either chooses not to acknowledge the National Socialist "Final Solution" or knows about it and chooses to keep it from his wife. If Erla Ludin's oral history account is to be believed, then she was the loyal and dutiful wife to a patriarchal figure who kept his work life separate from his private life. However, if her narrative is less than truthful, then an image emerges in which Malte Ludin's ambassadorial father and his mother as a surrogate father figure who raised him as a single parent knew about the crimes of National Socialism. Malte Ludin cannot imagine a scenario where his mother and father shared secrets and a commitment to

National Socialist ideology. The emotional bond that exists between Malte Ludin and his mother's memory does not permit him to indulge in posing this question.<sup>69</sup> Ludin has no memories of his father, and emotional distance allows him to probe his father's National Socialist past. However, memories of Erla Ludin are emotionally laden and just as his sisters' emotional connection to their father does not permit them to critically examine their father's past, so too is it impossible for Malte Ludin to look at his mother with anything other than fidelity and love.

Ludin's narrative asserts both the passivity of Erla Ludin in accepting superficial explanations as well as the gendered roles within the bourgeois family structure. While Hanns Ludin was the family provider and decision maker, Erla clearly accepted her role as supportive wife. In another excerpt from a video-recorded interview Erla Ludin in 1978, she voices her opinion about the relevance of men and women. "I never liked the *Kaffeeklatsch* or little visits with ladies only. I always felt men have to be there too, or it is uninteresting. Though I never had much to offer, it was more interesting with men. I thought that then, and I still feel that way today" (DVD 10:12). This self-deprecating opinion from a woman who received a classical German education and taught rhythmic gymnastics before her marriage is in keeping with the role some German women played during the National Socialist era. As Claudia Koonz argues: "While Nazi men preached race hate and virulent nationalism, women's participation in the movement created an ersatz gloss of idealism" (Koonz 5). The recording is troubling for Malte Ludin as it

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<sup>69</sup> One notices here a sort of gender crossing occurring given that the Ludin sisters cannot see their father as a flawed individual and Nazi perpetrator even when faced with archival evidence just as Malte Ludin cannot entertain the notion that his mother was also flawed and perhaps knew much more about the crimes of National Socialism and her husband than she let on as evidenced by the video-recorded television interview.

confirms the perpetrator image of his father. It remains a documentary about the relationships between a son and the father he never knew, the relationship between a son and his mother who represents a type of surrogate father, and the hierarchal relationship between elder sister and younger brother.

As is often seen in *Väterliteratur* texts, familial myths and historical fact often collide. Eldest sister Barbel's loyalty to her father and the memories of her privileged childhood in the Aryanized Pressburg villa the family inhabited vacillate between pathetic and apologetic. From Hirsch's theory of postmemory one can recognize in Barbel the desire to be the one person who can provide an accurate and truthful depiction of Hanns Ludin as a man and as a father. As the eldest surviving child, she is the one sibling with memories of him as a father, and so sees herself as the guardian of his memory. In the exchange with her younger brother that introduces the film, Barbel insists, "It is my right to see my father the way I want to see him. Not the way I want to see him, the way I do see him. It is my right and you cannot take that away from me. You have your own view and I am sorry" (DVD 00:11). Invoking an image of a noble man and a loving father, Barbel refuses to admit that he was indeed a war criminal. When confronted with deportation orders bearing her father's signature and historical documents noting the liquidation of Slovakian Jews, she continues to defend Hanns Ludin, claiming he was a soldier who carried out his orders from Berlin and never knew what fate that awaited the Jews whose deportation orders he signed. Barbel is convinced that the stories she heard from her mother as well as her own childhood memories are the authoritative source of information, above any other sources.

Not only is the ability to internally split her identifications with “the noble father” and the National Socialist perpetrator whom she represses a common characteristic of adult children of Nazi perpetrators, but in doing so Barbel performs the role of dutiful daughter. She reinforces the traditional family dynamic where the patriarchal figure is the head of the household and it is her duty to remain loyal to him and to act as the guardian to and of his memory. Explaining why she agreed to be interviewed for the documentary, Barbel offers: “Because I am so unshakeable in my certainty, which the others aren’t. I’m the only one who can do something for Erla, for our father, and for our deceased brother and sister” (DVD 120:50). Perhaps it is this repression and subsequent desire on behalf of the post-Holocaust generation, represented by Barbel, to see only what one wants to see that makes this the ‘typical German story’ for Malte Ludin.

Although her supposition may seem implausible to the contemporary viewer, especially since her comments were in 2004 in an interview for Ludin’s documentary, applying Marianne Hirsch’s work with postmemory elucidates the sentiment of Barbel Ludin. Although Hirsch’s work focuses on the descendants of Holocaust survivors and their commitment to protecting the memories of a Holocaust survivor relative – usually a parent – it is clear that Barbel’s identification as the child of a victim places her in a parallel situation. As misguided as her fidelity is to protecting the memory of her war-criminal father through the continuation of a myth about his supposed victimhood, Barbel uses her birth order placement as eldest surviving offspring to assume the mantle of guardian of her father’s memory. Describing this phenomenon among descendants of Holocaust survivors, Hirsch cogently argues: “At stake is precisely the ‘guardianship’ of

a traumatic personal and generational past with which some of us have a “living connection,” and that past’s passing into history or myth. At stake is not only a personal/familial/generational sense of ownership and protectiveness, but an evolving ethical and theoretical discussion about the workings of trauma, memory, and intergenerational acts of transfer. It is a discussion increasingly taking place in similar terms, regarding other massive historical catastrophes” (Hirsch 2). Barbel’s misguided identification as the child of a victim of the National Socialist regime propels her to be the guardian of his memory, the sole authoritative voice by virtue of being the eldest and the one with memories of him as a father. To memorialize him as a noble man and as a victim who had no idea of the fate of the transports to Auschwitz-Birkenau is to strip away the layers that composed his militarized masculinity. The sympathetic version of Hanns Ludin expounded by Barbel that envisions him as a victim is immediately at odds with the construct of masculinity both embraced and performed by her father. It is a contradiction that causes the two siblings to argue over the actions of their father, pitting Malte Ludin’s archival evidence against the emotion and childhood memories of his sister.

Having internally split the conflicting representations of her father, Barbel re-enacts a family dynamic from childhood in an attempt to assume the sole authoritative voice over their father’s memory, revealing the complex dynamics of the father-son, father-daughter, and brother-sister relationships. In an emotionally charged scene near the end of film, Barbel questions Malte Ludin’s motives for making the documentary. Faced with a barrage of factual information about the extent of their father’s direct

involvement and knowledge of the Holocaust, Barbel retreats from the discussion, calling her younger brother in the diminutive form ‘Maltechen,’ denoting his status as her little brother. Going further, she accuses him of attempting to be an “avenger for the oppressed” (DVD 100:14). The use of the infantilizing language, which includes not only the term Maltechen but also the visual image of an avenging hero reminiscent of childhood comic books and stories, is juxtaposed with the present-day appearance and age of the sister and brother. At the time of filming, Malte Ludin who was born in 1942 was 62 years old with grey hair, and Barbel Ludin who was born in 1935 was 69 years old, and although elegantly dressed, her face evidenced her age. In refusing to accept the historical evidence her brother presents her with, Barbel instead retreats to the dynamics of childhood, purposely infantilizing her brother as a means of asserting her position as elder sister, and guardian of their father’s memory.

The use of emasculating language and imagery is noteworthy since it illustrates the emotional involvement that Barbel, and her two surviving sisters, have in the memory of their father. Barbel does have some recollections of her father, but as Marianne Hirsch writes in describing her theoretical construct: “Postmemory’s connection to the past is thus actually mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation... It is to be shaped, however indirectly, by traumatic fragments of events that still defy narrative reconstruction and exceed comprehension” (ibid. 5). Reconciling the image of her father with that of Nazi war criminal is not possible for Barbel. However, the infantilizing language and imagery is

ineffective in its goal of placating and silencing Malte Ludin, who remains undeterred in his quest to depict the historical truth about his father's life and actions.

Malte Ludin presents the third generation – the children of his siblings – as being able to reconcile history and archival records with erroneous familial accounts and master the past with a lucidity that evades their parents. As descendants, they are further removed temporally from the events of National Socialism, are not conflicted by competing images of a paternal figure/ war criminal, and display the self-confidence of knowing that they are not responsible for the crimes of their grandfather. When faced with the certificate documenting the awarding of the 'Blood Order of the NSDAP' (*Blutorden*) to their grandfather, presumably for his serving time in prison for Nazi activities before 1933, they are able to perceive the extent of their grandfather's commitment to National Socialism. Not unlike Katrin Himmler in her memoir *The Himmler Brothers*, the Ludin grandchildren accept the historically documented past account as one which they must integrate into their own identity.

One of the goals of accounting for the past for Malte Ludin is to be able to answer the questions "Who was my father and what was the extent of his involvement in National Socialist crimes?" and "Who I am, as the son of a Nazi perpetrator?" In piecing together these fragments, Ludin is able to create a broader image of his father that is closer to reality than the very compartmentalized memories his elder sister uses to remember their father. Just as constructs of masculinity are fluid, Ludin confirms his independence and his own contemporary concept of masculinity, unaffiliated with fascism or neo-fascism. Although his father's past remains a part of his identity, Malte

Ludin has liberated himself from it and the postmemory he develops is grounded in historical accuracy.

In the next chapter I examine three contemporary screen culture productions that depict the intersection of Germanophone and Jewish masculinity, and one film that elucidates the lingering allure of Fascist masculinity to a segment of the German gay community. These contemporary films not only demonstrate the evolving portrayal of Germanophone and Jewish men in screen culture, but also how a construct of masculinity – Fascist masculinity that is presumed to be marginalized – finds representation in aspects of contemporary society.

## Chapter Five:

### Depictions of Germanophone and Jewish Masculinity in Contemporary Germanophone Screen Culture: 2005-2011

The cultural construction of Jewish masculinity must be understood as part of a partial gender system, embedded within the larger cultures but uniquely differentiated from it.  
Riv-Ellen Prell

Presenting a cinematic arc of Germanophone film that depicts the fluid yet culturally specific nature of masculinity requires selecting films that distinguish themselves both artistically and thematically. In this chapter I focus on contemporary films by directors marginal to German national culture that depict divergent styles of Holocaust themed narratives, constructions of masculinity and provide social commentary on contemporary issues. These films provide an overview of the issues surrounding contemporary representations of the Holocaust and masculinity in screen culture. When all six films are considered together (that is, the ones in the previous chapter and the ones in this one), this arc illustrates the movement from productions based on realism – and by extension era-specific concepts of masculinity – to more recent attempts to place the Holocaust in a context of normalization that allows for divergent representations of the subject.

The first film to be discussed in this chapter is Rosa von Praunheim's provocative and controversial 2005 documentary *Männer, Helden, schwule Nazis (Men, Heroes, and Gay Nazis)*. By examining the intersection of sexuality, masculinity and nationalism, Latvian-born Berliner von Praunheim, whose early work is widely regarded as being the

impetus for the gay liberation movement in 1970s and 1980s Germany, focuses on the attraction and presence of the German neo-Nazi movement in segments of the German gay community. Probing the complexities of contemporary gay identities in a unified German nation, von Praunheim adeptly distinguishes between fetishist attractions to Nazi imagery and those who ascribe to the values and ideals of neo-Nazism. Although homosexuality and neo-Fascism may seem to be diametrically opposed to one another, showing that they are not makes this one of von Praunheim's most important documentaries. It reveals not only the active participation in the neo-Nazi movement by gay men – a community long considered liberal – but also the ideological attraction. In separating the fetishist attraction to the accoutrements of neo-Nazi dress from the ideological attraction that some segments of the gay community hold for neo-Nazism, von Praunheim cogently argues that the racist and antisemitic doctrines of National Socialism continue to thrive more than sixty years after the Holocaust.

Based on the true story of Operation Bernhard at *KZ Sachsenhausen*, Stefan Ruzowitzky's 2007 Austrian-German co-production *Die Fälscher* (*The Counterfeiters*, 2007) is the second film analyzed. It focuses on the gritty and realistic depiction of masculine relationships and behaviour amongst the male protagonists. Brad Prager notes that: "*The Counterfeiters*' predominant genre can, however, be most closely identified with the German-language 'heritage film,' a label imported from British film studies by Lutz Koepnick, and referring to that familiar wave of high-profile, affirmative and box-office-friendly German films from the end of the last century including *Aimée and Jaguar*, (1999), *The Harmonists* (*Comedian Harmonists*, 1997) and *Nowhere in Africa*

(*Nirgendwo in Afrika*, 2001)” (Prager 79). Through the lenses of nationalism, social and communal responsibility, and masculinity, the barracks of KZ Sachsenhausen in *Die Fälscher* become a microcosm of class-based social ordering, where masculine behaviour, power struggles and ethics are continually in a state of flux.

The final film, also an Austrian production, is Wolfgang Murnberger’s 2010 production *Mein bester Feind* (*My Best Enemy*, 2011). Murnberger departs from the familiar trope of attempting to portray the Holocaust through realism. Utilizing humour, satire and elements of the ‘caper’ crime-mystery genre, Murnberger weaves a fast-paced narrative that defies conventional expressions of reality and presents the viewers with a Holocaust-themed mystery that has a touch of the fantastic and the wondrous. Consequently, viewers may leave a screening of this film almost wishing that events could have turned out this way, for this is a film where the Jewish male is victimized, yet emerges the vanquisher. Integral to the plot is the synergistically linked friendship between the two male protagonists and the importance of familial relationships.

The three films analysed in this chapter provide a mirror image to those discussed in Chapter Five and demonstrate the normalization of the Holocaust as a theme in Germanophone screen culture. Whereas female protagonists were central to the films discussed in the previous chapter, these films depict masculinity in a predominately male environment. Male characters dominate the discourse and thematic depictions in the films analyzed in this chapter. Whether it is portraying social stratification among men in a concentration camp, elucidating the very different paths two boyhood friends take following the *Anschluss* of Austria, or examining the attraction of some gay men to neo-

Nazi skinhead groups and ultra right-wing political parties, female characters are either nonexistent or assigned peripheral roles.

Exploring the interconnectedness between Germanophone and Jewish conceptualizations of masculinity is another important nexus of this chapter's analysis. In *Die Fälscher*, masculinity is portrayed in the traditional context of power during the National Socialist era – Germans and Austrians hold power, Jews are victims – while in *Mein bester Feind* the masculine power paradigm is reversed. Instead, it is the Jewish male protagonists, played by German, non-Jewish actors, who outsmart their German and Austrian oppressors at every stage to score a surprising 'win' in this caper. Jewish men hold power while the Germanophone men are continually outwitted and caught up in a situation of attempting to regain control. Finally, the provocative *Männer Helden schwule Nazis* shows the continued allure of Fascist masculinity to a specific segment of the German population - gay men.

**“We gay men are drawn towards a masculine ideal”:  
*Männer, Helden, schwule Nazis (Men, Heroes, and Gay Nazis, 2005)***



Rosa von Praunheim’s provocative 2005 documentary provides another example of postmemory visualised through the documentary film genre. The use of archival photographs of Nazi leaders such as Reichsminister Rudolf Hess, Secretary for Economic Affairs Walther Funk, and Artur Axmann, the last Reich Youth Leader – all of whom present-day neo-Nazis consider to have been gay or bi-sexual – helps to rehabilitate their legacies and demonstrate that gays have always been a significant core of the Nazi movement, a natural fit as it were. Yet, figures such as Röhm, who was murdered during the Night of the Long Knives (or Röhm Putsch as it is also known) or Hess, who died in jail, are recalled fondly today by German neo-Nazis as martyrs for the cause.<sup>70</sup> Misunderstood during the era in which they lived, postmemory situates them as

<sup>70</sup> Although some of the protagonists in von Praunheim’s documentary refer to Hess being murdered in jail, it is not a sentiment shared by all historians. In his 2006 text, *Tales from Spandau: Nazi Criminals and the Cold War*, Norman Goda posits that Hess committed suicide in Spandau prison in 1987.

victims who have become cultural and ideological icons for a new generation of gay neo-Nazis. They are the subjects of von Praunheim's gaze, a sub-culture in Germany's gay community who demonstrate and perform their construction of militarized, neo-Fascist masculinity. The homosexual community has traditionally been on the margins of social influence and hierarchy, with homosexuality only being decriminalized in West Germany, as in Canada, in 1969, with Austria following in 1971. As such, the struggle for equal rights has tended to dominate the discourse in the gay community, finding partners among progressive organizations. Von Praunheim's documentary is important for its depiction of a small but visible segment of Germany's vibrant and diverse gay community. Political-journalist Rainer Fromm, interviewed in the film, estimates that between 10 and 15% of the leadership of the neo-Nazi movement is openly gay with a solid foundation of closeted gays involved in the movement. Acceptance of gays within the movement is predicated, however, upon adherence to a clearly defined construct of masculinity that fuses male toughness and nationalism. This re-emergence of Fascist masculinity in Europe combined with increased support for racism and chauvinism is, as R.W. Connell emphasizes, striking (Connell 177). Less than seventy years after the defeat of Fascism in the Second World War and the collapse of militarized masculinity, neo-Fascism still exists in German cities and towns, even attracting gay adherents.

Indeed, the importance of male community and camaraderie has long figured in the dominant discourse of German history, intersecting with the emergence of the first scientific theory of gay sexuality published by Karl-Heinrich Ulrichs between 1864 and 1879. Ulrichs argued that the male homosexual was characterized by a

*Seelenwanderung*, a woman's soul having wandered into a man's body (Oosterhuis 13). Although his *Urning* theory and language is no longer a part of the discourse on gay rights or even queer theory, they went on to serve as the foundation for writings of Magnus Hirschfeld, Adolf Brand and others. Male camaraderie, the thread that runs through theories of masculinity and sexuality from Ulrich to the militarized neo-Nazi gay male, becomes one of the dominant themes of von Praunheim's film. Indeed, the protagonists of von Praunheim's documentary embrace expressions of masculinity and sexuality that are linked, at least aesthetically and morally, more to the paramilitary *Freikorps* communities than to contemporary parameters of gay identity or even the theories of Ulrichs and Hirschfeld. The subjects of von Praunheim's documentary have rejected the dominant constructs of masculinity discussed in Chapter Two (Western Hero, The Softie and The Footballer), and embraced conceptualizations of masculinity that further isolate them from the mainstream Germanophone gay community. In this section I discuss the three protagonists who von Praunheim has given voice to in this documentary: André – an Oi skinhead; Alexander Schlesinger – an activist for a far-right political party in Germany; and Bernd Ewald Althans – a former activist for the far-right turned special event promoter.

The first protagonist, identified only by his first name André, adheres to the classic skinhead subculture and identifies as an Oi skinhead. Originally from Leipzig, Berlin was his home at the time von Praunheim made his documentary. In contemporary Western European cities skinhead masculinity provides an alternative to what may be described as variations on hegemonic masculinity. Skinhead masculinity provides

adherents with a primarily homosocial zone of contact, defined behavioural parameters and identification with a hyper-masculine collective. For André, adhering to the dress, behaviour and ideology of the Oi skinhead movement represents the connection between masculinity and honour. He describes it as: “a culture of masculinity that has to do with honour. To me the potential for violence means having the courage to defend myself” (DVD 02:12).

In expounding on the apparent paradox of being openly gay in a far-right political movement, André states: “The fight against gays isn’t so much a fight against men who sleep with men, it’s against a lack of masculinity, against weakness” (DVD 11:37). Acceptance within his political community is contingent upon André representing himself as the “right type” of homosexual. He is acceptable because he adheres to an essentialised construct of a tough, militarized male. André’s identification with a collective of militarized or hyper-masculine men confers upon him a sense of sameness. In this collective there is a standard code for dress, behaviour and activities. André, whose voice is represented throughout the documentary, self-identifies as being part of the traditional Oi skinhead movement in physical appearance and cultural values. The movement is easily defined and recognized by its style of clothing: black military boots with white laces, very short hair or shaven head, jeans with suspenders and white T-shirt. It is the uniform of the populist working-class Oi skinhead male and easily identifiable from other expressions of gay masculinity. The Oi skinhead community is evocative of the *Sturmabteilung*, the notorious paramilitary units known as the SA or Brownshirts that were scrappy street vigilantes in the early days of National Socialism. The populist all-

male community provided the muscle and identifiable street presence to the fledgling political movement. Within André's community, to portray something other than this essentialised expression of masculinity is to be defined as non-masculine and weak. Thus, his community confirms the particular conceptualization of masculinity he performs.

Alexander Schlesinger, the documentary's second protagonist, is not an Oi skinhead, but rather belongs to an unnamed far-right, nationalist party. Schlesinger has his own standard uniform of all black clothing, shaven head and accompanying pit-bull dog. Schlesinger carefully avoids questions on the compatibility of being openly gay and a member of the far right by implying that the question should be whether being gay is well suited to centrist and leftist political leanings. He suggests instead that it is the liberal gay who finds himself in a paradoxical situation in contemporary, multicultural Berlin: "The people working on the gay-bashing hotlines have an ethical dilemma because it is young Turks and Moroccans beating up on gays. Strangely, so-called right-wing skinheads seldom attack gays. Generally, liberal gays have to deal with facts that don't fit their worldview... I think many gays are for lax immigration laws so they don't have to travel to fuck foreigners" (DVD 06:18). Schlesinger's ideology wraps masculinity together with race and nationalism, creating a neo-Fascist ideal. Having rejected the liberal values that typically define the mainstream gay community – tolerance, racial equality, championing the marginalized – Schlesinger has adopted a narrow and exclusionary view of masculinity. He declares: "We gay men are drawn towards a masculine ideal. I'm an intolerant gay" (DVD 15:17). It is a reminder that neo-

Fascism, like Fascism, is not the sole domain of heterosexual adherents but rather can appeal across wide segments of the population.

For von Praunheim's third protagonist, Bernd Ewald Althans, a former rising star in the German neo-Nazi movement, on the other hand, homosexuality proved to be a problematic issue to reconcile within the framework of neo-Fascist masculinity. Althans was mentored by the charismatic, neo-Nazi Michael Kühnen, whose goal was to install a Fourth Reich in Germany. When Kühnen's homosexuality became public in 1986, Althans found reconciling homosexuality with neo-Fascism to be impossible. Yet by the time Kühnen died of HIV-related causes in 1991, Althans was emerging as one of the most visible and influential spokesmen for neo-Fascism in Germany. In 1994, Althans was convicted of Holocaust denial and spent three years in a German prison. Ironically, it was Althans's own awareness of his emergent gay sexuality that led to him distancing and eventually extracting himself from neo-Nazi movements.

Paradoxically, coming out as a homosexual threatened Althans' status and participation in the far-right movement he was so passionate about. When asked if he remembers participating in rallies and chanting "*Am Laternenpfahl in der Nähe der Reichskanzlei hängen die Homosexuell Kühner und seines Stellvertreters. Und all die Nazis versammeln sich dort auf die hängenden Reisigbündel Paar zu sehen, wie einst SA Chef Röhm*" (On the lamp post near the Chancellery, hang the gay Kühner and his deputy. And all the Nazis gather there to see the hanging faggot pair, as once did SA Chief Röhm) (DVD 37:23), he admits simply with the term *genau* (exactly) that he did. One imagines the "Inability to Mourn" theory of collective responsibility developed by

Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich being applied individually to Althans. There is clearly much about his involvement in the far-right movement and his apparent conversion from it that remains unaccounted for, and unspoken. In von Praunheim's documentary he is depicted as unrepentant, indicating only that he has moved on to other activities.

Today, seven years later, Althans has extracted himself from the neo-Fascist movement and donated his personal archive of papers and books documenting his involvement in neo-Fascist politics in Germany to the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. Althans works as an event and nightclub promoter in Berlin's gay community and claims to have disavowed Fascism. However, he is not convincing in his admission of having completely abandoned all of the principles and values associated with the far right. He admits to having no sensitivity for minority groups in jokes or similar social settings and offers no apology for his past actions. Perversely, he defends Austrian neo-Nazi Gottfried Küssel's activities and antisemitic songs by describing him as "basically a very peaceful, harmless, artistic and quiet person" (DVD 21:33). Comments such as these suggest that Althans is still racist and perhaps antisemitic; he has just abandoned Holocaust denial and the far-right political ideology.

In deconstructing the allure of Fascist masculinity among segments of the gay community, von Praunheim distinguishes between fetishism towards muscular physique, military uniforms and homoerotic encounters in homoerotic situations and neo-Fascist masculinity. While the fetishist is attracted to the physical characteristics and the encounter, the neo-Fascist male embraces an ideology that not only connects masculinity

to nationalism, but also to racism and often misogyny. As Connell reiterates in his work, the formation of contemporary expressions of masculinities is linked to the crisis tendencies of the gender order (Connell 85). It is not surprising then that two of the protagonists of the documentary were raised in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) (André was born in Leipzig, Alexander Schlesinger in East Berlin). Each encountered tremendous socio-political, economic and cultural upheaval with the unification of Germany in 1990. Both men were exposed to a dramatic restructuring of societal norms as well as living conditions with the collapse of the GDR.

In her gender analysis of German unification, Elizabeth Heineman perceives the two former German states as an unequal power paradigm: "...the gendered and sexualized imagery of international relations, applied to unification, paired a dominant West Germany with a dependent East Germany, marking all East Germans as feminine-whether they relied on the *Vaterstaat* to guarantee their employment or a kindergarten place for their children" (Heineman 71). In the crisis of masculinity that resulted from the societal upheaval, it is realistic to expect a variety of patterns of masculine behavior to have emerged. That a minority of men should adopt neo-Fascist expressions is disturbing, but not altogether surprising. Neo-Fascist masculinity positions the Caucasian male at the top of the social hierarchical scale, undoubtedly providing comfort to those afraid of societal change.

The protagonists profiled in von Praunheim's documentary are not, however, confined to one region or state in Germany. Rather, they represent men who grew up in both the former West and East Germany and are attracted to the nationalistic concepts of

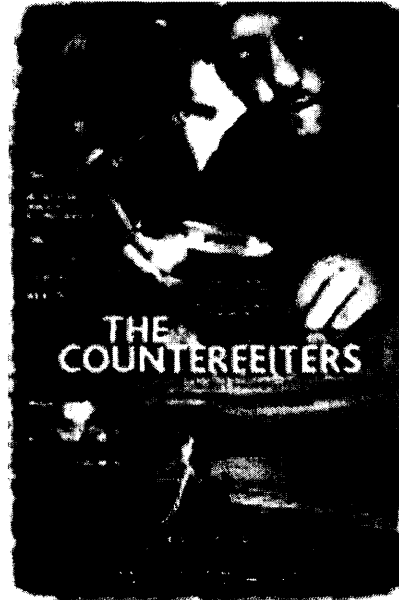
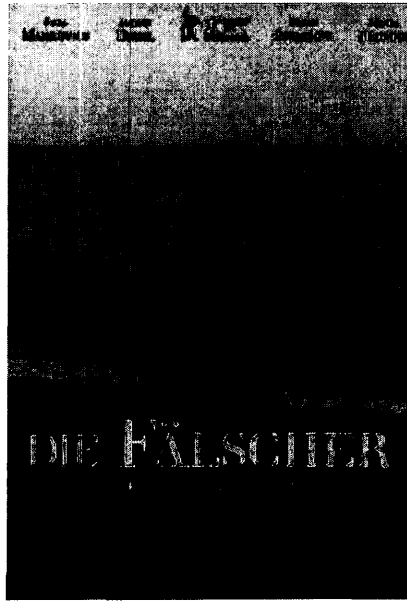
neo-Fascism as well is its emphasis on hypermasculinity. Commenting on hegemonic masculinities in the former East and West German states, Holder Brandes emphasizes the dominance of the West German concept of masculinity over the GDR traditional constructs of masculinity: "...a Western-shaped taste and corresponding manners and standards have been accepted into the former GDR on all levels of daily life, as well as consumption, architecture, politics and art. The leadership positions in politics, the economy, culture, and science are and continue to be occupied by men who come from the West or at least conform to the Western pattern of masculinity" (Brandes 193). The upheaval of societal norms that accompanied unification and the apparent dominance of the West German pattern of masculinity can be seen as an impetus for alternate expressions of masculinity emerging. Just as the crisis presented to masculinity by Germany's defeat in World War I coupled with fear of modernity stirred a renewed interest in the *Männerbund* and Fascist masculinity, so too did the collapse of the GDR elicit interest in neo-Fascist masculinity.

The political movements to which two of von Praunheim's protagonists belong also serve as a community to reinforce their ideology and value system. One cannot underestimate the power of the group dynamic to instil and maintain the dominant power structure while giving a sense of purpose and fulfillment to its adherents. Although the movements detailed by von Praunheim are neither as prevalent nor as large as the *Männerbund* or Hitler Youth, they provide an important community and approving framework, in which neo-Fascist masculinity can be reproduced and reinforced.

Tilman Moser suggests that skinhead hyper-masculinity represents a response to the authoritarian paternalism that discourages contact and discussion of emotions and feelings between men. From his psychoanalytical perspective the group collective provides a false sense of security, particularly attractive to young men with inferiority complexes. He writes, “seventeen-year-old right-wing radicals, for example, feel strong when they stand in a row and make a ‘Heil Hitler’ or wave a flag. If they had had fathers against whom they could lean their bodies in their weakness, they would not need an emblem, a staff or a Heil. Rather they would know that they are sometimes strong and sometimes weak. They wouldn’t need to imagine that they come from a superior race. They wouldn’t need contempt for the weak in order to feel strong” (Moser 57).

It is impossible to know, however, if von Praunheim’s protagonists are performing for the camera and exhibiting behaviour they may feel is expected from them, or if they are ideological neo-Nazis. The position of von Praunheim is clear - as a documentary film-maker he believes himself to be a neutral observer who lets the protagonists speak for themselves. Yet, as Marianne Hirsch writes: “Active looking distances, objectifies, turns subject into object” (Hirsch 156). The protagonists in *Männer, Helden, schwule Nazis* are undoubtedly the subject/object of von Praunheim’s gaze. They demonstrate that sexuality and nationalism are two important markers of identity. In rejecting contemporary constructs of masculinity and behaviour and drawing upon hyper militarized constructs of masculinity, they have created a postmemory of the National Socialist era for the present.

**“Ich bin ich. Die anderen sind die anderen” (I am myself. Everyone else, is everyone else): *Die Fälscher* (*The Counterfeiters*, 2007)**



Stefan Ruzowitsky's *Die Fälscher* negotiates the intricate space between postmemory, recalled memory and memoir by constructing a plot around an actual event (the counterfeiting operation known as Operation Bernhard) and intricately merging historical descriptions and details with Holocaust survivor testimonial accounts, and rumours and innuendo that surrounded the fate of the counterfeiters and the currency at the end of the Second World War. Ruzowitsky is 'creating' or 'inventing' memory of Operation Bernhard as seen through the perspective of the film's main protagonist Salomon Sorowitsch. In accordance with Austrian privacy laws, the names of all the protagonists were changed – except for Adolf Burger and Isaak Plappler, who were alive

at the time of production and agreed to be identified.<sup>71</sup> Loosely based on Adolf Burger's memoir of 'Operation Bernhard' titled *The Devil's Workshop: A Memoir of the Nazi Counterfeiting Operation* (2009; *Des Teufels Werkstatt: im Fälscherkommando des KZ Sachsenhausen*, 1985) *Die Fälscher* depicts ordinary Jewish men struggling with issues of morality and conscience, and struggling to survive in a concentration camp.<sup>72</sup> *Die Fälscher* presents a prisoner-of-war narrative in the tradition of such films as *La grande illusion* (RAC, dir. Jean Renoir, 1937), *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (Columbia, dir. David Lean, 1957) and *The Hanoi Hilton* (Cannon Group, dir. Lionel Chetwynd, 1987). This genre focuses primarily on issues of masculinity and camaraderie between imprisoned men, class and socio-cultural differences, and the wrestling with ethical and moral decisions while trying to survive long enough to outlast their captors.

An examination of the German-language promotional poster (previous page, upper left) hints at the non-redemptive tone of *Die Fälscher*. The design shows one of the main protagonists, Sally Sorowitsch, as a lone figure watching the waves approach the seashore. The cool indigo colour tone that dominates the image seems to imply that this is not a film with a typical happy ending; rather it is a film in which the main protagonist seems lost in reflective, if not troubling thoughts. No indication is given in this poster as to the historical context of the film or its Holocaust theme. Knowing the storyline, however, one can look back at this image imagining that Sorowitsch is asking

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71 The main protagonist Sally (Salomon) Sorowitsch is the name the filmmakers give to the counterfeiter Salomon Smolianoff, and SS-Sturmbannführer Friedrich Herzog is the name used to depict SS-Sturmbannführer Bernhard Krüger, who was in charge of Operation Bernhard.

72 Adolf Burger's memoir attempts to deliver an historical overview of the Holocaust and an overview of rationale behind Operation Bernhard. However, it is surprisingly sparse on the details of his personal experiences with Operation Bernhard, and in the Holocaust. Nevertheless, Burger served as a consultant for *Die Fälscher* and was on set for the duration of the filming.

himself if he compromised too much of himself in order to survive, or why he survived when kinder and more noble individuals perished in the concentration camps. The solitary figure in the poster only hints at the theme of moral ambiguity that permeates the film.

The English-language poster (previous page, upper right) also de-emphasizes the Holocaust context of this film. Instead, the focus is seemingly placed upon a romance between the seated man and glamorous woman standing beside him at the seaside, while the highlighted image of the protagonist working with tools and a desk lamp suggests that forgery and deceit plays a major role in the film. Indeed, the imagery hints at a romantic action film and could serve as promotional poster for the remake of the James Bond classic *Casino Royal* (Sony Pictures, dir. Martin Campbell, 2006). Again, a cool indigo tone casts a solemn, almost forlorn pall over the images. The lack of overt Holocaust representation or symbolism can also be interpreted as part of the normalization process in Germanophone screen culture. Ruzowitsky comments: "I tried to make a movie that was suspenseful and emotional, but at the same time brings across some political statements, if you will. This is something people in America like a lot. Back home in Germany and Austria, I was criticized a lot for the same reason. There, people think you're not supposed to deal with such sensitive issues within the means of entertainment filmmaking" (Guillen). Ruzowitsky's vision of tackling Austria's legacy of shared responsibility in the crimes of National Socialism through film clearly appealed to members of the American Motion Picture Academy, who voted *Die*

*Fälscher* the Best Foreign Language Oscar winner for 2007, the first Oscar ever won by an Austrian film.

What neither of these promotional posters indicates is any indication of the gritty portrayal of relationships among the film's male protagonists and the moral dilemmas they struggle with. At times dark and haunting, *Die Fälscher* focuses on the complex portrayal of the very ordinary Jewish men who find themselves in positions of privilege in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Initially, the men struggle with the knowledge that they have been granted privileges such as ample food, civilian clothes, and bed linens, while mere metres from their barracks the 'regular' concentration camp inmates are enduring suffering, torture and death. The counterfeit operation 'Operation Bernhard' was designed to destabilize Allied economies in the waning months of the Second World War – and necessitates the moral struggle the men face: how far are they willing to go and work for the success of the Nazi regime which is murdering their colleagues, families and communities? Through the male protagonists Ruzowitsky (re)constructs representations of masculinity that demonstrate the interconnectedness of class, ethnicity and education for Jewish men and the complex relationship of Jewish masculinity to that of the dominant, non-Jewish masculine culture of the era and the location. The struggle to redefine what it means to be a man in a situation in which the protagonists have almost no control prevails throughout the film.

For Ruzowitsky, this is essentially a narrative of self-discovery for non-Jewish Germans and Austrians. He implies that almost any German or Austrian national could inquire about their parents' or grandparents' actions during the National Socialist period

and find some connection. Brad Prager posits that the film is part of the Austrian coming to terms with its National Socialist past: “In terms of Austria’s cultural memory, it seems – in relation, for example, to the election of President Kurt Waldheim, a former Wehrmacht intelligence officer – that much of Austria’s population has difficulty accepting obvious evidence about their nation’s massive collaboration with the Nazis and still today view Austria as foremost among National Socialism’s victims” (Prager 80). In an interview, Ruzowitsky echoes this sentiment: “Being the grandchild of grandparents—some more, some less—attached to the Nazi party, and living in a country that still has problems dealing with its Nazi past, I always felt that I have to comment on the issue as a filmmaker” (Archibald).

For Austrian actor Karl Markovics, playing Sorowitsch was actually less daunting because the character is not deeply connected to a religious or cultural Jewish identity: “So it was much more [about] the point of why human beings treat other human beings like that, and under what conditions. This was the most interesting point for me and I hope that we will one day come to the point that it doesn't matter at all anymore. At that time, [when] the story [takes place], it mattered too much, today it still matters very much in Austria and Germany, but there are not so many Jews left” (indieWIRE). For Markovics the film is about representing a universalized understanding of the Holocaust while portraying an authentic representative of the masculinity of the Jewish protagonist.

The corollary of integrating identity with nationalism, religion and masculinity continues to be an important marker in civil society in culturally German environs. Neither Ruzowitsky nor Markovics are Jewish or German, yet both are astutely aware of

the intricacies of portraying the masculinity of a minority group that shared linguistic and cultural associations with the dominant group yet remained distinctly categorized as ‘other.’ Adolf Burger served as a consultant on the film set and provided insight into the complexities of living in the barracks during ‘Operation Bernhard’ and the relationships between the men. When asked if he hated the Germans and Austrians who worked in the camp while he was an inmate, Burger told Ruzowitzky: “How could I? I was German too” (DVD Special Feature- Interviews 29:00). Burger was in fact born and raised in Prague, but his German acculturation allowed him to feel a connection to those who imprisoned him.

Revealing the complexities and tensions between class-based constructions of masculinities permeates much of the narrative of *Die Fälscher*. Sally Sorowitsch, a composite character of at least two inmates involved in Operation Bernhard, represents the proletarian male. This particular experience of the ordinary, working-class Jewish man – or in the case of Sorowitsch, the petty criminal proletarian Jewish male – was a void that Ruzowitzky felt was missing in Holocaust depictions of Jewish masculinity and screen culture: “I felt it was very interesting, or it would be a completely new perspective because all the autobiographies that we know [about the camps] by Bruno Bettelheim, Primo Levi, all these were written by people with an intellectual, bourgeois background, an academic background, and here we have somebody who's sort of trained to survive and survive well within a prison” (indieWIRE). Ruzowitzky is less concerned with depicting idealized heroes or sanctified representations of the recalled memories of Holocaust survivor memoirs.

Ruzowitsky presents a nuanced understanding of the potential for friction between these diverse groups as well as the some of the men's continued adherence to pre-Holocaust values. The complexity of the masculine construct is realized as one model develops for the men as prisoners interacting amongst themselves, and another for the prisoners in relation to dealing with their captors. The inmates are a collective of blue-collar workers with average levels of education, Jewish Prussian-German bankers, artists, and typesetters, who have been brought together because of their technical skill in print making and forgery. The men are defined by their previous class position in pre-Holocaust society and likely would never have met nor needed one another had it not been for their forced confinement in KZ Sachsenhausen.

When career-criminal Sorowitsch is first introduced to the inmate who inspects the quality of the counterfeit banknotes being produced by 'Operation Bernhard,' the extent to which class-based values and masculine ideals collide is evident. The inmate, a Prussian-Jew and former banker adheres to the value systems of his class and previous life. He is introduced to Sorowitsch as Dr. Viktor Hahn, *Preußisches Kreditinstitut Hamburg* (Prussian Credit Bank Hamburg) with all the formality indicative of the Prussian bourgeoisie. When Hahn notices that a green triangle overlays the yellow triangle worn by Sorowitsch, the result is friction. Hahn's disgust at having to work with a habitual criminal - someone outside his normal social class - is illustrated in the following dialogue (DVD 27:40):

Hahn (H) – *Ein Berufskrimineller? Herr Laube!* (A career criminal? Herr Laube!)

Laube (L) – *Herr Sorowitsch ist sozusagen hauptberuflich Geldfälscher* (Mr. Sorowitsch is, as it were, a 'professional' counterfeiter).

H – *Die Verbrecher hier waren bisher nur die in den Nazi-Uniformen, mein Herr!*  
(Until now, the only criminals here were the ones wearing Nazi uniforms, my good man!)

Sorowitsch (S) – *Es geht euch an die Ehre, dass ihr mit einem Knastbruder arbeiten müsst?* (It besmirches your honour that you must work with a jailbird?)

H – *Wenn man nichts hat außer der Ehre... Sie werden es hier schwer haben* (If honour is all that one has left... You will have a hard time here).

S – *Leck mich [am Arsch]* (kiss my ass)

However, Sorowitsch's skill as a counterfeiter makes him indispensable to the success of the operation. Skill eventually trumps class-based attitudes and positions Sorowitsch near the top of the hierarchy in the barracks.

These competing models of masculinity, the proletarian criminal and the bourgeois banker, are forced to adapt to life in a concentration camp environment. Yet while Sally can rely on his street smarts to adapt to the ambiguity that accompanies working in a situation that prolongs one's own life but aids the Nazi war effort, the bourgeois banker is prisoner to his own societal conventions. This is revealed by the SS leader Herzog when he congratulates the men on producing a counterfeit of the British pound so successful that it passed not only the banking authorities in Switzerland but was also declared authentic by the British bank, saying: *"Ihr Juden... Tricksen und fälschen, das könnt ihr. Wenn man bei euch ein bisschen an der bürgerlichen Fassade kratzt..."* (You Jews, tricks and fakery, that's what you're good at. If one scratches just a little bit at that respectable façade...) (DVD 47:49). The implication here is that Jews are intrinsically different from the Germans and Austrians and can never fully integrate into society. The distinction is reinforced when the Prussian-Jewish banker Hahn objects to

being labelled as less than respectable and opines: “*Herr Sturmbannführer, ich war mein Leben lang ein anständiger Bürger. Ich muss darauf hinweisen, dass ich zu unrechtem Tun gezwungen werde*” (Herr Sturmbannführer, all my life I’ve been an upright citizen. I must point out that here I am being coerced into performing dishonest acts) (DVD 47:30). This pathetic appeal for understanding by his captors is met with uproarious laughter by Herzog and the SS officers, and silence by his fellow inmates.

Moreover, Ruzowitsky illustrates the complexity of a man attempting to maintain his humanity in a concentration camp environment that sought to dehumanize the inmates before killing them. This theme is revealed when Sorowitsch is subjected to humiliation by a sadistic guard. The *Hauptscharführer* (Master Sergeant), who delights in degrading inmates and is limited in what he can do to the Operation Bernhard men who are rewarded with additional rations, cigarettes and a ping-pong table for their productivity, seizes an opportunity to urinate on Sorowitsch, who is on his hands and knees scrubbing the washroom floors, saying to him: “*Weißt du, was du ohne Dollar bist? Nichts als ein dreckiger, krimineller Jude. Scheiß auf Herzog und seine ‚Motivation.‘ Ich wüsste, wie man euch beibringt, zu sparen. Ihr seid Dreckschweine. Ihr tut alles, um euer erbärmliches Leben zu retten. Echt widerlich*” (Do you know what you are without the dollar? Nothing but a dirty, criminal Jew. Fuck Herzog [SS leader] and his ‘motivation.’ I’d know how to teach you to save. You are such filthy swine. You stoop to anything to save your pathetic lives. Really disgusting) (DVD 53:09). Sorowitsch is confronted with what Lawrence L. Langer describes as a “choiceless choice” in which he must endure the humiliation of the *Hauptscharführer* urinating on his head and face, or endure more fatal consequences.

This dramatic, and pseudo-sexual, scene must also be interpreted as having a direct impact on Sorowitsch's masculinity. It may, on one level, be interpreted as a stand-in for a rape scene where one man is forced to yield his body, in this case silently acquiescing to the male in the position of power over him, who then demonstrates his power by urinating upon him. While the two are physically different in stature, it is the act of being urinated on that is both humiliating and reinforcing of the long tradition in Germanophone discourse of the Jewish male body as weak and effete. The act of urination exposes the uncircumcised penis to Sorowitsch, a reminder of the 'damaged' and impure body of the Jewish man in National Socialism ideology, contrasted to the intact, Aryan male. Thus, the power dynamic between the two men is revealed. Sorowitsch is both physically submissive to the guard and able to be raped – for he is on his knees cleaning the bathroom floor – and also coded as female, subjected to the desires of the stronger Aryan male. Fraught with tension, the viewer is uncertain as to whether an act of physical rape – penetration or fellatio – will occur. The act of urinating becomes the substitute for the discharge of semen, completing the analogy to rape. By subjugating Sorowitsch to his sadistic actions, the guard reinforces his own performativity of Aryan masculinity as well as the European tradition of Jewish masculinity as weak, reinforcing the 'racial' difference between the two men and the hierarchical position each inhabits.

Moreover, Sorowitsch is not the "Tough Jew" that Paul Breines (1990) ascribes to the model of masculinity actively developed by the Zionist youth movements during the interwar period in Europe. It is not an aptitude for sport or physical prowess that shapes Sorowitsch's character and behavior. Rather, I describe him as the "Street-Smart

Jew,” a member of the proletariat. He is a small-time career criminal who has little in the way of a classical education – either in a traditional Jewish sense or following the German *Bildung* ideal. Instead, Salomon "Sally" Sorowitsch is a Russian-Jewish émigré, who grew up on the margins of Berlin society and is not particularly prone to making choices based on morals and ethics. Although born Jewish, he exhibits no particular affinity to Judaism, either culturally, communally or religiously. It is as if Sorowitsch is the ‘accidental’ Jew – he acknowledges his heritage, but it plays no discernable role in either his beliefs or behaviour.

He is first introduced in the film as someone who is able to provide a high-quality counterfeit visa for a Jewish woman trying to get out of Germany. When the woman is unable to meet Sorowitsch’s monetary price for the visa, she persuades him to accept a sexual encounter with her to make up the difference. Sorowitsch is presented as a cross between the central male characters in *Casablanca* (Warner Bros. dir. Michael Curtiz, 1942): Rick Blaine portrayed by Humphrey Bogart and Captain Louis Renault portrayed by Claude Rains. Unlike Captain Renault, Sorowitsch does not prey on women offering visas in exchange for sex – he prefers currency or jewels – but he will accept the sexual favours of a beautiful woman as a last resort. Operating just outside the margins of the law, Sorowitsch can navigate his way through unconventional and dangerous situations relying on his street smarts to help him survive.

Indeed, Sorowitsch is not the noble or moralistic hero often portrayed in Holocaust film. He is not an intellectual or gifted musician like Władysław Szpilman in *The Pianist*. Nor is he one of the industrious or inoffensive and unobtrusive Jews from

*Schindler's List*. That, as we will see later, is the role of his alter ego, Adolf Burger. Rather, Sorowitsch is depicted as a morally flawed 'anti-hero' who is not instantly likeable. In the opening sequence when Sorowitsch declares that he will only produce a forged visa for an exact price, and appeals to sense of Jewish communal values fail to persuade him otherwise, he responds: "*Ich bin ich. Die anderen sind die anderen*" (I am myself. Everyone else is everyone else). Sorowitsch is shown as a man who looks out for himself, and he does not feel united through a common belief in Judaic values or religious ritual to other Jews. A career criminal and opportunist, he is a man on the margins of society who lived only for himself and his own gain.

The characterization of Sorowitsch recalls Primo Levi's literary description of survival in the concentration camps in *The Drowned and the Saved*. Commenting on how those who survived the concentration camp system were not the moral among humanity but often deeply flawed human beings, Levi remarks: "The 'saved' of the *Lager* were not the best, those predestined to do good, the bearers of a message: what I had seen and lived through proved the exact contrary. Preferably the worst survived, the selfish, the violent, the insensitive, the collaborators of the 'grey zone,' the spies" (Levi 82). Sorowitsch, the flawed human, the man who participated in 'Operation Bernhard' to aid the Nazi war effort to enhance his own chances of survival, is remarkably similar to Levi's description of the worst of the concentration camp – those who survived.

This construct is reinforced at the end of film when Sorowitsch is seen registering at a luxury hotel in Monte Carlo. The Second World War has ended, and the protagonists have gone their separate ways since liberation. When Sorowitsch is seen gambling the

counterfeit money he has brought out of KZ Sachsenhausen (a scene Ruzowitsky specifically developed from rumours that Sorowitsch actually did turn up in Monte Carlo and gambled extensively), the viewer witnesses a survivor of the Holocaust who remains very similar to the person he was before he was deported to the concentration camps. This deliberate development reflects Ruzowitsky's personal belief in the message the film might convey: "At a certain point I found out that it would be an awful message to bring across saying those Jews who survived the gas chambers became better people at least. This would be the completely wrong thing" (Dawson 1).

Rarely does Ruzowitsky permit the viewer to see Sorowitsch as being coded Jewish, and he is shown as coded Jewish only when he is in the presence of women. In a flashback to his pre-Holocaust life, Sorowitsch is seen engaging in loan-sharking and racketeering in a Berlin speakeasy. When a woman with whom he shares champagne disparages the Jewish heritage of his name Salomon, Sorowitsch is unfazed and replies to her boyfriend: "*Sie kann den Champagner zurückspucken. Es ist ein Rothschild*" (She can spit the champagne back. It's a Rothschild) (DVD 07:15). He is similarly coded as Jewish, vulnerable and weak, in the sex scene with the elegantly dressed young woman whom he picks up at the Monte Carlo casino. In bed, she notices the tattooed number on his arm and asks if he got it in the concentration camps. Her demeanour instantly changes from sensual to compassionate, while Sorowitsch becomes withdrawn. He is simultaneously depicted as a vulnerable Jewish man and concentration camp survivor, but also as a rogue who returns to the life of counterfeiting and petty crime he lived before the Holocaust.

Ruzowitsky uses the concentration camp tattoo as an indicator of vulnerable Jewish masculinity, but he avoids any linguistic reference to circumcision - as we see in the final film in this chapter *Mein bester Feind*, one of the traditional markers of Jewish masculinity. As an Eastern Jew who immigrated to Berlin, it is logical to assume that Sorowitsch would have been circumcised. Sander Gilman writes that: "It is no wonder that male Jews, in Vienna as elsewhere in German-speaking Europe, looked on their own bodies as the objects about which the debates over the meaning and source of health and disease were held. The primary way of avoiding these confrontations was to understate the meaning of circumcision" (Gilman 1993, 69). He further specifies the effects this had on the complicated gendering of Jewish identity. On the one hand, "the centrality of the act of circumcision in defining what a Jew is made the very term 'Jew' in the nineteenth century comes to mean the male Jew" (ibid. 49). On the other hand, circumcision, in the popular discourse leading up to and through the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Europe, paralleled Jewish masculinity with the female.

As Sander Gilman has pointed out "the clitoris was known in the Viennese slang of the time [*fin de siècle*] simply as the "Jew" (*Jud*). The phrase for female masturbation was "playing with the Jew"... this pejorative synthesis of both bodies because of their "defective" sexual organs reflected the *fin de siècle* Viennese definition of the essential male as the antithesis of the female and the Jewish male" (ibid. 39). As demonstrated in the next film discussed, *Mein bester Feind*, checking for circumcision was a common tactic for identifying Jewish men as it was the most obvious physical mark of difference between Jews and non-Jews and establishing them as the weaker race. Yet here a non-

Jewish filmmaker downplays any reference to the male Jewish body being circumcised. For Ruzowitzky, the primacy of being a victim of National Socialism trumps the specificity of Sorowitsch's Jewish identity. The particular has been transformed into the universal by the omission of any reference to the one of the most distinguishing physical characteristics of Jewish masculinity.

Ruzowitzky ends his film not with a commentary on the physicality or vulnerability of men, but on their morality and mortality. The closing scene compelled me to remember a personal narrative a Holocaust survivor once recounted to me: it was easy for him to gamble on the stock market and business ventures because having lost his entire family in Auschwitz-Birkenau, nothing could come close to replacing all that he had lost. Sorowitsch, however, returns to the same gambling and racketeering lifestyle he enjoyed before the Holocaust. This solitary image of Sorowitsch on a moonlit beach connects to Primo Levi's commentary on those who survived the Nazi Lagers: "I felt innocent, yes, but enrolled among the saved and therefore in permanent search of a justification in my own eyes and those of others. The worst survived, that is the fittest; the best all died" (Levi 82). When Sorowitsch is joined by a female companion who is in awe of his loss of so much money, she repeatedly murmurs '*so viel Geld*' (so much money). While she is clearly astonished that a man could lose so much money and be so emotionally unaffected by it, Sorowitsch knows that the money is, of course, counterfeit, as unreal as the world of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp he left behind was surreal. In response to his companion's repeated remark Sorowitsch replies "*Wir können*

*uns neues machen*” (We can make more [money]). He survived the camp as the same person he was when he entered, a proletarian petty criminal.

If Sorowitsch is the anti-hero, then his fellow inmate Adolf Burger, the young idealist, is the hero who reminds the inmates of their moral responsibility towards others – the antithesis of Sorowitsch’s ‘man for himself’ character. Indeed, imbued with noble characteristics, he should be the more likeable of the two main protagonists. The narrative, however, is told from the perspective of Sorowitsch, thus making him both the main protagonist and the one with whom viewers sympathize. Burger, designated with a red triangle over the yellow triangle, is identified as a political prisoner in the concentration camp environment. Indeed, Burger, who represents the voice of morality in the barracks, is a composite of several men who voiced moral objections to aiding the Nazis’ counterfeiting operation when their own families and communities were being killed in the concentration camps.

The first indication of Burger’s ethical decision-making comes early in the film when ‘Operation Bernhard’ men receive civilian clothing to replace their camp uniforms. Upon discovering a paper tucked into an inner pocket indicating that the previous owner of the jacket – a Jew from Berlin – was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, Burger rejects the civilian clothing and in defiance continues wearing the concentration camp uniform. Subsequently admonished by the other inmates for fear of offending the Nazi leadership, Burger’s decision to reject the civilian clothing is also mocked by the SS officer Friedrich Herzog – based upon the real-life SS officer who headed ‘Operation Bernhard’, Sturmbannführer Bernhard Krüger – who declares: “*Die Sachen sind gebraucht. Wenn*

*Sie Sträflingskleidung bevorzugen, tragen Sie gestreift. Das macht schlank.*” (The clothes are second-hand. You can wear prison stripes if you prefer. After all, stripes flatter the figure) (DVD 21:51). Burger wears the concentration camp uniform throughout the film, symbolically separating him from the other privileged inmates and reminding viewers of his adherence to a code of values that defines him as a Jewish man. Describing a rabbinic construction of masculinity, Michael L. Satlow writes, “Manhood is the result of a cultural transformation: a man can never lose his biological maleness, but he can lose his standing as a man” (Satlow 35).

Although Burger is shown as a socialist humanitarian rather than a religiously observant Jew, he clearly exhibits the Jewish value of *Klal Yisrael* (lit. All of Israel) - an ethical value that teaches that all of the Jewish people are responsible for one another. Burger questions the privileges that he and his ‘Operation Bernhard’ colleagues are given – operetta music to work by, cigarettes, even a ping-pong table – when the regular inmates of Sachsenhausen struggle to survive in the abysmal concentration camp conditions. Burger seems aware that he and the other men of ‘Operation Bernhard’ inhabit the ‘grey zone’ Levi depicts in *The Drown and the Saved*. Describing the fate of the men who acted out of goodness to help others in the Lager, Levi declares: “These and innumerable others, died not despite their valor but because of it” (Levi 83). Despite the moral ambiguity that Burger struggles with and his inherent goodness, he survives. Those who do not survive life in the privileged barracks are depicted as victims without any agency over their own destiny: Kolya, an art student from Odessa who contracts

tuberculosis and is shot by the SS, and Loszek who commits suicide at liberation when he discovers his family has been murdered.

Ruzowitsky compresses the tension that existed among multiple men in the barracks into his two leading protagonists: Sorowitsch and Burger. Burger is deeply conflicted by the realization that his role in 'Operation Bernhard' may extend his own life while contributing to the Nazis winning the Second World War, and this inner turmoil intensifies when he learns that his wife has been killed trying to escape from Auschwitz-Birkenau. In response, Burger – without the support of his fellow inmates – begins to commit acts of sabotage, thereby slowing down the success of the counterfeiting operation. When faced with certain death at yet another failure to produce a passable counterfeit American dollar, some of the inmates decide to reveal to the Nazi overseers that it is Burger who is the saboteur. At this point, Sorowitsch – the anti-hero until this point – intervenes, invoking the prison honour code that one does not turn in fellow inmates to authorities. Loyalty and solidarity among inmates takes precedence over the individual. Understanding the complex relationship between Burger and Sorowitsch, it is helpful to utilize the 'choiceless choices' terminology developed by Lawrence L. Langer. These unprecedented situations of tension, of emotional struggle and of contradiction with their sense of right and wrong, were indicative of the situation that Jews suffered during the Holocaust. It would be facile and incorrect to judge these decisions by contemporary standards or codes of conduct as the protagonists did not have agency over their decisions; they were very much choices without agency. As Langer posits, such "choiceless choices' have an intrinsic irresolvable quality to the

decision-making process. As such, they are not even a case of negotiating between a greater and lesser evil; they are ‘crucial decisions that do not reflect options between life and death, but one form of an abnormal response and another, both imposed by a situation that was in no way of the victim’s own choosing’” (Langer 72). Like Langer, Ruzowitsky rejects instilling any type of redemptive message into his narrative. Ruzowitsky portrays his characters in a multi-dimensional manner: emotionally damaged, living with “choiceless choices” and not always likeable. He wants his viewers to come away less with the sense of the happy ending and the redemptive message of humanity triumphing over adversity than he is in portraying that men and masculinity are not defined by their material possessions or financial successes but by their behaviour and the relationships they choose to cultivate.

A slightly broken, emotionally distant and gritty portrayal of Jewish masculinity emerges in *Die Fälscher*. It is not a narrative that predicates survival upon virtue – one’s own or in connection with a non-Jewish rescuer, superior intelligence in the classically educated sense, or even innate goodness. While both Burger and Sorowitsch survive, the viewer encounters a rather forlorn if not emotionally broken Sorowitsch gambling his counterfeit currency in a Monte Carlo casino. Burger is last seen at the liberation of the concentration camp and is never seen on screen again. One imagines that the men of ‘Operation Bernard’ left the experience behind them upon liberation and did not maintain contact. Sorowitsch, however, is presented as a man seeking intimacy through a casual sexual encounter and who Ruzowitsky imagines to be contemplating, much as Levi posited in *The Drowned and the Saved*, why it was that he survived. Sander Gilman

offers some insight into the complexity of survival when he writes: “*Schindler’s List* is the tale of survival and virtue; the tales of [Itzhik] Stern and [Diana] Reiter are of the uselessness of Jewish superior intelligence, unless it is connected to the virtuous non-Jew” (Gilman 1996, 198). There is no similar paradigm at work in *Die Fälscher*. Rather, the relationship between Sorowitsch and Berger is one of two working-class Jewish men, each with varying degrees of street smarts, attempting to survive through a series of “choiceless choices.”

“You’ll be the SS Officer who Took a Beating from a Jew”:

*Mein bester Feind (My Best Enemy, 2011)*



Austrian director Wolfgang Murnberger’s 2011 production *Mein bester Feind* presents viewers with one of the strongest examples of the normalization of Holocaust memory in contemporary Germanophone screen culture. Even the rapid evolution of the design featured on the cover of the original and 2012 DVD releases demonstrate this normalization of Holocaust memory. In the original cover design (above left) the yellow star juxtaposed against the SS uniforms reveals that this is a Holocaust story while the dark indigo colouring indicates a serious story line as is usual with Holocaust themed films that seek to depict the era through realism. The 2012 edition (above right), however, reveals nothing about the Holocaust, the Second World War or that this is a narrative that prominently features Jewish characters. Rather, one gets the impression

that this is a comedic caper that pits a hapless villain against a debonair, cigarette-smoking hero. *Mein bester Feind* belongs in the relatively rare category of films that choose to depict the Holocaust and Second World War using satire and fantasy. As such it joins *Life is Beautiful* (Cecchi Gori, dir. Roberto Benigni, 1997) *Mein Führer - Die wirklich wahrste Wahrheit über Adolf Hitler* (*Mein Führer: The Truly Truest Truth About Adolf Hitler*, Arte, dir. Dani Levy, 2007) and *Inglourious Basterds* (Universal, dir. Quentin Tarantino, 2009) as films in this sub-genre. Unlike *Life is Beautiful* however, Murnberger never situates comedic acts in a concentration camp setting. Satire and jokes are reserved for depicting episodic events outside the concentration camp, or within Nazi headquarters. It is a trope that Dani Levy also adhered to when he produced *Mein Führer* – while Nazis were the subject of satire and comedy, those victimized were not. Like *Mein Führer* and *Inglourious Basterds*, *Mein bester Feind* offers viewers a fantasy scenario in which the Jewish protagonists are able to thwart – or at least disrupt – the genocidal mission of the Nazis.

Utilizing comedy and satire with a subject as enormous in its tragedy as the Holocaust requires confidence, skill and sensitivity. Murnberger admits that he only felt comfortable doing so because the script was written by Paul Hengge, a 77 year-old Jewish-Austrian writer and Holocaust survivor (Dowling). As a survivor of the Holocaust, Hengge lends what is perceived to be an important moral authority to the project, thereby allowing Murnberger to mobilize satirical and comedic devices. Indeed, the Holocaust remains one of the most contested terrains for film and literary representation, and utilizing comedy and satire has often been disparaged. Yet it is not

solely on the basis of being a survivor of the Holocaust that provides Hengge with legitimacy. He established himself as a scriptwriter of such Holocaust-themed films as *Angry Harvest* (*Bittere Ernte*, Central Cinema, dir. Agnieszka Holland, 1985) *Hanussen* (Central Cinema, dir. István Szabó, 1988) and *Europa, Europa* (Central Cinema, dir. Agnieszka Holland, 1990). Unlike his previous projects, *Mein bester Feind* catapults the viewer into a fantasy realm where Jewish men are not only the targets of National Socialist aggression, but can also become the heroes of the film and outmanoeuvre the Nazis – not just any enemy but the most well equipped and sophisticated military in the world at the time of the Second World War. Commenting on the normalization process in representing the Holocaust in screen culture, Murnberger posits: "Slowly it is changing, so that when one makes a film about this period one does not have to only use realism and tragedy. The guilt that the Germans and Austrians bear does not have to be at the forefront of the film" (Dowling).

Like *Die Fälscher*, *Mein bester Feind* also features two antithetical male protagonists, whose class backgrounds feature prominently. Viktor Kaufmann is the debonair, intelligent and urbane son of a successful Viennese art gallery owner, while his best friend Rudi Smekal is the son of the Kaufmann family's late housekeeper. After the *Anschluß* (annexation) of Austria, Smekal joins the elite SS *Totenkopf* (Death's Head) division. Depicted as an opportunist rather than an ideological Nazi, Smekal seizes an opportunity to advance his career under the new regime. The family patriarch Jakob Kaufmann describes Smekal's decision to join the SS as: "*Der Sohn einer Hausbesorgerin ergreift seine Chance*" (A housekeeper's son grabs his chance) (DVD

22:45). Smekal symbolizes the working-class Austrians who embraced National Socialism as an opportunity to move beyond the limits imposed by class-based social stratification.

Indeed, Smekal represents the *Mitläufer*, those who ran with the crowd and sought career and social advancement regardless of who was persecuted. The character also provides Murnberger with the opportunity to comment on current attitudes in Austria on the Holocaust. Agreeing with Ruzowitzky, he notes: “Austria has certainly not worked through its history in the way that Germany has, Austria has long liked to portray itself as Hitler's first victim” (Dowling). The depiction of Smekal as an ordinary, working-class Austrian who consciously decides to join with the Nazis in the attempt to better his own life speaks to the ordinariness of those complicit in the Holocaust. Smekal can be seen as representing the Austrian ‘everyman’ despite not being the hero of the film.

Murnberger reasserts the intrinsic difference between Viktor Kaufmann and Rudi Smekal. Despite the coded references to Austrian class structure and Kaufmann being from a wealthy family, Murnberger hints at the protagonist having an underlying Jewish-Yiddish character that implies a difference that can never be overcome no matter how German – Austrian acculturated the protagonist may be. In the opening scene in which the viewer encounters a reluctant yet determined Kaufmann dressed in a concentration camp uniform pulling Smekal from the wreckage of their downed plane, Kaufmann is portrayed as talking with God. It is a scene that evokes Tevye from *Fiddler on the Roof* (MGM, dir. Norman Jewison, 1971). Kaufmann is heard saying “*Oh lieber Gott, warum*

*hast du ihn verrecken lassen? Warum tust du mir das an? Warum? Na ja*” (Oh dear God, why did you let him die? Why are you doing this to me? Why? Oh well) (DVD 04:25). Underneath the sophisticated exterior of the acculturated Western Jewish male is a simple man, reminiscent of the *Ostjuden* (Jews from Eastern Europe), who in times of distress talks to his God. Later, when the viewer encounters the suave Kaufmann through flashback, it is as if Murnberger is saying rather tongue in cheek that clothing makes the man – a concept that is revisited later in the film when Kaufmann dons an SS uniform as part of his elaborate impersonation hoax.

When the SS invade the Kaufmann home and search in vain for what is believed to be a lost painting by Michelangelo, Murnberger depicts the assault of National Socialism on the Jewish family. Jakob Kaufmann, the patriarch, is unable to physically protect his wife or son from the Nazis when the SS invade his home. Viktor Kaufmann, the son, is unable to render any assistance to his mother. Up until this point, Murnberger follows a standard trajectory of portraying a Jewish family – typical of the era – powerless to affect their own destiny when up against the power of the Nazi regime. Suddenly, however, the dynamics of the film change and Murnberger employs elements of the ‘caper’ crime-mystery genre. The SS offer the Kaufmann family safe passage to Switzerland in exchange for the Michelangelo painting, which unleashes a series of unexpected twists and turns as the Jewish hero attempts to outwit and outlast the Nazis and even get the girl.

When the Nazis renege on their deal to offer the Kaufmann family safe passage to Switzerland, and the Michelangelo sketch later turns out to be a forgery, Murnberger

propels his characters into an audacious series of events. When Viktor Kaufmann is released from a labour camp to locate the authentic sketch, he outwits the unsophisticated Smekal after the plane that is transporting them to Berlin is shot down by Polish partisans. Kaufmann switches their clothes and pretending to be Smekal the SS officer, while Smekal dressed in a concentration camp uniform tries in vain to convince everyone of his true identity. Here Murnberger reveals a little insight into the power of the uniform and the allure of National Socialism when Kaufmann says to Smekal: *“Ich glaub ich kann so langsam verstehen, warum du so glücklich bist in dieser schönen Uniform. Auch wenn du nur ein kleiner Furz bist in diesem Riesenwahnsinn.”* (I’m starting to understand why you’re so happy in this uniform, even if you are only a little fart in this madhouse) (DVD 1:06:14). The sharply tailored clothing, indicative of the power held by the Fascist militarized male, is revealed by Kaufmann, the Jewish protagonist.

Clothing, however, is just one element that helps Kaufmann in his guise as an SS officer. When a suspicious officer starts to believe that this may be a case of stolen identity, he demands that pants be dropped to show that the circumcised male is the true Jew. Smekal, dressed in the concentration camp uniform, is made to go first and when it is revealed that he is circumcised protests, *“Das war wegen einer Verengung als Bub! Eine Phimose! Er ist der Jude!”* (That was due to a constriction when I was a boy. Phimosis! He’s the Jew!) (DVD 57:58). Smekal, defeated and beaten as a result, vows to get even with the identity-switching Kaufmann. In a commentary on both Jewish and Germanophone masculinity, Kaufmann warns him, *“Ach, du hast doch keine Chance,*

*Rudi. Ich brauch doch nur irgendjemandem in deiner Baracke zu sagen, wer du wirklich bist und du bist tot*" (Ah, you have no chance, Rudi. I only have to tell someone in your barracks who you really are and you are dead) (DVD 1:01:15).

The implication, of course, is that Rudi would be killed by Jewish inmates in his barracks once they discovered his true identity as an SS officer. Yet this is the text from the original German-language edition. The subtitles for North American audiences reveal a different message to audiences: "Ah, I wouldn't become Rudi Smekal again. Think about it, you'll be the SS officer who took a beating from a Jew." Rather than emphasizing the Jewish prisoners exacting revenge by murdering an SS officer, the translation error in the North American edition insinuates that the ultimate assault on an SS officer's dignity would be to be physically beaten and outwitted by a Jew. However, in this fantasy realm Murnberger creates, Jewish masculinity can be unwittingly performed by a non-Jew, while Fascist masculinity can be performed by a Jewish male as long as he has the correct accoutrements and enough *chutzpah*.

Indeed, the choice of Moritz Bleibtreu to play the lead protagonist is not without significance. Born in Munich to Austrian actress Monica Bleibtreu and German actor Hans Brenner, Bleibtreu blurs the boundary between German and Austrian identities. Arguably one of the most recognizable German actors in screen culture today, Bleibtreu previously acted in *Lola rennt* (*Run Lola Run*, Sony Pictures, dir. Tom Tykwer, 1998), *Munich* (DreamWorks SKG, dir. Stephen Spielberg, 2005), and *Der Baader Meinhof Komplex* (*The Baader Meinhof Complex*, dir. Uli Edel, 2008). Bleibtreu also portrayed Joseph Goebbels in *Jud Süß - Film ohne Gewissen* (*Jud Süß: Rise and Fall*, Novotny &

Novotny GmbH, dir. Oskar Roehler, 2010), which took interpretative license with historical fact as well as characterization and was booed and jeered at several points during its screening at the 60<sup>th</sup> Berlin International Film Festival, the Berlinale. Defending the artistic interpretation that Roehler took with historical details as well as with his narrative inventions, Bleibtreu declared: "It's about time we Germans were able to live our history in a freer way, so that we can emancipate ourselves from it to some extent. This does not mean that we have to forget it - not at all. That's why we make these films" (O'Brien-Coker 1). Clearly Bleibtreu feels that the normalization of representation in Holocaust-themed films is an important element both cinematically and nationally, making him a natural fit for the lead protagonist in *Mein bester Feind* (even if it played at the 61<sup>st</sup> Berlinale where his performance as Nazi Germany's head propagandist in *Jud Süß* was still relatively fresh in the minds of cinema goers). The choice of Bleibtreu to play the Jewish protagonist Viktor Kaufmann was a risk, which could account for the creation of the de-contextualized cover design for the 2012 DVD release.

Murnberger is able to provide viewers with both a fantasy ending whereby Viktor Kaufmann, his fiancé and his mother not only survive the Nazis but retrieve the priceless Michelangelo sketch, thereby securing their future. Jewish masculinity is seen in positive and affirming terms. Viktor's father Jakob Kaufmann, who is only physically present in the opening scenes of the film, is depicted with the fullness of a major and influential patriarchal figure, specifically coded as Jewish. Jakob Kaufmann is remembered as a man of goodness and honour, one from whom other inmates sought comfort, solace and

emotional support. Before Viktor is released from a concentration camp in order to locate the missing Michelangelo sketch, an older inmate tells him: *“War ich in Mauthausen. Sie erzählten viel von Deinem Vater. Man ist zu ihm gekommen, war am Ende, gegangen ist man mit Hoffnung wieder und zuversicht. Wie er es gemacht hat – nur der Ewige, er sei gelobt – weiß es. Stolz kannst du sein, auf Deinen Vater”* (I was in Mauthausen. They talked a lot about your father there. People came to him at the end of their wits and left with fresh hope and confidence. How he did that, only the Eternal One, praise His name, knows. You can be proud of your father) (DVD 43:46).

Once again, a comparison to Primo Levi’s characterization of concentration camp inmates is central. Levi describes a man of similar character in the Auschwitz-Birkenau Lager: *“...and Robert, a professor at the Sorbonne who spread courage and trust all around him, spoke five languages, wore himself out recording everything in his prodigious memory, and had he lived would have answered the questions which I do not know how to answer”* (Levi 83). This is the first significant indicator of the elder Kaufmann being depicted in the manner of the biblical patriarchs.

The second marker occurs when Murnberger reveals that the elder Kaufmann has been looking out for his family even in death. Having made multiple forgeries of the Michelangelo sketch, Jakob Kaufmann hid the original behind the backing of his own painted portrait. In an ending where the Jewish hero gets the girl and has his mother returned from a concentration camp, all that is left to complete the fantasy ending is for the Kaufmann family to retrieve the Michelangelo sketch and financially secure their future. Demonstrating his patriarchal protection of his family, Jakob Kaufmann leaves a

simple yet prophetic message with his fellow inmates to be passed along to his son: “*Verliere mich nicht aus den Augen*” (Don’t let me out of your sight) (DVD 44:55). Smekal, who succeeded in getting possession of the Kaufmann’s art gallery with its extensive collection, is only too glad to return the portrait of Jakob Kaufmann as a gesture of goodwill.

Murnberger presents this as an empty gesture representative of the general Austrian response to issues of restitution and *Wiedergutmachung* (reparations). Responding to Viktor Kaufmann’s request to buy back the family portrait, Smekal shrugs his shoulders replies: “*Ich kann euch sicher einer Entschädigung zahlen... irgendwann. Es war nicht leicht. Der Aufbau und alles. Das waren schwere Zeiten... Brauchst aber nicht glauben, dass ich nicht weiß, was ein schlechtes Gewissen ist*” (I can pay you compensation... sometime. It was not easy. The whole recovery and everything. Those were tough times...Don't think I don't know what it is to have a bad conscience) (DVD 1:34:55). Murnberger describes this specific episode as an apology without any attempt at making amends. “Austrians have believed that it's enough to say that and to do nothing,” he claims (*Spiegel* Interview). Smekal represents the Austrian ‘everyman’ through whom Murnberger offers his social commentary about the tension between Austria’s self-perception in the aftermath of the Second World War as the first victim of National Socialism to its more recent conceptualization of having shared responsibility in the crimes of the Nazi regime.

The third factor which solidifies Jacob Kaufmann being coded in the style of a Jewish patriarch is revealed through the fact that he does not survive to be reunited with

his family. Just as Moses was not able to enter the Promised Land after leading his people through the desert, similarly Jakob Kaufmann cannot enter the new era with his family. These three factors firmly position the Kaufmann patriarch not only as an example of bourgeois Jewish masculinity, but also as someone who is coded in the tradition of the Jewish patriarchs. The brilliance of Murnberger's film lies in the ease with which conceptualisations of masculinity are performed, exchanged and re-invented by the male protagonists. Indeed masculinity is focus of the ending, which seems designed to leave viewers questioning the Holocaust related issues of restitution, legacy, de-Nazification, and rebuilding Jewish families in the aftermath of the Second World War.

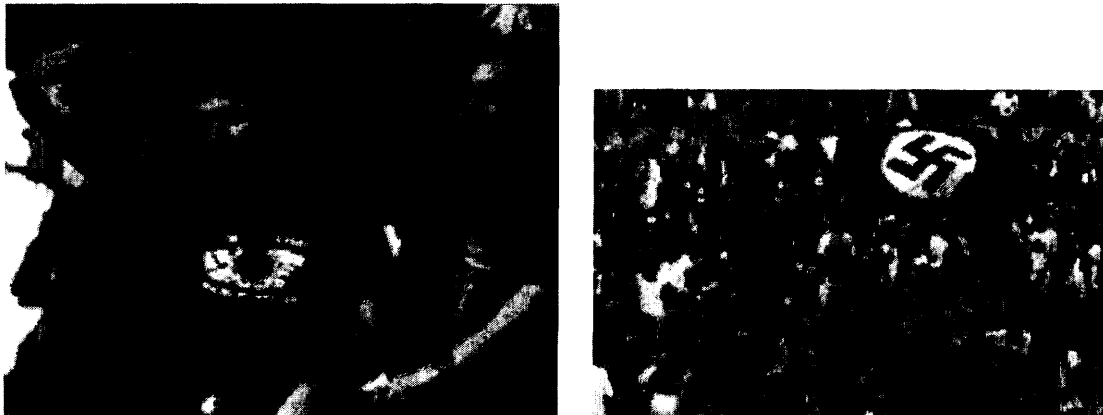
The six films examined in these two chapters offer insight into the portrayal of Jewish and Germanophone men in contemporary productions that represent a cinematic arc. I posit that the portrayal of Jewish and Germanophone men in these films has undergone a process of normalization surrounding the construction of masculinity, particularly as one witnesses a normalization of the Holocaust in Germanophone screen culture. Whether it is the populist, working-class male, the traditional bourgeois male, the militarized male or neo-Fascist male, understanding masculinity involves the complex analysis of numerous societal and cultural values. One of the challenges to scholars working in the field of masculinity studies in the twenty-first century is to explore and analyse different constructions of masculinity within different cultural, ethnic, religious, linguistic and geographic groups of men and provide the context for the healthy and diverse

representation of masculinity. In the concluding chapter I identify some of these challenges that may well create a crisis for a new generation of young men or at the very least will add to our understanding of post-Holocaust conceptualizations of masculinity.

### **Conclusion: The Continuing Symbiosis of Germanophone and Jewish Masculinities**

Yet unlike the boys of my father's pre-war generation, I had the Holocaust to contend with as well.

Warren Rosenberg



Euro 2012, one of football's most anticipated and prestigious competitions, routinely demonstrated that the issues addressed in this dissertation about the effects of Nazi and Holocaust models of masculinity are more alive than ever. The event displayed the deeply rooted presence and allure of Fascist accoutrements amongst segments of the fans. As illustrated above, a male fan (left image) publically gave the Hitler salute in support of the Ukrainian team, while young, predominately male fans (right image) unfurled a swastika flag in the stands. These images shocked the Western European media.<sup>73</sup> Florian Schubert, a German Internet reporter understandably appalled at the

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<sup>73</sup> The BBC reported, "On 14 April [2012] at the Metalist stadium in Kharkiv in Ukraine – one of the host cities for Euro 2012 – massed ranks of as many as 2,000 fans in the terraces for a match between two of Ukraine's biggest teams gave the Nazi salute to their team." (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-18192375>)

blatant display of National Socialist symbols, declared: "And all this went on in a city where under Nazism more than half a million people were murdered by the German occupiers -- almost the entire Jewish population (more than 400,000 men, women and children) but also more than 140,000 Russian prisoners of war."<sup>74</sup> The longevity of National Socialist ideology and its manifestation through fan behavior by segments of the football viewing public continues to haunt society as well as cast a racist shadow over sport and human behavior.

Throughout this text, I have demonstrated that the Holocaust, as an unprecedented event in human history, not only physically ruptured modern civilization by the murder of six million Jewish individuals, but also challenged societal values and conceptualizations. Constructions of masculinity in Germanophone and Jewish men were irrevocably challenged and altered by the Holocaust. Indeed, the Holocaust presented a crisis of unparalleled magnitude to masculinity as well as to the generations of men that were born during and after the Second World War. Just as the Holocaust positioned Jewish and Germanophone men at opposite ends of a dichotomous paradigm, it continues to symbiotically link them together, in manifestations and relationships that play themselves out whether on the football field, or in literary and cinematic representations. How these situations are understood in the broader context of history will be a dynamic and vital aspect of masculinity and gender studies in the future.

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<sup>74</sup> (<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/german-fan-behavior-at-euro-2012-sanctioned-a-841082.html>)

Utilizing an interdisciplinary approach, I have chronicled the development of models of Germanophone and Jewish masculinity that developed in Germanophone Europe following the Second World War. By providing detailed analysis of literary works and screen culture productions, I provide a means for understanding the complex relationship that Germanophone and Jewish men have to each other, the Holocaust, and to the legacy of National Socialism. As I have shown in Chapter One, conceptualizations of masculinity in Germanophone Europe were redefined – both from external cultural forces as well as developing organically. The Western Hero, the Footballer and the Softie represented new constructs of controlled masculinity in the wake of the devastation caused by the militarized Fascist male and National Socialism. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Footballer continues to be an extremely important construct of masculinity among segments of Germanophone Europe.

As I illustrated in Chapter One, Almog Cohen and Itay Shecter represent a new generation of Jewish Israeli males, football players of international stature who have made a conscious decision to live and work in European countries while maintaining deep ties to their country of birth. Born and raised in Israel – the only country in the world with a Jewish majority – Cohen’s and Shecter’s European-based careers required that they transition to being part of a minority community for the first time in their lives.<sup>75</sup> Both players retain strong ties to Israel and represent the globalization of sport,

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75 Almog Cohen joined the German football club Nuremberg in July 2010 and continues to play there. At the time of writing, Shecter was signed to the German team Kaiserslautern in July 2011, and since August 2012 has been on a one year loan to the British premier league team Swansea. However, Shecter remains signed to Kaiserslautern. In February 2012, Shecter was subjected to antisemitic taunts by some

and the influence of competing models of masculinity within the sphere of sports. In the future, the intersection of Jewish Israeli masculinity with Germanophone constructs will become increasingly important.

After the widespread, popular models of Germanophone masculinity examined in Chapter One, I analyzed the memoirs of three exceptional and prominent Jewish men, who show the specificity of a dwindling segment of the Jewish community, and Jewish masculinity, in Germanophone Europe. The models of masculinity discussed in Chapter Two – Paul Spiegel, Simon Wiesenthal, and Marcel Reich-Ranicki – are distinctive yet united in the familial, cultural and linguistic connections they shared with the countries they remained in following the Second World War. They demonstrate the ongoing presence of Jewish masculinity in Germanophone Europe, even in the face of daunting challenges.

Moving from the realm of culturally prominent men and father figures, Chapter Three provides a nuanced understanding of the genre of *Väterliteratur* and the transgenerational effects of National Socialism on the descendants of Nazi perpetrators. Chapter Three also demonstrates the continued cultural relevance of *Väterliteratur* with recent additions from third-generation descendants of Nazi perpetrators. As descendants will not be able to personally question their relatives who lived through the National Socialist era for much longer, *Väterliteratur* may be coming to an end. Whether literary contributions to *Väterliteratur* continue to be developed by third and fourth generation

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Kaiserslautern fans, which led to approximately ten young men being banned from the Kaiserslautern home stadium and swift condemnation from German football officials.

descendants of Nazi perpetrators, and how such works may affect conceptualizations of Germanophone masculinity remains to be seen. Similarly, as I demonstrated in my analysis of Katrin Himmler's work of *Väterliteratur*, the stage has been set for further inquiry into the interconnectedness between Israelis, the descendants of Holocaust survivors who chose to live in Germanophone Europe, and the descendants of Nazi perpetrators.

Depictions of Jewish masculinities in screen culture as discussed in Chapters Four and Five, particularly in relation to the Holocaust, will also be informed by the gradual decline in the number of living witnesses to the genocide of European Jewry. As we enter an era in which there will be fewer and eventually no Holocaust survivors alive (as in the era upon us, when the last of the perpetrators have died or will die within the next few years) representations of Jewish masculinity may become increasingly diverse. As shown in Chapter Five, Holocaust survivors have often lent a moral authority to projects such as *Die Fälscher* and *Mein bester Feind*. An unexpected outcome of this may well be the normalization of depictions of the Holocaust in screen culture; removed from a sphere sanctified by the survivors, cultural productions enter a new period where less importance is attached to the moral authority issued by survivors of the Holocaust. Whether Holocaust-themed films continue to develop to include satirical and comedic representations will be an important factor in the normalization of the genre.

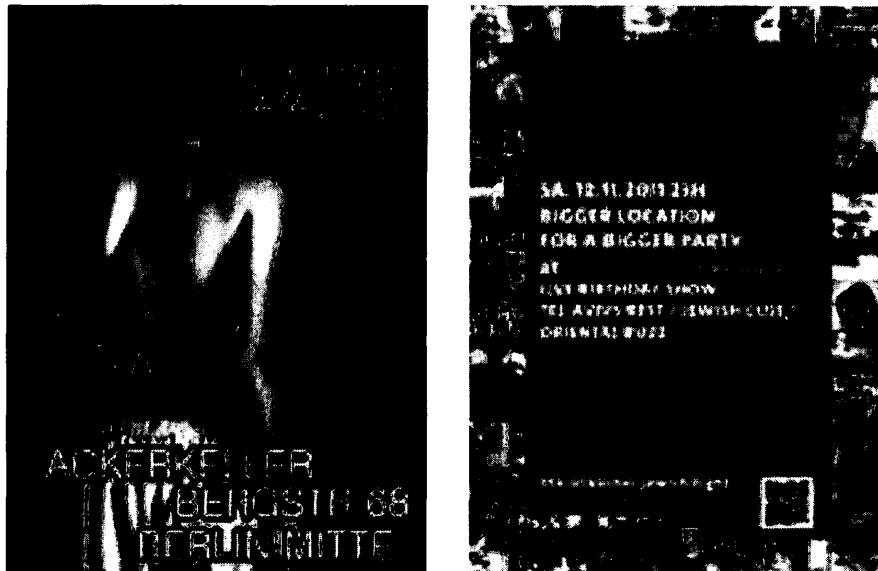
Throughout this project I have been guided by an awareness of the fluid nature of conceptualizations of masculinity and a belief in the intrinsic interconnectedness

between Germanophone and Jewish constructs of masculinity. Charting the re-masculinization of Germanophone men following the Second World War and the new constructs of Jewish masculinity in the wake of the Holocaust has shown that masculinity is continually at risk of new crises. Similarly, it is vulnerable to being appropriated by right-wing ideologies, extreme nationalism, and racism. Yet as I have demonstrated through my analysis of survivor memoirs, *Väterliteratur*, and screen culture, masculinity can be shaped by culture, education and critical thought into responsible, controlled and inclusive constructs of masculinity that can benefit civil society. As Heinrich Heine is credited with saying: “The men of action are, after all, only the unconscious instruments of the men of thought.”

### **Epilogue: Future Challenges of Jewish Masculinity(ies) Interacting with Germanophone Masculinity(ies)**

In the Catholic, Alpine nation [Austria] vigorous men like Arnold Schwarzenegger and Felix Baumgartner have always been appealing. And at the other extreme, in the city of Freud, the counter-images, like those by Schiele or the self-deformations of the Viennese Actionists, were especially radical exercises.

Spiegel editorial offering reasons why Vienna's Leopold Museum premiered the progressive exhibit "Nackte Männer. Von 1800 bis heute" (Nude Men. From 1800 to the Present Day) in 2012, ahead of museums in Berlin or Paris.



In Berlin, Frankfurt and Vienna, Israelis are becoming an increasingly recognizable minority. Avi Pichton confirms this observation: "There is indeed a literal and actual demographic upheaval in the shape of the return of tens of thousands of young Israeli Jews, if not yet to Poland then to Germany and other Western European countries. Israelis constitute a new 'ethnic' minority on the continent, only part of which is

conscious of its historic significance” (Pichton 80). Although post-unification Berlin enjoyed a diverse and vibrant nightlife culture, 2007-2008 saw the emergence of a specific Jewish-Israeli culture. Berlin became the destination location of young Israeli gays who brought their own concepts of masculinity, distinctive club culture and music with them as seen in the promotional cards at the opening to this section. Distributed widely throughout Berlin, the promotion cards for *Meshugge!* (pictured at the beginning of this section) advertise a night club event for gay Jews and their friends. With provocative images, such as of the fit, smooth-bodied young man with *tefillin* wrapped around his left arm in the left-hand side image, *Meshugge!* promotes itself as an unkosher, Jewqueer event. Similarly, the image on the right boldly declares “*Heute sind wir alle Juden*” (Today, we are all Jews), expressing the bold confidence and identity of Israeli Jews used to being the majority culture. The Jewish fascination with Berlin and Germany transcends time and geography.

The dynamics and ramifications of this intersection of the constructions of Israeli masculinity with Germanophone masculinity will become an area for future academic research and discourse. While exact numbers are difficult to ascertain, since many Israelis enter Germany on German or European passports, there is a visible Israeli community living in Germanophone Europe. As the member states of the European Union have grown over time, so too have the number of Israelis eligible for European passports. Their eligibility was dependent on a parent or grandparent having being a citizen of these countries before the Second World War. “Consequently, a vibrant and visible Israeli presence – composed primarily of children and grandchildren of Holocaust

survivors – exists in Berlin and Frankfurt” (Doron). Such encounters indicate interaction with Germanophone and Jewish Israeli constructs of masculinity and sexuality.

Similarly, the cultural expressions and literary works by members of the renewed Jewish communities in Germany and Austria will also factor into future discourses on both Germanophone and Jewish masculinities. Whereas the Jewish community of pre-Holocaust Germanophone Europe was largely German-aculturated and liberal, those demographics have shifted dramatically. The Jewish communities of Germany and Austria have been re-established with the immigration of Jews from the former Soviet Union. Many of these new arrivals did not speak or read the German language or grow up with the German *Bildung* values and ideals. In addition, Jews arriving from parts of the former Soviet Union, such as Russia or Ukraine, may have had little formal Jewish education, or in cases of Jews from Bukharan in Central Asia, a predominately Orthodox orientation. Integrating these immigrants into a German-Jewish identity has been a primary goal of the *Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland* (Central Council for Jews in Germany). Yet the cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds of these Jewish individuals from regions in the former Soviet Union will also factor into the discourse on expressions of masculinity.

One witnesses the tension between new expressions of “German Jewishness” and subsequent expressions of masculinity with the wider Germanophone community in the performance work of Oliver Polak. Commenting on the tension evident in Polak’s work, Michal Friedlander writes: “The theme of uncomfortable German-Jew/non-Jewish interface is the basis of Oliver Polak’s brash, largely autobiographical comedy. A 30-

something Jewish man who grew up in the backwaters of Papenburg, Polak is a Jew making fun of Jews and even using the Holocaust as comedic material. Is the audience allowed to laugh?" (Friedlander 71). Whether Polak's personal brand of humour and wit is an isolated case or indicative of a larger cultural trend remains a project for future consideration on conceptualizations of Jewish and Germanophone masculinities.<sup>76</sup> How contemporary and future generations of German Jewish men define themselves, and how cultural influences from North America as well as Israel affect them remains another important project.

Masculinity studies might also consider the influence of the European Union on conceptualizations of Germanophone and Jewish masculinities. With the integration of European countries there exists the potential construction of a transnational European identity as well as the export of soft masculinity constructs such as metrosexual identities to other European nation states. The emergence of a cohesive European identity may well lead to the construction of a specific model of European masculinity. One would expect such a model to link characteristics of identity – and subsequently constructs of gender – to Europe as a unified region similar to that of the United States, rather than to a specific regional country. While it may well be too early to discuss such a conceptualization, it is not too early to anticipate the development of it. Unless severe changes affect the dominant political structures, such as a lurch to the far right on a widespread scale or a significant decline in the economic power of the Eurozone, any

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<sup>76</sup> Polak's irreverent humour is reminiscent of Jewish American comic tradition exemplified by comedians such as Sarah Silverman, Jon Stewart, Jerry Seinfeld, and Joan Rivers. Although he is an anomaly in Germany, and his humour references specific German cultural and societal happenings, Polak may represent a Jewish-American cultural influence upon the German Jewish community.

specific development of a European masculinity may well be a variation of transnational masculinity. Brandes notes that even the development of the metrosexual – the urban-dwelling, heterosexual male, who embraces characteristics frequently associated with stereotypical gay men such as a nuanced sense of contemporary fashion, shopping and consumer culture – is simply a variation of transnational business masculinity. The power of this model of hegemonic masculinity lies partly in its ability to absorb and assimilate new patterns within it.

The most culturally and politically relevant challenge is undoubtedly the integration of the Islamic minorities, many of whom in Germanophone Europe are of Turkish origin. In February 2011, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited Germany and cautioned the approximately three million Turks and Turkish-Germans living there about German acculturation. Speaking in Dusseldorf, where he called upon the children of Turkish immigrants to learn the Turkish language before German, he commented “Yes, integrate yourselves into German society but don't assimilate yourselves. No one has the right to deprive us of our culture and our identity” ( Özlem and Reimann). Erdogan’s provocative speech garnered a rebuke from openly gay German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle, who countered that the acquisition of the German language is of primordial importance to integration. The linguistic, cultural and religious interconnectedness of the Turkish minority with hegemonic German masculinity will be a major element in future discourses on masculinities.

Masculinity is a fluid construct adapting and changing with specific forces. Often these factors are connected to, as Connell describes, the “crisis tendency.” How future societal, political and economic mechanisms challenge dominant expressions of masculinity remains to be seen, but Masculinity Studies will undoubtedly be a robust field of inquiry. The sphere which attracts my particular attention – the intersection of Germanophone and Jewish masculinity – will be affected by numerous cultural and social forces, and depicted by screen culture and through literary works. Whether future conceptualizations of Jewish masculinity in Germanophone Europe mirror Moses Mendelssohn’s credo – that one should be a Jew in the home and a mensch in the street – and whether neo-Fascist expressions of Germanophone masculinity will gain traction, will be for future generations to decide.

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