

# **Flieder, 1945 / Lilac, 2015**

**Visibility, Memory, Gender: Writing and Re-  
Imagining National Socialist Atrocity for the Stage.**

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## Abstract

This dissertation examines the case of two satellite concentration camps of Buchenwald in the German towns of Altenburg and Meuselwitz and the fate of the – mostly female – prisoners, forced to work in the factories of the arms manufacturer HASAG. The dissertation itself consists of two parts: In the stage play *Flieder, 1945 / Lilac, 2015*, I investigate the history and memory of the camps, factories, and the community which produced those through the frayed relationships of three generations of German women and a group of prisoners attempting to survive the camp.

The commentary *Visibility, Memory, Gender: Writing and Re-imagining National Socialist Atrocity for the Stage* addresses the history of the camps in Altenburg and Meuselwitz, documents the creative process, and engages with various theatrical and filmic representation of National Socialist atrocity. Particular focus is placed on questions of visibility of atrocity, the role of the ‘bystander’, and the female experience of atrocity, as well as the implications of the legacy of National Socialism for next-generation Germans.

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# Contents

<b>Flieder, 1945 / Lilac, 2015</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Visibility, Memory, Gender: Writing and Re-Imagining National Socialist Atrocity for the Stage.</b>	<b>129</b>
FOREWORD	130
The Bare Facts: Altenburg and Meuselwitz	132
The 'Strands': Visibility, Memory, Gender	139
<b>I. HIDDEN VISIBILITIES: COMPLICITY, VIOLENCE, AND SPACE.</b>	<b>145</b>
1. Blank Spaces: Altenburg Today and Meuselwitz' Other Past.	151
Great Interest: Entanglement and Complicity	155
Lilac, Nurture, Family	158
2. Violent Spaces in Meuselwitz: "I have no objections..."	164
"Only Provisional..."	166
Return to Normality	170
3. Staged Violence in Meuselwitz: "At least they didn't clap."	177
The Kommandant	179
'716 Until He Was Killed': The Execution	182
4. Hidden Violence in Altenburg: "This was a love story"	190
Sexualised Violence in the Concentration Camp System	197
Sexualised Violence in Altenburg	202
Writing the 'Unspeakable'	206
Excursus: "Untrue, Offensive, Cheap". The Representability of the 'Holocaust'	215

## **II. THE MAKING OF A NARRATIVE: ‘HOLOCAUST DRAMA’ AND THE DRAFTING OF MEMORIES. 234**

### **5. The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: The Representation of Good Germans, Bad Germans and Bystanders. 242**

The “Banality of Evil” 245

The ‘Good’ German 253

Bystanders to History 261

### **6. “He Won’t Shoot You Because He Enjoys You Too Much”: The Representation of Women. 270**

Female Prisoners at the Centre 273

Female Prisoners and their Testimonies 284

Female Perpetrators 291

### **7. “With Bare Hands, With Bare Heart, With Bare Skin”: The Depiction of Agency and Defiance. 302**

Imagining Militancy 305

Story-telling as Defiance 311

Cooking Cats: Agency and Defiance in Testimonies 317

### **8. “Kein Vergeben, Kein Vergessen”: Trauma, Memory, and the Making of Memorials in Germany. 326**

Master Narrative(s) 331

Micro Narratives 343

“Don’t Feed the Monster”: Silence and Narrative 349

## **CONCLUSION 360**

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY 362**

## **Flieder, 1945 / Lilac, 2015**

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

This play is based on research both into the satellite concentration camps in the communities of Altenburg and Meuselwitz in 1944/45 where thousands of concentration camp prisoners, mostly women, were forced to work for the private arms manufacturer HASAG, as well as my engagement with the history of dramatic representations of National Socialist atrocities and genocide of the last 70 years. This doubled gaze is present throughout the play: it is bilingual in German and English; the characters of Clara and her grandmother as a young woman, Lore, are doubled; as are Clara's boyfriend Mike and the Russian prisoner Andrey; action taking place on stage is also doubled on screen. The events of the play are conveyed and portrayed through Clara. They are her imagined memories, based on the stories she was told and the reproduced images she has seen. She writes her partner and herself into those memories. Thus, there is no need for a naturalistic portrayal; however, it can be used occasionally as one mode of play amongst many.

As a note for the staging, the action takes mostly place in the imagined area in which the camp and factory were located in the 1940s, but in their abandoned, derelict form of 2015 which Clara visits in one of the first scenes: a broken wall, the remains of the scaffold behind the gauze, possibly some rubble and abandoned structures, weeds. The factory area should be separated from this, possibly through a walk through the audience or in the audience, at least for the first two acts of the play. Above the previous camp area, as in one of those GDR multi-storey buildings, is Andrea's kitchen, ideally as 'real' as possible, with a table, a fridge, a small TV. Unless otherwise specified, Andrea is always in this space, cooking, eating, preparing food, and watching the proceedings (as a general rule, this applies to all the characters. If they are not in a scene, they can watch it, whether as characters or as performers taking a break). It would be ideal if Andrea could cook real coffee, fry eggs, make toast, with the smells on stage. Somewhere, disconnected from all other spaces, is Mike's window to New York. It should be visible from the stage.

The scene titles can be included in a performance, but are not necessary to it.

The Polish phrase "Mamo, nie płacz nie", in combination with the Hail Mary prayer, has been taken from the second movement of Henryk Górecki's *Symphony No.3, Op. 36 – Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* (1977). The poem which Andrey translates for Lore and quotes from at various moments in the play is Marina Tsevetseva's "Whence cometh such warmth, so tender?" (1916). The German translation of the original Russian is by Gerhard Hacker, the English translation from Gerhard Hacker and myself. I would like to thank Maciej Burdynowski and Gerhard Hacker for the Polish and Russian translations. Various other material that is quoted from in the play or inspiration has been drawn from, comes from sources discussed in the accompanying commentary.

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

CLARA GRUBER	a blond woman, in her mid-thirties (2015)	Same actress
LORE GRUBER	Clara's grandmother as a young blond woman (but really dark haired) (1944), in her early twenties	
MIKE	Clara's African American partner (2015)	Same actor
ANDREY	a young Russian prisoner (1944)	
ANDREA GRUBER	Clara's mother, in her fifties (2015), dark hair.	
ELSE RUMPERT	Lore's dark-haired sister (but really blond), SS auxiliary (1944), in her mid-twenties	
OLD WOMAN	rambler (dark-haired) (2015)	
BAUMANN	SS camp commander (1944)	
PEPIK	A young Czech-Jewish prisoner (1944)	
AGNIESZKA	A Polish political prisoner, 14 years old (1944)	
HALINA	A Polish political prisoner, 16 years old (1944)	
SULAIKA	A Sinti prisoner in her late twenties (1944)	
ANIKO	A Hungarian-Jewish prisoner, in her early twenties (1944)	
MAYOR		

SETTING: Camp area, factory hall and store room, Andrea's kitchen, New York

TIME: 1944-45; 2015

/ OVERLAPPING DIALOGUE

// INTERRUPTING DIALOGUE

Spoken language is in black, language to be translated for the audience is in red underneath; dialogue that is not to be interpreted for the audience appears in translation in footnotes. Dialogue in [...] indicates clarification that does not need to be included in a stage version.



## **I. AUTUMN**

## 1. PROLOGUE

BLACK. SOUND OF NEW YORK. WINE POURING IN A GLASS. EVENING LIGHT ON MIKE AND CLARA SITTING IN A WINDOW (OR FIRE ESCAPE), REMOVED FROM THE REST OF THE STAGE, THAT CAN BE EASILY ISOLATED.

MIKE: Stories.

CLARA: Good start.

MIKE: Will you let me even begin?

CLARA: Sorry, professor. Go on.

MIKE: Thanks. Jesus. So. Stories. They are pretty much everywhere, if you look for them, really look. You come here to study literature, maybe you told your family you're studying English, even though I'll have you read Russian poetry before the term ends...

CLARA: (SEDUCTIVELY) "Whence cometh such warmth, so tender?"

MIKE: Jesus, woman!

CLARA: Sorry.

MIKE: ... Before the term ends, because 'English' and 'literature' are in no way synonymous, and you might think that you find stories mostly in books. But we'll go beyond books in this course, we'll look for narrative-making in the ever-changing billboards outside college and down the road, we'll examine the narrative-making of Fox news and how an unarmed black teenager can pose a mortal threat to a large white man armed with a gun who can kill this unarmed black child and still come out of this story as someone who had to fight for his life because that's apparently the kind of narrative we now weave, fuck, fuck...

PHONE RINGS.

CLARA: (CHECKS) It's my mom. (TURNS PHONE OFF) I know you're angry, I'm angry too. And I think we should share this anger with our students, definitely. But...

PHONE RINGS.

CLARA: Oh, fuck off, Mom. Sorry, baby. (ANSWERS THE PHONE)  
Hallo?

ANDREA: (PHONE) Clara?

CLARA: (PHONE) Mutti... Weißt du, wie spät es hier ist? (PAUSE)  
Mutti? (PAUSE) Mutti, ist was passiert?

CLARA: (PHONE) Mom... Do you have any idea how late it is here?  
(PAUSE) Mom? (PAUSE) Mom, did something happen?

SOUND OF PHONE. BLACK ON WINDOW.

CLARA: In the spring after the marches, after the wall, when Mom went to *that* place... [that *hospital* place... with the nurses and the sticky food] they got me to stay at Granny Lore's... In the spring. She always made something sweet for dinner, semolina pudding or rice pudding, with preserves and cinnamon sugar...

SLOWLY LIGHT ON STAGE. A KITCHEN, WITHIN AN ELEVATED INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURE, ABOVE THE STAGE. ON THE KITCHEN TABLE, A FULL GERMAN BREAKFAST: SLICED BREAD AND SAUSAGE, CHEESE, VARIOUS JAMS, TWO HARD-BOILED EGGS IN DAINTY EGG CUPS. A FRIDGE AND TV. ANDREA AT THE TABLE.

CLARA: And we'd play in Granny's garden and sit under the lilac trees, like in a cave, and I was allowed to light a candle and roast raisins on the flame... And Granny'd sing the Pirate Jenny song for me and it was so wonderfully scary, you know, I'd huddle up close to her, in my cave, and imagine the pirates coming to town...

BELOW THE KITCHEN, ON STAGE THE PRISONERS – PEPIK, ANIKO, SULAIKA, AGNIESZKA AND HALINA STAND TO ATTENTION, FROZEN IN TIME. A BROKEN WALL CENTRE STAGE, WHERE AN OFFICE BUILDING USED TO BE. SOME REMNANTS FROM A FENCE AND GATE BETWEEN THE STAGE AND THE AUDITORIUM. AT THE BACK OF THE STAGE, THERE IS A GAUZE, THAT CAN BE USED AS A PROJECTION SCREEN, BEHIND IT THE STRUCTURE OF A SCAFFOLD.

CLARA: And when I was older and all the... stuff started... the counting, and the running, and Mom and I always shouting, and I couldn't bear to be around Mom, her pastiness, her paleness, her leanness gone... She was there, you know, Granny Lore was always there, and she never asked any questions...

## 2. MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

CLARA ENTERS THE KITCHEN IN SPORTS GEAR. ANDREA SERVES A CAKE. CLARA WANTS TO POUR HERSELF A CUP OF COFFEE. MUTED FACTORY SOUNDS.

ANDREA: (TAKES THE POT FROM HER) Jetzt setz' dich doch, ich mach das.

ANDREA: (TAKES THE POT FROM HER) Just sit down, let me do that.

CLARA: (SITS DOWN) Danke, Mutti. (TRYING) Schön, dass so viele gekommen sind. Du hast die Zeremonie wirklich... schön organisiert. Obwohl der Bürgermeister wirklich mehr zu Omis // [Widerstand damals hätte sagen können.]

CLARA: (SITS DOWN) Thanks, Mom. (TRYING) It's nice so many came yesterday. You've really organised the ceremony... well. Although the mayor could have said more about Granny's // [resistance then.]

ANDREA: // Magst du dein Ei gar nicht?

ANDREA: // Don't you like your egg?

CLARA: Mutti, ich bin seit zwei Minuten wach...

CLARA: Mom, I've been awake for literally two minutes...

ANDREA: Sonst wirds doch kalt...

ANDREA: But it'll get cold...

CLARA: (TRYING) Meinst du nicht, wir sollten nochmal beim Bürgermeister // fragen, wegen...

CLARA: (TRYING) Don't you think we should ask at the mayor's office again // for...

ANDREA: // Jetzt' iss doch einfach.

ANDREA: // Why don't you just eat...

CLARA GETS THE EGG CARTON.

ANDREA: Was soll das denn?  
 ANDREA: What do you think you're doing?

CLARA: Wollt' ich dich auch grad fragen. Weißt du, was das für Eier sind? 3. Käfighaltung. Factory farming. Ganz toll, Mutti. Dir ist schon klar, wie die Viecher gehalten werden, oder?

CLARA: I wanted to ask you just the same. You know what kind of eggs these are? Grade 3. Factory farming. Great, Mom. You do realise how these animals are kept there, don't you?

ANDREA: Ja, mein Gott...  
 ANDREA: Oh well, I mean...

CLARA: Schon klar, Hauptsache billig. (TRYING) Egal. Was ich sagen wollte, wegen gestern, und Omi: Meinst du nicht, wir sollten beim // Bürgermeister...

CLARA: Yeah, yeah, as long as it's cheap, I get it... (TRYING) Anyway. What I wanted to say, about yesterday, and Granny: Don't you think we should ask // at the mayor's...

ANDREA: // Es kann halt nicht jeder Bio kaufen...  
 ANDREA: // Not everyone can buy organic...

CLARA: Jetzt hör' halt mal auf mit dem Scheißei!  
 CLARA: Will you stop about the fucking egg!

ANDREA: Du musst es ja nicht essen, wenn du nicht willst.  
 ANDREA: Well, you don't have to eat it, if you don't want to.

CLARA: Ja. Will ich auch nicht. (SITS DOWN WITH HER COFFEE)  
 CLARA: Well, I don't want to. (SITS DOWN WITH HER COFFEE)

SILENCE.

CLARA: Die schreddern die männlichen Küken bei lebendigem Leib, weißt du das? Und die Legehennen, hast du das schon mal gesehen, wie die vor sich hinvegetieren, halb verhungert, und sich gegenseitig anfressen? Offene Wunden überall, Scheiße, Eiter und Blut, // und dazwischen schön deine Eier...

CLARA: They shred the male chicks alive, do you know that, Mom? And the laying hens, have you actually seen how they vegetate, half starved, resorting to cannibalism? Open wounds, shit, pus and blood // and between all that your lovely breakfast eggs...

ANDREA: // Ist gut jetzt.  
ANDREA: // Enough already.

CLARA: Nein, ist es nicht. Du unterstützt das, wenn du die Eier kaufst. Du sagst damit klar, dass du, Andrea Gruber, das gut findest. Du findest Tierquälerei gut.

CLARA: No, it's not enough. You're supporting this when you buy these eggs. You make a clear statement that you, Andrea Gruber, think that's good. You think animal cruelty is good.

ANDREA: Das ist doch gar nicht wahr! Aber ich kann mir das mit dem Bio halt nicht leisten, kannst du das immer?

ANDREA: That is not true! But I can't afford that organic stuff, can you afford that all the time, always?

CLARA: Musst du immer Eier essen? Zwingt dich jemand dazu? Du hast zwanzig Eier in deinem Kühlschrank. Kauf halt nur sechs.

CLARA: Do you have to eat eggs all the time? Anyone forcing you? You have twenty eggs in your fridge. Go and buy only six.

ANDREA: Dann kann ich keinen Kuchen backen, und die machen grad so weiter.

ANDREA: But then I can't make a cake, and they just continue this way, regardless of what I do.

CLARA: Wunderbar. Dann wär' das ja auch geklärt. Ich will übrigens keinen Kuchen.

CLARA: Well, brilliant. Great we talked about it. By the way, I don't want any cake.

CLARA LEAVES THE TABLE, TAKING HER PHONE OUT. ANDREA REMAINS, ALONE, WITH THE CAKE. BEGINS TO EAT IT MECHANICALLY, WATCHING THE FOLLOWING SCENE BELOW. THE FACTORY SOUNDS REMAIN MUTED.

### 3. LILAC

AN OLD WOMAN IN A LARGE COAT AND WITH A PLASTIC 'LIDL'-BAG STROLLS ACROSS THE HALF-LIT STAGE. SHE MUTTERS TO HERSELF, POINTING.

OLD WOMAN: Flieder... Johannisbeer, Himbeer, Brombeer.

OLD WOMAN: Lilac. Redcurrant. Raspberry. Blackberry.

SHE POINTS TO PEPIK IN A LOW SPOTLIGHT (BERRY AREA) WITH HIS BACK TO THE AUDIENCE. HE HOLDS HIS CAP IN HIS HANDS.

OLD WOMAN: Tafelapfel, Apfeljungbaum, Bohnapfel, Petersbirne, Luisenbirne...

OLD WOMAN: Dessert apple, young apple, winter apple, Peterpear, Louisapear...

SHE POINTS TO ANIKO, SULAIKA, AGNIESZKA AND HALINA IN THE APPLE&PEAR AREA. CLARA SPEAKS TO THE PHONE, POSSIBLY FILMING.

CLARA: (PHONE) This is the place, this was always the place, I first realised, in this place, the lilac bushes, behind the lilac bushes, everything here, later, that is much later, behind the bushes, in the rain, much later, much, much later, but here, the bushes, is where I first realised, I first realised how she, what she, did here, running, not walking, always running, then, plaits, locks, skinhead, *we'll get you, fucking cunt*, running.

MIKE COMES DOWN. BECOMES ANDREY. STANDS NEXT TO PEPIK.

CLARA: (PHONE) But not then. Much, much later. Not walking, running. She taught me that, Gran taught me, run, don't walk. Jump, don't sit. Look, don't stare. She learned it here. She did all of it here.

MAYOR ENTERS FROM THE AUDIENCE, CLOSE TO THE FRONT OF THE STAGE, WITH HIS BACK TO THE LARGEST PART OF THE STAGE.

HE ONLY EVER FACES FORWARDS, ENTIRELY IGNORING THE REST OF THE STAGE.

MAYOR: Als Bürgermeister habe ich den Leuten mit dem notwendigen Nachdruck verständlich gemacht, dass es sich hier um eine Weiterentwicklung handelt, die im staatlichen Interesse absolut notwendig ist und mehrmals in eindringlichen Worten auf die Wichtigkeit der Erweiterung der Betriebsanlagen hingewiesen. Die Stadt hat großes Interesse daran, dass dieser Betrieb zu uns kommt und sich bereit erklärt, die notwendigen Straßenarbeiten zu übernehmen. (POINTS INTO THE AUDIENCE) Dort drüben wird das Neue Werk, ausgestattet mit allen modernen Möglichkeiten errichtet werden. (TO FRONT LEFT OF THE AUDITORIUM) Zu Ihrer Linken wird das neue Gefolgschaftshaus entstehen, mit einem gemütlichen Aufenthaltsraum, höchstmodernen Waschanlagen und einer Leihbücherei für die Belegschaft. (TO BACK LEFT OF THE AUDITORIUM) Das dahinter zu errichtende Freibad ist bereits seit Monaten in aller Munde... (CONTINUES TO TALK IN SILENCE)

MAYOR: As mayor, I have gotten it across to the people with the necessary insistence that this is an advancement which is absolutely necessary on behalf of the interest of the state and have also indicated the importance of the expansion of the factory site repeatedly and urgently. The town itself has an invested interest in the company moving here and therefore shown itself willing to undertake the necessary road works. (POINTS INTO THE AUDIENCE) Over there, the New Factory Hall will be erected, of course up to the most modern standards. (TO FRONT LEFT OF THE AUDITORIUM) To your left will be the new community centre for the workforce with a cosy common room, the most modern washrooms and a library for the use of the rank and file. (TO BACK LEFT OF THE AUDITORIUM) And the open-air swimming pool, which is to be situated behind the community centre, has been the talk of the town for months... (CONTINUES TO TALK IN SILENCE)

OLD WOMAN: (POINTS TO) Knorpelkirsche, fünf Stück, vierzehn Jahre. Schwarze Herzkirsche, drei Stück, zehn Jahre. Hellrote Herzkirsche, zwei Stück, zehn Jahre.

OLD WOMAN: (POINTS TO) Wild cherry, five trees, fourteen years. Black sweet cherry, three trees, ten years. Red sweet cherry, two trees, ten years.

BAUMANN: Mützen auf!

BAUMANN: Caps on!



PEPIK AND ANDREY PUT THEIR CAPS ON.  
ANDREY LOOKS OVER HIS SHOULDER  
THROUGH THE 'FENCE' INTO THE  
AUDIENCE.

ANDREY: (INTO THE AUDIENCE) This one.

PEPIK: (GLANCES INTO THE AUDIENCE) That one? Have you  
seen the face?

ANDREY: No. But the legs.

PEPIK: (LOOKS) Alright.

ANDREY: Tango. And afterwards, I'll lie her down in the grass over  
there (INDICATES SCAFFOLD), and...

PEPIK: Careful!

BAUMANN: Mützen ab!

BAUMANN: Caps off!

THEY TAKE OFF THEIR CAPS IN UNISON.

OLD WOMAN: Tafelapfel, einer, vierzehn Jahre. Apfeljungbaum, vier Stück,  
zwei Jahre. Bohnapfel, drei Stück, zehn Jahre. Petersbirne,  
zwei Stück, vierzehn Jahre. Luisenbirne, zwei Stück,  
vierzehn Jahre. Pfirsich, zwei Stück, vierzehn Jahre.

OLD WOMAN: Dessert apple, one, fourteen years. Apple, four young trees,  
two years. Winter apple, three trees, ten years, Peterpear,  
two trees, fourteen years. Louisapear, two trees, fourteen  
years. Peach, two trees, fourteen years.

ANDREY: What about yourself?

PEPIK: (LOOKS ACROSS THE STAGE) Her. Sulaika.

ANDREY: That one doesn't dance anymore. Tired.

PEPIK: She will dance then. She will dance for me.

ANDREY: Choraschow.<sup>1</sup>

BAUMANN: Mützen auf.

BAUMANN: Caps on!

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<sup>1</sup> Alright / Agreed.

THEY PUT ON THEIR CAPS IN UNISON AND  
TURN (TOWARDS CLARA/AUDIENCE).

CLARA: (PHONE) Inhaling, deeply, going behind the lilac bushes, the night of my prom, going behind the lilac bushes, lilac, like in her garden, planted by Granny's father, a cage, a cave of lilac, but here, the night after my prom, in the rain, we were laughing, saying, swaying...

OLD WOMAN POINTS TO THE AREA CLARA  
JUST INDICATED.

OLD WOMAN: Blaue Pflaume, drei Stück, dreizehn Jahre. Gelbe Pflaume, drei Stück, dreizehn Jahre. Viktoriapflaume, eine, dreizehn Jahre. Mirabelle, eine, fünf Jahre.

OLD WOMAN: Blue plum, three trees, thirteen years. Yellow plum, three trees, thirteen years. Victoriaplum, one tree, thirteen years. Small yellow plum, one tree, five years.

PEPIK: (VERY SOFTLY) This American music, like in the picture house, you know?

ANDREY: No. But you will show me, choraschow?

PEPIK: Choraschow.

OLD WOMAN: Johannisbeeren, zwanzig Busch. Himbeeren, zwanzig Busch. Brombeeren, zwanzig Busch. Flieder. Flieder.

OLD WOMAN: Redcurrant, twenty bushes. Raspberry, twenty bushes. Blackberry, twenty bushes. Lilac. Lilac.

CLARA: (PHONE) And then..., by these bushes...

OLD WOMAN: / Flieder...<sup>2</sup>

CLARA: / (PHONE) those lilac bushes... In the rain. Swaying, we, entangled, and we kissed, and I heard my gran, "I'm too old for this" and I laugh and he laughs, run, don't walk, that was before this, before the rain but during the bushes, the...

OLD WOMAN: Flieder. / Flieder.

OLD WOMAN: Lilac. / Lilac.

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<sup>2</sup> Lilac...

MAYOR: Und auch für die ausländischen Arbeitskräfte wird ein neues, schönes Barackenlager errichtet, auf dem Land, dass der Betrieb eigens zu diesem Zweck erstanden hat...

MAYOR: And for the foreign workers, the company will also erect a new, beautiful barrack camp, on land, which the company has acquired solely for this reason...

HE STILL DOESN'T POINT, BUT THE OLD WOMAN DOES, INDICATING THE WHOLE STAGE.

OLD WOMAN: Flieder.

OLD WOMAN: Lilac.

MAYOR EXITS INTO THE AUDITORIUM AND TAKES A SEAT.

CLARA: (PHONE) She was always there and now she's gone. She never asked any question... Look, don't watch. Run, don't walk. Don't feed the monster, look...

ANDREY LOOKS AROUND. CLARA BECOMES LORE, PUTTING THE PHONE AWAY. SHE SMILES AT ANDREY.

ANDREY: Her.

PEPIK: Legs?

ANDREY: (SOFTLY) Eyes...

ENTER ELSE FROM THE AUDIENCE.  
FACTORY SOUNDS INCREASE.

ELSE: Lore!

#### 4. SISTERS

LORE TURNS AWAY FROM ANDREY.

LORE: Else!

THEY RUN TOWARDS EACH OTHER, HUG.

LORE: Mensch, ich dachte, du kommst gar nicht mehr wieder. Wie du aussiehst... Ganz anders.

LORE: I thought you'd never come back... Let me look at all... So different...

ELSE SWIRLS ON THE SPOT AND CLAPS HER BOOTS TOGETHER.

ELSE: Das macht die Uniform, nicht? Man wird ganz außergewöhnlich.

ELSE: That's the uniform. One becomes quite out-of-the-ordinary...

LORE LIGHTS A CIGARETTE AND OFFERS ELSE THE PACK.

ELSE: Nein, danke. Ich rauch' nicht mehr.

ELSE: No, thanks. I don't smoke anymore.

LORE: Seit wann?

LORE: Since when?

ELSE: (MYSTERIOUSLY) Das erzähl' ich dir später.

ELSE: (MYSTERIOUSLY) I'll tell you later.

LORE: Mensch, ich bin so froh, dass du wieder da bist. Das Haus ist so leer ohne dich.

LORE: I'm so glad you're back. The house is so empty without you.

ELSE: Du, ich muss aber hier im Gelände wohnen, mit den anderen Frauen.

ELSE: You know that I have to live here, right? In camp, with the other women.

LORE: Oh, achso. Naja, dann musst du eben oft zu Besuch kommen. (PAUSE) Wie war's denn? Du hast gar nicht geschrieben.

LORE: Oh... Well. You have to visit often, then. (PAUSE) What was it like? You didn't write at all.

ELSE: Ach, wir hatten so viel zu tun. Toll war's. Du solltest das auch machen. Hans schlägt dich bestimmt vor, wenn ich ihn darum bitte.

ELSE: Oh, we've been too busy. It was great. You should do it too. Hans will recommend you for sure, if I ask him.

LORE: Hans?

ELSE:                   Unterscharführer Baumann.

LORE:                   Ihr kennt euch?

LORE:                   You know each other?

ELSE:                   Klar, in Ravensbrück ist er ja ein und ausgegangen, und da ist das alles nicht so formell, weißt du.

ELSE:                   Sure, he was in Ravensbrück all the time, and it's not so formal there, you know.

LORE:                   Sicher.

LORE:                   Sure.

ELSE:                   Habt' ihr euch schon kennengelernt? Was hältst du von ihm?

ELSE:                   You met him yet? What do you think of him?

LORE:                   Was soll der denn bei mir in der Fabrik? Seine schneie Uniform dreckig machen?

LORE:                   Why, what would he want in the factory with me? Get his fancy uniform dirty?

ELSE:                   Red' nicht so.

ELSE:                   Don't talk like that.

LORE:                   Bist du sicher, dass du nicht nach Hause kommen willst? Frag' doch mal, es ist doch nicht weit von uns bis ins Lager...

LORE:                   Are you sure you don't want to come home? Why don't you ask, it's not that far from our place to the camp...

ELSE:                   Ich bin jetzt Teil einer Gemeinschaft, Lore, da kann ich nicht einfach raus, nur weil meine Schwester abends Gesellschaft will, versteh' das doch.

ELSE:                   I'm part of a community now, Lore, I can't just leave that only because my sister wants company in the evenings, you have to understand that.

LORE:                   Ja... Es ist halt so leer ohne dich.

LORE:                   Yes... It's just so empty without you.

ELSE:                   Überleg' doch noch mal, ob du dich nicht auch bewerben willst. Die paar Wochen Ausbildung in Ravensbrück – und Lore, da ist es himmlisch, direkt am See – und dann ist es vorbei mit der Plackerei an den Maschinen und du ziehst aus dem alten Kasten direktemang zu uns ins Gemeinschaftshaus, überleg' doch, wie lustig das wär, wenn wir beide wieder zusammen arbeiten...

ELSE: Why don't you consider applying for it. Those few weeks of training in Ravensbrück – and Lore, it's wonderful there, directly at the lake – and then it's goodbye to the drudgery at the machines and you move from that old house directly to us in the community centre, just think how great it would be for the two of us to work together again...

LORE: An der Maschine bin ich jetzt auch nicht mehr.

LORE: I'm not at the machine anymore either.

ELSE: Nee?

ELSE: No?

LORE: Nee, ich bin jetzt Vorarbeiterin. Die... Die anderen Leute sind an unserer Maschine.

LORE: No, I'm an overseer now. The... The other people are now at our machine.

ELSE: Andere Leute?

ELSE: Other people?

LORE: Na, die aus dem Lager.

LORE: Those from the camp.

ELSE: Achso. Naja, das ist ja normal, dafür sind'se ja hier.

ELSE: Oh well. That's normal, that what they're here for.

PAUSE.

LORE: Ich bleib' lieber in der Fabrik.

LORE: I'd rather stay in the factory.

ELSE: Du bist doch wirklich genau wie Vater... Dickköpfig wie ein Esel. Es ist eine neue Zeit, Prinzessin. Warum nicht daran teilhaben?

ELSE: You're like father, really... Stubborn like a donkey. It's a new time, princess. Why not take part in it?

LORE: Ich hab' rote Nelken gepflanzt.

LORE: I've planted red carnations.

ELSE: Im Garten?

ELSE: In the garden?

LORE: Auf seinem Grab.

LORE: On his grave.

ELSE: Du, ich sollt' jetzt weiter, mich melden. War aber schön von dir, das Empfangskomitee.

ELSE: I should go now, report. It was so nice of you to meet me here.

LORE: Ja, na dann... Ich muss' auch in die Fabrik... Du... Also, wenn du magst... Dann komm' doch heut' abend und ich koch uns was...

LORE: Yeah, well... I should go back to the factory... You... Well, if you like, why don't you come over tonight and I'll cook something...

ELSE: Ja... Mal sehen...

ELSE: Yes... I'll see...

SHE TURNS TO THE GATE, LORE STARTS IN THE DIRECTION OF THE AUDIENCE.

ELSE: Lore, wart' ma', ganz vergessen zu fragen: Hast du was von Peter gehört?

ELSE: Lore, wait, I forgot to ask: Did you hear from Peter?

LORE SHAKES HER HEAD. ELSE HUGS HER QUICKLY.

ELSE: Das heißt aber nix, Prinzessin. Du wirst sehen, dann kommen fünf Briefe auf einmal.

ELSE: That doesn't mean anything, princess. You'll see, you'll get five letters at once.

LORE: Sicher.

LORE: Sure.

ELSE GIVES HER A QUICK KISS ON THE CHEEK AND ADJUSTS HER UNIFORM.

LORE: Du siehst ganz offiziell.

LORE: You look very official.

ELSE LEAVES TO THE GATE.

LORE LOOKS AFTER HER, TURNS AWAY FROM THE CAMP, AS SHE WALKS AWAY (TO THE FACTORY), CLARA TAKES HER PHONE OUT. ANDREY TAKES THE PHONE OUT AND BECOMES MIKE.

## 5. ARGUMENTS

SOUND OF A FACTORY BELL. THE FACTORY SOUNDS INCREASE FURTHER. SULAİKA, AGNIESZKA, HALINA AND ANIKO HUDDLE TOGETHER. LORE/CLARA LEANS AT THE WALL AND LOOKS AT THE SCREEN AT THE BACK OF THE STAGE.

ON THE SCREEN, SULAİKA, AGNIESZKA, HALINA AND ANIKO WORK AT THE CONVEYOR BELT. PUTTING BULLET CASES IN BOXES, LIFTING THE HEAVY BOXES FROM THE BELT TO AN ADJOINING STORE ROOM. LORE SUPERVISES THEIR WORK, OCCASIONALLY INSPECTING THE CASES IN THE LEFT AND RIGHT CORNERS OF THE BOXES. THE BLACK AND WHITE FILM HAS A QUALITY NOT DISSIMILAR TO THE FACTORY SCENE IN CHARLIE CHAPLIN'S "MODERN TIMES".

MIKE: (PHONE) Claire? Where are you?

SULAİKA: (SOFTLY) Not much longer. A few hours.

AGNIESZKA: (SCREEN) Co ona powiedziała?<sup>3</sup>

HALINA: (SCREEN) Już niedługo.<sup>4</sup>

CLARA: (PHONE) I'm at the place.

MIKE: (PHONE) You haven't been home for more than a few hours...

CLARA: (PHONE) I couldn't stay at home.

MIKE: (PHONE) Why couldn't you stay at home, I'm sure Andrea...

CLARA: (PHONE) She made a cake.

PAUSE.

MIKE: (PHONE) How dare she...

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<sup>3</sup> What did she say?

<sup>4</sup> Not much longer.



CLARA: (PHONE) She made a fucking cake as if this was a fucking birthday celebration! I mean, how inappropriate can you get?

MIKE: (PHONE) Maybe. Just maybe she was happy to see her daughter after what... five years?

HE PUTS THE PHONE AWAY.

ON SCREEN, ELSE COMES IN, FOLLOWED BY ANDREY AND PEPIK.

ELSE: (SCREEN) Schau mal, Lore, ich hab' dir was mitgebracht.

ELSE: (SCREEN) Look, Lore, I brought you something.

SCREEN: ELSE TAKES LORE BY THE ARM AND WHISPERS. THEY GIGGLE. ANDREY JUST STARES AT LORE, PEPIK AND SULAIIKA EYE ELSE.

STAGE: ELSE ENTERS, FOLLOWED BY ANDREY AND PEPIK. ANDREY STARES AT LORE, PEPIK JOINS THE WOMEN, HUDDLED TOGETHER, THEY ALL LOOK AT THE SCREEN AND VOICE THEIR LINES FOR THE SCREEN.

PEPIK: (SOFTLY) Who's that, Sulaika?

SULAIIKA: SS-woman? The German's sister.

PEPIK: New?

SULAIIKA: Shh, Pepik.

SCREEN: ELSE LEAVES. THE MEN MOVE TO JOIN THE WOMEN, ANDREY LOOKING AT LORE. LORE NOTICES ANDREY'S LOOKING AND SMILES SUDDENLY.

STAGE: LORE NOTICES ANDREY'S LOOKING AND SMILES SUDDENLY, THEN TAKES THE PHONE OUT DELIBERATELY. ANDREY MIRRORS HER. THE FACTORY NOISES SUBDUE.

CLARA: (PHONE) It's only been three years.

MIKE: (PHONE) Oh well, then, forget what I said.

CLARA: (PHONE) I can't even bear to be in the same room with her.

PAUSE.

MIKE: (PHONE) Did you eat the cake?

CLARA: (PHONE) No. (HANGS UP AND STARTS RUNNING)

## 6. LAST SUPPER

ANDREA WATCHES THE SCENE FROM ABOVE, WHILE PREPARING DINNER. CLARA CIRCLES THE PRISONERS, RUNNING. THE FACTORY NOISES INCREASE.

CLAUSTROPHOBIC LIGHT, MAKING A SMALL ROOM ON THE STAGE, WHERE THE PRISONERS ARE GATHERED. SULAIKA RUBS ANIKOS BACK. AGNIESZKA AND HER SISTER SIT TOGETHER, HALINA COMBS ANGIEZSKA'S HAIR WITH HER FINGERS. PEPIK AND ANDREY SIT APART, TALKING SOFTLY, LOOKING AT BULLET CASES.

THE SCENE IS DOUBLED ON THE SCREEN IN BLACK AND WHITE, BUT JOLTED AND DISINTEGRATED, FRAGMENTED.

SULAIKA: Thick potato soup, with bacon and lots of parsley. And with it, a juicy damson cake, with yeast, but no crumbs. And not too sweet.

ANIKO: Damson?

SULAIKA: Like plums.

ANIKO: Plum cake and potato soup?

SULAIKA: That's how we eat it. In autumn. It's autumn food.

ANIKO PULLS A FACE.

SULAIKA: Just wait, I'll make it for you. You'll like it well enough. I'll even leave the bacon out for you.

ANIKO SHUDDERS AND PUTS HER HANDS ON HER STOMACH.

AGNIESZKA: Ona jest w ciąży?<sup>5</sup>

SULAIIKA: What?

AGNIESZKA MIMES A BABY.

SULAIIKA: Yes, a baby.

SULAIIKA PUTS HER FINGER TO THE LIPS.  
AGNIESZKA SMILES AND REPEATS THE  
GESTURE.

SULAIIKA: Your turn.

ANIKO: I don't remember.

SULAIIKA: Come on.

ANIKO: I don't know...

SULAIIKA: What did your mother cook for you?

ANIKO: I don't know...

SULAIIKA: What did you cook for your husband?

ANIKO: I don't know...

SULAIIKA: Oh, come on, you'll remember one dish, won't you?

ANIKO: Well, what did you cook for your children, then? (LONG  
SILENCE) Sulaika...

SULAIIKA: Semolina pudding. With preserved cherries.

SILENCE

ANIKO: Chicken soup. I used to cook chicken soup for him. Once a week. With *knaidelach*. He... He couldn't do that. Wring the chicken's neck. I did that. He... He'd always go pale. My father thought [he was a sissy]... But I [didn't mind]... "Well, you can sew", I used to say to him. I was never good at that. My mother always used to say, "You have to marry a tailor, no other man would [take you]..." And then... He...

SULAIIKA: Does he have good hands?

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<sup>5</sup> Is she pregnant?

ANIKO: He had good hands.

SILENCE.

SULAIKA: You'll cook chicken soup for your child, Aniko. With *knaidelach*.

SCREEN OFF. FACTORY NOISES SUBDUE.

## 7. MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

ANDREA SITS AT THE SET DINNER TABLE,  
WATCHING SCENES OF VIOLENCE ON THE  
TV. ENTER CLARA.

ANDREA: Wo warst du denn?

ANDREA: Where have you been?

CLARA GETS A WATER BOTTLE FROM THE  
FRIDGE.

CLARA: Wo wohl.

CLARA: Where would I have been?

ANDREA: Schon wieder? (PAUSE) Ich hab' gekocht... Risibisi...

ANDREA: Again. (PAUSE) I made food... Risibisi...

CLARA: Ich hab' keinen Hunger.

CLARA: I'm not hungry.

ANDREA: Aber das hast du doch / immer so gern gegessen...

ANDREA: But you've always / liked it so much...

CLARA: / Ich hab' keinen Hunger.

CLARA: / I'm not hungry.

PAUSE.

ANDREA: Wenn du willst, mach' ich dir einen Grießbrei.

ANDREA: If you want, I'll make you semolina pudding.

CLARA: Himmelnochmal!

CLARA: For god's sake!

CLARA LEAVES, BANGING THE DOOR.  
ANDREA STAYS BEHIND, TURNS THE TV

OFF AND EATS THE DINNER SLOWLY,  
WATCHING THE SCENE BELOW...

## 8. POWER

BAUMANN ENTERS THROUGH THE  
AUDITORIUM, WITH SOME BACON IN HIS  
HAND. THE FACTORY NOISES INCREASE.

BAUMANN: (LURING) Hier, Mietze, Mietze, Mietze... Hiiieer, Muschi...

BAUMANN: (LURING) Here, kitty, kitty, kitty... Heeere... Pussy cat...

MAYOR: Na, Herr Unterscharführer.

MAYOR: Well, Herr Unterscharführer.

BAUMANN: Tach, Herr Bürgermeister.

BAUMANN: Hello there, Mr Mayor.

MAYOR: Kätzchen schon wieder verschwunden?

MAYOR: Your kitty disappeared again?

BAUMANN: So siehts aus, Herr Bürgermeister.

BAUMANN: Looks like it, Mr Mayor.

MAYOR: (TO AUDIENCE MEMBER) Ham Sie die Katze vom Herrn  
Unterscharführer gesehen? Nicht? Na gut.

MAYOR: (TO AUDIENCE MEMBER) Have you seen the cat of our  
Unterscharführer here? No? Well then...

BAUMANN: Sie wird schon wieder auftauchen, Herr Bürgermeister.  
(CONTINUES HIS SEARCH TOWARDS THE STAGE)

BAUMANN: She'll turn up again, Mr Mayor. (CONTINUES HIS SEARCH  
TOWARDS THE STAGE)

CLARA APPEARS ON STAGE AND BEGINS  
TO EXERCISE AT THE WALL. SULAIKA,  
ANIKO, AGNIESZKA AND HALINA ARE LED  
BY ELSE THROUGH THE AUDIENCE INTO  
THE CAMP / ON STAGE. ELSE POINTS OUT  
BOXES IN THE APPLE/PEAR AREA.

ELSE: Die da. Nach da.

ELSE: Those. Over there.

SHE POINTS TO THE PLUM AREA, WHERE  
CLARA EXERCISES AT THE BROKEN WALL.

THE WOMEN BEGIN SHIFTING THE BOXES.

ELSE: Heil Hitler, Herr Unterscharführer.

BAUMANN: (SOFTLY) Wie geht's denn?

BAUMANN: (SOFTLY) How's it going?

ELSE: Gut.

ELSE: Well.

BAUMANN: Die machen dir keine Probleme?

BAUMANN: They don't give you any grief?

ELSE: Nein.

ELSE: No.

BAUMANN: Und in der Fabrik, die alten Kollegen?

BAUMANN: And in the factory, the old colleagues?

ELSE: Keine Probleme. Sind inzwischen eh' alle weg.

ELSE: No problems. They're all gone by now, anyway.

BAUMANN THROWS THE MEAT AWAY.  
LIGHTS A CIGARETTE.

BAUMANN: Gut. Es gefällt mir ja nicht, dass du diese Arbeit tust, mit denen. Aber das ist ja nicht für immer. (SOFTLY) Wann?

BAUMANN: Good. I don't like you doing this job, with them. But that won't be forever. (SOFTLY) When?

ELSE: Hast du mit ihr gesprochen?

ELSE: Did you talk to her?

BAUMANN: Noch nicht. Es ist nicht so leicht, in meiner Position.

BAUMANN: Not yet. It's not that easy, in my position.

ELSE: Hans... Ich kann das nicht...

ELSE: Hans... I can't do that...

BAUMANN: (GRABBING HER) Else, du musst Geduld haben, // ich [werd' sie verlassen]...

BAUMANN: (GRABBING HER) Else, you have to be patient, // I [will leave her]...

ELSE: // Ich muss gar nichts. Mein Dienst ist zu Ende. (LEAVES)

ELSE: // I don't have to do anything. My shift is over. (LEAVES)

BAUMANN: Mieze! Komm. Muschi!

BAUMANN: Here, pussy cat! Here!

ANIKO DROPS A BOX. BAUMANN JUMPS AT HER.

BAUMANN: Aufheben! Du glaubst wohl, du kannst dir hier alles erlauben, he? Hier im Paradies geht das wohl, hm? Glaubst du das? Ist es das, was du glaubst?

BAUMANN: Pick it up! You think you can do whatever you want here, eh? Here in paradise you can do whatever, eh? You think that? That what you think?

AGNIESZKA SCREAMS, HALINA COVERS HER MOUTH VERY QUICKLY.

ELSE: (RETURNING) Was machst du da?

ELSE: (RETURNING) What are you doing?

BAUMANN: Nichts.

BAUMANN: Nothing.

HE MOVES TOWARDS AGNIESZKA.

ELSE: (QUICKLY) Weißt du, heut' Abend hab' ich nichts vor.

ELSE: (QUICKLY) You know, I'm actually free tonight.

BAUMANN STOPS.

BAUMANN: (SOFTLY) Mein Büro. Nach Dienstende.

BAUMANN: (SOFTLY) My office. After end of shift.

ELSE NODS, LEAVES. BAUMANN MOVES TO THE BROKEN WALL.

BAUMANN: Weitermachen.

BAUMANN: Continue.

THE WOMEN CONTINUE CARRYING THE BOXES. THE SCREEN LIGHTS UP, THE SCAFFOLD BEHIND IT BECOMING VISIBLE.

BAUMANN POINTS AT ANIKO. SHE FOLLOWS HIM BEHIND THE WALL, WHERE CLARA STILL EXERCISES.

CLARA: The first time I realised was when Mom returned from *that* place, that *hospital* place, her leanness gone, the definition of her muscles, sinews, running along the lines of her bare upper arms as she lifted buckets of coal for the stove and the burners, as she carried buckets of wet washing, as she returned from the factory, swinging her bare arms to loosen the muscles and sinews and joints. All lost and all gone, this was the first time I realised, after the summer spent with Granny Lore, the last summer, when Mom returned from *that* place, pasty, I realised, you have to be strong, like Granny, you have to...

## 9. ARGUMENTS

SULAIKA, AGNIESZKA AND HALINA  
CONTINUE UNLOADING THE BOXES IN THE  
APPLE/PEAR AREA AND CARRYING THEM  
TO THE BROKEN WALL.

CLARA SITS ON THE BROKEN WALL, SHE  
SMOKES AND DRINKS WATER. MIKE LEANS  
IN THE WINDOW. HE RINGS HER. THE  
FACTORY NOISES DECREASE.

MIKE: (PHONE) Where are you now?

CLARA: (PHONE) At the place. Just been for a run.

MIKE: (PHONE) Again?

CLARA: (PHONE) I like it here. I lost my virginity over there, did I tell you that story?

MIKE: (PHONE) Only about a hundred times.

ANIKO RETURNS, WITH A PIECE OF  
BREAD. SHE BREAKS IT AND HANDS  
SULAIKA HALF, SULAIKA BREAKS IT AND  
HANDS AGNIESZKA ONE HALF. BAUMANN  
CUTS MEAT IN SMALL CHUNKS,  
OCCASIONALLY CALLING HIS CAT, WHILE  
WATCHING THE WOMEN.

CLARA: (PHONE) It's a good story.

MIKE: (PHONE) I guess it's better if you've been there.

CLARA: (PHONE) Ha! We were so drunk, // and in the rain...



MIKE: (PHONE) How's your mom?

CLARA: (PHONE) No. We're not talking about her.

MIKE: (PHONE) Ok. What did you have to eat today?

CLARA: (PHONE) We're not talking about that either, c'mon!

MIKE: (PHONE) Why don't you write me a list of approved conversation topics and get back to me? (HANGS UP)

CLARA: Fuck.

SHE STAYS WHERE SHE IS AND LIGHTS ANOTHER CIGARETTE. CLARA AND ANDREA LOOK AT THE SCREEN. THE FACTORY SOUNDS INCREASE.

## 10. SUCH WARMTH, SO TENDER?

ON SCREEN, THE PRISONERS MARCH OUT IN BLACK AND WHITE. LIKE IN BEYER'S "NAKED AMONG WOLVES", THEY HAVE A MILITANCY ABOUT THEM, THEIR COLLARS ARE UP AND THEIR CAPS PULLED DOWN LOW OVER THEIR FACES. THE CAMERA ZOOMS IN ON PEPIK AND ANDREY. ANDREY ONLY MOUTHS HIS LINES IN THE FILM, IT IS MIKE WHO ACTUALLY SPEAKS THEM, LOOKING INTENSELY AT CLARA FROM HIS WINDOW ACROSS THE STAGE.

ANDREY: (POINTING TO CLARA/LORE) Her.

PEPIK: (SCREEN) (LOOKS) Legs?

ANDREY: (SOFTLY) Eyes...

SILENCE.

PEPIK: (SCREEN) Today, then? Do you think, Sulaika will join in? Aniko doesn't think so...

SILENCE.

PEPIK: (SCREEN) So do you?

ANDREY: What?

PEPIK: (SCREEN) Do you think, Sulaika will join us?

ANDREY: What? Sure.

PEPIK: (SCREEN) Come on, what's going on with you?

ANDREY: Nothing.

PEPIK: (SCREEN) Sure.

SILENCE.

PEPIK: (SCREEN) You won't do anything stupid, will you?

ANDREY: What do you mean?

PEPIK: (SCREEN) Nothing. Just in general. Don't do anything stupid.

ANDREY: In general? Choraschow.

SILENCE.

PEPIK: (SCREEN) It's only a game, right? You know that this is only a game?

ANDREY: What?

PEPIK: (SCREEN) Well... The game.

ANDREY: Choraschow. (HUMS SOFTLY)

PEPIK: (SCREEN) Sraní.<sup>6</sup>

## 11. LILAC

CLARA STUBS OUT HER CIGARETTE. THE FILM GOES BLACK. THE FACTORY SOUNDS DECREASE. SHE DIALS. MIKE ANSWERS.

CLARA: (PHONE) I'm sorry. You know, when I was little, for a long time, I didn't really know that Granny's stories were... True, I mean, real, you know? That they had happened here, at this place. This place was just where we used to play hide and seek or hang out to smoke, later... (SHE POINTS AT IT) And, only once I realised that it was here, that Granny Lore had done all of that here... Not in some obscure, unreal place, but here... It kinda changed everything, you understand that? It gave me this sense of... Realness, straightness, and that I can be like that too. Real. Straight. Like her.

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<sup>6</sup> Shit.

OLD WOMAN ENTERS WITH HER PLASTIC BAGS.

OLD WOMAN: / Flieder...

CLARA: (PHONE) / Anyway. I lost my virginity over there... at a school's over party...

MIKE: (PHONE) I know the story, really.

CLARA: (PHONE) I wondered what used to be there, on that exact spot /, where we did it, in the rain...

OLD WOMAN: / Flieder...

MIKE: (PHONE) Ok. Enough already about the lost virginity!

CLARA: (PHONE) My mom never wants to talk about it. After that thing... I mean, after the fall of the... and Mom's... [suicide attempt.] After that, Mom acted as if it had never happened, the camp, the factory, Granny... Even now, Mom doesn't want to talk about it. I mean, Granny Lore basically saved us after..., taking me in, looking after me, no questions asked, saved me, after Mom... [tried to fucking *kill* herself], just like she saved them, all of them, except for... and she would have saved him if she could've... and my mom just refuses to... Acknowledge her...

MIKE: (PHONE) I know that you...

CLARA: (PHONE) I always, always wanted to be like her, you know? Granny...

ELSE: (FROM THE AUDIENCE) Lore...

CLARA PUTS THE PHONE AWAY AND RUNS THROUGH THE AUDIENCE TO ELSE.  
FACTORY SOUNDS INCREASE.

## 12. SISTERS

ELSE AND LORE WATCH THE PRISONERS WALK THROUGH THE AUDIENCE INTO THE 'FACTORY'.

LORE: Ich hab' auf dich gewartet, gestern.

LORE: I waited for you, yesterday.

ELSE: Ja. 'Tschuldigung. Ich hatte... Stubendienst.  
ELSE: Yes. Sorry. I had... Barracks' duty.

LORE: Was?  
LORE: What?

ELSE WAVES TO AGNIEZSKA. AGNIESZKA  
STEPS OUT OF THE LINE. ELSE HANDS  
HER AN APPLE.

ELSE: Da, für dich. Hast gut geschafft, gestern.  
ELSE: There, that's for you. You did good work yesterday.

AGNIESZKA CURTSIES AND RUSHES BACK  
TO HER SISTER.

LORE: Bohna?  
LORE: Winter?

ELSE: Tafel.  
ELSE: Dessert.

LORE: Gut.  
LORE: Good.

SILENCE.

LORE: Kannst du dir das vorstellen? Dass wir früher da gespielt  
haben?  
LORE: Can you imagine? That we used to play over there?

THE SCREEN LIGHTS UP SLIGHTLY, THE  
BLURRED OUTLINES OF THE SCAFFOLD  
VISIBLE.

ELSE: Muss ich mir nicht vorstellen. War ja so.  
ELSE: Don't have to imagine that. Is true.

LORE: Ich mein'... Der Obstgarten... Wenn ich die Augen zumach',  
seh' ich ihn noch. Aber wenn ich da jetzt am Zaun vorbei  
lauf'... Dann bring' ich das nicht mehr zusammen. Dass es so  
normal war. Und heute...? Vater hätt' nicht verkauft, wenn...  
Er würd' sich im Grab umdrehen, wenn er wüsste...

LORE: I mean... The orchard... When I close my eyes, I can still see  
it. But when I walk along that fence now... Then I can't bring  
the two together. That it used to be so normal. And today...?  
Father would not have sold if... He'd turn in his grave, if he  
knew...

ELSE: Lass' uns von was Anderem reden.

ELSE: Let's talk about something else.

LORE: (SOFTLY) Er hat das immer bedauert, Else. Immer.

LORE: (SOFTLY) He has always regretted that, Else. Always.

ELSE: Das macht's nicht ungeschehen.

ELSE: It's done. Can't be undone.

LORE: Er wollte das nicht. Es tat ihm gleich so leid, hinterher...  
Wenn du nur nochmal zurückgekommen wärst...

LORE: He didn't want that. And he was really sorry, afterwards... If  
only you'd come back home again at some point...

ELSE: Er hat mich halb totgeschlagen und du hast einfach  
zugesehen!

ELSE: He beat me within every inch of my life and you just watched!

LORE: Er hat das immer bedauert... Aber ihr hattet eben so  
unterschiedliche Ansichten und...

LORE: He has always regretted that... But you had these different  
views and...

ELSE: Und ihr nicht? Pass' mal besser auf, was du sagst,  
Prinzessin...

ELSE: And you didn't? You better be careful what you say,  
princess...

LORE: Else. Nicht mit mir. Nicht mit uns. Das war doch nie mit uns.

LORE: Else. Not with me. Not with us. This has never been a thing  
between us.

SCREEN GOES DARK AGAIN. PAUSE.

ELSE: Nein. Das war nie mit uns.

ELSE: No. This has never been a thing between us.

LORE PULLS OUT HER CIGARETTES. ELSE  
TAKES ONE.

LORE: Ich dachte, du hast aufgehört?

LORE: I thought you quit?

ELSE LIGHTS UP. THEY LAUGH.

LORE: Wo warst du gestern? Im Ernst.  
LORE: Where have you been yesterday? Seriously.

ELSE: Auf dem Schreibtisch vom Herrn Unterscharführer.  
ELSE: On the desk of the Unterscharführer.

LORE: Und wo war der Unterscharführer?  
LORE: And where was the Unterscharführer?

ELSE: Heftig bei der Sache.  
ELSE: Pumping away.

THEY GIGGLE.

LORE: So ist das also.  
LORE: So that's what it is.

ELSE: So ist das also.  
ELSE: So that's what it is.

LORE: Und wie lange ist das schon so?  
LORE: And how long has it been like that?

ELSE: Paar Wochen.  
ELSE: Few weeks.

LORE: Ich dachte, der ist verheiratet.  
LORE: I thought he's married.

ELSE SMOKES.

LORE: Ah...  
LORE: Right...

ELSE: Was würde Vater sagen?  
ELSE: What would father say?

LORE: Etwas über bürgerliche Moral. Das würd' ihn nicht kümmern.  
LORE: Something about bourgeois double standards. He wouldn't care about it.

ELSE: Stimmt. Das nicht.  
ELSE: Right. Not about that.

LORE: Aber andere kümmert's vielleicht. Grade jetzt, ich mein...  
LORE: But others might care about it. Especially now, I mean...  
ELSE: Mich kümmerts. Ich will so nicht sein. Aber nun bin ich doch so.  
ELSE: I care. I don't want to be like that. And now I am like that anyway.

LORE GIVES HER A KISS AND STUBS OUT HER CIGARETTE.

LORE: Mich kümmert das nicht. (GOES IN)  
LORE: I don't care about that. (GOES IN)  
ELSE: (POINTS TO THE CAMP) Aber das andere, das kümmert dich?  
ELSE: (POINTS TO THE CAMP) But this, you care about that?  
LORE: Das ist nichts zwischen uns, Else.  
LORE: That's not a thing between us, Else.

ELSE NODS AND STUBS OUT HER CIGARETTE.

ELSE: (TO THE PRISONERS) Na los, schnell. Schnell!  
ELSE: (TO THE PRISONERS) Go on, Quick! Quick!

### 13. WORK

THE FACTORY NOISES INCREASE.

ON SCREEN, IN A BLACK AND WHITE SILENT FILM, SULAIKA AND AGNIESZKA, HALINA AND ANIKO WORK AT THE CONVEYOR BELT. PUTTING BULLET CASES IN BOXES, LIFTING THE HEAVY BOXES FROM THE BELT TO AN ADJOINING STORE ROOM. LORE SUPERVISES THEIR WORK, OCCASIONALLY INSPECTING THE CASES IN THE LEFT AND RIGHT CORNERS OF THE BOXES.

ON STAGE, THE ACTORS LOOK AT THE SCREEN. THEY DOUBLE THE SCENE, TAKING THEIR PLACES.

DURING THE SCENE, THEY OCCASIONALLY REFER BACK TO THE SCREEN TO CHECK THEIR CUES OR POSITIONS. CLARA WATCHES FROM THE WALL, ONLY SAYING HER LINES, NOT DOUBLING LORE FROM THE FILM.

ANDREA WATCHES FROM ABOVE, THE OLD WOMAN ROAMS IN THE BACKGROUND.

ON SCREEN AND STAGE, AGNIESZKA YAWNS.

SULAIKA: Sing something, Adzi.

AGNIESZKA: Co?<sup>7</sup>

ON SCREEN AND STAGE, SULAIKA HUMS, MIMES HUMMING TO AGNIESZKA. AGNIESZKA HUMS SOFTLY.

SULAIKA: Political prisoner and can hardly look over the table.

ON SCREEN AND STAGE, ANIKO LAUGHS. LOUD NOISES FROM THE OUTSIDE, SOME BLOWS AND SCREAMING, BAUMANN'S VOICE. AGNIESZKA STARTS AND ALMOST CUTS HER FINGER OFF.

ON SCREEN, LORE LEAVES THE ROOM. EVERYONE VISIBLY RELAXES.

SULAIKA: Calm, child, calm yourself.

ON SCREEN AND STAGE, SHE TAKES THE CUTTER FROM AGNIESZKA, CHECKS HER HANDS, GIVES HER SOME OF HER OWN CASES.

SULAIKA: They beat you if you don't manage the quota, and you and your sister, you'll manage the quota.

ON STAGE ONLY, BAUMANN ENTERS, POINTS AT HALINA. HALINA FOLLOWS HIM.

---

<sup>7</sup> What?



THE FILM ON SCREEN APPEARS NOW TO  
BE IN A LOOP – ONLY WORK IS DEPICTED.

SULAIKA: Sing something, Adzi.

ON STAGE ONLY, AGNIESZKA NODS TO  
SULAIKA.

SULAIKA: Now I have to sing too? You are really insatiable.

ON STAGE ONLY, SHE BEGINS TO HUM.  
SULAIKA TAKES AGNIESZKA'S CUTTER  
FROM HER AND MOTIONS TO HER TO SIT  
DOWN. THE GIRL SITS DOWN, PUTS HER  
HEAD ON SULAIKA'S LEGS AND CLOSES  
HER EYES. ANIKO AND SULAIKA  
EXCHANGE A GLANCE OVER THE  
DISTANCE AND WORK FASTER.

SULAIKA: (SOFTLY) You're a pretty one with your dark marble eyes.  
Someday, the boys will queue up for you. My Anita had such  
marble eyes too. All our women, gypsy eyes, they said. Mum  
and my sister... All marble eyed. You've got yours from your  
mum too, I guess. She'll be glad when she got you back  
safely in Warsaw.

My mother never let us out of her sight when we were the  
age of you and your sister now. Long time ago. I always  
thought, I'd do that differently with my Anita one day.

AGNIESZKA: Mamo, co on robi z Haliną? Zawsze wybiera Halinę...<sup>8</sup>

SULAIKA: (HUSHES HER) With the lads it doesn't matter, they're  
always allowed everything anyway, was no different with me,  
my oldest was always allowed everything too and the little  
one... Well, he was only a baby, wasn't he? Three children,  
can you imagine that? My husband always said, I don't look  
like it. My sister had two, looked like four. You probably can't  
wait to see your mum again...

ON SCREEN, LORE COMES IN AND MAKES  
A HECTIC MOVEMENT.

ON STAGE, CLARA STUBS OUT HER  
CIGARETTE AND STEPS IN.

---

<sup>8</sup> Mum, what is he doing with Halina? He always picks out Halina...

SULAIKA AND ANIKO GET THE GIRL UP AND WORKING, THE PACE VISIBLY CHANGES.  
ELSE STORMS IN.

ELSE: (COUNTS) Wo ist die andere?  
ELSE: (COUNTS) Where is the other one?

LORE: Ehm, meinst du Halina...?  
LORE: Ehm... You mean Halina...?

ON STAGE ONLY, ELSE GRABS LORE BY THE ARM AND PULLS HER TO THE SIDE, POINTING AT THE PRISONERS.

ELSE: Hast du den Raum verlassen?  
ELSE: Did you leave the room?

LORE: Und wenn schon...  
LORE: And what if...

ELSE: Du sollst die doch nicht alleine lassen.  
ELSE: You mustn't leave them alone.

LORE: Du lieber Himmel... Wegen der paar Minuten?  
LORE: My goodness... Those few minutes?

ELSE WHISPERS URGENTLY.

PEPIK: Sulaika.

SHE LOOKS AT HIM.

PEPIK: Don't work so quickly.

SULAIKA: And get beaten?

LORE PULLS AWAY FROM ELSE.

LORE: Und wenn? Die schaffen zwölf Stunden am Stück, mit ner halben Stunde Pause, wenn sie sich fünf Minuten stehen, was ist bitte zu schlimm daran? War doch auch nicht anders, als wir an der Maschine war'n...

LORE: And if so? They work for twelve hours straight, with half an hour break, if they steal five minutes, what exactly is so horrible about that? Wasn't any different when we worked the machines, was it?

PEPIK TAKES A BOX.

ANDREY: Ammunition kaputt, war kaputt.

SULAIIKA: Ammunition kaputt, Sulaika kaputt.

THE MEN CARRY THE BOXES TO THE  
STORE ROOM PAST ELSE UND LORE.  
HALINA RETURNS WITH BAUMANN, HIS  
HAND ON HER NECK.

BAUMANN: Alles in Ordnung hier?

BAUMANN: Everything in order here?

ELSE: Alles in Ordnung.

ELSE: Everything alright.

BAUMANN LEAVES, ELSE PUSHES HALINA  
TO THE WORK STATION, TURNING TO  
LORE. HALINA HANDS AGNIESZKA A PIECE  
OF BREAD.

ELSE: Die brauchen eine harte Hand. Wenn du einmal Schwäche  
zeigst, // dann ist es vorbei...

ELSE: They need a firm hand. If you show weakness just once //  
then it's over...

LORE: Du redest, als wär'n das Tiere!

LORE: You talk as if they were animals.

LORE FOLLOWS THE MEN INTO THE  
'STORE ROOM'. FILM CONTINUES TO  
LOOP; THE WOMEN CONTINUE TO WORK.  
ELSE SUPERVISES THEM ON STAGE AS  
DOES LORE IN THE FILM.

#### 14. SUCH WARMTH, SO TENDER?

LORE STORMS INTO THE 'STORE ROOM'.  
PEPIK AND ANDREY EXCHANGING BULLET  
CASINGS IN THE BOXES WITH REJECTS.  
ALL FREEZE. LORE BACKS AWAY TO THE  
DOOR.

ELSE (OFF): Lore!

LORE TURNS BACK TO THEM AND  
MOTIONS QUICKLY TO COVER UP. ELSE  
POKES HER HEAD IN.

ELSE: Du musst das verstehen. Ich hab' nun mal die Ausbildung, du nicht.

ELSE: You have to understand. I got the training, you don't.

LORE: Ja, das versteh' ich schon.

LORE: Yes, sure, I understand that.

ELSE: Also?

ELSE: So?

LORE: Also... Ich lass' sie nicht mehr alleine.

LORE: So... I won't leave them alone anymore.

ELSE NODS AND LEAVES. THE OLD  
WOMAN ENTERS, POINTING AND  
MUTTERING... LORE TURNS TO LEAVE,  
THEN TURNS BACK, LOOKING AT ANDREY.

LORE: I'm Lore.

SHE SMILES AND LEAVES QUICKLY.  
ANDREY LOOKS AFTER HER.

ANDREY: (QUOTES SOFTLY) "Eyes, too, have risen, faded..."  
(BREAK) Wait. Claire, wait... Claire, baby? Are you still there?

SOUND OF PHONE.

## 15. LAST SUPPER

ANDREA TURNS HER LIGHT ON. SHE  
PREPARES FOOD. ON SCREEN, IN  
NOSTALGIC SEPIA: PEPIK, ANDREY, ANIKO,  
SULAIKA, AGNIESZKA AND HALINA SIT  
TOGETHER IN THE STORE ROOM. ANIKO  
AND SULAIKA BREAK THE FOOD UP INTO  
FIVE PORTIONS.

ON STAGE, THE PRISONERS HUDDLE  
TOGETHER.

ANIKO: What we need is a knife.

SULAİKA: (LAUGHS) Or five breads.

AGNIESZKA: Co?<sup>9</sup>

HALINA: Powiedziała, że potrzebujemy nóż. Albo pięć kawałków chleba.<sup>10</sup>

AGNIESZKA: Makaron zapiekany z jajkami, miodem i masłem topionym!<sup>11</sup>

SULAİKA: What did she say?

ANIKO: Too quick for me.

PEPIK: She wants pasta with eggs and honey and melted butter.

SULAİKA: I'll make that for you, child, look!

SHE PRETENDS TO WORK SOME MAGIC,  
AND HANDS AGNIESZKA HER PIECE OF  
BREAD.

AGNIESZKA: Dziękuję, Mamo!<sup>12</sup>

PEPIK: She said...

SULAİKA: I understood that already.

SILENCE.

THE SISTERS HUDDLE TOGETHER AND  
SHARE AN APPLE.

EVERYONE ELSE EATS THEIR BREAD,  
ANIKO PUTS HERS IN HER POCKET.

PEPIK: Won't be any better later.

ANIKO: I'll keep it.

PEPIK: For when?

ANIKO: Tomorrow evening.

PEPIK: To mě podrž.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> What?

<sup>10</sup> She said, we need a knife. Or five pieces of bread.

<sup>11</sup> Baked pasta with eggs, honey and melted butter!

<sup>12</sup> Thanks, mum!

<sup>13</sup> I'll be damned.

SULAIKA: You haven't eaten anything this morning either, don't you think I didn't notice. Are you ill? Not feeling well?

ANDREY: No...

PEPIK: To mě podrž. She is fasting.

SULAIKA: What?

ANIKO: It's Yom Kippur...

SULAIKA: Are you mad? We fast every day here!

ANIKO: But it's Yom Kippur.

PEPIK: (LAUGHS) You're mad!

ANIKO: And you're a bad Jew!

PEPIK: I'm no Jew at all, I'm Czech!

ANIKO: You should definitely mention that to the Germans...

ANDREY LOOKS AT THEM AS IF THEY ARE ALL CRAZY AND STARTS LAUGHING.

SULAIKA: What?

PEPIK: What?

ANDREY KEEPS LAUGHING. THE ADULTS JOIN.

SHOUTS FROM OUTSIDE. AGNIESZKA STARTS AND HOLDS HER SISTER.

AGNIESZKA: Tak się boję bicia.<sup>14</sup>

HALINA: Nie płacz, Adzi. Nie bój się, nikt Cię nie uderzy. Dopilnuję tego.<sup>15</sup>

THE ADULTS SOBER UP, LOOKING AT THE SHAKING GIRL, AT EACH OTHER.

SULAIKA: Back to work before the German shows up.

---

<sup>14</sup> I'm so scared of the beatings...

<sup>15</sup> Don't cry, Adzi. You don't have to be afraid, no one is going to hit you. I'm looking out for you.

THEY STAND UP.

PEPIK AND ANDREY FALL BACK. PEPIK  
HOLDS SULAIKA AND ANIKO BACK.

PEPIK: Don't work so quickly, Sulaika.

SULAIKA PULLS HERSELF FREE.

SULAIKA: Do you want to die, Pepik?

ANIKO: If we're careful they won't notice // a thing.

SULAIKA: // Do you want to die? Because I don't care. As far as I'm  
concerned, they can beat me to death. But you? The girls?  
(GRABS PEPIK) And what about you? Do you want to  
dance? Do you want to live? Someone must get out.  
Someone must live. (PUSHES HIM BACK) I work as quickly  
as we must, as quickly as they want.

SHE TURNS AND WALKS AWAY FROM  
THEM.

ANDREY: (SOFTLY) And you think they'll let you live?

ANIKO: Leave her be, you two. I'll speak to her.

FADE TO BLACK. SCREEN GOES BLACK.

SOUNDS OF AIRPLANES AND EXPLOSIONS.

AGNIESZKA SCREAMS.

## 16. LIES

FACTORY SOUNDS DECREASE. CLARA  
JOGS AROUND THE BROKEN WALL. OLD  
WOMAN WANDERS AIMLESSLY IN THE  
BACK, MUTTERING TO HERSELF.

CLARA: Warten Sie mal. (GIVES HER SOME MONEY)

CLARA: Excuse me... (GIVES HER SOME MONEY)

OLD WOMAN: Flieder.

OLD WOMAN: Lilac.

CLARA: Was bitte?

CLARA: Excuse me?

OLD WOMAN: Flieder. (POINTS AT THE STAGE)  
OLD WOMAN: Lilac. (POINTS AT THE STAGE)

CLARA: Kann ich irgendwas für Sie tun? Jemanden anrufen?  
CLARA: Can I do something for you? Call someone?

OLD WOMAN: (BRUSHES CLARA'S HAIR) So hell.  
OLD WOMAN: (BRUSHES CLARA'S HAIR) So light.

CLARA: Ja... Ich komm' auf meine Omi Lore. Die war früher auch so blond.  
CLARA: Yeah... I take after my granny Lore. She used to be really blond too.

OLD WOMAN: Ich war immer dunkel.  
OLD WOMAN: I was always dark.

CLARA: Ja. (SMILES) Schönen Tag noch. (LEAVES)  
CLARA: Sure. (SMILES) Have a nice day. (LEAVES)

OLD WOMAN: (INDIGNANT) Ich war immer dunkel. (LOOKS ABOUT HERSELF, STAYS AND WATCHES.) Flieder. Tafelapfel. Apfeljungbaum. Bohnapfel. Petersbirne...  
OLD WOMAN: (INDIGNANT) I was always dark. (LOOKS ABOUT HERSELF, STAYS AND WATCHES.) Lilac. Dessert apple. Young apple tree. Winter apple. Peterspear.

FADE TO BLACK.

SOUNDS OF AIRPLANES.

BAUMANN: Hier, Muschi... Komm, komm...  
BAUMANN: Here, pussy cat... Come, come...

## 17. NIE PŁACZ NIE

IN THE APPLE/PEAR AREA. FACTORY  
SOUNDS INCREASE.

CLARA: I imagine that is was that November night, almost Halloween, when it really started for her, I mean, she wasn't there, of course, with the dead girl, with Agnieszka screaming, running to her dead sister's body...



ON SCREEN, AGNIESZKA SCREAMS AND RUNS TOWARDS HER SISTER'S DEAD BODY. ON STAGE, THE ACTRESS DOUBLES THE ACTION.

AGNIESZKA: Nie, nie, puść mnie! Moja siostra! Chcę do siostry!<sup>16</sup>

SULAIKA: Calm, child, calm. You can't go to your sister now...

ANIKO: Agnieszka, nie płacz...Don't cry Don't cry. Nie płacz.

BAUMANN: (LOOKING FOR HIS CAT) Was soll denn das Theater hier?

BAUMANN: (LOOKING FOR HIS CAT) What is going on here?

AGNIESZKA: Chcę do siostry!<sup>17</sup>

ANIKO: Ihre Schwester...

ANIKO: Her sister...

BAUMANN: Wie heißt du denn?

BAUMANN: And what's your name?

AGNIESZKA: Agnieszka.

HE TAKES HER BY THE ARM, GENTLY, AND LEADS HER TO HALINA'S BODY. SULAIKA WANTS TO FOLLOW, BUT ANIKO HOLDS HER BACK. BAUMANN POINTS AT THE BODY.

BAUMANN: Da ist sie. Von ihr ist ja noch ziemlich viel übrig.

BAUMANN: There she is. Quite a lot left of her, too.

AGNIESZKA: Przepraszam! Tak mi przykro, to wszystko moja wina! Nie będę już płakać, proszę, tak mi przykro, proszę, będę dzielna ale proszę nie zostawiaj mnie tu samej, proszę... Przepraszam. Tak mi przykro...<sup>18</sup>

BAUMANN'S PATIENCE WEARS OFF AS SHE CRIES AND BEGS.

BAUMANN: Gut jetzt. Steh' auf...

BAUMANN: Alright now. Get up...

---

<sup>16</sup> No, no, let me go! My sister! I want my sister!

<sup>17</sup> I want my sister!

<sup>18</sup> I'm sorry! I'm so sorry, it's all my fault! I won't cry anymore, please, I'm so sorry, please, I'll be brave but please don't leave me here alone, please... I'm sorry. I'm so sorry...

AGNIESZKA: Proszę nie zostawiaj mnie tu sam, proszę... Przepraszam.  
Tak mi przykro...<sup>19</sup>

BAUMANN: Es reicht jetzt. Steh' auf.

BAUMANN: Enough now. Get up.

AGNIESZKA CRIES DESPERATELY.  
BAUMANN PULLS HER UP ROUGHLY.

BAUMANN: Du hörst jetzt auf zu heulen, oder ich schick' dich mit ihr mit!

BAUMANN: You will stop wailing now, or I'll send you with her [to the oven]!

SULAIIKA: Agnieszka. Adzi. Nie płacz. Nie płacz.<sup>20</sup>

AGNIESZKA STOPS CRYING. BAUMANN  
PUSHES HER AWAY. SHE STAGGERS TO  
ANIKO AND SULAIIKA, WHO TAKE HER WITH  
THEM. BAUMANN LIGHTS A CIGARETTE,  
SHAKING, LOOKING AFTER ANIKO, MOVES  
INTO THE AUDITORIUM.

## 18. NIE PŁACZ NIE

CLARA WATCHES FROM THE WALL.  
BAUMANN SEARCHES HIS CAT IN THE  
AUDITORIUM. A LOW, WARM SPOT ON  
ANDREY AND PEPIK AS THEY STAND  
ALONE AT THE 'FENCE'.

PEPIK: We had to undress them. They brought them on carts and...  
We had to undress them. What was left... Wasn't much  
anymore... Parts... Only parts and Baumann said... We had  
to undress them all, every last piece of fabric. What do they  
want with that fabric?

ANDREY: Aniko? Sulaika?

PEPIK: I mean, all we wear now are only rags, and if all of that is  
blown up as well, what do they want with that? What do they  
need these shreds for, what are they doing with it? What  
would anyone want with these leftovers? Why did we have to  
undress them? We had to undress them, do you understand,  
the women, we had to...

---

<sup>19</sup> Please don't leave me here alone, please... I'm sorry. I'm so sorry...

<sup>20</sup> Agnieszka. Adzi. Don't cry. Don't cry.

BAUMANN: Hier, Muschi... Komm, komm...

BAUMANN: Here, pussy cat... Come, come...

PEPIK: Why did we have to undress them? I... I've never... I have never seen a girl, do you understand? Never.... Why? What would the Germans want with these shreds? No one would want them anymore, why can't they burn them in their rags, no one wants these shreds anymore... They are only shreds now.

BAUMANN: (RUSHING AT HIM) Ja, schaut nur gut hin, schaut genau hin! Das waren eure Amifreunde! Schau es dir genau an, du Saujude! Das habt ihr gemacht!

BAUMANN: (RUSHING AT HIM) Yes, you go and look at it, look closely! This was done by your Yankee-friends! You look closely, you dirty Jew! You people did that!

ELSE: Hans! Hans, was tust du denn? Beruhige dich. (TO ANDREY) Verschwindet.

ELSE: Hans! Hans, what are you doing. Calm down. (TO ANDREY) Go.

THEY GO.

ELSE: Was machst du denn, Hans?

ELSE: What is it, Hans?

BAUMANN: (SHAKING) Else...

ELSE: (SOFTLY) Hans, was hast du denn? (HUGS HIM, WHISPERS) Deine Mieke ist mir grade über den Weg gelaufen, Richtung Magazin hin, die Mäusefängerin...

ELSE: (SOFTLY) Hans, what is it? (HUGS HIM, WHISPERS) Your kitty just crossed my path, heading to the store room, the mice hunter...

BAUMANN: (PULLING HIMSELF TOGETHER) Sehr gut, Fräulein Rumpert. Das wäre dann alles, Fräulein Rumpert.

BAUMANN: (PULLING HIMSELF TOGETHER) Very good, Miss Rumpert. That would be all, Miss Rumpert.

ELSE: Jawohl, Herr Unterscharführer. (SALUTES AND LEAVES)

BAUMANN REMAINS ALONE, OLD WOMAN WATCHES. MAYOR RISES IN THE AUDIENCE.

BAUMANN: Herr Bürgermeister!

BAUMANN: Mr Mayor!

MAYOR: Baumann. Schlimm, das. Da bringen die, quasi, ihre eigenen Leute um... Das Lager hat's ja schlimmer erwischt, als die Stadt.

MAYOR: Baumann. Horrid thing. There they are, effectively killing their own like that... The camp's been hit worse than the town...

BAUMANN: Jawohl, Herr Bürgermeister. Und dann auch noch die Frauen... (PAUSE) Wissen Sie, diese Arbeit... Man tut ja seine Pflicht, aber... Diese Last...

BAUMANN: Yes, Mr Mayor. And then mostly the women... (PAUSE) You know, this work... One does his duty, of course, but... This burden...

MAYOR: Es ist ja nur vorübergehend... (PAUSE) Haben Sie wenigstens Ihr Tier wiedergefunden?

MAYOR: All of this will pass, soon... (PAUSE) Have you found your animal, at least?

BAUMANN: (SOFTER) Ja, Herr Bürgermeister.

BAUMANN: (SOFTER) Yes, Mr Mayor.

CLARA: (TAKES OUT HER PHONE) That's the day it started, it really started, for her, for them. The day after the air raid, the 31<sup>st</sup> of November 1944, Granny Lore walked up to the camp to check on her sister...

CLARA TAKES THE POSITION OF THE OLD WOMAN...

## 19. SUCH WARMTH, SO TENDER?

CLARA: When she arrived at the camp fence, she noticed in the perimeter the covered cart (SHE POINTS AT NOTHING), she noticed the rubble, and then she noticed, on the other side of the fence, approaching her... the Russian man, she didn't know his name... (SHE PUTS PHONE AWAY.) Andrey!

ANDREY APPROACHES FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FENCE, THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER.

LORE: Sulaika? Aniko?

ANDREY NODS.

LORE: Agnieszka?

ANDREY NODS.

LORE: Halina?

ANDREY SHAKES HIS HEAD.

LORE: Oh god, that poor girl.

ANDREY: I'm surprised you knew her name.

LORE: (SHARPLY) I know all your names.

ANDREY: Yes. That's why I'm surprised.

LORE: You know my name, don't you?

ANDREY: So? I know all the German names.

LORE: So?

ANDREY: So, I can find them, later.

LORE RECOILS. ANDREY TURNS TO MOVE  
AWAY FROM THE FENCE.

LORE: It will not always be like this.

ANDREY TURNS TO LOOK AT HER.

LORE: (SOFTLY) It will not always be like this. In the spring, it will be different, you'll see.

ANDREY: I doubt it will make a difference for us.

LORE: It will be different.

ANDREY: Oh... Will it now?

LORE: (NODS, QUICKLY) Just wait for the spring. It will be different.

ANDREY NODS, LEAVES. LORE LOOKS  
AFTER HIM.

MIKE: What became of him?

CLARA LOOKING IN THE DIRECTION OF  
ANDREY.

CLARA: He's the one who died. The one whose name she never told  
me. (WALKS AWAY THROUGH THE AUDIENCE)

## 20. DUTY

ELSE AND BAUMANN AT THE 'FACTORY  
GATE'. LORE WALKS TOWARDS THEM.

BAUMANN: Ich habe dir gesagt, es ist nicht so einfach...

BAUMANN: I said it wouldn't be easy...

ELSE: Für wen? Für wen ist es nicht so einfach? Für mich wär's  
ganz einfach, das einfachste auf der Welt, aber diese ganze  
Heimlichtuerei, die ist nicht einfach für mich...

ELSE: For whom? For whom isn't it easy? 'Cos for me, it'd be the  
easiest thing in the world, but all this secrecy, that isn't easy  
for me...

BAUMANN: Soll das eine Drohung sein?

BAUMANN: Is that meant to be a threat?

ELSE: Was?

ELSE: What?

BAUMANN: Ich lass' mir nämlich nicht drohen, und von dir am  
allerwenigsten...

BAUMANN: I won't be threatened, least of all by you...

ELSE: Was soll das denn heißen? (LOUDER) Von so einer, wie mir?  
Das willst du doch damit sagen, oder nicht? Bin ich dir nicht  
gut genug, ist es das? Bin ich nicht fein genug?

ELSE: What's that supposed to mean? (LOUDER) By someone like  
me? That's what you want to say, isn't it? I'm not good  
enough for you, is that it? Am I not fancy enough?

BAUMANN: Das hast du jetzt gesagt.

BAUMANN: You said that.

ELSE: Weil du ja eben nichts sagst – du musst ja gar nichts sagen,  
du schweigst dich hübsch durchs Leben...

ELSE: Because you say nothing – you don't say anything, you happily keep quiet your entire life...

BAUMANN: Fräulein Rumpert, das reicht jetzt.

BAUMANN: Miss Rumpert, that's enough.

ELSE: Du kannst mich mal, mit deinem Fräulein Rumpert.

ELSE: Go fuck yourself with your Miss Rumpert...

HE STORMS OFF, SHE TURNS TO GO TO LORE, BUT AT THAT MOMENT, THE PRISONERS ARRIVE. LORE GOES UP TO MEET THEM AND WALKS INTO THE 'FACTORY' WITH THEM, CAREFULLY LOOKING ABOUT HERSELF, THEN QUICKLY PULLING AGNIESZKA TOWARDS HER, HUGGING HER.

## 21. SISTERS

ANDREA IN THE KITCHEN PACKING AND UNPACKING FRUIT – APPLES, PEARS, BERRIES...

SCREEN, SULAIKA, ANIKO, AGNIESZKA, PEPIK AND ANDREY STAND HUDDLED TOGETHER AGAINST A WALL, WHILE ELSE CHECKS CONTENT OF BOXES, STOMPING AROUND.

ON STAGE, THE ACTORS STAND, RELAXED, CHECKING THE FILM, SPEAKING THEIR LINES.

LORE: Else, was hast du denn?

LORE: Else, what is it?

ELSE: Nichts.

ELSE: Nothing.

LORE: Du hast doch was.

LORE: Come on, what is it?

ELSE PAUSES. LORE MOVES CLOSER TO HER.

LORE: Ich seh' doch, dass es dir nicht gut geht.  
LORE: I can see you're not well.

ELSE SOBS. LORE HUGS HER CLOSE.

LORE: Was ist denn?  
LORE: What is it?

ELSE: Ich glaube, Hans...  
ELSE: I think Hans might...

SHE PULLS HERSELF FREE.

ELSE: Nichts. Es ist nichts.  
ELSE: Nothing. It's nothing.

SHE PRACTICALLY RUNS OUT OF THE ROOM. FILM STOPS.

BREAK. CLARA AND MIKE TAKE OUT THEIR PHONES.

MIKE: (PHONE) So far, so good.

CLARA: (PHONE) I know. Once her sister left, the prisoners relaxed...

MIKE: (PHONE) How do you know all this? Did she tell you that?

THE PRISONERS RELAX.

CLARA: (PHONE) Just listen. Once Granny Lore was in charge...

## 22. SABOTAGE

LORE: (IPOINTS) Alright. Pepik, you come here please.

SHE MOTIONS AT A PLACE NEXT TO ANIKO.

LORE: Until you're recovered, you will be doing this.

SHE PAUSES, THEN PULLS A COLOURFUL HEADSCARF OUT OF HER POCKET, HANDING IT TO ANIKO.

ANIKO TAKES IT, QUESTIONINGLY, LORE POINTS AT ANIKO'S SHORN HEAD.



LORE: (NODS AT ANDREY) You and I will carry the boxes if you please.

LONG PAUSE.

ANIKO BINDS THE HEADSCARF AROUND HER HEAD, EVERYONE STARTS WORKING.

PEPIK: (SOFTLY) Right corner and left corner. She only checks the right and the left corner.

SULAIKA TURNS TO GLARE AT HIM, BUT ANIKO NODS.

LORE AND ANDREY CARRY THE BOXES, EVER SO OFTEN LORE CHECKS THEM IN THE RIGHT AND LEFT CORNER.

SULAIKA: Sing something, child.

AGNIESZKA UNRESPONSIVE, WORKING MECHANICALLY.

SULAIKA: Sing, Adzi.

AGNIESZKA DOESN'T RESPOND. PEPIK STARTS SINGING "PIRATE JENNY".

THE OLD WOMAN APPEARS, DANCING TO HIS SONG IN THE BACKGROUND.

LORE ENTERS THE 'STORE ROOM'. ANDREY TURNS AROUND HECTICALLY, IN HIS HANDS A ROUGH KNIFE MADE FROM METAL SHARDS. LORE SLOWLY PUTS DOWN THE BOX.

LORE: What are you doing?

ANDREY HOLDS OUT THE KNIFE. LORE STARES AT IT.

LORE: I'll have to report this...

SILENCE. SHE MOVES.

ANDREY: You're dead before you reach the door.

LORE STARES AT HIM, SHOCKED.

LORE: Then you'll all die.

ANDREY SMILES.

LORE: What... What do you want with this?

ANDREY: (GESTURES TO THE WORK ROOM) Pepik's father used to be a singer at the German Theatre in Prague. His mother a pianist. He wanted to join the theatre, too...

LORE: And what has this got to do with the knife?

ANDREY: Everything will collapse soon. And then they'll kill us. And then I'll have my knife, chorashow, and maybe we'll live, and one of them will die.

LORE: One like me?

ANDREY: Depends.

LORE: On what?

ANDREY: You. (HE WALKS PAST HER, TO THE DOOR)

LORE: Wait...

HE TURNS.

LORE: I live in Canal Street. If you follow the train tracks, in the direction of the station. My garden is the only one with no vegetable patches. If... When it gets to that point, you can come to mine.

ANDREY: What's growing in your garden, then?

LORE: Lilac. But it isn't in bloom yet. It covers up everything, when it is in bloom. In spring. (BREAK) Hang on a minute... (TAKES OUT HER PHONE)

FACTORY SOUNDS DECREASE.

### 23. LILAC

CLARA: (PHONE) // Hang on a moment... Going to call you back... (HANGS UP THE PHONE AND JOGS TO THE STAGE)

CLARA: Entschuldigen Sie! Entschuldigung bitte?

CLARA: Excuse me! Excuse me, please?

THE OLD WOMAN TURNS TO FACE HER.

CLARA: Ist alles in Ordnung? Brauchen Sie Hilfe?

CLARA: Is everything alright? Do you need help?

OLD WOMAN: Flieder. Johannisbeerbusch, zwanzig Stück. Himbeerbusch, zwanzig Stück. Brombeerbusch, zwanzig Stück. Flieder. Flieder.

OLD WOMAN: Lilac. Redcurrant, twenty bushes. Raspberry, twenty bushes. lackberry, twenty bushes. Lilac. Lilac.

CLARA: Ja, ok, aber...

CLARA: Yeah, ok, but...

THE OLD WOMAN MOVES AWAY,  
MUMBLING AND POINTING.

CLARA: Warten Sie doch... Kann ich Ihnen nicht irgendwie helfen?

CLARA: Wait... Can't I help you at all?

THE OLD WOMAN TURNS TO HER.

OLD WOMAN: Flieder.

SHE POINTS AT THE STAGE. THEY STAND  
STILL, FACING EACH OTHER.

OLD WOMAN: Flieder. (SHE MOVES AWAY)

CLARA: O-kay.

SHE TAKES THE PHONE AND DIALS AGAIN,  
MOVING BACK TO HER PREVIOUS  
POSITION. AT THE BROKEN WALL,  
BAUMANN COMES OUT, PUTTING CHUNKS  
OF MEAT IN A BOWL.

BAUMANN: Mietze! Komm'. Komm, komm, komm, Mieze.

BAUMANN: Kitty! Come here. Come, come, come, pussy cat.

MIKE: (PICKS UP PHONE) Thanks. That how you treat a lady?

CLARA: (PHONE) Oh, shut up.

MIKE: (PHONE) What was it?

CLARA: (PHONE) I thought this old woman needed help, but she's just jackass crazy.

MIKE: (PHONE) You've got such a way with words...

CLARA: (PHONE) Shut up. You want to hear the rest of it?

THEY RESUME THEIR POSITIONS.  
FACTORY SOUNDS INCREASE.

## 24. SUCH WARMTH, SO TENDER?

LORE AND ANDREY IN THE STORE ROOM,  
AS BEFORE.

ANDREY: What's growing in your garden, then?

LORE: Lilac. But it isn't in bloom yet. It covers up everything, when it is in bloom. In spring.

ANDREY: Lilac?

LORE GESTURES, HELPLESS.

ANDREY: I was never good with the botanical terms.

LORE: Botanical?

HE GESTURES, SMILING. THE SCREEN  
LIGHTS UP, THE SCAFFOLD BECOMING  
VISIBLE.

LORE: My husband always meant to do something about it. The smell drove him crazy. But I never let him. My father planted the lilac. First, in the orchard. (SHE POINTS AT THE SCAFFOLD) And then in our garden, too. For us, Else and me. So we'd always have flowers on our birthdays. (PAUSE) I talk about him as if he was dead.

ANDREY: Your father?

LORE: My husband. Peter. He's not dead.

ANDREY: Where is he?

PAUSE. THE SCREEN GOES DARK AGAIN.

LORE: I think he's dead.

PAUSE.

ANDREY: Did he have good hands?

LORE: What?

ANDREY SHRUGS.

LORE: He had strong hands. He worked in the mine. Had been since he was a boy. When we got married, my father said... Never mind.

ANDREY: What did he say?

LORE: It's good you got a miner. Else is the one who likes to play with uniforms. You want a miner, not a soldier.

ANDREY: Now you got both?

LORE: Now I got neither.

ANDREY: And your sister got her uniform.

LORE: And your uniform?

ANDREY: Not much left of it, is there? I never made a good soldier.

LORE: Show me your hands. (SHE EXAMINES THEM) You wouldn't make a good miner either.

A NOISE OUTSIDE. THEY JUMP.

LORE: I need to go back.

ANDREY: (QUOTES) "And eyes, too, have risen, faded, Yet I saw you eye to eye." (BREAK) Claire, wait... Claire? You still... Claire, are you still there?

## 25. MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

ANDREA STANDS UP FROM THE TABLE.  
FACTORY SOUNDS DECREASE.

ANDREA: (SHOUTING DOWN) Clara!

CLARA: Was?

CLARA: What?

ANDREA RUSHES DOWN AND TRIES TO  
HAND CLARA A FOODBAG.

ANDREA: Ich hab' dir was Obst eingepackt...

ANDREA: I packed you some fruit...

CLARA: Mutti, ich kann einkaufen gehen, wenn ich was brauche.

CLARA: Mom, I can go grocery shopping if I need something.

ANDREA: Ja... Ich dacht' ja nur...

ANDREA: Yes... I just thought...

CLARA: Ich muss jetzt los, Mutti. (LEAVES)

CLARA: Mom, I have to go now. (LEAVES)

ANDREA: Wart', du hast...

ANDREA: Wait, you...

ANDREA ALONE. OLD WOMAN WATCHES  
HER FROM THE MARGINS.

ANDREA: Du hast dein Obst vergessen. (EXITS)

ANDREA: You forgot your fruit. (EXITS)

## II. WINTER

## 26. LILAC

DARK. FLASHING LIGHTS. SOUNDS OF A  
LARGE GROUP OF PEOPLE.

IN THE KITCHEN, ANDREA TAKES OUT  
BEDDING AND SHAKES IT, FEATHERS FALL  
ON THE GROUND, LIKE SNOW.

VOICES: Volksverräter!<sup>21</sup>

OLD WOMAN WALKS ACROSS THE STAGE  
THROUGH THE SNOW, POINTING.

OLD WOMAN: Flieder. Flieder.

ANDREY AND PEPIK SCUFFLE ACROSS  
THE STAGE, FREEZING.

OLD WOMAN: Der Flieder blüht noch nicht.

OLD WOMAN: The lilac isn't in bloom yet.

ANDREY TURNS AND SMILES AT HER,  
MAKING A FEW DANCE STEPS.

VOICES: Volksverräter! Volksverräter!

ANDREY STRETCHES OUT HIS ARMS  
TOWARDS HER.

OLD WOMAN: Du musst warten, bis der Flieder blüht.

OLD WOMAN: You have to wait until the lilac blossoms...

SHE MIRRORS HIM, THEY ARE ALMOST  
TOUCHING...

VOICES: Volksverräter! Volksverräter!

CLARA ENTERS. OLD WOMAN AND ANDREY  
RETREAT. SHE SITS ON THE BROKEN  
WALL, PULLS A CIGARETTE OUT OF HER  
POCKET, STARING INTO THE SNOW.

VOICES: Volksverräter! Volksverräter!

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<sup>21</sup> Traitor of the people.



ANDREY AND PEPIK REAPPEAR, CARRYING BOXES, LOADING AND UNLOADING IN THE SNOW. CLARA WATCHES THEM, WHILE ANDREA KEEPS EMPTYING THE BEDDING, VOICES SHOUT IN THE DISTANCE. CLARA'S PHONE RINGS, BUT SHE LETS IT RING, STILL WATCHING THE SCENE.

## 27. LAST SUPPER

FACTORY SOUNDS INCREASE.

A SPOT IN THE DARKNESS AND SNOW, IN WHICH PEPIK, ANDREY, SULAIKA, ANIKO AND AGNIESZKA GATHER. ANDREY WRITES ON A PIECE OF PAPER. AGNIESZKA PICKS AT HER BREAD.

SULAIKA: You're not hungry?

AGNIESZKA KEEPS PICKING AT HER BREAD.

ANIKO: Adzi, musisz coś zjeść.<sup>22</sup>

AGNIESZKA KEEPS PICKING AT HER BREAD. ANIKO SHRUGS.

SULAIKA: Tell her, she got to eat.

ANIKO: I did.

ANIKO SIGHS AND GETS UP, RUBBING HER BACK. SULAIKA JOINS HER. WHILE THEY TALK, PEPIK HOLDS UP HIS FISTS TO AGNIESZKA AND MAKES HER CHOOSE ONE. AT FIRST, SHE IS NOT INTERESTED, BUT HE PERSISTS.

ANIKO: She doesn't want to [eat].

SULAIKA: She has to, or she won't make it.

ANIKO: Maybe she doesn't want to make it.

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<sup>22</sup> Adzi, you have to eat.

SULAIKA: Don't talk like that.

ANIKO: How am I to talk? You can't save her if she doesn't want to be saved. Maybe not even then.

SULAIKA: You say that now. Once you got your little Shlemil, you'll think differently.

ANIKO: Shlemil?

SULAIKA: Well, you haven't told me what you'll call him.

PAUSE

ANIKO: Béla. Like his father.

PAUSE.

SULAIKA: And if it's not [your husband's]... And if it's a girl?

AGNIESZKA GIGGLES AND TRIES TO OPEN  
PEPIK'S FIST.

ANIKO: Sulaika.

SULAIKA: What?

ANIKO: No. If it's a girl... Sulaika.

SULAIKA: Oh...

AGNIEZSKA SUCCEEDS AND FINDS A  
SPICE NUT IN PEPIK'S HAND. HE HANDS IT  
OVER TO HER. SHE NIBBLES ON IT.

SULAIKA: Where did you get that from?

PEPIK: The foreman in the metal room. (TO AGNIESZKA) Dobre, co?<sup>23</sup>

AGNIESZKA: Tak! Bardzo dobre.<sup>24</sup>

PEPIK: His wife makes them.

SULAIKA: And he gave them to you?

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<sup>23</sup> Good, isn't it?

<sup>24</sup> Yes! Very good.

PEPIK: He gave me one.  
ANDREY: How generous.  
SULAIKA: Yes. That was generous, Pepik.

LORE APPEARS IN THE DOOR. THEY GET  
UP TO FOLLOW HER.

PEPIK: (TO ANDREY) What you got there?  
ANDREY: Nothing?  
PEPIK: C'mon, show...  
ANDREY: It's nothing...

HE FALLS BACK TO LOOK OVER THE  
PAPER AGAIN.

MIKE: (PHONE) I taught your poem today. "Whence cometh such  
warmth, so tender..." But it's not the same without you here  
to... (HE PUTS THE PHONE AWAY AND RUSHES TO  
WORK)

## 28. SISTERS

IN THE BACKGROUND, ANIKO, SULAIKA  
AND AGNIEZSKA CONTINUE LOADING AND  
UNLOADING. ELSE COMES TO JOIN CLARA,  
THEY SHARE A CIGARETTE. ELSE LOOKS  
OVER HER SHOULDER.

LORE: Oh bitte...  
LORE: Oh please...  
ELSE: Ich hab' ihm versprochen, ich hör' auf...  
ELSE: I told him I'd stop...

LORE GRIMACES.

ELSE: Was?  
ELSE: What?  
LORE: Nichts, nichts.  
LORE: Nothing...

LORE: Hör' mal, wo wir grad' von kalt reden... Kannste nich' noch mal fragen, wegen Jacken?

LORE: Listen, as we're talking about the cold, can't you ask again, for jackets?

ELSE: Du lieber Himmel...

ELSE: Goodness, not again...

LORE: Da verliert noch eine nen Finger, so wie die zittern.

LORE: One will lose a finger, the way they're shaking...

ELSE: Die soll'n sich nicht so anstellen.

ELSE: They should pull themselves together.

LORE: Es ist doch aber saukalt, und die ham nicht mal Unterhemden, Else.

LORE: It's damned cold and they don't even have vests, Else.

ELSE: Wie sieht das denn aus, wenn ich unsere Gefangenen besser einkleide, als hier die Ausgebombten?

ELSE: What does it look like if I dress our prisoners better than those who've been bombed out?

LORE: Als würdest du dich um die Produktivität kümmern?

LORE: As if you gave a damn about productivity?

AGNIESZKA PASSES WITH A HEAVY BOX.

ELSE: Ist ja gut, ich red' noch mal mit ihm.

ELSE: Alright, I'll speak to him.

LORE: Dank' dir, Else.

LORE: Thanks, Else.

ELSE STOPS AGNIESZKA.

ELSE: Wo sind die Männer, Mädels?

ELSE: Where are the men, girl?

AGNIESZKA: Przepraszam, nie rozumiem...<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> I'm sorry, I don't understand...

LORE: Geh' rein, Adzi, du frierst doch... (TO ELSE) Die sind im Metallraum.

LORE: Go in, Adzi, you're cold... (TO ELSE) They're in the metal room.

ELSE: Was soll'n das, wir ham die doch nicht hier, damit dann dieses Kind...

ELSE: Why? We didn't get them so that this child...

LORE: Agnieszka.

ELSE: Wie auch immer. Damit dieses Kind die die Kisten trägt...

ELSE: Whatever. So that this child carries the boxes...

LORE: Ist ja gut, sie kommen ja schon...

LORE: Alright, they're coming already...

ANDREY AND PEPIK GO PAST LORE.  
ANDREY SMILES AT HER.

ELSE: Nicht so langsam...

ELSE: Move it!

LORE: Lass' doch gut sein, denen ist auch kalt. Fragst du also noch mal?

LORE: Let them be, they're cold too. Will you ask again?

ELSE: Ja doch. (PAUSE) Das sind nicht deine Freunde, Prinzessin, das ist dir schon klar, oder? (LEAVES.)

ELSE: Yes, yes. (PAUSE) They are not your friends, princess, you do realise that, right? (LEAVES.)

CLARA TAKES HER PHONE OUT. WHILE  
LISTENING TO MIKE'S MESSAGE, SHE  
EXCHANGES GLANCES WITH ANDREY.

MIKE: (VOICEMAIL) I taught your poem today. "Whence cometh such warmth, so tender..." But it's not the same without you here to nitpick...

CLARA DIALS, IT RINGS.

LORE SMILES AT ANDREY, MOVES  
TOWARDS HIM.

ANDREY: Finally.

LORE: So, I hear you're writing dirty poetry for me?

ANDREY: It's not dirty, it's beautiful. Absolutely beautiful.

LORE: Let's hear.

ANDREY: Not yet. Not done yet.

LORE: Damn perfectionist.

ANDREY: Yeah, well, you fell for it, so I must be doing something right.

LORE: Something, I guess.

HE PICKS UP THE PHONE. CLARA LISTENS.

MIKE: (VOICEMAIL) without you here to nitpick or criticise my choice of words. I mean, what are you still doing there, Claire? Funeral is over. You only argue with your mother. What are you still doing at that place? Come home, baby.

PEPIK TAPS ANDREY ON THE SHOULDER  
TO INDICATE THEY SHOULD GO.

## 29. LIES

PEPIK AND ANDREY RUSH TO THE STAGE,  
WHERE THE OTHERS LINE UP IN FRONT OF  
THE BROKEN WALL. ANDREA PREPARES A  
SALAD DINNER.

ON SCREEN, THE PRISONERS MARCH TO  
'CAMP'. PEPIK AND ANDREY CLOSE UP,  
CAPS PULLED DOWN LOW OVER THEIR  
FACES.

PEPIK AND ANDREY SPEAK THEIR LINES  
FOR THE FILM, CHECKING THE IMAGES  
OCCASIONALLY.

PEPIK: That one. (NODS TO A WOMAN IN THE AUDIENCE) Did you see her?

ANDREY: Hm?

PEPIK: Did you see her?

ANDREY: Yeah. Sure.

PEPIK: Well, what did you think?

ANDREY: What's another word for chest?

PEPIK: What?

ANDREY: Chest. I like bosom better, but I need something monosyllabic...

PEPIK: What are you doing?

ON SCREEN, THEY MARCH THROUGH THE  
'GATES' AND HAVE TO PAUSE. BAUMANN  
AND ELSE TALK QUIETLY.

ANDREY: C'mon, it's your first language, after all, not mine. Bosom.  
Any idea?

PEPIK: No. What are they doing?

ON STAGE, THEY CONTINUE WAITING IN  
LINE.

CLARA: First, the prisoners thought it was a selection, but there  
weren't any selections here, of course. It was Baumann and  
Else, handing out jumpers...

SULAIKA: I don't believe it.

CLARA: Like Lore had promised she would...

SULAIKA: Oh, shut up, Andrey.

CLARA: One by one, they could pass the guards and Else made sure  
that each prisoner received a jumper, to the last. Thanks to  
Granny Lore.

ON SCREEN, ELSE HANDS OUT JUMPERS  
TO THE PASSING PRISONERS, HANDED TO  
HER BY A RELUCTANT BAUMANN.

THERE ARE NO JUMPERS ON STAGE. THE  
PRISONERS WATCH BAUMANN AND ELSE  
ARGUE AND LEAVE, ONE BY ONE, UNTIL  
ONLY ANIKO IS LEFT.

ELSE: Wenn die so zittern, dass sie sich die Finger abschneiden,  
haben wir auch nichts davon.

ELSE: Because if they shake so much that they lose their fingers, we get nothing out of it.

BAUMANN: Dann bestellen wir uns halt neue.

BAUMANN: Then we order new ones.

ELSE: Woher denn?

ELSE: Where from?

BAUMANN: Vorsicht, Fräulein Rumpert, Sie klingen jetzt aber verdächtig // nach Wehrkraftszersetzung...

BAUMANN: Careful now, Miss Rumpert, you sound dangerously // defeatist...

ELSE: // Du lieber Himmel, du weißt genau, wie ich das meine.

ELSE: // Dear God, you know exactly what I mean.

BAUMANN: Der neue Ton von dir, seit du hier bist, der gefällt mir überhaupt nicht. Das liegt nicht vielleicht an deiner Schwester? Man hört ja nicht viel Gutes über die Frau vom Peter Gruber...

BAUMANN: I dislike this new tone of voice since you got here. That wouldn't have anything to do with your sister now, would it? One doesn't hear a lot of good about Peter Gruber's missus...

ELSE: Wie bitte? Wer hier hat denn irgendetwas Schlechtes über meine Schwester zugesagt?

ELSE: Excuse me? Who'd say anything bad about my sister here?

BAUMANN: Das sie sich ein bisschen zu gut mit eurem Vater verstanden hat, vielleicht?

BAUMANN: That she was maybe a little bit too close with your father?

ELSE: Ist das jetzt etwa verboten?

ELSE: And since when is that forbidden?

BAUMANN: (GRABS HER) Jetzt hör' mir mal gut zu, Fräulein, mit deiner großen Klappe, ich hab' ein paar Erkundigungen eingeholt, über deinen Alten, und was ich da so gehört habe, das gefällt mir gar nicht, und dass du mir das verschwiegen hast, ja, dass...

BAUMANN: (GRABS HER) Now listen carefully, missy, with your big mouth, I've made a few enquires, about your old man, and I don't like what I've heard at all and even less that you haven't bothered to tell me...



ELSE: Was denn genau? Dass er mich halbtot geschlagen hat, als ich zum BdM wollte? Dass ich mit vierzehn direkt in Stellung gegangen bin, damit ich von ihm wegkomme?

ELSE: What exactly? That he beat me half to death when I wanted to join the Hitler Youth? That I got myself into service as quickly as I could, just to get away from him?

BAUMANN: Wenn du glaubst, dass ich mir mit deiner rotversifften Verwandtschaft die Karriere verbaue, dann...

BAUMANN: If you think I'll ruin my career with your red-infested family then...

ELSE: Und wenn du glaubst das ich immer noch dumm genug bin zu glauben, dass du deine Frau für mich verlässt, dann bist du wirklich noch blöder, als du aussiehst. (STOMPS OFF)

ELSE: And if you believe that I am stupid enough to still believe that you'll leave your wife for me, then you are even dafter than you look. (STOMPS OFF)

SCREEN GOES BLACK.

MIKE: Incidentally, what became of your granny's sister again? The Nazi one?

CLARA: She disappeared at the end of the war, I don't quite know how...

CLARA EXITS WITH THE PHONE. ANDREA  
TURNS HER ATTENTION TO THE  
PRISONERS.

ANIKO WANTS TO SLIDE PAST BAUMANN.

BAUMANN: Mitkommen...

BAUMANN: Come...

HE POINTS AT ANIKO, PUSHING HER WHEN  
SHE DOESN'T MOVE QUICKLY ENOUGH.  
SHE FOLLOWS HIM TENTATIVELY,  
GLANCING AT SULAIKA AND AGNIESZKA.  
BAUMANN AND ANIKO DISAPPEAR BEHIND  
THE WALL. SILENCE.

AGNIESZKA: On ją skrzywdzi jeszcze raz, prawda? Tak jak Halinę. On wszystkich krzywdzi... Tak jak Halinę.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> He's going to hurt her again, isn't he? Like Halina? He's hurting everyone... Like Halina?

ANDREY: What about Halina?

SULAIKA: Just shut up.

ELSE APPEARS, ANDREY AND PEPIK EXIT QUICKLY.

ELSE: Was glaubst du eigentlich, was du da tust?

ELSE: *What exactly do you think you're doing?*

LIGHTS ON ANDREA PREPARING DINNER. THE LIGHTS ON THE SCENE BELOW FADE OUT, ONLY SOUNDS AND VOICES HEARD. WHILE ANDREA SPEAKS, THERE ARE QUICK, FRAGMENTED FLASHES OF SCENES OF VIOLENCE ON THE TV.

ANDREA: Zu Hause am Küchentisch sitzt Mutter, im blauen Rauch, die Lippen verzogen. *Hast du den Verstand verloren? Mit dem Kind dahin?* Das Kind spielt, blauer Mantel, blonde Zöpfe, im kahlen Garten. Da wusst ich auch noch nichts. Wollt nichts wissen. Ihre verzogenen Lippen verziehen sich, *Wie ich früher.* /

ANDREA: *At home, at the kitchen table sits my mother, in blue smoke, lips twisted, have you lost your mind? With the child? There? The child, my child, plays, blue coat, blond plaits, in the bare winter garden. Then, I didn't know yet either. Didn't want to. Her twisted lips twist like myself when I was young.* /

ELSE: / Das Sprechen am Zaun ist strengstens verboten... Ich werd's dir zeigen, du Zigeunerhure...<sup>27</sup>

ANDREA: / Auf mich, *Schwarzkopf, Dummkopf, genau wie sie.* Ich bin kein Nazi. *Das war sie auch nicht. Aber dumm war sie, wie du. Das Kind da mit...* Ich war da nicht in Uniform, Mutter. Willst du das echt vergleichen? Warum bist du eigentlich nicht mitgekommen, man sollte denken Lore Gruber, die Heldin... Und dann weiß ich's. Dann hör' ich's...

ANDREA: *To me, black hair, stupid head, just like her.* I am not a Nazi. *Neither was she. But stupid, she was, like you. Taking the child...* I was not there in uniform. Do you really want to compare this? Why didn't you go, after all, one would think you, Lore Gruber, the heroine... And then, I know. Then I hear it...

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<sup>27</sup> Speaking at the fence is strictly forbidden... I'll show you, you gypsy whore...

LIGHTS BACK ON.

FACTORY NOISES DECREASE.

### 30. MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

ANIKO REAPPEARS FROM AT THE BROKEN WALL AND WAITS THERE. ABOVE, IN THE KITCHEN, ANDREA SERVES CLARA A SALAD.

ANDREA: Setz' dich doch, willst du nicht // was essen.

ANDREA: Sit down, don't you want // something to eat.

CLARA: // Nein, ich will nichts essen. Ich will was von dir hören.

CLARA: // No, I don't want anything to eat. I want you to talk now.

ANDREA: Ich hab' Salat gemacht, weil du doch immer // so gesund essen willst.

ANDREA: I made a salad, because you're // eating so healthy all the time...

CLARA: // Verdammt, Mutti, kannst du mal für zwei Minuten nicht über Essen reden?

CLARA: Damit, Mom, can't you stop talking about food for two minutes?

ANDREA: Was hast du nur immer mit den alten Geschichten?

ANDREA: What is it will those old stories all the time?

CLARA: Jetzt sag' mir doch einfach, was ich wissen will!

CLARA: Just tell me what I want to know!

ANDREA: Was du wissen willst? Das willst du doch alles gar nicht wissen, du willst doch immer nur hören, was du eh' schon weißt.

ANDREA: What you want to know? You don't want to know about all that, you only ever want to know what you know already anyway.

CLARA LEAVES. AT THE DOOR.

ANDREA: Damals, nach der..., kurz vor... Vor der Sache damals...

ANDREA: Back then, after the..., just before... The thing back then...

CLARA: Kurz vor der *Sache*? *Sache*? Ich war acht und musste dein *Blut* aus der Wanne wischen. (LEAVES.)

CLARA: The *thing* back then? *Thing*? I was eight and had to clean your blood from the bathtub. (LEAVES.)

ANDREA: Du weißt nicht... (SHOUTS AFTER CLARA) Du willst das alles doch gar nicht wissen! Du lebst doch in einer Traumwelt! Du willst doch überhaupt nicht wissen, wie es... Wenn ich dir das alles erzähle... Du willst das nicht wissen! Du willst das nicht hören... (TURNS)

ANDREA: You don't know... (SHOUTS AFTER CLARA) You don't want to know about all that! You're just living in a dream world! You don't really want to know... If I told you everything... You don't want to know. You don't want to hear all that... (TURNS)

ANDREA: (SOFTLY TO ANIKO BELOW) Das wollte keiner wissen... Ich wollte es ihnen ja sagen, aber es wollte keiner mehr hören...

ANDREA: (SOFTLY TO ANIKO BELOW) No one wanted to know... I wanted to tell them, but no one wanted to hear it anymore...

### 31. DUTY

FACTORY NOISES INCREASE. ANIKO STANDS MOTIONLESS ON STAGE, LOOKING DIRECTLY AT THE AUDIENCE. CLAIRE SETTLES ON THE WALL AND LOOKS AT THE SCREEN.

SCREEN: BAUMANN PUSHES ANIKO AGAINST THE WALL.

BAUMANN: (SCREEN) Ihr glaubt wohl, ihr könnt' euch bei mir alles erlauben, hm? Das bei mir alles durchgeht, oder was?

BAUMANN: (SCREEN) You think you can do anything you want here, don't you? That I'll let it pass, regardless?

STAGE: AGNIESZKA ENTERS, PAUSES, AND SEES ANIKO. THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER UNTIL ANIKO SHAKES HER HEAD.

SCREEN: ANIKO SHAKES HER HEAD. BAUMANN HITS HER.

ANIKO: (STAGE) Entschuldigen Sie, Herr Unterscharführer.

ANIKO: (STAGE) Pardon me, Herr Unterscharführer.

STAGE: AGNIESZKA TURNS AND RUNS.  
ANIKO ON STAGE BEGINS TO UNDRESS,  
ALL THE WHILE LOOKING DIRECTLY AT THE  
AUDIENCE. HER GAZE IS OPEN, NOT  
STARING, AND SOMEWHERE BETWEEN  
THE CHARACTER AND THE ACTRESS  
PERFORMING.

SHE DOES NOT STARE AT THE AUDIENCE,  
DOES NOT INDICT THEIR LOOKING AT HER,  
BUT SIMPLY RECIPROCATATE THEIR GAZE.  
SHE FOLDS HER CLOTHES CAREFULLY  
AND PUTS THEM ASIDE – PARTLY AS  
ACTRESS WHO IS AWARE THAT SHE WILL  
NEED HER COSTUME AGAIN, BUT ALSO AN  
ACTRESS WHO IS AWARE OF THE  
MEANING OF HER ACTIONS.

SCREEN: BAUMANN REACHES OUT TO  
LOOSEN ANIKO'S HEAD SCARF. IT COMES  
UNDONE, REVEALING HER SHORN HEAD.  
BAUMANN CUPS HER FACE IN HIS HANDS.

BAUMANN:

(SCREEN) Geht doch. Warum nicht gleich so?

BAUMANN:

(SCREEN) See, why not like that immediately?

SCREEN: HE GRABS HER, RIPPING HER  
CLOTHES OFF AND TURNING HER  
AROUND, POSITIONING HIMSELF  
BETWEEN HER NAKED BODY AND THE  
AUDIENCE.

ANDREA:

(LOOKING AT ANIKO) Das wollte keiner wissen...

ANDREA:

(LOOKING AT ANIKO) No one wanted to know...

SCREEN: AGNIESZKA COMES RUNNING AT  
THE BACK, FOLLOWED BY ELSE.

ON STAGE, ELSE ENTERS WITH  
AGNIZESZKA, THEY LOOK AT THE FILM AND  
SPEAK THEIR LINES.

ELSE:

(STAGE) Hans!

SCREEN: SHE SENDS AGNIESZKA AWAY  
AND WALKS QUICKLY TOWARDS ANIKO  
AND BAUMANN.

ELSE: (STAGE) Hans! Geh' von der Frau weg!  
ELSE: (STAGE) Hans! Get away from that woman!

SCREEN: SHE PULLS BAUMANN AWAY.  
ANIKO COWERS ON THE FLOOR,  
COVERING HERSELF WITH HER ARMS.  
ELSE STEPS BETWEEN ANIKO AND  
BAUMANN (AUDIENCE GAZE).

ELSE: (STAGE) (COLD) Hast du den Verstand verloren?  
ELSE: (STAGE) (COLD) Have you lost your mind?

BAUMANN: (SCREEN) Else, du verstehst das nicht...  
BAUMANN: (SCREEN) Else, you don't understand...

ELSE: (STAGE) Geh! (SCREAMS) Geh' weg!  
ELSE: (STAGE) Go! (SCREAMS) Go away!

SCREEN: BAUMANN STUMBLES AWAY,  
STUNNED. ELSE TURNS TO ANIKO.

SCREEN GOES BLACK.

ANDREA: (LOOKING AT THEM) Das wollte keiner wissen...  
ANDREA: (LOOKING AT THEM) No one wanted to know...

OLD WOMAN POINTS AT ANIKO AND ELSE  
ON STAGE.

ELSE: (SOFTLY) Es ist gut. Er ist weg. Es ist ja nichts passiert. Alles  
ist jetzt wieder gut. Du kannst in deine Stube zurück. Nichts  
passiert. (TOUCHES ANIKO LIGHTLY ON HER  
SHOULDER) Nichts passiert. Steh' auf, Mädchen.

ELSE: (SOFTLY) It's alright. He's gone. Nothing happened.  
Everything is alright now. You can go back to your quarters.  
Nothing happened. (TOUCHES ANIKO LIGHTLY ON HER  
SHOULDER) Nothing happened. Get up, girl.

ANIKO TAKES ELSE'S HAND, PRESSING IT.  
ELSE GIVES HER A QUICK NOD. ANIKO  
TAKES HER DRESS. ELSE MOVES  
BACKWARDS, LOOKING AT ANIKO'S BELLY.

ANIKO: Ja. Nichts passiert.  
ANIKO: Yes. Nothing happened.

ANIKO NOTICES HER GLANCE, SLOWLY  
PUTS HER HAND ON HER STOMACH.

ELSE: Wie weit?

ELSE: How far?

ANIKO: Fünf Monate.

ANIKO: Five months.

ELSE PAUSES, HARDENS. GESTURES.

ELSE: (HARD) Anziehn.

ELSE: (HARD.) Dress.

ANDREA: (LOOKING AT THEM) Davon wollte keiner mehr was  
wissen...

ANDREA: (LOOKING AT THEM) No one wanted to know anything  
anymore...

## 32. ARGUMENTS

FACTORY SOUNDS DECREASE. CLARA AT  
THE WALL ON THE PHONE, MIKE IN THE  
WINDOW, SMOKING. WHILE THEY SPEAK,  
ELSE SHEARS SULAIIKA'S HAIR, EITHER ON  
SCREEN OR ON STAGE.

MIKE: (PHONE) So you didn't stay for dinner?

CLARA: (PHONE) I don't want to have this conversation right now.

PAUSE.

MIKE: (PHONE) Claire, when are you coming home?

CLARA: (PHONE) I can't.

MIKE: (PHONE) I miss you. You've been gone for weeks, I can tell  
that you're not well and I'm not... Claire, I'm not prepared // to  
go through all of this again.

CLARA: (PHONE) Please, Mike. Not now. I can't. I just can't.

MIKE: (PHONE) What can we talk about then? A little bit of German  
guilt? That what you want to talk about? That make you feel  
better about yourself? Constructing your little narratives // of  
the good German and wallowing in the past because...

CLARA: (PHONE) // Don't give me that bullshit! I'm not one of your wide-eyed freshmen! But there must be something good coming out of this story, her life, their lives, how she saved them... some kind of...

MIKE: (PHONE) Closure? Redemption? Like Celan found closure? Levi? Plath-like? Live re-enactment of death in a fucking gas-oven. You want redemption, go to a fucking church but leave the dead alone...

CLARA: (PHONE) It's not about the dead, Mike. Well, it is, of course, but... I'm trying to find some of the people she saved, Sulaika or Pepik... Adzi... I've got an appointment with the mayor to see if they can involve her story in their memorial events... A plaque or... Something. A token. I think she deserves that.

MIKE: (PHONE) God! Will the Bundeswehr give a salute? The mayor be there, giving a nice little talk how things were bad then, but are good now, hip-hip-hurray? The survivors delivering a pretty speech about their saviour, your gran? How she saved them? How they were saved by her? And then you all have closure! Can you even hear yourself?

FACTORY SOUNDS INCREASE.

### 33. WORK

IN A SPOTLIGHT, THAT REPRODUCES THE QUALITIES OF THE BLACK AND WHITE FILMS, SULAIKA, WITH SHORT HAIR, AND ANIKO WITH HER HEADSCARF, LEAN AGAINST EACH OTHER. AGNIEZSKA IS CURLED UP ASLEEP AT THEIR FEET. PEPIK AND ANDREY SIT NEXT TO THEM, SHARING A SLICE OF BREAD. LORE CHECKS A LIST NEARBY. ON SCREEN, THE WOMEN ARE SEEN, DOUBLED.

ANDREA: Das wollte keiner mehr hören...

ANDREA: No one wanted to hear it any more...

ANIKO: I'm sorry about your hair...

SULAIKA: It's just hair. I'll get a scarf, like yours. Like sisters.

ANIKO LOOSENS HER HEADSCARF AND HANDS IT TO SULAIKA.



SULAIKA: What are you doing?  
ANIKO: Take it.  
SULAIKA: And what will you do?  
ANIKO: I won't need it.  
SULAIKA: Why? Your stubborn Jewish skull too thick for the cold?  
ANIKO: The kettle calling the...  
SULAIKA: You're calling me stubborn?  
ANIKO: I would never dare. (PAUSE) Take it, Sulaika. Please.  
SULAIKA: No. You'll get a head cold and your baby will be born with a snotty nose.  
ANIKO: Please.  
SULAIKA: Put it back on, girl. I could never pull it off like you, anyway.  
ANDREY: (TO SULAIKA) Sorry about the hair.  
SULAIKA: She didn't recognise you then?  
ANDREY: I wouldn't be walking otherwise.

ANDREY GETS UP AND MOVES TO LORE.

ANDREY: Aniko... Sie ist eine gute Arbeiterin, ja?  
ANDREY: Aniko... She's a good worker, isn't she?  
LORE: Ja? Warum?  
LORE: Yes? Why?  
ANDREY: Weil... Sie muss vielleicht fort. Und das wär' doch schade. Wenn sie nicht wiederkommt?  
ANDREY: Because... She might have to leave. And it would be a shame, wouldn't it? If she didn't come back?  
LORE: Wiederkommt? Woher?  
LORE: Come back? From where?

SOUND OF A FACTORY BELL. THEY GET UP.  
ELSE ENTERS.

ELSE: Na los, an die Arbeit.

ELSE: Back to work.

ANDREY MOVES AWAY QUICKLY.

LORE: Ist alles in Ordnung?

LORE: Everything alright?

ELSE: Natürlich. Warum nicht? (TO THE WOMEN) Na los.

ELSE: Of course. Why not. (TO THE WOMEN) Go on.

ANIKO: (TO SULAIKA) Take it, please.

SULAIKA: Why, you think they'll give you some extra? You can give it to me afterwards.

ANIKO: No, I can't.

SULAIKA: You think they'll take it from you?

ANIKO: I think they'll strip me bare.

PAUSE.

SULAIKA: You'll be fine, girl. You and little Béla.

ANIKO GRABS HER AND PUSHES THE SCARF INTO HER HANDS.

ANIKO: Take it, for the love of god, take it and wear it and let me...

SULAIKA TAKES THE SCARF AND TIES IT AROUND ANIKO'S HEAD.

SULAIKA: I'll not let you walk about half-naked. You'll get cold.

SHE MOVES ON. ANIKO FOLLOWS HER.  
SCREEN OFF.

### 34. COMFORT

ANDREA PUTS WATER BOTTLES IN THE FRIDGE AND A SMOOTHIE ON THE TABLE.

ANDREA: Das wollte keiner mehr wissen...

ANDREA: No one wanted to know anymore...

SHE GETS A WHOLE CAKE AND BEGINS TO EAT IT, MECHANICALLY, WHILE WATCHING THE SCENE BELOW.

### 35. DUTY

BAUMANN CUTS MEAT AT THE WALL. AS ELSE GOES PAST HIM, HE GRABS HER ARM AND LOOKS AT HER.

BAUMANN: Else...

ELSE: Ja.

ELSE: Yes.

BAUMANN: Ich habe es doch nicht gesehen...

BAUMANN: I didn't see it.

ELSE PULLS HERSELF FREE.

BAUMANN: Es ist doch nichts passiert.

BAUMANN: Nothing happened anyway.

ELSE: Es ist nichts passiert.

ELSE: Nothing happened.

ANIKO APPEARS BEHIND HER, DRESSED IN HER HEADSCARF AND A JACKET.

BAUMANN: Manchmal... Manchmal ist es schwer.

BAUMANN: Sometimes... Sometimes it is difficult.

ELSE: Was?

ELSE: What?

BAUMANN: Unsere... Pflicht.

BAUMANN: Our... Duty.

ELSE GESTURES FOR ANIKO TO MOVE CLOSER. TRAIN SOUNDS.

BAUMANN: Und du... Du warst so lange fort. Und ich hier... Es ist schwer, manchmal.

BAUMANN: And you... You were gone for so long. And I here... It is hard, sometimes.

ELSE MOTIONS FOR ANIKO TO MOVE  
AHEAD.

BAUMANN: Aber wir... Du und ich, Else. Du und ich.

BAUMANN: But we... You and I, Else. You and I.

ELSE: Ja?

ELSE: Yes?

BAUMANN: Wir stehen das durch, zusammen. Bis alles wieder normal ist... Du und ich. Weil... Wir aufeinander bauen können. Richtig?

BAUMANN: We're going to pull through, together. Until everything is back to normal... You and I. Because... We can rely on each other. Right?

ELSE: (LOOKING AT ANIKO) Ja. Wir stehen das durch, du und ich. Bis alles wieder normal ist...

ELSE: (LOOKING AT ANIKO) Yes. We're going to pull through, you and I. Until everything is back to normal...

STAGE: ELSE WALKS AWAY, GESTURING  
FOR ANIKO TO FOLLOW HER THROUGH  
THE "GATES", DOWN FROM THE STAGE  
AND THROUGH THE AUDIENCE.

SCREEN: SULAIKA FOLLOWS THEM,  
RUNNING AND SCREAMING, IN BLACK AND  
WHITE, A SIMILAR FEEL TO THE WOMEN  
SCREAMING IN PAIN IN *SCHINDLER'S LIST*,  
BUT SILENT.

SULAIKA: (STAGE) Aniko! Aniko!

STAGE: SULAIKA ON STAGE MERELY  
FEEDS THE LINES TO THE PAINED SULAIKA  
ON FILM. ANIKO TURNS AROUND, SLOWING  
DOWN. SHE STRETCHES OUT HER HANDS,  
AS IF UNSURE WHETHER TO CATCH OR TO  
STOP SULAIKA.

SCREEN: JUST BEFORE SULAIKA REACHES  
THE GATE, AGNIESZKA CATCHES UP WITH  
HER, GRABBING HER.

SULAIKA: (STAGE) Aniko!

STAGE: ANIKO LOWERS HER HAND, LOOKING AT HER FRIEND. THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER. ANIKO TURNS AWAY AND FOLLOWS ELSE.

SCREEN: AGNIESZKA'S AND SULAIKA'S FACES CLOSE TOGETHER, SPEAKING SOUNDLESSLY, IN GREAT PAIN, TRYING TO GIVE EACH OTHER COMFORT.

THE TWO WOMEN ON STAGE LOOK AT THESE IMAGES AND SPEAK THEIR LINES WHILE WATCHING THE FACES ON SCREEN.

SULAIKA: (STAGE) (SOFTLY) Aniko...

AGNIESZKA: (STAGE) Mamo nie płacz nie...<sup>28</sup>

SULAIKA: (STAGE) Potato soup. With damson cake. I need to make the potato soup with damson cake for you. I'll even leave the bacon out for you. I'll leave the bacon out.

AGNIESZKA: (STAGE) Mamo nie płacz nie...

SULAIKA: (STAGE) But I'm not crying, child. (WHISPERS) I don't cry. You're crying. You don't have to cry. (PULLS HERSELF AND AGNIESZKA UP) You don't have to cry. Why are you crying? Everything is going to be alright, little Adzi, everything is going to be alright. You'll see. I'll cook potato soup for you, how would you like that? Or semolina pudding. With cherries. Yes, you'd like that. I'll make you semolina pudding with preserved cherries. And melted butter. Cinnamon sugar. But don't cry anymore, Adzi.

STAGE: THEY TURN TO THE AUDIENCE, HUGGING, LOOKING AT THE SPECTATORS LOOKING AT THEM ON SCREEN. SOUND OF A TRAIN IN THE DISTANCE. SCREEN OFF. FACTORY SOUNDS DECREASE. THE WOMEN REMAIN BELOW FOR THE FOLLOWING SCENE.

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<sup>28</sup> Mama, don't cry...

### 36. MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

CLARA WALKS PAST THEM TO ANDREA IN THE KITCHEN, WHO HIDES THE CAKE QUICKLY, AND SITS DOWN.

ANDREA: Ich hab' dir...

ANDREA: I got you...

SHE POINTS AT THE SMOOTHIE. CLARA GETS A BOTTLE OF WATER FROM THE FRIDGE.

CLARA: Ich hab' übermorgen einen Termin bei der Stadt.

CLARA: I've got an appointment at the city council tomorrow.

ANDREA: Warum?

ANDREA: Why?

CLARA: Für eine Tafel. Für Omi und die Gefangenen. Für die Gedenkfeier.

CLARA: For a memorial plaque. For Granny and the prisoners. For the memorial ceremony.

ANDREA: (GETS UP ABRUPTLY) Soll ich dir einen // Grießbrei machen?

ANDREA: (GETS UP ABRUPTLY) Shall I make you // pudding?

CLARA: // Nein.

CLARA: // No.

ANDREA STOPS.

CLARA: Willst du mitkommen? Du weißt doch mehr als ich, und es ist deine Mutter... Wir suchen auch nach den Überlebenden... Sulaika oder... Aniko. Vielleicht finden wir jemanden, vielleicht wollen sie kommen und Omi die letzte Ehre erweisen...

CLARA: Do you want to come? You know more than me, and it's your mother... We're also looking for survivors... Sulaika or... Aniko. Maybe we'll find someone, maybe they want to come to honour Granny's memory...

ANDREA: Nein!

ANDREA: No.

CLARA: Warum nicht, um himmelswillen?  
CLARA: Why not for heaven's sake?

ANDREA: Du wirst niemanden finden.  
ANDREA: You'll find no one.

CLARA: (GETS UP) Ich weiß' wirklich nicht, warum ich es immer wieder versuche... (LEAVES)  
CLARA: (GETS UP) I honestly don't know why I keep trying... (LEAVES)

### 37. LILAC

THE OLD WOMAN ENTERS.

OLD WOMAN: Du musst warten, bis der Flieder wächst.  
OLD WOMAN: You have to wait until the lilac blossoms.

INDICATING, SEARCHING.

OLD WOMAN: Warte einfach, bis der Flieder wächst.  
OLD WOMAN: Just wait, until the lilac is in bloom.

FLICKERING LIGHTS, MANY VOICES.

VOICES: Volksverräter! Volksverräter!

OLD WOMAN PANICS, LOOKS. ANDREA ENTERS BELOW, CARRYING SOME FOOD. OLD WOMAN PAUSES, RELAXES, TOUCHES ANDREA'S HAIR.

OLD WOMAN: Ich war auch immer dunkel.  
OLD WOMAN: I was always dark, too.

ANDREA: Ich weiß. (HANDS HER THE FOOD)  
ANDREA: I know. (HANDS HER THE FOOD)

VOICES: Volksverräter! Volksverräter!

OLD WOMAN: Sie hat mir alles weggenommen.  
OLD WOMAN: She took everything from me.

ANDREA: Ich weiß.  
ANDREA: I know.

VOICES: Volksverräter! Volksverräter!

OLD WOMAN DROPS THE BAG, FOOD  
SPILLS. ANDREA COLLECTS IT, HANDS IT  
TO THE OLD WOMAN.

OLD WOMAN: Wo ist Aniko?

OLD WOMAN: Where's Aniko?

ANDREA: Das wollte niemand mehr hören...

OLD WOMAN: No one wanted to listen to that anymore...

ANDREA LEADS HER OFF. FACTORY  
SOUNDS INCREASE.

### 38. NIE PŁACZ NIE

SCREEN: NO SOUND, BLACK AND WHITE  
IMAGES. PEPIK WAITS TO OIL THE  
MACHINERY. SULAIKA STANDS STILL AT  
THE CONVEYOR BELT. ELSE PATROLLING.  
THE IMAGES ARE JOLTED AND NO LONGER  
CORRESPOND EXACTLY WITH THE SCENE.  
THE ACTORS ON STAGE NO LONGER  
ACKNOWLEDGE THE SCREEN, THEY  
SPEAK TO THEMSELVES NOW.

STAGE: SOUND OF A FACTORY BELL.  
AGNIESZKA MOVES AWAY FROM SULAIKA,  
WHO DOES NOT STIR.

PEPIK: Sulaika.

SHE DOESN'T REACT.

PEPIK: Sulaika.

SHE DOESN'T REACT.

AGNIESZKA: Mamo?

SULAIKA DOESN'T REACT. LORE ENTERS.

LORE: Sulaika, Pause.

LORE: Sulaika, break.

SULAIKA DOESN'T REACT.



LORE: Wo ist Aniko? Krank?  
LORE: Where is Aniko? Is she ill?

SULAIKA DOESN'T REACT.

AGNIESZKA: Mamo...

ELSE WALKS OVER.

ELSE: Na los, weg da, Ziegeunerin!  
ELSE: Move, gypsy!

SULAIKA DOESN'T MOVE. ELSE PULLS HER GUN ON HER.

ELSE: Na los!  
ELSE: Get on with it!

LORE: Was machst du denn da?  
LORE: What are you doing?

ELSE: Halt's Maul!  
ELSE: Shut up!

LORE: Wer bist du überhaupt, was soll das? Else, was soll das?  
LORE: Who are you, what is this? Else, what is this?

ELSE: Halt's Maul! (TO SULAIKA) Beweg' dich, Ziegeunerhure!  
ELSE: Shut up! (TO SULAIKA) Move, gypsy whore!

LORE: Sulaika, ihr Name ist Sulaika! Sie hat einen Namen, Else...  
LORE: Sulaika, her name is Sulaika! She has a name, Else...

ELSE: Halt endlich deinen Mund! Du glaubst immer noch, du bist was Besseres aber jetzt bin ich wer, und du, du solltest aufpassen, du kannst dir das hier nicht mehr leisten, Vater ist nicht mehr da um dich zu beschützen, verstehst du? Ich bin die einzige, die dich noch beschützen kann, ich, ich alleine, wann kapierst du das endlich, Prinzessin?

ELSE: Shut up already! You still think you're better than me but now I'm someone and you, you should pay more attention, you can't afford any of this anymore, father isn't here to protect you any more, you understand? I'm the only one who can still protect you, when will you get this, princess?

SILENCE. ELSE LEAVES.

LORE: (SOFTLY) Adzi... Sing' was.  
LORE: (SOFTLY) Adzi... Sing something.

SCREEN: PEPIK CLIMBS ON THE MACHINE.

AGNIESZKA TRIES TO HUM, BUT SHAKES  
TOO MUCH. SULAIKA WORKS SLOWLY.  
PEPIK SINGS "PIRATE JENNY" FOR  
AGNIESZKA.

HE CONTINUES THROUGHOUT. SOUND OF  
A PHONE RINGING.

LORE: (SOFTLY) Wo ist Aniko?  
LORE: (SOFTLY) Where is Aniko?

SHE TRIES TO CATCH ANDREY'S EYE, BUT  
HE'S AVOIDING HER GLANCE LIKE  
EVERYONE ELSE.

LORE: Wo ist Aniko?  
LORE: Where is Aniko?

SHE MOVES AWAY FROM THE PRISONERS'  
STARES. SULAIKA APPROACHES ANDREY.

SULAIKA: Alright.

ANDREY: Alright what?

SULAIKA: Alright.

ANDREY: You...

SULAIKA: I break machines for you. I put broken cases in the boxes for  
you. Whatever. But I have one condition.

ANDREY: What?

SULAIKA: The girl. You get her out of here. For all I care, the Germans  
can shoot me, but not the girl.

ANDREY: Chorashow.

### 39. SISTERS

THE OLD WOMAN WANDERS ACROSS THE  
STAGE. POINTS AT ELSE. LORE  
APPROACHES HER. THEY SMOKE.

LORE: Ihr Name war Aniko.

LORE: Her name was Aniko.

ELSE: Was willst du eigentlich von mir?

ELSE: What do you want from me?

LORE: Aniko Friedman. Sie war zweiundzwanzig Jahre alt.

LORE: Aniko Friedman. She was 22 years old.

ELSE: Was soll das?

ELSE: What's this?

LORE: Sie kam aus einem kleinen Dorf, konnte nicht gut nähen, //  
und

LORE: She came from a small village, couldn't sew very well // and...

ELSE: Ich habe Vorschriften, Lore!

ELSE: I have rules to follow, Lore!

SILENCE.

LORE: Für dich ist alles immer so einfach, keine Fragen, keine...

LORE: Everything is always so easy for you, no questions asked.

ELSE: Das könnte es für dich auch sein.

ELSE: Could be easy for you, too.

LORE: Nein, ich glaub' nicht. (PAUSE) Das Mädchen macht es nicht  
mehr lange.

LORE: No, I don't think so. (PAUSE) The girl won't last much longer.

ELSE: Dann bestellen wir neue.

ELSE: Then we order new ones.

LORE: Woher denn?

LORE: Where from?

ELSE: Was willst du eigentlich von mir?

ELSE: What do you want from me?

LORE: Bring' sie zurück ins Lager, Else. Bitte. Lass' sie einen Tag ausruhen. Gib' ihr was zu essen.  
LORE: Take her back to camp, Else. Please. Let her rest for a day. Give her something to eat.  
ELSE: Das ist gegen die Vorschriften, Prinzessin.  
ELSE: It's against the rules, princess.  
LORE: Komm' schon, was bringt es dir, wenn sie verreckt? Was hat sie dir denn getan? Was haben die dir eigentlich getan?  
LORE: Oh, c'mon, what's it to you if she dies? What did she do to you? What did they ever do to you?  
ELSE: Das deutsche Volk // muss sich einheitlich gegen volksfremde und // feindliche Einflüsse...  
ELSE: The German people // must protect themselves against foreign // and hostile...  
LORE: // Oh bitte! Nicht mit mir! Das hat doch nichts mit uns zu tun.  
LORE: // Please! Not with me! That's got nothing to do with us.

SILENCE.

ELSE: Ich hab Angst, Lore.  
ELSE: I'm scared, Lore.  
LORE: (TAKES HER HAND) Sie auch.  
LORE: (TAKES HER HAND) So is she.

THEY SMOKE, HOLDING HANDS. ELSE  
NODS, STAMPS OUT HER CIGARETTE.

ELSE: He, Mädchen! (PAUSE) Adzi!  
ELSE: Hey, girl! (PAUSE) Adzi!

AGNIESZKA COMES.

ELSE: Na komm, Kleine.  
ELSE: C'mon, little one.

SHE LEADS AGNIESZKA AWAY. LORE  
REMAINS, WATCHING AFTER THEM.

## 40. LILAC

FACTORY SOUNDS DECREASE. OLD WOMAN WANDERS, APPROACHES CLARA, SMOKING ON THE WALL.

OLD WOMAN: Flieder. Flieder.

OLD WOMAN: Lilac. Lilac.

CLARA: (TIRED) Was ist mit dem Flieder?

CLARA: (TIRED.) What about the lilac?

OLD WOMAN: (SHAKES HER HEAD) Der Flieder blüht noch nicht. Du musst warten, bis der Flieder blüht.

OLD WOMAN: (SHAKES HER HEAD.) Lilac isn't in bloom yet. You have to wait, until the lilac is in bloom.

CLARA: Was?

CLARA: What?

OLD WOMAN: Du musst warten, bis der Flieder blüht. Der Flieder verdeckt alles. Alles. Im Winter ist es kahl. Aber wenn der Flieder blüht, ist alles verdeckt. Warte. Warte bis der Flieder blüht... (MUMBLES) Flieder. Flieder...

OLD WOMAN: You have to wait until the lilac is in bloom. Lilac covers everything. Everything. In winter, it's barren. But when the lilac is in bloom, everything is covered. Just wait. Wait until the lilac is in bloom. (MUMBLES) Lilac. Lilac...

THEY SIT NEXT TO EACH OTHER, WATCHING.

## 41. SABOTAGE

CLARA SITS ON THE WALL, WRAPPED IN A WOOLEN SHAWL. PEPIK IS PERCHED ON A 'MACHINE', ANDREY, ELSE AND SULAIKA DOWN BELOW, ALL FROZEN.

ON THE SCREEN, THE DISJOINED IMAGES STILL SHOW.

CLARA: They planned it so well, even my granny didn't know how they did it, exactly. But she knew it was them. They had already done what they could with the false casings, and Pepik had a scheme, with help from the forced labourers and the foreman at the tool room, where they produced faulty tools, but this was to be larger. And actually, it was quite easy. It was the machine that made the casings. Pepik had to go up on it to grease it, maintain it. And he found this big bolt. So, that night, Sulaika distracted Else with a false problem with the casings in the store room, Andrey kept guard, and Pepik went up and pulled the bolt. He was down again before anyone noticed.

THE MACHINE STOPS.

ELSE: Was ist passiert?

ELSE: What happened?

CLARA: Of course, none of the Germans would go up there to check. Pepik had to go up and investigate his own sabotage.

PEPIK INVESTIGATES. JUMPS DOWN FROM THE MACHINE, SHAKING HIS HAND.

PEPIK: Ich weiß nicht... Kaputt.

PEPIK: I don't know... Broken.

ELSE: Verflucht...

ELSE: Damn.

SHE STORMS OFF. ONE AFTER ANOTHER, ALL MACHINES COME TO AN HALT. THE FACTORY NOISES STOP COMPLETELY. PEPIK BEGINS TO SING SOFTLY.

## 42. NIE PŁACZ NIE

CLARA AS BEFORE. MIKE SITS IN THE WINDOW, IN A VEST, SMOKING, LOOKING OUT.

ON THE SCREEN, THE IMAGES FROM THE SABOTAGE FLICKER A LAST TIME, THEN THEY FADE. THE SCREEN WILL NO LONGER BE USED FOR PROJECTIONS.

CLARA: Does it matter?

LONG SILENCE.

BAUMANN LEADS AGNIESZKA TO THE WALL. AGNIESZKA IS BAREFOOT. HE SIGNALS HER TO STAND WITH HER BACK AGAINST THE WALL. HE STEPS BACK AND LOOKS AT HER.

AGNIESZKA: Zdrowaś Mario, łaskiś pełna Pan z Tobą, błogosławionaś Ty między niewiastami I błogosławiony owoc żywota Twojego Jezus...<sup>29</sup>

CLARA: It... Hurts. Of course, it does. (PAUSE) I should have been better... I should... I should have... (PAUSE) Adzi lived because of her, you know? She did that. Granny did that. She saved her. From the cold, from starvation, from that work... She saved her. And I wasn't even here when she...

AGNIESZKA: Święta Mario, Matko Boża, módl się za nami grzesznymi teraz i w godzinę Śmierci naszej... Mamo nie płacz nie...<sup>30</sup>

BAUMANN DRAWS HIS PISTOL, AIMING AT AGNIESZKA'S HEAD.

AGNIESZKA: Mamo nie płacz nie... nie płacz nie...<sup>31</sup>

PEPIK STOPS SINGING.

BLACK.

SOUND OF A SHOT.

CLARA: (WHISPERS) She saved a little girl and I wasn't even here when she died.

#### 43. MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

LIGHTS. ANDREA APPROACHES CLARA, SULAIKA CRADLES AGNIESZKA'S DEAD BODY, SILENTLY.

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<sup>29</sup> Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus...

<sup>30</sup> Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

<sup>31</sup> Mama, don't cry... Don't cry...

CLARA: She saved Agnieszka. Little Adzi. She saved her...  
(NOTICES ANDREA) Was machst du denn hier?

CLARA: She saved Agnieszka. Little Adzi. She saved her...  
(NOTICES ANDREA) What are you doing here?

ANDREA: Weißt du noch, der Tag nach deinem Abiball? Da hab' ich dich auch hier gefunden, da, hinten beim Flieder.

ANDREA: You remember, the day after your prom? I found you here too, back there, under the lilac.

CLARA: Ja, ja...

ANDREA: Im Regen und Matsch, das war ja ein furchtbar kalter Sommer, und nur im Bikini und der kurzen Hose... Gezittert und geheult... "Mutti, warum liebt er mich nicht? Was stimmt nicht mit mir, warum will er mich nicht, // warum wollte er nicht..."

ANDREA: In the rain and mud, it was a horribly cold summer, wasn't it, and you only in your bikini and the shorts... Shaking and crying... "Mom, why doesn't he love me? What's wrong with me, why didn't he want me // why didn't he want to..."

CLARA: // Was willst du?

CLARA: // What do you want?

SILENCE.

ANDREA: Ich wollt' dir nur sagen, dass ich denen abgesagt habe.

ANDREA: I just wanted to tell you that I cancelled.

CLARA: Wem?

CLARA: What?

ANDREA: Denen von der Stadt.

ANDREA: The appointment with the town hall.

CLARA: Was?

CLARA: What?

ANDREA: Ich hab' denen abgesagt. Ich will das nicht. Und du hörst mir ja nicht zu, also musst...

ANDREA: I cancelled. I don't want this. And you never listen to me, so I had to...



CLARA: Hast du jetzt total den Verstand verloren? Warum? Weißt du, wie lange ich gebraucht habe, um diesen Scheißtermin zu bekommen, und du sagst denen ab? Spinnst du? Warum um alles in der Welt machst du so eine Scheiße...

CLARA: Have you completely lost your mind? Why? Do you know how long it took me get this fucking appointment, and now you cancel it? Are you mad? Why do you something like that...

ANDREA: Ist gut jetzt...

ANDREA: It's enough now...

CLARA: Nein, ist nicht gut!

CLARA: No, it's not enough...

ANDREA: Es reicht! Und es reicht mit diesen ganzen alten Geschichten, die will doch niemand mehr hören und die brauchen wir auch nicht mehr zu hören, gerade jetzt nicht...

ANDREA: Enough! Enough with the old stories, that no one wants to hear anymore and we don't need to hear them anymore now...

CLARA: Gerade jetzt? Gerade jetzt sollten wir das hören... Oder bist du schon so verblendet, dass... Du schämst dich! Du schämst dich für deine eigene Mutter, ich fass' es nicht...

CLARA: We don't need to hear them anymore now? Just now we should hear them... Or are you so delusional already that you... You're ashamed! You're ashamed of your own mother, I don't believe it...

ANDREA: Du doch auch.

ANDREA: So are you.

SILENCE

CLARA: Wie kannst du nur? Wie kannst du ihr Gedenken nur so durch den Dreck ziehen?

CLARA: How can you? How can you drag her memory through the mud like that?

ANDREA: Für dich ist immer alles so einfach. Richtig oder falsch, gut oder schlecht. So einfach ist es nicht.

ANDREA: Everything is always so easy for you. Right or wrong, good or bad. It's not that easy.

CLARA: Hörst du dir eigentlich zu? Hörst du eigentlich, was du da sagst? Omi Lore hat ihr Leben dafür riskiert, das richtige zu tun, in einer Zeit, in der alle nur das Maul gehalten haben – und du? Du bist doch immer nur mitgelaufen! // Du hast doch dein ganzes Leben immer nur...

CLARA: Can you actually hear yourself? Do hear what you say? Granny Lore has risked her life to do the right thing, in a time when everyone kept quiet and you? You were only ever a follower! // Your entire life you only ever...

ANDREA: // So redest du nicht mit mir! /

ANDREA: // Don't you talk to me like that! /

CLARA: / Ich rede mit dir, wie ich will!

CLARA: / I'll talk to you how I want!

ANDREA: Ich habe die Schnauze voll von dieser ganzen Scheiße! Das hört jetzt auf, diese Heiligenverehrung! Das hatten wir alles früher schon, diese ganze scheinheilige Scheiße, und ich lass' nicht zu, dass du das alles wieder hochholst, verstanden? Du bildest dir so viel ein, und du hast keine Ahnung, wie schwer es damals für mich war, nach der Wende, du warst ja noch zu klein... du weißt überhaupt nicht, was ich alles durchgemacht haben, nach der *Sache* damals, alle dachten, ich spinn', du weißt überhaupt nicht, was diese Frau mit uns gemacht hat...

ANDREA: I'm fed up with all this shit! This blind admiration needs to stop! We had all of this hypocritical shit before, and I won't allow you to dig it all up again, understood? You are so full of yourself, and you have no idea how hard it used to be for me, after the fall of the wall, when you were still little... you have no idea what I had to go through, after the *thing* back then, everyone thinking I'd gone mad, you have no idea what this woman did to us...

CLARA HITS ANDREA. SILENCE.

CLARA: Hättest du doch einfach ein bisschen tiefer geschnitten. Wir hätten dich einfach verbluten lassen sollen.

CLARA: Why didn't you just cut a little bit deeper. We should have just let you die.

SHE LEAVES. ANDREA ALONE. THE OLD WOMAN TOUCHES HER, GENTLY.

OLD WOMAN: Sie hat mir alles weggenommen...

OLD WOMAN: She took everything from me...

ANDREA: Ich weiß. (LOOKS AFTER CLARA) Mir auch...

ANDREA: I know. (LOOKS AFTER CLARA) Me too...

THE OLD WOMAN POINTS TO THE NEXT  
SCENE UNFOLDING.

#### 44. COMFORT

STILL NO MORE FACTORY SOUNDS.  
ANDREA AND THE OLD WOMAN STILL  
THERE, MOTIONLESS, WATCHING.  
SULAICA, PEPIK AND ANDREY HUDDLE  
FRONT STAGE.

PEPIK: Sulaika...

SHE DOESN'T REACT.

PEPIK: Sulaika...

HE PRODUCES SOME POTATO PEEL. SHE  
DOESN'T REACT.

PEPIK: Sulaika... You couldn't know...

SHE MOVES AWAY FROM HIM.

ANDREY: Let it go.

PEPIK: This wasn't worth it.

ANDREY: Four days, Pepik. And running.

PEPIK: Adzi, Andrey.

SILENCE. SULAICA DROPS TO HER KNEES.

PEPIK: Sulaika. (PAUSE) Potatoes, Sulaika. Boiled potatoes. With  
butter and salt. (PAUSE) That's all. Only potatoes, butter and  
salt. (PAUSE) Although... Maybe asparagus. Potatoes with  
butter, salt and asparagus. (PAUSE) And... Parsley. Lot of  
parsley. (PAUSE) And...

SULAICA: Semolina pudding.

PEPIK: Yes?

SULAIKA: With... Sugar and cinnamon. (SOFTLY) I'll make that for you.

LORE APPROACHES FROM THE OTHER  
SIDE OF THE FENCE, PASSING THE OLD  
WOMAN. ANDREA LEAVES.

ANDREY: Pepik...

PEPIK: What?

PEPIK SEES LORE.

PEPIK: Stop it.

ANDREY: What?

PEPIK: Stop.

ANDREY LEAVES.

SULAIKA: Pepik...

PEPIK: Yes?

SULAIKA: I'm so tired.

PEPIK: Not much longer. Then you'll make me semolina pudding.  
With sugar and cinnamon.

SULAIKA: I'm so tired...

#### **45. SUCH WARMTH, SO TENDER?**

ANDREY WALKS ON THE INSIDE OF THE  
'FENCE', LORE ON THE OUTSIDE. SHE  
CARRIES A BRANCH OF UNBLOSSOMED  
LILAC.

HE WALKS A FEW STEPS BEHIND HER,  
SOMETIMES, SHE PAUSES SO HE  
CATCHES UP AS IF BY ACCIDENT. ONLY  
THEN DO THEY SPEAK. THEY AVOID  
LOOKING AT EACH OTHER, BUT STRUGGLE  
TO TAKE THEIR EYES OF THE OTHER ONE  
FOR LONG.

ANDREY: Dance with me.

THE OLD WOMAN WALTZES.

LORE: What?

ANDREY: Waltz, Tango... Whatever you'd like.

HE KNEELS DOWN, AS IF TO ADJUST HIS SHOES. LORE KEEPS WALKING, SUDDENLY DOING A FEW WALTZ-STEPS, THEN CONTINUING TO WALK AS NORMAL. ANDREY WATCHES HER, SMILING. LORE PUTS A TINY BRANCH OF LILAC CLOSE TO THE 'FENCE'. THERE IS A LITTLE HOLE NEAR THE BOTTOM. ANDREY TAKES THE BRANCH.

ANDREY: What's that called?

LORE: Lilac.

ANDREY: Is that growing in your garden?

LORE: (SOFTLY) Yes. Yes, that's growing in my garden. (SAD) But it isn't in bloom yet. (STANDS UP, AS IF TO LEAVE)

ANDREY: (SOFTLY) "Whence cometh such warmth, so tender?"

LORE PAUSES.

ANDREY: (QUOTES) "Не первые – эти кудри  
Разглаживаю, и губы  
Знавала – темней твоих.<sup>32</sup>  
The stars I've seen, rising, fading,  
– Whence cometh such warmth, so tender? –  
And eyes, too, have risen, faded,  
Yet I saw you eye to eye.  
У самых моих очей.<sup>33</sup>  
I've never before such songs, in  
the dark of night, softly harkened,"

---

<sup>32</sup> These curls – they are not the first I  
Have stroked, and I have grazed  
Lips darker than yours before.

<sup>33</sup> Yet I saw you eye to eye.

LORE TURNS. HE SMILES.

ANDREY: “– Whence cometh such warmth, so tender? –  
my head on the minstrel’s chest.”

LORE: (SMILES) Warte noch. Warte, bis der Flieder blüht. Bis er  
alles verdeckt. (LEAVES)

LORE: (SMILES) Wait. Wait, until the lilac is in bloom. Until it covers  
everything. (LEAVES)

CLARA PUTS HEADPHONES ON, STARTS  
JOGGING.

ANDREY: (SOFTLY) “Whence cometh such warmth, so tender?”  
(PHONE) Wait, hang on... Claire, are you still... Claire, wait,  
what are you... Are you still there? (CLIMBS TO HIS  
WINDOW)

### **III. SPRING**

## 46. ARGUMENTS

IN THE DISTANCE VOICES, SHOUTING.  
CLARA JOGS INTO THE DIRECTION OF THE  
'FACTORY'.

CLARA: I wonder how it was for her, with him, in this factory, how they... With everyone always watching, and how they found out about them. I imagine it was like this: on a night shift, when the machine was running again. The prisoners working. And she walked past him, past Andrey...

VOICES: Volksverräter! Volksverräter!

CLARA: Andrey. She walked past him, past Sulaika and Adzi at the machines...

## 47. SUCH WARMTH, SO TENDER?

FACTORY SOUNDS RETURN, LOUD.  
SULAIKA AND A NEW WOMAN WORK ON  
THE CONVEYOR BELT. PEPIK AND ANDREY  
REPAIR A JAMMED BELT. CLARA/LORE  
WALKS PAST, PUTTING HER PHONE AWAY.

CLARA/LORE: And she just looked, looked at him and he... He followed her, of course!

MIKE/ANDREY FOLLOWS HER.

CLARA/LORE: It was the first time they were so close to each other, alone.

HE MOVES CLOSER, KISSES HER.

VOICES: Volksverräter! Volksverräter!

SHE PUTS HER ARMS AROUND HIM.

CLARA/LORE: And she didn't really think in this moment at all, although she should have, she thought later, later she thought how reckless, how thoughtless, how selfish, but in that moment, she didn't think, she just wanted to feel him... And he seemed so... Helpless for a moment, when we were close, so... Appalled and he recoiled, and I thought, is it my hands, are they too rough, all the girls he knew before, they didn't have rough hands, like I do, I'm sure, and he recoiled and I... Shivered, and looked at him, and he smiled, so awkwardly and said...



MIKE/ANDREY: Der Geruch...<sup>34</sup>

CLARA/LORE: The smell... His smell, he was embarrassed by his smell...  
(LAUGHS AND PULLS HIM CLOSER) Du Dummer...<sup>35</sup>  
(TAKES HIS HEAD BETWEEN HER HANDS) A man has to have his smell, did you not learn that in your fancy school?

MIKE/ANDREY: No, I didn't...

CLARA/LORE: What did you learn then?

MIKE/ANDREY: (QUOTES) "Whence cometh such warmth, so tender?  
Where to, my sweet youthful rover,  
with it now, lighthearted minstrel,  
with lashes, so long, oh so long?" (BREAK) Hang on, this can't be right...

SHE KISSES HIM, THEY EMBRACE,  
STUMBLING TOWARDS THE WALL, HIS  
HANDS UNDER HER SHIRT.

VOICES: Volksverräter! Volksverräter!

ELSE ENTERS.

BLACK.

MIKE: Oh shit.

CLARA: Indeed.

#### 48. SISTERS

MIKE WATCHES. ELSE SITS AT THE FRONT  
OF THE STAGE, DANGLING HER LEGS.  
LORE COMES TO SIT NEXT TO HER AND  
PULLS A PACK OF CIGARETTES FROM HER  
POCKET, LIGHTS ONE. ELSE POINTS AT IT.

LORE: Ich dachte, du willst aufhören?

LORE: I thought you want to quit?

---

<sup>34</sup> The smell.

<sup>35</sup> Stupid...

ELSE: (SHRUGS) Hans mag es nicht.  
ELSE: (SHRUGS) Hans doesn't like it.

LORE GIVES HER A CIGARETTE. SILENCE.  
THE SCREEN LIGHTS UP.

LORE: Weißt du noch, wie wir immer da hinter dem Flieder heimlich geraucht haben?  
LORE: Remember how we used to smoke behind the lilac over there?

SHE POINTS AT THE SCAFFOLD.

ELSE: Ja, und ich weiß auch noch die Prügel, die ich von Vater bezogen habe...

ELSE: Yes, and I also remember the thrashing I got from father.

LORE: Ich doch auch.

LORE: I got it, too.

ELSE SMIRKS. SILENCE.

ELSE: Ich muss das melden... (PAUSE) Und was ist mit Peter? Denkst du denn gar nicht an ihn?

ELSE: I have to report this. (PAUSE) What about Peter? Don't you think about him at all?

LORE: Jeden Abend geh' ich nach Hause. Allein. Und sitz' in dem dunklen Haus, allein. Leg' mich ins Bett, allein. Früher hab' ich mir die Briefe noch angeguckt. Aber es steht ja nichts Neues drin.

LORE: Every evening I go home. Alone. And sit in the dark house, alone. Go to bed, alone. Before, I still looked at the letters. But there's nothing new in there.

ELSE: Der Ivan, das ist ein dreckiger // Untermensch [der taugt dir nicht...]

ELSE: This Ruski is a dirty // subhuman [who is not good enough for you...]

LORE: // Else, bitte. (PAUSE) Bitte. (THEY SMOKE) Lass' das nicht zwischen uns stehn. Wir ham das doch alles nie zwischen uns stehn lassn.

LORE: // Else, please. (PAUSE) Please. (THEY SMOKE) Don't let this stand between us. We have never let any of this stand between us.

SILENCE.

ELSE: Vater würd' sich im Grab umdrehen.

ELSE: Father would turn in his grave.

LORE: Er hätt' nicht verkauft, wenn er das geahnt hätte. Egal, was der Bürgermeister sagt.

LORE: If he had known, he wouldn't have sold it. No matter what the mayor said.

ELSE: Hat ja keiner geahnt.

ELSE: No one knew.

THEY STOMP OUT THEIR CIGARETTE BUDS. ELSE GETS UP.

ELSE: Na gut. Ich bring' das für dich in Ordnung, Prinzessin.

ELSE: Alright. I'll sort it out for you, princess.

SHE LEAVES. LORE LOOKS AFTER HER. FACTORY SOUNDS DECREASE.

MIKE: Do you think Lore believed her?

CLARA/LORE: Maybe. I mean, Else was her sister, after all.

LORE LIGHTS ANOTHER CIGARETTE AND RUBS HER SHOULDERS AS IF COLD. THE SCREEN GOES DARK. CLARA GETS UP, SHAKES HERSELF AND CONTINUES JOGGING, EXITS.

## 49. LILAC

OLD WOMAN ENTERS, LOOKING AFTER CLARA. PICKS UP CIGARETTE BUTTS FROM THE WALL. GOES TO THE LILAC AREA. PICKS UP LILAC BRANCHES AND PUTS THEM IN THE PLASTIC BAG.

VOICES: Volksverräter! Volksverräter!

OLD WOMAN: Du musst warten. Warte, bis der Flieder blüht. (LOOKS AROUND) Warte, bis der Flieder blüht.

OLD WOMAN: You have to wait. Wait until the lilac blossoms. (LOOKS AROUND) Wait until the lilac is in bloom.

## 50. LAST SUPPER

FACTORY SOUNDS INCREASE. SULAIKA AND PEPIK LIFT BOXES, OCCASIONALLY TALKING SOFTLY, EXHAUSTED. LORE AND ANDREY APART.

LORE: Warte noch.

LORE: Wait.

ANDREY: It's too dangerous.

LORE: Trust me.

ANDREY: You? Yes. Her? No.

LORE: She's my sister, Andrey. She promised not to say anything. She promised me.

ANDREY: They'll kill me.

LORE: They'll kill you if they catch you. You have to wait.

ANDREY: Wait! Wait! I've been waiting for months! We've been waiting for months!

LORE TAKES HIS HANDS, PULLS THEM TO HER CHEST. PEPIK AND SULAIKA FALL SILENT.

LORE: You have to wait. Promise me that you'll wait.

ANDREY: If you had your way, we'd be waiting until the world bursts into flame around us...

LORE: Nicht solange. Nur, bis der Flieder blüht.

LORE: Not that long. Just until the lilac is in bloom.

THEY JUMP APART. ELSE ENTERS.

ELSE: Lore, kommst du mal?

ELSE: Lore, can you come here?

LORE: (TO ANDREY) Mach' nichts. Warte bis der Flieder blüht. Mach' nichts, bis ich es dir sage. Wenn der Flieder blüht, werde ich es dir sagen. Bis dahin, mach' nichts.

LORE: (TO ANDREY) Do nothing. Wait until the lilac is in bloom. Do nothing until I tell you. When the lilac blossoms, I'll tell you. Do nothing until then.

LORE FOLLOWS HER.

SULAIKA: You should go now.

PEPIK: / What? They'll shoot him before he gets to the fence.

ANDREY: / Lore says, we need to wait...

SILENCE.

SULAIKA: You can't trust her.

ANDREY: (LAUGHS) Of all the Germans in the world....

SULAIKA: She won't help you. When push comes to shove, she won't help you. Go now. Without her.

ANDREY: I can't. You know that's madness.

PEPIK: You're both mad. (SOFTLY) It can't be much longer anymore. The Americans are so close now, the foreman in the machine room says, //they're already at...

ANDREY: // Not without Lore! They won't let us live. But with Lore, we might be able to...

SULAIKA: (TIREDLY) And you believe this will save us? You believe she'll save us? We'll all die, Russian. Like Aniko. And she'll watch.

## 51. LILAC

THE PRISONERS WALK PAST THE OLD WOMAN WITHOUT SEEING HER.

OLD WOMAN: Warte bis der Flieder blüht.

OLD WOMAN: Wait until the lilac is in blossom.

ANDREY WALKS PAST HER.

OLD WOMAN: Du musst warten.  
OLD WOMAN: You have to wait.

SHE REACHES OUT TO HIM.

VOICES: Volksverräter!

ANDREY WALKS AWAY. ELSE WALKS PAST  
HER, OLD WOMAN RECOILS.

## 52. LIES

PEPIK AND ANDREY SIT TOGETHER, AS IF  
IN THE CAMP ON THE STEPS OF THEIR  
BARRACK, IN THE EVENING SUN. ELSE  
APPROACHES, INDICATING TO ANDREY.

ELSE: (SOFTLY) Heute Nacht.  
ELSE: (SOFTLY) Tonight.

ANDREY: Aber Lore hat gesagt...  
ANDREY: But Lore said...

ELSE: Halt' den Mund. Ich habe dich auf die Krankenliste gesetzt,  
du bleibst in der Baracke, wenn die anderen auf Nachtschicht  
gehen. Hinter der Baracke, drei Schritte links, im Zaun. Du  
gehst durch das Loch, und hältst dich niedrig, bis du die  
Büsche an den Gleisen erreichst. Du gehst rechts an den  
Gleisen entlang, aber halt dich im Gebüsch. Lore ist im  
dritten Haus, sie hat ihre Wäsche im Garten aufgehängt, die  
Fabrikittel. Du gehst durch das Gartentor, sie hat's geölt,  
und versteckst dich im Schuppen. Da ist Brot. Wenn dich in  
den nächsten Tagen niemand dort findet, holt sie dich ins  
Haus, wenn es sicher ist, und du kannst auf den Dachboden.  
Nick', wenn du verstanden hast.

ELSE: Shut up. I've put you on the sick list, you stay in the barrack  
when the others go to nightshift. Behind the barrack, three  
steps to the left, in the fence. You go through the hole, and  
stay low until you reach the bushes at the train tracks. Turn  
right and follow the tracks, but stay in the shrubs. Lore's is  
the third house, she got her washing in the garden, the  
factory garb. You go through the garden gate, she's oiled it,  
and hide in the shed. There's bread. If no one finds you in the  
next few days, she'll take you into the house when it's safe  
and you can hide in the attic. Nod if you understood.

ANDREY NODS. ELSE TURNS TO LEAVE.

ANDREY: (SOFTLY) Danke.  
ANDREY: (SOFTLY) Thanks.  
ELSE: Ich tue das nicht für dich. (LEAVES)  
ELSE: I'm not doing this for you. (LEAVES)  
PEPIK: What was that?  
ANDREY: I don't know.  
PEPIK: Why's she helping?  
ANDREY: For Lore...  
PEPIK: I thought Lore said...  
ANDREY: I know. Something must have happened.  
BAUMANN: (OFF STAGE) Hier, Mieze, hier, hier...  
BAUMANN: (OFF STAGE) Here, kitty, here, here...  
ANDREY: Get Sulaika.

PEPIK LEAVES. ANDREY PULLS HIS KNIFE.

### 53. THE LAST SUPPER

PEPIK, SULAICA AND ANDREY EAT  
ROASTED MEAT FROM A CAN.

PEPIK: (EATING RELUCTANTLY) I always liked cats.  
SULAICA: I like cat too. (PUTS A PIECE OF MEAT IN HER MOUTH)  
ANDREY: (IMPERSONATES BAUMANN) Kitty! Here, kitty kitty kitty...

THEY LAUGH, EAT. SILENCE.

SULAICA: So, tonight then.

ANDREY NODS.

SULAICA: I don't trust her.  
ANDREY: Me neither. But what can I do?  
SULAICA: If you waited until tomorrow...

ANDREA: What if it's too late tomorrow?

SILENCE.

PEPIK: You're right.

THEY FINISH EATING.

SULAIKA: It's time.

THEY GET UP. ANDREY HUGS HER.

ANDREA: If it's safe, we'll get you too.

SULAIKA: Of course.

ANDREY: In a few days. When... If it works, Lore will tell you. And then we'll get you. When the lilac is in bloom.

PEPIK AND ANDREY HUG.

ANDREY: We'll get you, choraschow?

PEPIK: Choraschow.

THEY BREAK UP IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS.

OLD WOMAN: (SHOUTS AFTER HIM) Warte bis der Flieder blüht!

OLD WOMAN: (SHOUTS AFTER HIM) Wait until the lilac is in bloom!

#### 54. DUTY

PEPIK AND SULAIKA STAND TO ATTENTION. ELSE SUPERVISES.

PEPIK: How much longer?

SULAIKA: Not long...

ANDREY SEARCHES THE 'FENCE' BETWEEN AUDITORIUM AND STAGE.

PEPIK: How much longer?

SULAIKA: Soon.

ANDREY TURNS BACK ON THE FENCE.



PEPIK: How much...

SULAIKA: Pepik, please.

ANDREY DOUBLES BACK ON THE FENCE.  
BAUMANN WITH FLASHLIGHTS.

BAUMANN: Mietze? Komm, komm, komm. Mietze!

BAUMANN: Kitty? Here, here, kitty, kitty!

ANDREY PANICKS, HIDES.

BAUMANN: Mietze! Komm, komm, komm...

BAUMANN: Kitty! Here, here, kitty...

ANDREY SCRATCHES AT THE FENCE.

PEPIK: It must be soon.

SULAIKA: Yes, soon.

BAUMANN'S FLASHLIGHT ON ANDREY.

PEPIK: Soon...

ANDREY FREEZES.

OLD WOMAN: (SOFTLY) Warte noch...

OLD WOMAN: (SOFTLY) Wait...

BLACK. FACTORY SOUNDS DECREASE.

## 55. ARGUMENTS

PHONE RINGS. CLARA RUNS, PICKS UP,  
OUT OF BREATH.

MIKE: (PHONE) What are you doing?

CLARA: (PHONE) What?

MIKE: (PHONE) Are you running?

CLARA: (PHONE) Yeah. So, what?

MIKE: (PHONE) You changed the flight date?

CLARA: (PHONE) Yeah, I meant to ring you, // but...

MIKE: (PHONE) // What did you eat today?

CLARA: (PHONE) What?

MIKE: (PHONE) What did you eat today?

CLARA: (PHONE) I don't want to have this // conversation right now

MIKE: (PHONE) // I don't fucking care! Did you eat anything today? How is that such a fucking difficult question? Boiled egg? A fucking salad? Or are we back at five blueberries and a gallon of freezing water? I just need to know which stage of crazy I have to fucking deal with / again.

CLARA STOPS STILL IN HER TRACKS.

CLARA: (PHONE) / Mike, I...

MIKE: (PHONE) / I don't get it, I seriously don't get it. After all that crap, after three years, three fucking years, of all this shit, you're just right back where you started at – same place, same fucking... it's like, are you doing this on purpose? Does it get you fucking turned on or what is it? Are you too stupid to eat, is it that? Three fucking degrees and you're too daft to actually / keep yourself alive?

CLARA: (PHONE) / You don't mean that...

MIKE: (PHONE) / What is it? You want to get yourself down so much you can be an extra in the next Holocaust flick, that it? You think you can somehow cleanse yourself of historical guilt by making size zero? I don't understand you, I don't fucking understand! Three fucking years, Claire! It took you three years to get there and you just throw it all away! Why? Why are you doing // this to you, to us...

CLARA: (PHONE) // You mustn't feed the monster, don't you understand? The first time, the first time I realised, I...

SILENCE.

MIKE: (PHONE) (SOFTLY) I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, Claire. But... I can't. I can't do this. Not again. It's... It's too much. I... I'm just not sure if I love you enough to do all this again. I'm sorry.  
(HANGS UP)

OLD WOMAN WATCHES. WHILE CLARA SPEAKS, THERE ARE SCENES OF VIOLENCE FLICKERING ON THE TV, TOO QUICK TO MAKE OUT ANY DETAILS, BUT THE IMAGES ARE SO FAMILIAR THAT THE IMAGINATION OR MEMORY OF THEM COMPLETES THE PICTURE.

## 56. COMFORT

CLARA: The first time I realised was when Mom returned from *that* place, *that* [*hospital*] place, [the summer after the fall of the wall] she returned fat, pasty, sedated, her leanness gone, the definition of her muscles, sinews, running along the lines of her bare upper arms as she lifted buckets of coal for the stove and the burners, as she carried buckets of wet washing, as she returned from the factory, swinging her bare arms to loosen the muscles and sinews and joints.

OLD WOMAN LEADS CLARA THROUGH THE AUDIENCE, HUGGING HER CLOSE AND HUMMING.

ANDREY STANDS ALONE IN THE DARK.  
DAWN, SWAYING, ARMS BY HIS SIDE.

CLARA: The summer had already turned when she came back from *that* place and and as she returned, her leanness had been covered up with rolls and softness and weakness, as she stuffed pink smarties and sugared Nescafe and fries into that looming hole that used to be her mouth, drawn in red, even on factory days, even when there hadn't been any lipsticks in the shop for weeks.

Deep and bright red, like no one's mother, *you're getting too old for this*, Granny used to say to her before she went out, no one's mom had red like mine, pulsing along trembling fingers pointing to the coal bucket under the open window, covered in snow, white coal, *geh weg, Clara, geh zu Omi, geh weg*, no other mom had that.

OLD WOMAN: Shhh... Sei still. Sei ganz still.

OLD WOMAN: Shhh... Be quiet. Be very quiet.

THEY PROCEED TO THE FAR BACK.

CLARA: / When she returned from *that* place, she was as pale as she had been when she had gone in, a missed season, pale, lips cracking, her leanness gone, she picked me up from school, all the other mothers shiny and new, *like fried chicken*, Granny would say of them, while she was away in *that* place, she returned pasty. As she fed her pastiness with pink smarties and sugared Nescafe and fries, I thought how good it was that the coal buckets disappeared, because she wouldn't have been able to lift them anymore, it was good the washing machines appeared because she wouldn't have been able to carry the wet fabrics anymore, it was good the factory was closed down, because she wouldn't have been able to work there anymore anyway. She sat and stared as I started to have red pulsing out of me, she sat and stared as we ran the streets, sometimes hunting, mostly hunted, *wir kriegen dich, Zecke, Fotze, du bist tot*, inhaling, deeply, going behind the lilac bushes, running in the rain, running to the bathroom, counting, always counting, she sat and stared and stuffed herself. Don't feed the monster.

## 57. NIE PŁACZ NIE

BAUMANN ENTERS AND LIGHTS A CIGARETTE. THE PRISONERS ARE BEING LED BY ELSE THROUGH THE AUDIENCE TOWARDS THE GATES. THEY ARE MADE TO STAND TO ATTENTION.

CLARA: *I'm getting too old for this*, Granny would say, and sing the Pirate Jenny Song for me, plaiting my hair for school, *I looked just like you when I was young, just like you*, blond plaits, blond locks, skinhead.

Taking me by the hand, in my blue coat, that night in autumn, before the winter when she went to *that* place, hands clasped hard, strong, strong, strong hands, sinewy, lean, strong, to the streets, when there were still people here to take the streets, marching, chanting, demanding, *look, Clara*, Granny said, *look!* And I looked, clasping her hand. I looked and I saw the bodies and the raised hands, *no violence*, the screaming policeman, beyond the buckets and the washing and the factory, beyond the drawn red of smiling mouths, I looked and I saw beyond the evenings on the steps to the garden, covered in lilac, pulling on a cigarette, *I should quit*, she used to say, *I'm getting too old for this, I wanted to quit a*

*long time ago, pursing her lips, no one is going to give you anything in life, you need to claim it, to fight for it, life's a battle. Everything's a fight, don't ask, demand, take, don't bow to power, look, Granny said, taking me on her shoulders, look at them. And I looked, and I saw beyond the bodies and the raised hands and the truncheons that stayed still that night, look. I looked and saw the red pulsing out of her, no one's mum had red like that. Pasty. Become strong. Run, don't walk. Jump, don't sit. Look, don't stare. Count. Don't feed the monster.*

THE SCENES OF VIOLENCE END. THE SCREEN LIGHTS UP BRIGHT, THE SCAFFOLD BEHIND IT CLEARLY VISIBLE. BAUMANN AND ELSE APPROACH ANDREY AND PREPARE TO LEAD HIM TO THE SCAFFOLD BEHIND THE GAUZE AT THE BACK OF THE STAGE. THEY LEAD HIM PAST PEPIK.

ANDREY: Сулайка будет танцевать для тебя. Танцуй и для меня. Вместе с Лорой. Танцуй с Лорой.<sup>36</sup>

PEPIK MAKES A SMALL SOUND IN PROTEST. BAUMANN, ELSE AND ANDREY BEHIND THE GAUZE. ANDREY IS MADE TO LIE ON THE SCAFFOLD.

BAUMANN POSITIONS HIMSELF AND RAISES THE WHIP. THE LIGHTS BEHIND THE GAUZE FADE TO A COMPLETE BLACK. THE PRISONERS BEGIN TO COUNT AND CONTINUE THROUGHOUT THE SCENE.

PRISONERS: Eins. Zwei. Drei. Vier. Fünf. Sechs. Sieben. Acht.  
(CONTINUE SOFTLY COUNTING TO 716.)

MIKE APPEARS IN THE WINDOW, WITH SOME SHEETS IN HIS HAND AND A GLASS OF WINE.

MIKE: Stories. They are pretty much everywhere, if you look for them, really look. There is this story, for example, which is a rather sad story, but also, in many ways, a good one. It's been told again and again, until it's rather well known, and it goes like this:

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<sup>36</sup> Sulaika will dance for you. Make sure to dance for me, too. With Lore. Dance with Lore.

CLARA: When I was little, for a long time, I didn't really know that Granny's stories were... True, I mean, real, you know? That they had happened here, at this place. This place was just where we used to play hide and seek or hang out to smoke, later... And, only once I realised that it was here, that Granny Lore had done all of that here... Not in some obscure, unreal place, but here... It kinda changed everything, you understand that? It gave me this sense of... Realness, straightness, and that I can be like that too. Real. Straight. Like her.

MIKE: There is, however, another version of this story as well. Took me a really long time to find out about this one. It goes like this:

"Some of the Germans who worked there were normal people, you know, they weren't supposed to talk to us, but after all, we were human beings, and sometimes we had to ask something and most of them were just like any foreman, you know, it was normal. But some abnormal things happened, and I think one I had to identify because it is deeply in my memory, you know. There was a Russian who ... tried twice to escape and they caught him. First time, I didn't know what they did to him but second time they decided they had to show us "No escape from here". They brought him back. They tied him to a type of lumber. And we had to count aloud. The number of times they hit him until he was dead. 716. We had to watch it.

It was a lesson, you know. How they organised it. "You have to show these kinds of people that is does not do to try to escape." Anyway, it remained in me. 716 until he was killed."<sup>37</sup> (FLIPS THROUGH THE SHEETS) ...Violent spectacle, a lesson ... onlooking prisoners ... forced to participate in it to some extent by counting the blows. (TESTS A SENTENCE) In his memory, this violent spectacle forms a stark contrast to the normality of the everyday life in the factory and his encounters with the German co-workers. It was a horrendous abnormality, committed by an ominous 'they' – it was 'they' who brought the Russian back, 'they' who tied him up, and 'they' who had organised it.

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<sup>37</sup> Michael Flack, Interview 17144. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, accessed 19. February 2015.

CLARA: They waited until the lilac blossomed, Agnieszka and Aniko, Pepik and Sulaika. They waited. And then they ran to the garden, and Granny Lore sat outside, singing, softly, the Pirate Jenny song, lilac covering everything, hiding everything, / her song covering the screaming door, the steps, everything covered up...

MIKE: (TALKING OVER HER) The language the survivor uses to describe the perpetrators thus contrasts with the language in which he describes the German factory workers – “some of the Germans”, “normal people”, “like any foremen” – opposed to a generic, threatening ‘they’. In his memory, there is a clear distinction between the normality of human life and the abnormality of atrocity, and he, very graciously, extends this distinction to the German population, too. Some were normal and some committed atrocity. These things were distinct. (CHANGED VOICE). Real. Straight.

MIKE RUSTLES THROUGH THE PAPERS,  
STOPS.

CLARA: (SCREAMS AT HIM) Shut up! She saved them! She saved them!

MIKE: And then, you keep finding stories. Like this one. Same event? Same story? Different story?

“Roll call, night shift is still there... They’re pulling a Russian along. His mouth is distorted, his nose bloody. So, they caught him after all. He is brought to the trestle, when he fights back, they kick him in the backside. Then he is pulled over the trestle and tied to it. ... The screams of the victim are putting our teeth on edge [...], the Russian doesn’t react anymore. [T]he SS officer[s] leave, laughing. The Kapo holds our roll call, the night shift leaves to the factory with the Volksturm, who watched the whole time with a pale face. The soaking man is left tied to the trestle in the freezing night. At the fence, countless men, women and children have been watching the spectacle. At least they didn’t clap. I guess that is something.”<sup>38</sup>

The ‘countless men, women and children’ // who watched a man being beaten to death...

CLARA: // No, stop! Stop it! (REACHES OUT)

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<sup>38</sup> Schwarz, *Züge auf falschem Gleis*, 293-294.

OLD WOMAN: (HOLDS HER BACK) Nein. Warte. Warte bis der Flieder blüht. (LOOKS AT THE AUDIENCE) Warte bis der Flieder blüht.

OLD WOMAN: No, wait. Wait until the lilac is in blossom. (LOOKS AT THE AUDIENCE) Wait until the lilac is in blossom.

CLARA/LORE: Warum hast du nichts gemacht?

CLARA/LORE: Why didn't you do anything?

OLD WOMAN: (PUSHING HER) Mach' du was. Na los, mach' was. Mach' doch was. Los, mach' was.

OLD WOMAN: (PUSHING HER) Go on, you do something. Go on, do something. Go, do something.

PRISONERS: Siebenhundert. Siebenhundertundeins.  
Siebenhundertundzwei. Siebenhundertunddrei.  
Siebenhundertundvier. Siebenhundertundfünf.  
Siebenhundertundsechs. Siebenhundertundsieben.  
Siebenhundertundacht. Siebenhundertundneun.  
Siebenhundertundzehn. Siebenhundertelf.  
Siebenhundertzwölf. Siebenhundertdreizehn.  
Siebenhundertvierzehn. Siebenhundertfünfzehn.  
Siebenhundertsechzehn.

SILENCE.

ELSE AND BAUMANN COME FROM BEHIND THE GAUZE AND EXIT THROUGH THE AUDIENCE. THEY STOP SHORTLY WITH THE MAYOR, A HANDSHAKE, A PAT ON THE SHOULDER.

THE PRISONERS DISPERSE. ONLY SULAIKA AND PEPIK REMAIN. SULAIKA TURNS TO LOOK AT LORE. LORE TURNS TO LOOK AT THE AUDIENCE. THE OLD WOMAN LAUGHS.

OLD WOMAN: (TO LORE) Warte einfach, bis der Flieder blüht.

OLD WOMAN: (TO LORE) Just wait until the lilac is in blossom.



## 58. SISTERS

ELSE LIGHTS A CIGARETTE. LORE WALKS TOWARDS HER AND PAST HER. ELSE HURRIES TO KEEP UP WITH HER.

ELSE: Lore, du darfst dir das nicht so anmerken lassen...

ELSE: Lore, you mustn't let it show like that...

LORE KEEPS WALKING.

ELSE: Hörst du, du musst so tun, als wäre alles normal... Die Leute reden schon...

ELSE: You hear me, you must act as if everything's normal... People are already talking...

LORE KEEPS WALKING.

ELSE: Hörst du mir zu, verdammt? Ich hab' das nicht alles so schön für dich eingefädelt, dass du das jetzt so wegwirfst...

ELSE: Damit, are you listening to me? I haven't arranged this so nicely for you so that you can throw it all away like that now...

LORE KEEPS WALKING.

ELSE: Jetzt bleib' halt mal stehen.

ELSE: Just stop!

ELSE STANDS IN LORE'S WAY. STOPS HER.

ELSE: Hast du die Judenmarie schon vergessen? Glaubst du, das würden sie bei dir nicht machen? Weil dich hier jeder mag? Glaubst du, meine Uniform würd' dich davor schützen? Hast du das alles schon vergessen?

ELSE: Have you forgotten the Jew's Marie already? You think they wouldn't do that to you? Because everyone here likes you? You think my uniform would protect you from that? Have you forgotten already?

LORE TRIES TO WALK PAST ELSE, BUT SHE STOPS HER.

ELSE: Was hast du denn gedacht? Dass ich einfach zusehe, wie meine Schwester durch die Straßen getrieben wird? Wie sie dir die Haare scheren? Hast du wirklich gedacht, ich hätte das zugelassen? Dafür, dass du nicht nach Ravenbrück wolltest, bist du ziemlich scharf drauf, verhaftet zu werden. Hast du das alles wegen einem Kerl vergessen?

ELSE: What did you think? That I'll just watch how my sister will be paraded through the streets? How they shave your head? You really thought I'd let that happen? Considering you didn't want to go to Ravensbrück, you're pretty set on getting arrested. Did you forget all of that just because you wanted some dick?

LORE: Du hast es versprochen. Du hast es mir versprochen, Else.  
LORE: You promised. You promised me, Else.

ELSE: Er wär' ohnehin draufgegangen, verstehst du das nicht? Sie hätten euch erwischt, und hätten ihn am nächsten Baum aufgehängt und dich... Verstehst du das denn nicht?

ELSE: He wouldn't have made it anyway; don't you get it? They'd've caught you, and hung him from the next tree and you... Don't you understand?

LORE FREES HERSELF.

LORE: Vater... Hat Recht gehabt, weißt du? (STEPS AWAY FROM ELSE) Ich wünschte, ich wär' damals nicht dazwischen gegangen. Hätt' er dich doch totgeschlagen.

LORE: Father was right, you know? (STEPS AWAY FROM ELSE) I wish I hadn't interfered back then. Should have let him beat you to death.

LORE WALKS AWAY FROM ELSE.

ELSE: (SHOUTS AFTER HER) Und was hast du gemacht? Du hast auch nur zugesehen! Hast genauso feige geglotzt und dein Maul gehalten wie die alle hier! Du bist nicht besser als wir, Prinzessin! Du bist genauso feige wie alle anderen auch!

ELSE: (SHOUTS AFTER HER) And what did you do? You just watched! You just watched and kept your mouth shut like all the other cowards! You're no better than us, princess! You just a much of a coward as everyone else!

## 59. LIES

LORE KEEPS WALKING UNTIL THE FENCE.  
SULAIKA ON THE OTHER SIDE.

LORE: Ich...

LORE: I...

SILENCE. THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER.  
SULAIKA TURNS AWAY.

LORE: Ich... Sulaika, ich konnte nichts tun. Ich konnte doch nichts machen, was hätte ich denn machen sollen? Ich wusste nicht, dass sie... Und dann... Ich konnte doch nichts machen.

LORE: I... Sulaika, I couldn't do anything. I couldn't do anything, what was I to do? I didn't know that she... And then... I couldn't do anything.

SULAIKA JUST STANDS.

LORE: Ich wollte das alles nicht, Sulaika, ich habe das nie gewollt. Ich hätte mich nie darauf einlassen dürfen, das weiß ich jetzt, aber er... Ich... Er ist tot wegen mir, alles wegen mir und ich... Ich... Es tut so weh, Sulaika, es tut so weh, ich weiß nicht was ich... Ich weiß nicht, wie ich... Ich bin ganz allein... Wie soll ich ohne... Ohne...

LORE: I didn't want for this to happen, Sulaika, I never wanted any of this. I shouldn't have gotten into it in the first place, I know that now, but he... I... He's dead because of me, everything because of me, and I... I... It hurts so much, Sulaika, it hurts so much, I don't know what I... I don't know how I can... I'm all alone... How can I... Without... Without...

SULAIKA: (LAUGHS) Du... Du hast mir alles weggenommen. Alles.

SULAIKA: (LAUGHS) You... You took everything from me. Everything.

THE MAYOR STANDS UP.

MAYOR: (TO THE AUDIENCE) It is our joint desire that the entire life of this town and its industry shall continue again like in normal times as soon as possible. The greatest problem, however, is with the foreigners. If difficulties occur with them, we can turn to the American commander who will bring them to reason. It is American policy that the Germans shall be treated well. The Americans will do everything to establish good relations. This should be in our interest, too. Everything shall be made right as quickly as possible.<sup>39</sup>

A SIREN SOUNDS. MAYOR EXITS QUICKLY.

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<sup>39</sup> Based on minutes of meeting between town representatives and US American Commandant. Witting, "(no subject)," April 24, 1945, Meuselwitz. *Einmarsch der amerikanischen Besatzungstruppen*. 7Nr1, Stadtarchiv Meuselwitz.

LORE: Ich... Sulaika, ich...

LORE: I... Sulaika, I...

SULAIKA: (LAUGHS) Du hast mir alles weggenommen. (WALKS AWAY)

SULAIKA: (LAUGHS) You took everything from me. (WALKS AWAY)

OLD WOMAN: Sie hat mir alles weggenommen.

OLD WOMAN: She took everything from me.

## 60. THE END

CLARA: Wer?

CLARA: Who?

OLD WOMAN: Sie hat mir alles weggenommen. (MOVES AWAY) Flieder. Johannisbeeren. Himbeeren. Brombeeren. Flieder. Flieder

OLD WOMAN: She took everything from me. (MOVES AWAY) Lilac. Currants. Raspberries. Blackberries. Lilac. Lilac.

CLARA: (BLOCKS HER WAY) Sulaika? (TAKING HER SHOULDERS) Sulaika?

CLARA: (BLOCKS HER WAY) Sulaika? (TAKING HER SHOULDERS) Are you Sulaika?

OLD WOMAN: Nein.

OLD WOMAN: No.

CLARA: They waited until the lilac blossomed, Agnieszka and Aniko, Pepik and Sulaika. They waited. And then they ran, they ran, along the railroad tracks, at night, they ran. To the garden with no vegetables, no fruits, not plant beds, just a cave of lilac, and Granny Lore sat outside, singing, softly, the Pirate Jenny song, lilac covering everything, hiding everything, her song covering the screaming door, the steps, everything covered up...

SIREN. BAUMANN LEADS THE PRISONERS THROUGH THE GATES.

CLARA: Everything covered, everything hidden, Else, maybe, suspecting something, but what was she to do, silence, hidden, hiding, in the shed, in the lilac, everything covered, no tracks, no traces, but she did that, she ran, she did not walk, she jumped, she did not sit, she looked, she didn't stare, hiding, while they marched out, hiding...

SULAIKA IS AT THE END OF THE TRACK.  
SHE STUMBLES. PEPIK TRIES TO HELP  
HER UP.

SULAIKA: Go, Pepik.

PEPIK: Get up.

SULAIKA STAYS ON THE GROUND. ELSE,  
CHECKING THE BACK, NOTICES THEM.  
SHE MOVES SLOWLY TOWARDS THEM.

PEPIK: Get up, Sulaika.

SULAIKA: Just go, boy.

PEPIK: You have to get up.

SULAIKA: Why?

PEPIK: Dance with me.

SULAIKA: What?

PEPIK: Waltz.

HE PULLS HER UP AND HUGS HER CLOSE.

SULAIKA: Just go, Pepik.

HE TAKES HER HANDS AND STARTS  
HUMMING A MELODY. THEY DANCE,  
SLOWLY, TIREDLY, SULAIKA COLLAPSING IN  
HIS ARMS.

CLARA: She saved them. She couldn't save him, but she saved them!

ELSE PAUSES NEAR THEM. SHE SHOOTS  
THEM. THEY COLLAPSE, STILL IN EACH  
OTHER'S ARMS. ELSE MOVES OUT  
THROUGH THE GATES, LOCKS THEM, AND  
FOLLOWS THE TRAIL OF PRISONERS. THE  
OLD WOMAN LOOKS AFTER HER.

CLARA: Hiding, hidden, covered. While they marched out. And Else  
died, there, on that death march...

OLD WOMAN: Du siehst aus, wie sie.

OLD WOMAN: You look like her.

CLARA: Was?

CLARA: What?

OLD WOMAN: Du siehst aus wie Else. Ich war immer dunkel.

OLD WOMAN: You look like Else. I was always dark.

OLD WOMAN AND CLARA BOTH LOOK AT ELSE, WHO BECOMES YOUNG LORE SHE TURNS AND SMILES, GIVES CLARA THE GUN, TAKES A FEW WALTZ STEPS AND BEGINS TO LEAVE. CLARA, TOUCHES HER HAIR. STARES AT THE OLD WOMAN IN TERROR. OLD WOMAN STARTS TO LEAVE. CLARA BECOMES ELSE WITH A GUN IN HER HAND, RUNS AFTER YOUNG LORE.

CLARA: (PLAYING ELSE RELUCTANTLY) Warte! Lore, warte.

CLARA: (PLAYING ELSE RELUCTANTLY) Wait! Lore, wait!

YOUNG LORE STARES AT HER.

ELSE (CLARA): Du musst mitkommen. Hörst du? Komm' mit.

ELSE (CLARA): Du must come with me. Do you hear? Come.

YOUNG LORE JUST STARES AT HER.

ELSE (CLARA): Lore, hörst du nicht? Komm' mit mir mit.

ELSE (CLARA): Lore, don't you hear me? Come with me.

YOUNG LORE: Du hast mir alles weggenommen.

YOUNG LORE: You took everything from me.

ELSE (CLARA): Lore, das war doch nie zwischen uns. Das war doch nie was zwischen uns.

ELSE (CLARA): Lore, that was never between us. That was never anything between us.

YOUNG LORE: Else. Du hast mir alles weggenommen.

YOUNG LORE: Else. You took everything from me.

ELSE (CLARA): Du musst jetzt mitkommen.

ELSE (CLARA): You need to come with me now.

LORE WALKS AWAY FROM HER, TO THE  
OLD WOMAN.

YOUNG LORE: (POINTS) Flieder. Johannisbeeren. Himbeeren. Brombeeren.  
Flieder. Flieder.

YOUNG LORE: (POINTS) Lilac. Currant. Raspberry. Blackberry. Lilac. Lilac.

ELSE/CLARA LOOKS AFTER HER AND RUNS  
AWAY. OLD WOMAN REMAINS, SHADOWED  
BY LORE, WITH THE FALLEN BODIES OF  
PEPIK AND SULAIKA. OLD WOMAN AND  
LORE PAUSE AND LOOK OVER THE EMPTY  
STAGE, THE AUDITORIUM.

## 61. COMFORT

ANDREA CUTS A CAKE WITH A SHARP  
KNIFE AS SHE SPEAKS. CLARA WATCHES.

ANDREA: Damals noch, im letzten Sommer, als meine Mutter noch  
meine Mutter war, auf der Treppe zum Garten, das Kind,  
mein Kind, isst Grießbrei oder macht Purzelbäume, "*Mutti,  
schau, schau doch, Mutti, schau mal, was ich kann*", mit  
meiner Mutter eine Zigarette teilen, zum hundertsten Mal,  
*eigentlich wollte ich ja aufhören, ich werd' zu alt dazu*, die  
Arme noch schwer von der Fabrik, aber leichter, schon das  
Zucken in den Beinen, wieder aufzuspringen, in den Laden,  
in den Keller, in die Waschküche, "*Mutti, schau was ich  
kann*", der letzte Sommer, das Kind klammert sich noch an  
die Beine, wenn ich, mit rotem Mond und rotem Rock, gehen  
will, "*bitte bleib doch da, Mutti, bleib da, ich bin auch ganz  
brav*", meine Mutter lacht, *du wirst zu alt dafür*, zu uns  
beiden, für meinen roten Mund und für Claras Anhänglichkeit,  
*zu alt*, ich gehe, ins Nachbardorf oder in die Stadt, kurze  
Nacht, und wenn ich aus der Fabrik komme, und Clara aus  
der Schule gerannt, ist der Mund noch immer rot und ich  
schwinde die Arme.

Im Herbst neuer Wintermantel fürs Kind, Mutter legt was  
drauf, damit es der blaue sein kann, den sie unbedingt will,  
ein blauer Wirbelwind zwischen den Straßen. Ein blauer  
Wirbelwind, wenn ich sie an die Hand nehme, mitnehme,  
*Schau, Clara, schau!* Die Straßen voll, ich nehme sie auf die  
Schultern, ein Vopo schreit mich an, was ich mich erblöde,  
mein Kind mitzunehmen, ich kenne ihn, aus dem nächsten

Dorf, aber nicht in Uniform, *Schau, Clara*, sie klammert sich an meine Hand und schaut, und hebt die Hände mit mir, wenn wir rufen, *keine Gewalt*. Die blonden Zöpfe fest geflochten, ihre Hand fest in meiner.

Zu Hause am Küchentisch sitzt meine Mutter, im blauen Rauch, die Lippen verzogen.

*Hast du den Verstand verloren? Mit dem Kind dahin?*

Das Kind spielt, blauer Mantel, blonde Zöpfe, im kahlen Garten.

Die verzogenen Lippen verziehen sich, *Wie ich früher*. Auf mich, *Schwarzkopf, Dummkopf, genau wie sie*.

Ich bin kein Nazi.

*Das war sie auch nicht. Aber dumm war sie, wie du. Das Kind da mit...*

Ich war da nicht in Uniform, Mutter. Willst du das echt vergleichen? Warum bist du eigentlich nicht mitgekommen, man sollte denken du, Lore Gruber, die Heldin...

*Ja, die Prinzessin, die wäre auch dumm genug gewesen, dahinzugehen, die war ja dumm genug, für den Ivan, und wer musste dann wieder alles in Ordnung bringen? Aber du...*

*"Mutti, schau, schau Mutti."*

Was soll das heißen?

*Du bist zu alt für diesen Unsinn. Mach endlich die Augen auf.*

*Ich hab sie einmal vor dem Russen gerettet, aber ich bin zu alt dafür.*

Was redest du eigentlich?

*Wenn du dich auf der Straße von den Ivans über den Haufen schießen lassen willst, dann tu' das, aber lass mir das Kind.*

*Dummkopf. Prinzessin. Prinzessin. Du bist auch so eine Prinzessin. Wie sie. Glaubst du, du kannst die Welt retten?*

*Dein Ivan kommt für dich nicht wieder, wenn sie dir den Kopf kahlscheren...*

Mutter, was redest du da? Du hast doch...

*"Mutti, Mutti schau mal..."*

*Ich hab sie gerettet! Sie hat einfach nur dagestanden und geglotzt, aber ich, ich hab sie gerettet, vor dem Ivan. Immer, immer musst ich mir anhören, was sie alles... Ich war das, ich habe sie gerettet! Der Ivan war doch eh abgeschrieben.*

*Wenn ich das nicht gemeldet hätte, dann wären sie beide draufgegangen. Ich habe genau das richtige getan, und sie, die Prinzessin, geht einfach weg, lässt mich einfach zurück, allein, um alles wieder in Ordnung zu bringen, für sie... Wo sie doch... Ich, ich habe sie gerettet.*

Was... Was sagst du da?

*"Mutti, Mutti schau..."*

Was... Was sagst du da? Mutter... was redest du da?



ANDREA:

Back then, the last summer [ of the GDR], when my mother was still my mother, on the steps to the garden, the child, my child, eats semolina pudding or does somersaults, "*Mutti, look, look, Mutti, look what I can do*", sharing a cigarette with my mother, for the hundredth time: *I really meant to quit, I'm getting too old for this*, my arms still heavy from the factory, but lighter, already the itch in the legs to jump up, into the shop, into the basement, into the washroom, "*Mutti, look what I can do*", the last summer, the child clings to my legs, "*please stay, Mutti, stay, I'll be real good*", when I, red-mouthed and red-skirted, want to leave, my mother laughs, *you're getting too old for this*, to the both of us, for my red mouth and for Clara's clinginess, *too old*, I go, to the next village or into town, a short night, and when I come back from the factory, and Clara comes running from school, my mouth is still red and I swing my arms.

In autumn a new winter coat for the child, my mother helps out, so it can be the blue one Clara wanted so much, a blue hurricane in the streets, grey with uniforms and placards and raised hands. A blue hurricane, when I take her hand, take her with me, *Look, Clara, look!* The streets full, I put her on my shoulders so she can see, a policeman shouting at me, how stupid can I be, taking my kid to this, I know him, from the next village, but not in uniform, *Look, Clara*, she clings to my hand and looks, raising her hands with me, when we shout *no violence*. Her blond plaits tight, her hand tightly in mine.

At home, at the kitchen table sits my mother, in blue smoke, lips twisted, *have you lost your mind? With the child? There?* The child plays, blue coat, blond plaits, in the bare winter garden.

My mother's twisted lips twist *like myself when I was young*. To me, *blackhead, stupid head, just like her, just like my princess sister*.

I am not a Nazi.

*Neither was she. But stupid, she was, like you. Taking the child...*

I was not there in a uniform, mother. Do you really want to compare this? Why didn't you go; after all, one would think you, Lore Gruber, the heroine...

*Yes, the princess would have been stupid enough too, to go there, after all, she had been stupid enough for the Russian, and who had to sort it out for her then? But you...*

"*Mutti, look, look, Mutti,*"

What's that supposed to mean?

*You're too old for this nonsense. Open your eyes. I have saved the princess once from the Russian, but I'm too old for this. What are you talking about? When you want to get yourself shot down in the streets by the Ruskies, then by all means, but leave me the child. Stupid head. Princess. Princess. You're such a princess, too. Like her. You think you can save the world? Your Ruski won't return for you, when they shave your head...*

Mother, what are you talking about? You have...

*"Mutti, look..."*

*I've saved her! She just stood there and stared, but I, I saved her, from the Ruski. Always, always I had to listen to how she... It was me, I had saved her! The Ruski would have bitten the dust anyway. If I hadn't reported it, they both wouldn't have made it. I had done the exact right thing, and she, the princess just left... Left me behind, alone, to pick up the pieces, when I... When she... I... I have saved her.*

What... What are you saying?

*"Mutti, Mutti, look"*

What... What are you saying? Mother... what are you talking about?

ANDREA STOPS CUTTING, KNIFE RAISED,  
ALMOST TALKING TO THE KNIFE.

ANDREA: Alles zerbricht, wie Glas. Der Lippenstift, das Lied, der Flieder, alles Lüge. Versuch', es wiederzusammenzusetzen. Bist du nicht mehr kannst. Und alles bricht auseinander.

ANDREA: Everything shatters, like glass. The lipstick, the song, the lilac, everything a lie. Try and piece it together. Until you can't anymore. And everything falls apart.

CLARA: Deep and bright red, like no one's mother, no one's mom had red like mine, pulsing along trembling fingers pointing to no other mom had that.

ANDREA: Aber das wollte ja niemand hören, niemand wollt' es mehr hören... der Kohleeimer unter dem offenen Fenster, voll Schnee, weiße Kohle...  
Geh' weg, Clara, geh zu Omi...

ANDREA: But no one wanted to hear it, no one wanted to hear it anymore... the coal bucket under the open window, covered in snow, white coal, *geh weg, Clara, geh zu Omi, geh weg...*

CLARA: Mama! Mama... (THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER) Mama...  
(WHISPERS) Mama... Ich hab Hunger...

CLARA: Mama! Mama... (THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER) Mama...  
(WHISPERS) Mama... I'm hungry...

ANDREA: Ich mach' dir einen Grießbrei. Das hast du doch früher so  
gerne gegessen. Mit Zimt und Zucker.

ANDREA: I'll make you a semolina pudding. You used to like that so  
much. With cinnamon and sugar.

SHE OFFERS CLARA THE CAKE. CLARA  
BEGINS TO EAT, MECHANICALLY,  
WATCHING THE SCENE BELOW WITH HER  
MOTHER.

## 62. THE END

OLD WOMAN AND LORE INDICATE THE  
WHOLE STAGE, SPREADING THEIR ARMS,  
LILAC BRANCHES IN ONE HAND.

LORE: Flieder. Flieder.

LORE: Lilac. Lilac.

THEY DROP THE BRANCHES, PICK UP THE  
PLASTIC BAGS AND LEAVE, SLOWLY.

THE FALLEN BODIES OF PEPIK AND  
SULAIKA REMAIN, ALONE.

FADE TO BLACK.

**Visibility, Memory, Gender: Writing and Re-  
Imagining National Socialist Atrocity for the  
Stage.**

## FOREWORD

We have perhaps, in reality, forgotten the dead and now remember only the living. It is stories of survival we tell.<sup>1</sup>

Tim Cole

In March 2013, at the premiere of a play about anti-Stalinist in Altenburg resistance during the Soviet occupation and early GDR, which I had written for the local theatre, our historical advisor, Dr. Enrico Heitzer, approached me with a thin folder. It contained a few newspaper clippings and extracts from local researchers about a satellite concentration camp for women in Altenburg. “For the next project”, Dr. Heitzer said as he handed me the folder. I scanned the documents and announced that I had no interest in writing a play about National Socialism. I think I might have used the term ‘minefield’. Most certainly, I did not wish to pursue another historical project so soon after the last; I wanted to move away from documents, notions of historical truth, and narratives in which I had to constantly negotiate my own imagination with ‘what had really happened’. However, the folder stayed with me during the next year, as did the first question that I asked myself that evening: Why didn’t I know about this camp, and its sibling in the nearby Meuselwitz? I had worked on Altenburg in the late 1940s for most of the previous year, yet the existence of these two camps for forced labourers, their presence on the streets, their visibility within the communities, had never come up.

Over the course of the following year, I finally decided to take on the ‘minefield’ in the form of a PhD project. While I originally set out to explore my first question

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<sup>1</sup> Tim Cole, *Images of the Holocaust: The Myth of the ‘Shoah Business’* (London: Duckworth, 1999), 93.

about the visibility of the two camps in Altenburg and Meuselwitz through the means of theatre, I quickly realised that I needed to include my own position – that of a third-generation German woman engaging with her own history – to the play. Thus, the question of the visibility and everyday-ness of National Socialist atrocity in the German province was widened to include the question of memory and, in a way, intergenerational trauma with regards to this (hidden) visibility in the same German province some 70 years later. My focus on women and gender means that I engage with all of those themes through the prism of female experiences, in particular those of victim, perpetrator, bystander, and descendant.

In this commentary, I trace the process of negotiating these different strands in my play *Flieder, 1945 / Lilac, 2015* as well as situate myself within the creative and discursive landscape I am mapping out. This landscape is vast: it includes specific local history as well as the wider historic-political background as well as over 70 years of engagement with National Socialism in history, politics, and philosophy as well as literary, theatrical, and filmic interpretations and reactions in various languages and continents. In an attempt to narrow down the material, I tend to concentrate on the local history of Altenburg and Meuselwitz, only hinting at the implications of the larger concentration camp complex those two camps were part of. I also engage with the documents and testimonies as a playwright, commenting on how these sources impacted my own narrative-making and imagination, not as a historian making qualitative or quantitative assessments of the historical situation. Regarding the wealth of literature, theatre, and film about National Socialist atrocity of the last 70 years, I work mostly with theatre and film in German and English – with

some exceptions. The films and plays I chose to discuss are either of an overall importance for the genre – *Schindler's List*, for example, made a lasting impact on the depiction of the persecution and extermination of the European Jews – or they were of specific importance to me in my creative process.

### **The Bare Facts: Altenburg and Meuselwitz**

Presumably no private enterprise of the German industry, not even IG Farben, was more involved in 'annihilation through work' than the Hugo Schneider AG from Leipzig (HASAG). This private enterprise, which is scarcely known even in academia, presumably not only employed more concentration camp inmates and 'work Jews' than any other, but was also responsible for the murder of several thousand Jewish forced labourers in the General Government.<sup>2</sup>

Mark Spoerer

The Hugo-Schneider-Aktiengesellschaft, HASAG, originally produced lamps and metal goods in Leipzig. Following Hitler's ascent to power, the company began its rise to achieving a leading role in the arms industry, moving their production focus to ammunition. HASAG was also the producer of the anti-tank rocket launchers *Panzerfaust*. Under the leadership of its general director Obersturmbannführer Paul Budin, the HASAG expanded into occupied Poland in 1939. Between 1942-1945, HASAG pressed at least 40,000 Jewish men and women as forced labourers into its services in the Radom district. Also in 1939, HASAG began to 'employ' growing numbers of civilian forced labourers in its plants in Germany – more than 10,000 alone in its headquarters in Leipzig. In 1944, a satellite concentration camp was established with more than 5,000 female inmates, who were forced to work in the HASAG factory. Similar satellite camps were set up in close proximity to HASAG

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<sup>2</sup> Mark Spoerer, *Zwangsarbeit unter dem Hakenkreuz. Ausländische Zivilarbeit und Häftlinge im Deutschen Reich und im besetzten Europa 1939-1945* (Stuttgart: DVA, 2001), 54.  
All translations from German into English are my own unless otherwise indicated.

factories in Taucha, Schlieben, Colditz, Flößberg, as well as in Altenburg and Meuselwitz.<sup>3</sup> These camps were under the administration of the Buchenwald main camp. Buchenwald, like most concentration camps, had over 100 so-called satellite camps with around 51,000 inmates, most of whom were rented out to service private industries – against a fee. The Buchenwald concentration camp made approximately between one and two million *Reichsmark* (RM) a month with this forced labour.<sup>4</sup> In April 1945, most of the camps were cleared out resulting in so called death marches. At the end of April 1945, the HASAG headquarters in Leipzig were blown up, presumably on purpose by Paul Budin, who allegedly committed suicide with his wife in the explosion.

The HASAG factory in Altenburg, founded in 1936, eventually produced around 30% of the ammunition for Luftwaffe airplanes. In 1945, the factory had over 13,000 employees, including approximately 3,800 civilian forced labourers and prisoners of war, as well as about 2,900 concentration camp inmates.<sup>5</sup> The factory in Meuselwitz had also been founded in 1936. Martin Schellenberg puts its capacity in February 1944, before the establishment of the satellite camp, at over 3,200 employees, including more than 2,000 civilian forced labourers from various countries.<sup>6</sup> In both Altenburg and Meuselwitz, the first satellite concentration camps for women were

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<sup>3</sup> Spoerer, *Zwangsarbeit*, 55; “NS-Forced Labour at the Hugo-Schneider-Aktiengesellschaft Company”, Leipzig Nazi Forced Labour Memorial, accessed 26. January 2018, <http://www.zwangsarbeit-in-leipzig.de/en/nazi-forced-labour-in-leipzig/ns-forced-labour-at-the-hugo-schneider-aktiengesellschaft-company/>.

<sup>4</sup> These number are given by Emil Holub in David A. Hackett ed., *Der Buchenwald-Report: Bericht über das Konzentrationslager Buchenwald bei Weimar* (Munich: Beck, 1996), 226.

<sup>5</sup> Willy Schilling, *Thüringen 1933-1935 – Der historische Reiseführer* (Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 2010), 118.

<sup>6</sup> Martin Schellenberg, “Meuselwitz (Männer)”, in *Der Ort des Terrors Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager, Band 3 Sachsenhausen Buchenwald*, ed. Wolfgang Benz and Barbara Distel (München: C.H. Beck, 2006), 526-527.



established in late 1944, initially under the administration of the Ravensbrück concentration camp for women.

SS-Oberscharführer Johann Frötsch had been stationed in Buchenwald before his transfer to Altenburg in August 1944, where he had 34 SS officers and 32 female auxiliary staff under his command. The camp's administration was passed from Ravensbrück to Buchenwald approximately two weeks later. In September 1944, 2,440 women were imprisoned in the Altenburg camp: 1,642 so-called political Polish prisoners, 500 Hungarian Jewish women, and 288 Sinti and Roma women. By mid-October, approximately 400 women, mostly Jewish and Sinti and Roma, had been sent back to Ravensbrück or Auschwitz, presumably to be murdered, and were replaced by Hungarian Jewish women.<sup>7</sup> The men's camp in Altenburg had a more or less constant population of 50 men from November 1944 until February 1945. In March 1945, the population more than doubled when another 115, mostly Jewish, male prisoners were transported to Altenburg from Buchenwald. Sick inmates were returned to and replaced from the main camp.<sup>8</sup> With its exact position still unknown, the satellite camp was part of the factory area, fenced off with barbed wire and watch towers, and located approximately 15 minutes from the factory halls.<sup>9</sup> Presumably, the non-Jewish women were housed in a former factory hall, while Jewish and Sinti and Roma women were housed separately in barracks.<sup>10</sup> The forced labourers had to work 12 hour shifts, producing mostly ammunition and *Panzerfäuste*.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Irmgard Seidel, "Altenburg (Frauen)", in: *Der Ort des Terrors*, 363.

<sup>8</sup> Charles-Claude Biedermann, "Altenburg (Männer)", in: *Der Ort des Terrors*, 365-367.

<sup>9</sup> Seidel, "Altenburg (Frauen)", 364.

<sup>10</sup> Personal correspondence with Dr. Marc Bartuschka, email message to the author, 03. August 2016.

<sup>11</sup> Seidel, "Altenburg (Frauen)", 364.

In Meuselwitz, SS-Oberscharführer Heinz Blume, previously head of the stone quarry Kommando at Buchenwald, took the position of camp commander until December 1944, when Kommandoführer Bergmaier took over.<sup>12</sup> Camp staff consisted of 55 SS-officers and 30 female auxiliaries.<sup>13</sup> In October 1944, 1,800 female prisoners arrived at the Meuselwitz train station from Ravensbrück. 300 of them were subsequently moved to the camp in Taucha. The majority of the remaining 1,500 women were Polish women from Warsaw, where many had been active members of the “Armija Krajowa” and participated in the Uprising. The women’s camp was bombed several times: on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 1944, over 40 women were killed in an air raid.<sup>14</sup> Women wounded in the raid, as those too sick to work, were transported back to Ravensbrück. The men’s camp in Meuselwitz was established in November 1944 with 41 prisoners from Buchenwald, its peak population was reached in spring 1945 with over 300 male prisoners. Both the men’s and women’s camp were north east of the factory area, separated by a street and fenced off with barbed wire.<sup>15</sup>

The satellite camp in Altenburg was ‘evacuated’ on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 1945, the prisoners forced on a death march.<sup>16</sup> About 800 prisoners were liberated by the US

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<sup>12</sup> According to Katrin Greiser, Anton Bergmaier (also Bergmayer or Bergmeier) had been sentenced to death in the Buchenwald trial, but was released in 1955, see also her discussion of Heinz Blume’s trial and retrial: Katrin Greiser, *Die Todesmärsche von Buchenwald. Räumung, Befreiung und Spuren der Erinnerung*. (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008), 435-437.

<sup>13</sup> Irmgard Seidel, “Meuselwitz (Frauen)”, in: *Der Ort des Terrors*, 523-524.

<sup>14</sup> Both Jan Rocek-Robitschek and Walter Wogens describe how the women’s camp was hit during an air-raid, and how some of the male prisoners had to collect their remains. Jan Rocek-Robitschek, Interview 7647, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, accessed 19. February 2015; Walter Wogens, Interview 15335. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, accessed 20. February 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Martin Schellenberg, “Meuselwitz (Männer)”, 536-527.

<sup>16</sup> Seidel, “Altenburg (Frauen)”, 364; Biedermann, “Altenburg (Männer)”, 366.

army in Waldenburg a few days later.<sup>17</sup> Several survivors also recall being part of a group split from the main death march and liberated in Meerane or other towns in the proximity.<sup>18</sup> The evacuation from Meuselwitz followed between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of April 1945, with the inmates being forced on open train wagons.<sup>19</sup> The trains from Meuselwitz were bombed at Graslitz at the German-Czech border and after the ensuing chaos, in which various prisoners were wounded, shot at by the SS or escaped, the group eventually broke off. Individual groups managed to self-liberate or were liberated by Soviet military.<sup>20</sup>

The factory in Altenburg was blown up by the occupying US forces and after the Red Army took over Thuringia from the US military in summer 1945, most

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<sup>17</sup> Seidel, "Altenburg (Frauen)", 364.

Max Eidus and Ida Friedman, as most survivors whose interviews I accessed, were liberated at Waldenburg. The latter also observed the accompanying SS shooting prisoners too weak to walk on the death march. Morduch Max Eidus, Interview 1223, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, accessed 17. February 2015; Ida Friedman, Interview 19679, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, accessed 18. February 2015. Leopold Popowsky described the reactions of the local population to another death march to Buchenwald: "They didn't object to it. They watched and they were very pleased [...]." Leopold Popowsky, Interview 2108, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, accessed 18. February 2015.

<sup>18</sup> Olga Frenkel was liberated in Meerane, Frances Katz in Glauchau, Olga Frenkel, Interview 34030, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, accessed 18. February 2015., Frances Katz, Interview 3480, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, accessed 18. February 2015. Another female survivor recalled in 1945 that "they took us to Chemnitz to kill us. [...] They kept on telling us to march three more kilometres [...]. We dared to steal because we heard the siren in Mirau [...].", M. F. "Protocol Nr. 163", Budapest, 28. June 1945. DEGOB, accessed 03. December 2014, <http://degob.org/index.php?showjk=163>. Leo Brenner recalls being liberated by American troops in Altenburg "right outside the camp in the woods". Leo Brenner, Interview 1662, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, accessed 16. February 2015.

<sup>19</sup> Seidel, "Meuselwitz (Frauen)", 525; Schellenberg, "Meuselwitz (Männer)", 529.

<sup>20</sup> Esther Grun continued on the death march for another three weeks. Irving Belfer escaped and was recaptured several times. Irving Belfer, Interview 226, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1994, accessed 19. February 2015, Esther Grun, Interview 1592, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, accessed 19. February 2015. Marie Levitan hid with a local woman in Graslitz while Aniko Whealy remained with the waggons and was eventually told that they were free to leave. Marie Levitan, Interview 33515, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, accessed 19. February 2015, Aniko Whealy, Interview 1968, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, accessed 20. February 2015.

machinery from the factories in Altenburg and Meuselwitz were disassembled and transported to the USSR.<sup>21</sup> The fate of the vast majority of those several thousand women and men forced to work in the concentration camps in Altenburg and Meuselwitz remains unknown.<sup>22</sup>

Raul Hilberg's *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders – The Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945* (1993) is a seminal study of the persecution and extermination of the European Jews. Hilberg's 'functional' understanding of National Socialist atrocity was highly influential within the field of 'Holocaust Studies', inspiring historians like Christopher Browning, whose *Remembering Survival – Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp* (2010) provided a starting point for my research. Mark Spoerer's *Zwangsarbeit unter dem Hakenkreuz* (2001) provides an introduction to the role of forced labour in National Socialist Germany and its occupied territories, while Michael Thad Allen focuses on the entanglement of SS, state, and private industries in *The Business of Genocide – The SS, Slave Labour, and the Concentration Camps* (2002). Marc Buggeln's *Das System der KZ-Außenlager* (2012) gives a concise overview of the satellite concentration system as an integral part of this forced labour complex. The survivor and historian Felicja Karay published several works about forced labour, including *Wir lebten zwischen Granaten und Gedichten* (2001), about poetry in the HASAG

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<sup>21</sup> Seidel, "Altenburg (Frauen)", 364-365; Biedermann, "Altenburg (Männer)", 366; Schellenberg, "Meuselwitz (Männer)", 529.

<sup>22</sup> Dr. Marc Bartuschka's research indicates that the original death march from Altenburg was split up and separated, with approximately 500 prisoners liberated at Meerane in addition to the 800 liberated in Waldenburg. What happened to the remaining prisoners, marching in separate, smaller columns, cannot be ascertained entirely, although Dr. Bartuschka found no record of massacres, personal correspondence with Dr. Marc Bartuschka, email message, 18. August 2018.

women's camp in Leipzig. There is relatively little published academic literature as such available on the camps in Altenburg and Meuselwitz. Both camps feature in Wolfgang Benz and Barbara Distel's *Der Ort des Terrors* (2006), an invaluable reference point for my research. Altenburg has a very active history society and an array of residents engaged with the subject and quite a few of those research projects have been published: Ingolf Strassmann, born in Altenburg, but exiled in 1939, discusses the camps in various publications, such as *Die Juden in Altenburg* (2004) and *Altenburg in Thüringen. Stadt und Land unterm Hakenkreuz* (2003). Günther Hauthal, a local history teacher, discusses forced labour and satellite camps in Altenburg and Meuselwitz in *Im Altenburger Land zwischen 1933 und 1945* (2005). In 2009, A-level students Diana Blass, Christian Brumme and Felix Otto published their history project about the Altenburg factory and camp. Bert Markiewicz's *Oma, was war die HASAG?: ein Kapitel Altenburger Stadtgeschichte der Neuzeit* about the HASAG factory in Altenburg is one of several academic theses on the subject. In 2013, the city council of Altenburg commissioned Dr. Marc Bartuschka to conduct initial research into the Altenburg camp, which promises to lead to a conclusive academic historical publication on the camp in the future.

With regards to original sources, there are numerous archives that hold collections about the camps. In particular the Buchenwald archive has an array of documents relating to the satellite camps. The Meuselwitz city archive holds mostly documents relating to the building processes of the factory and camp, the relationship between the HASAG and town, as well as material relating to the American occupation. How I used those sources during the conception of my play is

documented in Part I. The Altenburg city archive, the Thüringisches Staatsarchiv in Altenburg and the Ravensbrück archive also hold various sources regarding the camps and HASAG in Altenburg and Meuselwitz. However, these proved less decisive for my creative work, and therefore are not included here. Survivor testimonies in written form make up a significant part of the collections at the Buchenwald archive. Short protocols detailing the experiences of mostly Hungarian-Jewish prisoners returning home in 1945 can be found online in the collection of the National Committee for Attending Deportees. The federal archive for forced labour in Germany also contains several video testimonies by survivors. However, for the experiences of those men, women, and children imprisoned in Altenburg and Meuselwitz, the wealth of testimonies of the Visual History Archive was indispensable for me. Out of the approximately 70 testimonies in English and German by survivors of the two camps, I worked with around 40. Those testimonies provided the basis for my play in the form of thematic strands which I then in turn transformed into a fictionalised fabric.

### **The ‘Strands’: Visibility, Memory, Gender**

But I witness something that was also terrible in Altenburg. Altenburg was in the middle of a town and we were able to see the homes nearby, and the trees and that made me very happy, because spring time I finally saw the first tree in a long time, and we also had grass in our area. And one day, they carried in a group of people, men, women, and they looked worse than we did, and when they sat down to rest, we were not allowed to talk to them. As they sat down to rest, they started to eat the grass that we had. And I knew that I was hungry, terribly hungry, but I had never eaten grass, and for them to eat the grass, I thought “My god, what happened? Where did they come from?” It was a very scary experience.<sup>23</sup>

Lenka Berlin

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<sup>23</sup> Lenka Berlin, Interview 19673, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, accessed 16. February 2015.

Take one pint of water, add a half pound of sugar, the juice of eight lemons, the zest of half lemon. Pour the water from one jug, then into the other, several times. Strain through a clean napkin. Grandmother, the alchemist. You spun gold out of this hard life. Conjured beauty from the things left behind. Found healing where it did not live. Discovered the antidote in your own kitchen. Broke the curse with your own two hands. You passed these instructions down to your daughter. Who then passed it down to her daughter.<sup>24</sup>

Beyoncé

"I was thirteen when Poland was first occupied, nineteen at liberation. I spent my teenage years in camps. I didn't see a normal pregnancy carried to term in a normal situation. I didn't know what you were supposed to do. I didn't know it wasn't a good idea to get on a bicycle. [...] And I had no one to tell me this, to advise me, because my mother was killed in Auschwitz."<sup>25</sup>

Itka Frajman Zgmuntowicz

I have decided to start this section with three quotations that, to me, isolate the most important themes that make up the essence of my play: visibility, trauma, memory, and gender. Lenka Berlin, a Jewish survivor of the Altenburg satellite camp, indicates in her recollections the notion of visibility – the camp in the middle of the town, the reciprocal gaze to and from the houses nearby. There is a longing in her short sentences – a longing for spring, colour, grass: normality – as opposed to the violent abnormality of starvation and imprisonment that she experienced. She also evokes the ever-present hunger in the camp. The lines from Beyoncé's song "Redemption", which came out in 2016 as I was writing the first draft of my play, denotes the importance of cooking and nurturing in the creation of a (black) female genealogy. The last quotation by Itka Frajman Zgmuntowicz indicates the trauma caused by the violent disruption of such a genealogy experienced by survivors of National Socialist atrocity and genocide, like herself, as well as hinting to the topic of gender-specific violence against Jewish women – in particular young mothers and pregnant

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<sup>24</sup>"All Night", Beyoncé, track 11 on *Lemonade*, The Beyhive, 2016.

<sup>25</sup> Itka Frajman Zgmuntowicz quoted in Sara R. Horowitz, "Women in Holocaust Literature: Engendering Trauma Memory", in *Women in the Holocaust*, ed. Dalia Ofer and Leonore J. Weitzman (New Haven & London: Yale University Press), 365.

women. Those themes can be connected to the characters in my play, albeit not one single character could be said to represent a specific theme. Sulaika takes on the role of protective mother or older sister within the camp primarily through making 'food narratives' of a better past or a promising future. Imprisoned because of her belonging to the ethnic minority of Sinti and Roma, she also comes from a victim group that has been omitted from public recognition for a long time and continues to experience discrimination and persecution.<sup>26</sup> She enters a relationship of 'camp sisters' with the young Jewish woman Aniko, pregnant and alone. Another pair of sisters are the Polish teenagers Agnieszka and Halina. Due to their language constraints, they remain often silent and unheard within their 'prisoner family', yet Angnieszka is able to actively re-create a mother-daughter bond with Sulaika.<sup>27</sup> Lore and Else form an altogether different pair of sisters, supportive of each other, and bound by their shared memories of their father's 'nurture' (or lack of it). The women in my play are at the forefront, with the men serving mostly as auxiliary characters.

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<sup>26</sup> see also: Hildegard Franz, Interview 48452, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1998, accessed 16. February 2015. Mrs Franz was a survivor of the Altenburg camp. Her description of the deaths of her own three children, as well as of her sister and her children, in Auschwitz, informed Sulaika's backstory. Her youngest daughter was also called Anita. The 2013 documentary *Valley of Sighs* by Mihai Andrei Leaha, Iulia Hossu and Andrei Crisan details the mostly forgotten history of internment of Romani in Rumania; Sybil Milton gives a concise overview of the issues concerning a gender-based analysis of the Porajmos, the National Socialist genocide of the Sinti and Roma, in Sybil Milton, "Hidden Lives: Sinti and Roma Women", in *Experience and Expression: Women, the Nazis, and the Holocaust*, ed. Elizabeth R. Baer and Myrna Goldenberg (Detroit: Wayne State University Press. 2003), 53-76.

<sup>27</sup> Agnieszka and Halina are inspired by the memories of Maria Brzęcka-Kosk, who was interned in Meuselwitz as a teenager with her mother and sisters. Her testimony is available at the Buchenwald Archive in two different written versions: Maria Kosk, "Erinnerungen einer 14jährigen Gefangenen des Konzentrationslagers Buchenwald-Meuselwitz 05.10.1944-08.05.1945". trans. Kristina Rudolf. (Warsaw, 25.02.1996), Buchenwaldarchiv (BwA), [63-17-3].; Maria Kosk, *In der Erinnerung bewahrte Zeit*, trans. Christhart Henschel, (no date), Buchenwaldarchiv (BwA), [63-17-3]. The latter was published in 2016: Maria Brzęcka-Kosk, *Als Mädchen im KZ Meuselwitz. Erinnerungen von Maria Brzęcka-Kosk*, ed. Anne Friebe, Bernd Karwen and Julia Spohr, trans. Christhart Henschel (Dresden: Stiftung Sächsische Gedenkstätten, 2016).



Pepik, for example, combines many traits and anecdotes related by Jewish survivors.<sup>28</sup> Andrey is based on a shadow haunting the testimonies of survivors Fred Schwarz and Michael Flack: a Russian prisoner publicly beaten to death in the Meuselwitz camp, and therefore at the centre of my investigation of (hidden) visibility.<sup>29</sup> Those notions of visibility and what is hidden from the gaze as well as of the normality and abnormality of atrocity with regards to the camps in Altenburg and Meuselwitz centrally inform the first part of this commentary, “Hidden Visibilities: Complicity, Violence, and Space”.

There is a multitude of secondary literature about the representation and remembrance of National Socialist atrocity, and in particular about the persecution and extermination of the European Jews, in literature, film, and theatre. Among the pioneers to study the creative ‘re-imagining’ of the extermination of the European Jews in the field of ‘Holocaust Studies’ are Lawrence L. Langer (*The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination*, 1975), Alvin H. Rosenfeld (*A Double Dying*, 1980) and James E. Young (*Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust*, 1988) to name just a few. Following the establishment of the Women’s Movement and emergence of Women and Gender Studies in the 1980s and 1990s, the role of gender in ‘Holocaust Studies’ began to be foregrounded by scholars like Joan Ringelheim, the director of Oral History at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Myrna Goldenberg, co-

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<sup>28</sup> Michael Flack’s description of the execution of a Russian prisoner, for instance, informed Pepik’s friendship with Andrey. Michael Flack, Interview 17144. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, accessed 19. February 2015. Walter Thalheimer’s and Leo Brenner’s detailed memories of acts of sabotage were incorporated into Pepik’s role in the successful sabotaging of the machine in Act II. Walter Thalheimer, Interview 3094, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, accessed 19. February 2015; Brenner, Interview 1662.

<sup>29</sup> Fred Schwarz, *Züge auf falschem Gleis* (Vienna: Der Apfel, 1996), 293-294.

editor of *Experience and Expression: Women, the Nazis, and the Holocaust* (2003, with Elisabeth Baer), S. Lillian Kremer (*Women's Holocaust Writing*, 1999) and Sara R. Horowitz (*Voicing the Void. Muteness and Memory in Holocaust Fiction*, 1997). Robert Skloot (*The Darkness We Carry*, 1988) and Gene Plunka (*Holocaust Drama*, 2009) focus on theatrical interpretations of National Socialist genocide, while Tim Cole in *Images of the Holocaust* (1999) and Peter Reichel in *Erfundene Erinnerung* (2004) trace the history of 'imagined memory' of National Socialist atrocity through theatre, film, and public memory. These notions of an 'imagined memory', the echoes and legacy of the past, and the act of narrative-making in the engagement with the past are at the centre of the 2015-timeline in my play.

Thus, many of the themes established in the 'remembered' timeline of 1944/45 are mirrored in 2015. Andrea and Clara form a very dysfunctional 'mother and daughter' pairing: both are cut off from the intergenerational, female genealogy described above and so violently pursued by Clara in her obsessive focus on her grandmother's positive legacy, albeit for different reasons than Jewish survivors and their descendants. Both engage with their trauma and the lack or loss of a supportive female community in their lives through their relationship with food. While Andrea literally eats her emotions, Clara refuses food, and with it, the attempted genealogy offered by her mother.<sup>30</sup> Clara makes narratives instead – in a way, aligning herself

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<sup>30</sup> The role of food, of eating and digesting traumatic memory, among Jewish survivors and their children is also at the heart of Donald Margulies' disturbing play *The Model Apartment*, with the daughter Debbie disclaiming: "They're inside me. All of them. [...] When my stomach talks, it's *them* talking. Telling me they're hungry. I eat for them so they won't be hungry". Donald Margulies [1990], *The Model Apartment*, in *The Theatre of the Holocaust. Volume 2. Six Plays*, ed. Robert Skloot, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 255.

more closely with the 'mind' than the 'body'.<sup>31</sup> In her narrative-making, she casts herself and her partner Mike in the roles of her 'heroic' grandmother and Andrey, actively projecting the present onto a past which informs this very present. The act of narrative making – of shaping memory through the means of text, stage, film – as an effort to align the understanding of one's self in the world and with regards to one's history, legacy, and genealogy, form the content of the second part of my discussion "The Making of a Narrative: 'Holocaust' Drama and the Drafting of Memories".

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<sup>31</sup> Susan M. Shaw and Janet Lee point out that "[...] eating disorders reflect the ways women desire self-control in the context of limited power and autonomy", in *Women's Voices, Feminist Visions: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, ed. Susan M. Shaw and Janet Lee (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012), 231. Clara's attempts at controlling the narrative and controlling the body coincide in that sense. See also: Marni Grossman [2010], "Beating Anorexia and Gaining Feminism.", in *Women's Voices, Feminist Visions*, 241-243; see also Natalie Jovanoski's discussion of body-policing in the depolitication of gendered food discourses: Jovanoski, *Digesting femininities: the feminist politics of contemporary food culture* (Cahm: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 59-101.

## I. HIDDEN VISIBILITIES: COMPLICITY, VIOLENCE, AND SPACE.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Chapters 1 and 3 of this part are based partially on the paper “*At Least They Didn’t Clap*. Hidden Visibilities – Rewriting Forced Labour into Altenwitz”, which I delivered about my research at the *The Past in the Present: Rewritings, Reinventions, Reimaginings* Research Marathon, organised by Sean Seeger and Ava Dikova at the University of Essex, 14<sup>th</sup> July 2015. Parts of chapters 2 and 3 were presented in the paper “Violent Spaces: “As These Fixtures, Like You Mention, Are to Be Considered as Only Provisional, I have No Objections...” Forced Labour and Satellite Concentration Camps in Two German Towns, 1944-45” at the *Bringing Conflict Home* conference, organised by Lotta Schneidemesser, Alexander Hardie-Forsyth, Harriet Beadnell, and Stephanie Wright, University of York, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

With the term of authenticity, comes along its 'aura', an attribution of meaning to the places of the former camps occurs, which seems to overcome all structural or spatial changes – such as demolition of structural evidence – or temporal distance. This does not remain without consequences for the memorial sites. They were 'rebuilt after 1945 into commemorative rather than cognitive sites' by 'isolating them from everyday life, making them musealised and auratising the place'. [...] For a place to remain in memory in its history, meaning or function, it must be marked and noted as such. [...] Thus, in its shape as a building, ruin, landscape, etc., it must be associated with a memory, be it in writing, narrated, or transmitted as a tradition. The structural remains alone cannot be read anymore without reminder or inscription after a very short time. [...] The 'memory of the places' thus focuses in its expressiveness on the 'here', on a place that is determined, marked, and explained, as meaningful or memorable.<sup>33</sup>

Alexandra Klei

On a hot day in August 2015, I sat on the curb of a small road in Meuselwitz, rolling a cigarette. I had spent the day in the town hall, which also houses the local police station and the archive, open Tuesdays and Fridays. Although the archivist had provided me with carton-loads of documents, I felt that the day had been a waste. The documents were city council meeting protocols, correspondence, lists, but nothing seemed to hold the same weight as the research I had done over the course of the previous year – the survivor testimonies of the Visual History Archive, the transportation lists at Buchenwald. The archivist closed shop on midday, and as I had mentioned my intention to visit the former camp site, she kindly gave me a lift, so I did not have to walk through the intense heat for an hour. She described the position of the two memorial stones, and dropped me off not far from the first one, which was off the main site, but at a public road, so people would actually see it. I dutifully took some pictures and then marched onwards to the actual site, or what I took it to be. But I stopped at a corner before the railroad tracks and the side street that led to the area, mostly garages, a couple of houses, and some unkempt grassland, sat on the curb, and rolled myself a cigarette.

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<sup>33</sup> Alexandra Klei, *Gestalt der Erinnerung: Gedenkstätten an Orten ehemaliger Außenlager des Frauen-Konzentrationslagers Ravensbrück*, (Berlin: Metropol, 2006), 19-20.

I had visited Buchenwald before, and the former campsite in Altenburg as well, which I will describe in more detail later on. During my visit to Buchenwald, I had felt weighed down by the place, as if the ground itself were 'evil'. I had kept looking at the concrete, the gravel, the grass, and felt as if they seethed violence and pain. That place had been so loaded by my knowledge of its past that I did not even need the signs, I already projected all kinds of raw emotion on everything I saw. But the signs had helped. They had provided me with a map, a narrative, guiding me through my feelings. Already in Altenburg I had felt mostly lost and confused – there was a vague, somewhat unauthorised, sense of significance and history, but I was aware that I could just as well have been on the wrong road, with the 'real' history having had taken place two streets down. Now, it was more complicated. I had visited Altenburg at the very beginning of my work, without detailed knowledge about personal fates, by now, I had, amongst many others, accessed the two testimonies describing the haunting execution of the Russian inmate at the Meuselwitz camp. I wanted to find that place, and at the same time, it scared me, and so I had a smoke.

While I was stalling, thinking about this place of execution, a man passed me, maybe in his fifties. He gave me a sceptical look as he walked past me, and then turned around to come back to me. I immediately tensed, would he ask me for a smoke or burst into a tirade? As it turned out, he asked me if I was okay and if I wanted some water, it was a hot day, after all. I assured him that I was fine and had water with me, and watched him walk away. When he was gone, I realised that I would have liked to ask him about this place – if he knew what it had been; what he thought of it. But I did not ask, instead I got up and paced history for a while.

I am not sure if I indeed found the site of the execution. What I did find was my constant wondering – was this where the fence was? Is this the place where they stood and watched? Did the man whom I had already named Andrey for my play, but whose real name I am not likely to ever know, die here, where the garages are? What did this area look like before? And before that? As it turned out later, the day at the archive had not been as much of a waste as I had presumed, since many of the documents that I found there actually made me think of these questions more acutely. The detailed descriptions of the building process, correspondence between different offices, invoices from local businesses, all of these provided a counterpart to the material I had encountered before, the survivors' testimonies, the transportation lists. In the following months, when reviewing the material, I realised that it was exactly in this area of tension where I wanted to set my play – between the then and now, between a grocer's invoice to the camp and a survivor's pained explanations about the violence they endured in this camp. Only much later in the writing process I also realised the importance of my own position – third-generation German, descendent of bystanders and perpetrators, searching the site of atrocity – would eventually have in the play. The following chapters will investigate in more depth this correlation between space and violence, visibility and complicity in Altenburg and Meuselwitz, which sources I found, and how I used them to construct my play. I will thereby jump indiscriminately between Altenburg and Meuselwitz, since I combined the historical camps and drew on material from both places.

In the first chapter, "Blank Spaces", I discuss with more detail my visit to the former campsite in Altenburg, and what can be drawn from the way we engage with

and present such 'everyday' sites of past atrocity to ourselves and our communities. Once I have considered Altenburg's present, I move on to look further into Meuschwitz's 'other' past, the site's existence previous to its incarnation as a site of atrocity. This sense of history as corresponding layers of time that are interconnected, rather than purely linear, feeding off each other, is intricately woven into my play, which not only operates on two timelines that often impact on each other, but also draws further upon the time before the site was a concentration camp. The second chapter, "Violent Spaces" focuses almost entirely on Meuselwitz, drawing mostly on material from the town archive. In it I engage with various sources that detail the community's engagement with the growing development of the factory and camp, from the assistance given by city officials to HASAG during the buying of building land, from the exchange of prisoners of war as forced labourers between both communities and the HASAG, to the town's endorsement of the construction of the barracks for the concentration camp and local business with the camp. Through these interactions, the site became a violent space long before public executions took place there, and this also, in my play, implicates not only characters such as Baumann or Else, or the mayor, but even Lore herself, or her father, as members of this community.

The last two chapters both deal with physical violence, and are based less on German archived material, but more in survivors' testimonies. "Staged Violence" deals with 'official' violence in the Meuselwitz camp, mostly, the SS-officer Heinz Blume, and the aforementioned execution of the Russian prisoner. Blume, as little as I found out about him, remains one of the historical sources for Baumann, as well



as the officers Frötsch and Klaus, who were stationed in Altenburg, and the accounts of the execution were at the very heart of my writing. The last chapter in this part, “Hidden Violence” concerns itself with violence directed specifically at female inmates, in particular sexualised violence. Else sending Aniko to her death due to her being not only a Jewish woman, but a pregnant Jewish woman, and Baumann’s assault on Aniko as well as the hinted assaults at other women<sup>34</sup>, are based not only on broader discussions of the role of gender and sex in the field of ‘Holocaust Studies’, but incidents implied or openly described with regards to the Altenburg camp.

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<sup>34</sup> Mona Becker, *Flieder, 1945 / Lilac, 2015*, 70-82. All further references in-text as (F/L).

## 1. Blank Spaces: Altenburg Today and Meuselwitz' Other Past.



Plate. 1. Entrance to Gewerbegebiet Poststraße, Altenburg, 2014. © M.B.



Plate. 2. Sign Gewerbegebiet Postraße, Altenburg, 2014. © M.B.

These pictures show the entrance to the industrial area Gewerbegebiet Poststraße, in Altenburg in November 2014, including an advertisement board and map for the convenient location of the business one might be searching. The outline of this map is strikingly similar to the rough maps of the area from the 1940s, with the difference that those maps showed the location of prisoners' barracks and ammunition factory halls, rather than the small-scale businesses of today. After Germany had lost the war, the factories in Altenburg and Meuselwitz were disassembled and demolished.<sup>35</sup> A few years ago, the city council invested several million Euros in relaunching the whole area for local industries. The impending demolition of the last prisoner barracks in Altenburg caused public debate and the attempt to conserve

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<sup>35</sup> See also Alexandra Klei's description of the area in Altenburg and of the memorial on the local graveyard, Klei, *Gestalt der Erinnerung*, 171-157; Katrin Greiser describes the history of origins of the memorial on the graveyard, Katrin Greiser, *Die Todesmärsche*, 360-361.

some building elements as a historical monument.<sup>36</sup> As is discernible from a single look at the advertisement board, the area is not exactly overflowing with businesses. Many of the signs are blank.

In 2006, a local citizens' initiative led to the installation of a commemorative plaque in the Gewerbegebiet.<sup>37</sup> In November 2014, when I visited the area, I spent a few hours looking for it, but I was unable to find the plaque. The board at the entrance, as shown in the reproduction, does not include any information about the plaque, or indeed about the history of this place. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there was no one around to ask and I did not dare knock on one of the doors of the residential homes not far away down the road. It was just me and a murder of crows.



*Plate 3 Commemorative Plaque Gewerbegebiet Postraße, Altenburg, 2006. © Bürgerverein Altenburg Nord e.V.*



*Plate 4 Municipal Office, Gewerbegebiet Poststraße, Altenburg, 2014. © M.B.*

<sup>36</sup> Florian Theos, "Zeugnisse aus der NS-Zeit vor dem Abriss," *Osterländer Volkszeitung*, 20.-21. October 2012; Anja Siegesmund, "Bilanz Grünes Wahlkreisbüro Altenburg", 26. August 2014, accessed January 02, 2017, <http://www.anja-siegesmund.de/aktuelles/bilanz-gruenes-wahlkreisbuero-altenburg/>; "Dem Dunkel entrissen", TV Altenburg, 02. February 2015, accessed January 02, 2017, [http://www.wochenspiegel-abg.de/regionales/Dem\\_Dunkel\\_entrissen-6703.html](http://www.wochenspiegel-abg.de/regionales/Dem_Dunkel_entrissen-6703.html).

<sup>37</sup> "Gedenktafel im ehemaligen HASAG Gelände wurde eingeweiht", Bürgerverein Altenburg Nord e.V., accessed July 5, 2016, <http://www.buergerverein-abg-nord.de/chronik.htm>.

One of the reasons I was unable to find the plaque was that I thought I was looking for a stone, or a small memorial. As I found out later, it was actually a tablet (Plate 3). The plaque is on the wall of a red-brick building in the industrial area, which I did indeed see and photograph, a municipal office (Plate 4). I did go up to the gate, where I saw the city council logo, but not past it. I may be forgiven for not expecting to find any memorial there, past the gates, behind the walls. Like the blank spaces on the advertisement board at the entrance to the industrial area – left to be filled in by prospective entrepreneurs – the place presented itself to me as a blank space, a blind spot in the public memory of this town and community, the plaque a hidden visibility. On that day, it seemed to me that it is entirely possible to live your whole life in Altenburg without knowing or acknowledging that there were camps for prisoners of war, for civilian forced labourers, and for concentration camp inmates in the middle of your hometown and that the inmates in these camps were visible to the population – that is, to the German co-workers in the factories, and to the residents of the town, when the prisoners cleared rubble off the streets or defused bombs. It seemed possible to live your whole life in Altenburg without knowing or acknowledging that men, women, and indeed children were abused, exploited and murdered right on your doorstep, but I doubt that it is possible to live your whole life in Altenburg without knowing of the atrocities committed at Auschwitz.

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The claim that the general population did not know about the genocide that was committed in their name in the death camps in Poland, on the Russian front, and in the concentration camps is widespread and important for German self-

understanding since the war.<sup>38</sup> This understanding places the responsibility for National Socialist war crimes, genocide, and other atrocities firmly in the hands of the 'Nazis'. These atrocities happened far away, out of sight, in places with names that are difficult to pronounce.<sup>39</sup> Even the locations of terror within the national borders of Germany, like the concentration camp Buchenwald, appear to be on the margins of the city landscape, outside the community and somewhat removed from it. It might have been impossible not to know about them, but it was possible to avoid seeing them. Located outside the community in such a way, these places become distinct from the community: 'Buchenwald' and 'Weimar' are in no way synonymous, the horrors of the camp do not seep into the town of Goethe.<sup>40</sup> The notion of a geographically distinct 'evil' – its confinement to a closed location – is far more bearable than the thought of atrocity being deeply ingrained into the very fabric of

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<sup>38</sup> See also Harald Welzer, Sabine Moller and Karoline Tuschgggnall, "*Opa war kein Nazi*": *Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust im Familiengedächtnis* (Frankfurt am Main; Fischer, 2003). The study about familial and intergenerational memory suggests a disparity between the learned factual knowledge about the past and an emotionally significant reference system conveyed through family (10) – this can lead to the othering of "the Nazis" (150-156), and the reiteration that one did not and could not have known about atrocities (156-161).

<sup>39</sup> See also, Hannah Arendt [1963], *Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on the Banality of Evil* (London: Penguin Books, 2006), 16-18. In theatre, this notion of knowingly not knowing can be found, for example, in the figure of witness 1, a train employee stationed close to Auschwitz, in: Peter Weiss, *Die Ermittlung – Oratorium in 11 Gesängen* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1969), 9-11. The debate about suppression and responsibility has been also been rekindled in 2013 with the release of and public debate about the German TV-production *Unsere Mütter, Unsere Väter*. See also Sebastian Hammellehle, "TV-Debatte bei Jauch – Wischiwaschi durch den Weltkrieg", 03. March 2013, *Spiegel Online*, accessed 02. January 2017, <http://www.spiegel.de/forum/kultur/tv-debatte-bei-jauch-wischiwaschi-durch-den-weltkrieg-thread-86238.html>.

<sup>40</sup> The 2015 re-make of *Naked Among Wolves* addresses this in a scene that is not in the 1963 film, in which two camp prisoners are brutally murdered on a picturesque road while a resident watches through her curtains.

our communal spaces.<sup>41</sup> And while it was the bleakness and the blankness of the place and the memory of it, which resonated most with me after my short visit on that dreary November day, my subsequent engagement with it proved this first impression to be a highly misleading one. The place might be bleak today, but it is in no way blank – it is and has always been part of a community and the site's spell as a site of atrocity is but one layer in its history, and the community itself was instrumental in its becoming a site of atrocity in the first place.

### **Great Interest: Entanglement and Complicity**

This entanglement can be exemplified by the development of the HASAG factory in Meuselwitz. In 1938, feverish correspondence began to take place between the local branch of the HASAG company, their headquarters in Leipzig, the city council and mayor of Meuselwitz, and various other national agencies like the *Reichsbauernschaft*. The HASAG planned to expand their Meuselwitz branch along the railroad tracks and thus announced their plans to buy the land from its various, private owners. At a city council meeting in early October 1938 the first mayor of Meuselwitz reported his negotiations with landowners to procure the appropriate land for the HASAG. In the protocol, it is stated that:

The town has a great interest in this company's development in Meuselwitz. For this reason, the town will act as trustee. There are some difficulties to overcome, but they must be overcome, otherwise, compulsory acquisition has to be put into effect.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> For a discussion and local case study of the importance of decentralised investigation and remembrance of local NS-history, as means to deconstruct "one of the central myth of West and East German post-war history" that the atrocities were mostly unknown to the general population, see Sebastian Haak, "Lager der Nazis waren allgegenwärtig – auch mitten in Thüringen", *Thüringisches Landeszeitung*, 08. April 2015, accessed 02. January 2016, <http://www.tlz.de/web/zgt/leben/detail/-/specific/Lager-der-Nazi>.

<sup>42</sup> Protocol. "Auszug aus dem Stadtratsitzungsprotokoll. Punkt 10. Hasag-Erweiterung," Meuselwitz, 07. October 1938. *Ankauf von Grundstücken für die Hasag durch die Stadtverwaltung Meuselwitz 1938-1940*. 148/3. Stadtarchiv Meuselwitz.

These simple lines not only state the council's vested interest in the expansion of the ammunition factory in their town, but hint at fierce negotiations with the landowners that are alluded to in the other documents as well. Only three days before the documented city council meeting, a report about such negotiations was sent to the director of the local HASAG branch, von Grambusch. The report begins with a very clear statement regarding the entangled relationship between private industry and local state interests which were to define the correlation between industry and state institutions for the coming years, in particular the war years, and which later dictated the role of forced labour in this process.<sup>43</sup>

Attached I present you with the result of my negotiations about the expansion of property beyond the railway line Meuselwitz-Leipzig. I have made it clear to the people with the necessary authority that this purchase is necessary in the state political interest. I have further indicated that, if a voluntary sale is not of the question, compulsory acquisition will have to be taken.<sup>44</sup>

Within the space of two sentences, the undisclosed author – presumably either the mayor himself or a member of his staff – uses the word 'necessary' (*notwendig*) twice: once to emphasise his own authority (*Nachdruck*) to bring his point across, and once to indicate just how important that sale is for the "state political interest"

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<sup>43</sup> For a detailed description of economic SS structure and enterprise, the SS's – multifold – approaches to economic employment of prisoners, and the relationship between the SS and private German industry, see: Michael Thad Allen, *The Business of Genocide – The SS, Slave Labor, and the Concentration Camps*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002). For an investigation of the role of Jewish forced labour and its historical interpretation, see Wolf Gruner, *Jewish Forced Labor Under the Nazis – Economic Needs and Racial Aims, 1938-1944*, trans. Kathleen M. Dell'Orto (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Satellite camps, as part of the extermination process, have been historically side-lined. Investigations like the one of Dr. Bartuschka in Altenburg have been trying to amend this. For a historical analysis of the satellite camp system, see Marc Buggeln, *Das System der KZ-Außenlager: Krieg, Sklavenarbeit und Massengewalt* (Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2012).

<sup>44</sup> Correspondence. (no addressor) to HASAG director von Grambusch. "Grundstücksverhandlungen," 03. October 1938. *Ankauf von Grundstücken für die Hasag durch die Stadtverwaltung Meuselwitz 1938-1940.148/3*. Stadtarchiv Meuselwitz.

itself. He continues to briefly discuss each landowner and their respective willingness to sell. The land in question is of agricultural use, either farm land, owned privately or leased from the local baron, or garden allotments. How much that land meant to its individual owners can be discerned from reading between the lines of the report:

The miner Paul Elßner also seems to be willing to sell. He couldn't make an affirmative commitment about the price yet. I was under the impression that he would be willing to settle for the purchase price of the land if he was going to be reimbursed for his assets (shed, 50-60 trees, 100 bushes). [...] For social reasons I don't think it right to apply more pressure on Elßner. Elßner is willing to sell, but he is reliant on the property as additional income and surtenance.<sup>45</sup>

The author not only acknowledges the importance of the land to its owner, but he reasonably understands his reluctance to sell such an asset. He also seems sensitive to Elßner's concerns to come to a mutually beneficial agreement. After discussing several other prospective sellers in a similar way, however, the author's tone changes drastically towards the end of the document:

Mr Saupe acted with hostility towards the enterprise continually. It might be that he could be persuaded to sell against a much higher price. But, as he must have realised that we will not go above the offered price, he tried to show the property as indispensable to him under all circumstances. The farmer Hermann Kluge took up a similar position. He justified his negative attitude by claiming that he wanted to build his farm house on the property because the town would be too crowded. [...] With Saupe and Kluge only the way of compulsory acquisition is likely to lead to success. I will immediately familiarise myself with the statutory provisions, concerning compulsory acquisition, in order to assist you as quickly as possible with the purchase of the property. Heil Hitler!<sup>46</sup>

It has already been established at the beginning of the text that a landowner's reluctance to sell does not necessarily condemn them in the eyes of the author – he understands Elßner's concerns about losing additional income and suggests measures to help him. When discussing Saupe, however, the author states that Saupe only “tried to show the property as indispensable” to himself and that he was actually “hostile” the entire time; the same applied to Kluge, who simply had “a

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<sup>45</sup> Idem.

<sup>46</sup> Idem.



negative attitude". Because they are hostile and negative, the author holds no objections to proceeding with pressure and suggests moving on with compulsory acquisition. One day later, Saupe and Kluge were invited to attend a meeting with the HASAG director von Grambusch and the first mayor Sachse. While Kluge agreed to the sale during this meeting, Saupe remained unwilling to do so despite both the mayor and the director emphasising the "importance of the matter".<sup>47</sup> Only in a later meeting Saupe agreed to the sale and asked to be reimbursed for his trees in addition to the sale price of the land. This was agreed, and Saupe was even offered a job in the new factory, which he, as the author succinctly notes, declined due to his ill health.<sup>48</sup> From the first approach to the agreed sale, the whole transaction seems to have taken less than three weeks: the case of Saupe ends with a five-page document, provided by the pomicultural inspector Sante, listing all fruit trees and scrubs on Saupe's allotment, alongside with their age, variety, and worth.<sup>49</sup>

### **Lilac, Nurture, Family**

Aside from the impressive display of joint effort and pressure by the private HASAG company and the city representatives, I was intrigued in particular by the mysteriously difficult Saupe presented in these documents – this stubborn, 'hostile' presence who did not want to work in the factory and did not want to sell his orchard.

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<sup>47</sup> Protocol about the continued negotiations under attendance of von Grambusch. "No subject," Meuselwitz, 04. October 1938. *Ankauf von Grundstücken für die Hasag durch die Stadtverwaltung Meuselwitz 1938-1940.148/3*. Stadtarchiv Meuselwitz.

<sup>48</sup> Protocol. "Betr: Grundstücksankauf von Stellmacher Saupe," Meuselwitz, 07. October 1938. *Ankauf von Grundstücken für die Hasag durch die Stadtverwaltung Meuselwitz 1938-1940.148/3*. Stadtarchiv Meuselwitz.

<sup>49</sup> Evaluation. E[mil] Sante, "Abschätzung der Obstbäume," Altenburg, 13. October 1938. *Ankauf von Grundstücken für die Hasag durch die Stadtverwaltung Meuselwitz 1938-1940.148/3*. Stadtarchiv Meuselwitz.

He eventually became reimagined as Lore's and Else's communist father (F/L, 16-21, 67-72). The conflict between Else and her father impacts on all of her relationships, from her sister Lore, whom she wishes to protect, but also resents for being their father's favourite (F/L, 102-104), to Baumann, on whom she is far more reliant than she would admit. Most importantly, however, whenever Lore questions Else's involvement in the National Socialist state, it constitutes an existential threat to Else, evoking their father's violence and anger towards her, and thus causing her to violently reaffirm her decision (F/L, 32-36, 88-90).

Since there is little information about the female SS-auxillaries who had served at Altenburg and Meuselwitz, I looked for biographies of better known female concentration camp guards. This father-daughter relationship is partially based on the notorious SS-*Aufseherin* Irma Grese (1923-1945), who had worked at Ravensbrück, Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen, and was renowned for her violence. She was one of the few women who had been sentenced to death by the allies, and was executed in December 1945.<sup>50</sup> Irma Grese came from a family of dairy farmers, and her father was strongly opposed to his children taking part in any National Socialist organisations, a prohibition that Grese already circumnavigated as a child, and in her late teens, when she got a job as a guard in Ravensbrück:

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<sup>50</sup> Wendy A. Sarti, *Women + Nazis: Perpetrators of Genocide and Other Crimes during Hitler's Regime, 1933-1945* (Bethesda: Academia Press, 2011), 109-111.

Several SS-auxiliaries in Altenburg, like the notorious Elisabeth Ruppert, had also been stationed in Auschwitz prior to their deployment in Altenburg. Seidel, "Altenburg (Frauen)", 364. A Jewish female survivor of Auschwitz indicts Ruppert of participation in selections in Auschwitz in her testimony: "They selected the sick and the weak but it also happened that they selected also the pretty ones and all of them went to the crematorium. Dr Mengele, and SS women Drechsler, Ruppert, Grese – who was hanged already before the end – and Mandel did the selections.", K. M., "Protocol Nr. 2279", testimony given by a female Jewish survivor of Auschwitz. Budapest. 03. August 1945. DEGOB, accessed 03. December 2014, <http://degob.org/index.php?showjk=2279>.

Albert Grese, once he found out where his daughter Irma was working in 1943, had a terrible fight with his daughter, and may have beat her for taking part in SS activities. Helen Grese revealed that her sister never returned to the family home after this fight.<sup>51</sup>

While the memory of their childhood is thus painful and conflicted to Else, their deceased father and childhood memories of him and their garden are a source of moral guidance and strength to Lore, who not only notices the changes to their 'orchard' and that their father would not have approved of them ((F/L, 32-36, 102-104), but also still lives in their family home and tries to hold on to a sense of morality passed on to her by her father (F/L, 19, 32-36). In her final argument with Else, Lore notes that "I wish I hadn't interfered back then. Should have let him beat you to death" (F/L, 79), referring to Else's most traumatic encounter with their father, and retrospectively siding with him against her sister. Lore gains a sense of justification and moral superiority through her connectedness with their father, as she is the one who is comfortable with their past, their garden, their overbearing parent – the 'good girl' and, in a sense, the 'good German'. When Else replies "And what did you do? You just watched! You just watched and kept your mouth shut like all the other cowards! You're no better than us, princess! You're as much of a coward as everyone else!" (F/L, 119), she is not simply lashing out at her sister, but also tries to unmask Lore's hypocrisy not only during Else's own punishment at the hands of her father, but during the public execution of Andrey, hinting at Lore's self-satisfied passivity that allows her to remain a bystander.

The previous existence of the forced labour complex in Meuselwitz as orchards and agricultural land also profoundly affected the imagery of my play. I encountered the

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<sup>51</sup> Sarti, *Women + Nazis*, 111.

sites in both towns fuelled by my knowledge about their violent past. While reading the report of pomicultural inspector Sante, the Meuselwitz area suddenly gained yet another layer. Fruit trees and berry shrubs, meticulously counted and valued, the importance that the orchards held for people like Saupe, Kluge, and Elßner, and the image of a blooming, thriving orchard uprooted to make space for an ammunition factory and later camp barracks, resonated strongly with me. The presence of the past incarnation of the camp as an orchard is constantly invoked on stage, be it through dialogue or imagery. In particular both Lore / the Old Woman and Clara have a strong connection to their childhood gardens and (white-washed) memories of a better, more innocent time, from which they draw their moral compass and strength. For Lore, these are of her father and the developing notion that she, in contrast to her sister, shows solidarity with the oppressed; for Clara, of her grandmother, whom she presumes to be Lore, a 'good German' and fighter against injustice, with whom Clara fully identifies. While they both tend to have these notions of a clear and uncompromised moral existence, the garden is never uncompromised. It is where Else was beaten by her father (F/L, 102-104), it is where Clara's grandmother Else takes part in Andrey's murder and Lore watches (F/L, 113-118). On stage, the different layers of time overlap and blend, everything is connected, which is most clearly demonstrated in the use of lilac in the play.

Towards the end of Sante's document, two lilac bushes are listed. Amongst all the apple, pear and cherry trees, the currants, raspberries and strawberries, they stood out to me as useless things in a practical sense, but nevertheless things of beauty. Lilac and lilac branches thus became an integral part of the interior image

system of my play. According to Robert McKee, an interior image system, a repeated category of imagery that is intrinsic to the world of a film, subtly supports the plot and communicates with the audience on an unconscious level. McKee cites two examples of this use of imagery in film. The primary interior image system of the film *Chinatown* (1974) consists of various motives concerning seeing/not seeing: Windows, mirrors, cameras, (broken) glasses, which, in their combination, add to the film's theme of searching 'evil' in the wrong direction, looking in the wrong way. In *Les Diaboliques* (1955), a constantly repeated image system, according to McKee, is water: puddles, bath tub, fish, water drops at the window, discussions about holidays at the sea. Through constant repetition, water becomes intrinsically connected with the 'diabolical' theme of death, murder, terror.<sup>52</sup>

Similar to water in the second example, in my play the image system revolves around nature and nurture – the Old Woman's evocations of the allotment, the trees – and both Sulaika's (imaginary) and Andrea's (material) attempts at nurturing and feeding their loved ones to thwart off pain and fear. While 'nature' versus 'nurture' also in a way reflects back on National Socialist racist ideology, it is mostly linked to both 'food talk' amongst (female) concentration camp inmates, as well as food, cooking and nurturing as themes of feminist literature.<sup>53</sup> Trees, food, and nurture are all interconnected, and lilac is a constant presence within this image system, both

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<sup>52</sup> Robert McKee, *Story – Substance, structure, style, and the principles of screenwriting* (London: Methuen, 1998), 400-408.

<sup>53</sup> See also Myrna Goldenberg, "Food Talk: Gendered Responses to Hunger in the Concentration Camps", in *Experience and Expression: Women, the Nazis, and the Holocaust*, ed. Elizabeth R. Baer and Myrna Goldenberg (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 161-179; Harriet Blodgett, "Mimesis and Metaphor: Food Imagery in International Twentieth-Century Women's Writing", *Papers on Language and Literature* 40, no 3 (Summer 2004): 260-295. Sue-Ellen Case discusses the biological insinuations of the term 'nurture' critically, Sue-Ellen Case [1988], *Feminism and Theatre* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 54-56.

physically on stage, as well as in the dialogue, used in connection with a variety of themes. Lilac plays an important role in the blossoming relationship between Lore and Andrey as an image of hope and endurance (F/L, 55-58, 97-101) and is a vital element in Clara's childhood memories of her grandmother (F/L, 7-9). In both cases it is connected with a sense of belonging, of closeness, affection and nurture, of a safe space in times of trouble, be it the grandmother's garden for the child Clara during her mother's absence or Lore's and Andrey's reminder of their mutual humanity in inhumane times. On another plane, Lore begs Andrey to postpone his escape until the lilac in her garden is in flower as it "covers everything" (F/L, 90,106), in the contemporary geography of the play, lilac bushes now grow on the site of Andrey's execution at the former allotment, effectively covering up this specific site of violence and the memory of it (F/L, 1. PROLOGUE). Lore as Old Woman wanders the stage endlessly, evoking the lost lilac, but whether she mourns her murdered lover, the violence that had taken place and her own complicity in it, or rather her long-gone childhood, remains unanswered (F/L, 31). In the process of the play, the image of the lilac consequently develops into a reminder that the retreat into private life or bliss offers no safeguard nor consolation. Thus, nurture is also intrinsically connected to covering up, to silencing – be it Lore who wrongly reassures Andrey (F/L, 105-106), Sulaika who smooths Aniko's attempts at addressing her imminent death (F/L, 79) or Andrea, who silences her own pain and daughter's questions with obsessive feeding (F/L, 9-11, 72-73, 79). While all of these characters face different struggles on highly different scales, many of them also resort, in some ways, to similar coping strategies. Finally, in the last scene of the play, lilac branches are

placed on the executed bodies of Sulaika and Pepik, an early symbol of hope now both serving as a memorial to the murdered as well as covering and silencing them (F/L, 128).

## **2. Violent Spaces in Meuselwitz: “I have no objections...”**

In 1938 the negotiations taking place in Meuselwitz between the town council, the HASAG, and the private landowners were intended with an eye to expansion of the factory grounds and new constructions for the factory. The cooperation between the HASAG, the municipal authorities and other, privately owned businesses, did not stop there, however, and, with the outbreak of the war, this cooperation quickly came to include human beings as well.

In November 1940, a council employee made a note about a conversation he had with a HASAG official regarding accommodation and board for 12 prisoners of war who had been transferred from the Employment Office Altenburg to do building works in Meuselwitz. Those PoWs were accommodated and fed by the HASAG, for a charge of 1,50RM for board. During the conversation, the HASAG employee was unable to recall what had been charged for accommodation. It was also noted that security had to be provided by the company, and that another building company, Flentje & Helm, had been informed about those proceedings.<sup>54</sup> Subsequently, the HASAG invoiced the first mayor of Meuselwitz in January 1941 for a total of 747.00RM for the board of the 12 PoWs, provided by the town, and security guards,

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<sup>54</sup> Note about board and accommodation for PoWs. “Vermerk”, Meuselwitz, 24. November 1940, *Originale Pläne Baracken HASAG für 1300 Häftlinge*. 150/8, Stadtarchiv Meuselwitz.

provided by the HASAG.<sup>55</sup> Another invoice, dated from November 1942, charges the town with a total of 671,58RM for the subsequent use of PoWs provided to the company by the municipal powers:

Subject: Meuselwitz, cession of prisoners of war, list of our correspondence of 18.11.1942  
12 men from 15.11.40 – 31.12.41  
6 “ from 15. 4.42 – 11. 5.42  
2 “ from 12. 5.42. – 10. 6.42<sup>56</sup>

While this correspondence indicates a certain amount of confusion concerning who was to pay for what and who was to provide which services, as well as some backlog regarding payment, in particular the second invoice shows quite clearly that the involved parties were more than willing to utilise the arrangement they had come to over the course of several years. The extent of said confusion and backlog is evident in a letter from Kurt Helm, of the Flentje & Helm building company, writing to the first mayor in Meuselwitz in December 1942 in response to a letter from the mayor sent a couple of days after the mayor's office had received the second invoice from HASAG quoted above. After apologising for his late reply, Kurt Helm comments on the issue of the reimbursement of expenses accompanying the use of the PoWs.

With regards to the matter itself, I'd like to comment that I paid 1,50RM and have only been reimbursed 1,00RM, and thus there are already additional expenses of 0,50RM. In the meantime, all invoices are of course settled, and it is quite impossible for me to issue a subsequent billing after 2 years. To simplify matters, I therefore suggest that you directly balance the amount and thus save me the trouble of issuing you an invoice incl. 2,04% VAT. Perhaps you'll write to this effect to the Hasag as well? Heil Hitler!<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Correspondence and invoice. HASAG to First Mayor, "Betr: Verpflegung der Gefangenen und Wachposten in den Monaten NOVEMBER und DEZEMBER 1940," Meuselwitz, 10. January 1941, *Originale Pläne Baracken HASAG für 1300 Häftlinge*. 150/8, Stadtarchiv Meuselwitz.

<sup>56</sup> Correspondence and invoice. Building-site Office HASAG to Town Council, "Betr.: Meuselwitz, Überlassung von Kriegsgefangenen Aufstellung unserer Briefe vom 18.11.1942," Meuselwitz, 18 / 21. November 1942, *Originale Pläne Baracken HASAG für 1300 Häftlinge*. 150/8, Stadtarchiv Meuselwitz.

<sup>57</sup> Correspondence. Kurt Helm to 1st Mayor of Meuselwitz, "Betr.: Überlassung von Kriegsgefangenen," Meuselwitz, 15. December 1942, *Originale Pläne Baracken HASAG für 1300 Häftlinge*. 150/8, Stadtarchiv Meuselwitz.



Were it not for the subject heading, one would never be able to tell that the negotiations were about human beings. This is true for most of the correspondence, but particularly notable in Kurt Helm's short note, which simply discusses the "matter itself". The letter points to an almost cordial relationship between the concerned parties. While a delay in payment of more than two years might cause anxiety and frustration elsewhere, this correspondence indicates that such matters could be resolved rather informally with a direct payment excluding VAT and a notification of that action from the mayor to the HASAG.

### **"Only Provisional..."**

Some indication about what the prisoners of war might have been building for the HASAG in the first place can be found in another series of letters between the local building-site office HASAG, the mayor's office and the Thuringian Labour Inspectorate situated in Gera. In September 1941, the HASAG building-site office wrote to the first mayor regarding construction works in one of its buildings:

As you already know, we have made arrangements in Building W on our new site to accommodate the foreign workforce. For this reason, we have had to install 12cm wide lightweight stone walls, to separate the dormitories and common rooms. According to regulations, we'd have to submit new records for those fixtures to the building inspection department. However, since the installed walls, which are only provisional, will be removed again immediately after the discharge of the foreign workforce, we ask you to relinquish the submission of the graphical documentation etc, and to be content with this written notification. Heil Hitler!<sup>58</sup>

The writer clearly references a previous conversation or exchange with the mayor about these new constructions, and, with the walls already installed, the question at hand is simply whether or not additional and official documentation could be forgone.

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<sup>58</sup> Correspondence. Building-site office HASAG at the construction site Meuselwitz to 1st Mayor of Meuselwitz, "Betr.: Neues Werk Meuselwitz, W Gebäude," Meuselwitz, 17. September 1941, *HASAG Neues Werk 1939-1945 222/1*, Stadtarchiv Meuselwitz.

The writer then emphasises twice the provisional nature of these building works, which are to be dismantled as soon as the “foreign workforce” is discharged again, albeit leaving it completely open as to when that might be.

After receiving this request, the first mayor’s office immediately wrote to the Labour Inspectorate in Gera, summarising the request and asking for their opinion on the matter<sup>59</sup> and less than two weeks after receiving the initial enquiry, the mayor could write to the HASAG with a positive answer:

Since these fixtures, as you mention, are to be considered as only provisional, I have no objections. However, the regulations of the federal building inspectorate ordinance are to be meticulously observed and followed. The fixtures are to be removed as soon as the discharge of the foreign workforce takes place or the foreign workforce is accommodated elsewhere.<sup>60</sup>

The mayor apparently went out of his way to make the procedures easier for the HASAG company. By writing to the Inspectorate in Gera on their behalf and by giving them this positive reply, he made sure that the company did not have to follow the usual regulations. There are “no objections” to HASAG forgoing regulations, to their settling workers in “provisional” structures, and to the duration of this provision remaining entirely unclear.

When objections were voiced, for example in 1944, when the various town offices received copies of correspondence between the HASAG and different offices in Berlin regarding the construction of solid accommodation for 1,300 people – essentially, the barracks for the satellite camp – these objections were solely with regards to the adherence to regulations and usually of a rather constructive nature.

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<sup>59</sup> Correspondence. No addressor to Thuringia Labour Inspectorate Gera, “Betrifft Hasag – Neues Werk Meuselwitz,” 20. September 1941, *HASAG Neues Werk 1939-1945 222/1*, Stadtarchiv Meuselwitz.

<sup>60</sup> Correspondence. No addressor to Hugo Schneider A–G. Meuselwitz, “Betrifft Neues Werk Meuselwitz, – W Gebäude” 30. September 1941. *HASAG Neues Werk 1939-1945 222/1*, Stadtarchiv Meuselwitz.

The Meuselwitz department of building regulations, for example, received a copy of a letter from the department of aerial defence in Weimar to the *Luftgaukommando* in Berlin in January 1944, in which it is outlined that the HASAG asked to be exempt from the '500m regulation' to be able to put the barracks closer to the factory than usually allowed. The writer from the department of aerial defense specifies that "[o]ur duty-bound objections are solely due the fact that a large barrack camp will be put directly next to the large factory" and asks for clarification from the office in Berlin regarding whether or not the HASAG should be exempted from this rule.<sup>61</sup> Four days later, a municipal employee of the town of Meuselwitz – presumably from the department of building regulations – replies to the original writer in Weimar, echoing his concerns about the close proximity of barracks and factory.

As it is a matter of the construction of a large number of living quarters on the currently empty factory site, I have, due to the unavoidable agglomeration, great objections concerning fire safety in the case of catastrophe. In my opinion, the Hasag also has property beyond the enclosure which would be suitable for barracks. Even if this might not achieve a 500m distance either and the entirety of the barracks could not be accommodated there, it would at least soften the agglomeration on the factory premises.<sup>62</sup>

Again, it is not out of the question that the HASAG could circumnavigate building regulations; just a matter of the extent of that circumnavigation, and again, the Meuselwitz office proved to be willing to contribute constructively to solving the issues at hand, even though, in this case, it actually shared some of the concerns about fire safety and safety distances. These exchanges make it obvious, I think, that the city officials did not grudgingly admit the introduction of forced labour in their

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<sup>61</sup> Correspondence. Department of aerial defence to *Luftgaukommando*, "Fa. Hugo Schneider AG., Meuselwitz – Massiveunterkünfte für 1 300 Personen," Weimar, 08. January 1944, *HASAG Neues Werk 1939-1945 222/1*, Stadtarchiv Meuselwitz.

<sup>62</sup> Correspondence. No addressor to Department of aerial defence, "Massivunterkünfte – Firma Hugo Schneider AG., Werk Meuselwitz," 12. January 1944, *HASAG Neues Werk 1939-1945 222/1*, Stadtarchiv Meuselwitz.

community or were merely silently complicit in it. Rather, they were active parties in the establishment of not only the ammunitions factory in the first place, but also in the expansion of the HASAG through the use of forced labour by PoWs; in the continuous process of introducing forced labourers and, eventually, concentration camp prisoners into the local workforce.

In my play, this active involvement is most evident in the figure of the mayor, who enthusiastically praises the new development in the factory grounds (F/L, 11-16. He describes a National Socialist-capitalist worker's utopia, which is not there, to the audience, while the Old Woman simultaneously evokes the 'before' – the trees and shrubs of the orchard – which are also not there anymore – and Clara mourns her memories of the place intertwined with her dead grandmother – not there anymore. Who is there, on stage to be seen, but not mentioned by any of the three, are Andrey and Pepik, Sulaika and Aniko, Adzi and Halina: the concentration camp prisoners. After his speech, the mayor goes on to sit in the audience for the duration of the play, occasionally interacting with Baumann or responding to scenes, but above all, always actively watching the proceedings (F/L, 16, 26, 47-49, 79). As a matter of fact, the act of watching is of prime importance throughout the play: Andrea watches the proceedings from her kitchen, and actors not actively in a scene are invited to remain on stage to participate in this act of watching as well (F/L, "Author's Note"). The theme of the visibility of the camp within in the community is therefore less directly discussed in the play, but rather integrated in its form. Everyone is always watching, no one – not the mayor, nor Lore, not even the second-generation

like Andrea – is outside of the camp system, just like the camp was not apart from but a part of the community.

### **Return to Normality**

The complicity of the town officials and local community becomes even more evident in the language and processes following the occupation of Meuselwitz by US American troops on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 1945. On the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 1945, a meeting took place between the first town mayor, several managing directors from local industries, and the American commandant. The protocol of the meeting suggests a strong focus on the quick reconstruction of the local economy and on the need for a good working relationship between the occupying forces and the local population. Regardless of whether or not the German note-taker's perception of the meeting was tainted by wishful thinking, it is telling that the matter of the satellite camp and the issue of forced labour are not mentioned in the protocol at all – even though the problem of the 'foreign' population in Meuselwitz was comprehensively addressed by the American commandant:

1. The entire economic life of the town of Meuselwitz and the industry shall continue again as in normal times. Everyone must be returned to their workplaces.
2. The greatest problem is with the foreigners. If they want to eat, they need to work, but under the command of the Americans. If difficulties occur with the foreigners, the businesses, agriculture etc in question should turn to the commandant, who will bring them to reason. He will try to remove the foreigners, mainly the Russians and Poles. But it will take a little while. Once the Russians and Americans meet in the war situations, it will happen very quickly. American policy: The Germans shall be treated well. They will do everything to establish good relations. This should be in our interest, too. Meuselwitz will return to the production of 1934, 35 and 36. This won't be possible for all companies, e.g. Hasag, but with all the others, everything shall be made right as quickly as possible. [...]
4. The Germans from the West and East are the last, who will be returned, first it's the foreigners' turn.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Minutes of Meeting between town representatives and US American Commandant. Witting, "(no subject)," April 24, 1945, Meuselwitz. *Einmarsch der amerikanischen Besatzungstruppen. 7Nr1*, Stadtarchiv Meuselwitz.

The main objective everyone seems to be able to agree on is the return to normality of town and industry, and amicable relations between the Germans and the Americans, a point that is reiterated at various other moments in the minutes as well. “As in normal times”, production – with the notable exception of the HASAG – shall continue, everyone shall resume their work, the Germans shall be treated well, and the “foreigners” have to work if they want to eat. Even the German refugees shall be returned to where they came from, as soon as the “foreigners” had been got rid of. The brevity with which the repatriation of the Russian and Polish “foreigners” is noted down is reminiscent of the provisional nature of the accommodation built by HASAG a few years earlier – now that the “foreigners” are no longer needed, they must go. Those “foreigners” were forced labourers, who had been lured or coerced into working for the HASAG, and, in the case of the Russian, Polish and other Eastern Europeans, often treated little better than the concentration camp prisoners.<sup>64</sup> The population of the concentration camp in Meuselwitz had been ‘evacuated’ in open freight trains in April 1945 towards Czechoslovakia and forced on an ensuing death march. Some of them were liberated by Soviet troops.<sup>65</sup> Apparently, their ordeal – the remaining empty barracks, the reason for the presence of the “foreigners”, their right to compensation or justice – were not discussed at this meeting of town representatives, industry, and occupying forces, or, if they were discussed, the note-taker did not consider it necessary to record this discussion. The reiteration that the American commander would prevent “foreigners” from causing “difficulties” for local

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<sup>64</sup> See Spoerer, *Zwangsarbeit unter dem Hakenkreuz*, 14-18, 90-116 for a differentiation of the different ‘categories’ of forced labourers, including PoWs; Seidel, “Meuselwitz (Frauen)”, 525. Schellenberg, “Meuselwitz (Männer)”, 529.

<sup>65</sup> Seidel, “Meuselwitz (Frauen)”, 525. Schellenberg, “Meuselwitz (Männer)”, 529.

businesses and that they would have to work in order to eat indicates that any attempts at redistribution or compensation as a means of justice would not only not be tolerated, but that such attempts would also not be read as justified compensation, but as looting and trouble-making. The assertion that “everything will be made alright as quickly as possible” is clearly directed solely at the Germans present and making it right does not, at least in these minutes, include taking responsibility for the damage and pain caused by the community represented at the meeting. Like the provisional fixtures in the forced labourers’ accommodation, the labourers’ presence in the town is considered something non-permanent, an abnormal occurrence that can be simply removed in order to return to ‘normal times’ (see also F/L, 120).<sup>66</sup>

A further indication about the involvement of the community in the maintenance of the “foreigners” forced to work for the HASAG in Meuselwitz, and the relative ease with which members of this community regarded their complicity even after the collapse of the system that allowed their collusion, can be found in a flood of invoices sent to the HASAG during the summer and autumn of 1945. From the local bank branch to butchers and grocers, companies that attempted to invoice the HASAG for rent and food deliveries to the “foreigners’ kitchen” (*Ausländerküche*) all received a similar, negative reply:

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<sup>66</sup> Spoerer discusses the complications faced with the presence of millions of DPs, including lynchings and the German fear of repercussions, as well as the complicated situation of many returning forced labourers in their home countries, Spoerer, *Zwangsarbeit unterm Hakenkreuz*, 209-215.

Since the invasion of the allied troops, we don't have the right of disposal over the in our former foreigners' camps accommodated foreigners. As the foreigners' camps were ordered to be maintained by the military government and stoked with foreigners from other areas as well, the costs for the accommodation of the foreigners on behalf of the military government are to be absorbed by the town council Meuselwitz, and will be settled accordingly with the military government. Thus, we have to ask you to send your invoices to the foreigners' kitchen from the time after the invasion of the allied troops to the town council of Meuselwitz, which will conduct payment. According to our documentation, this regards your invoices ... which we return attached with the request to re-invoice your deliveries until the 13.4.1945 anew.<sup>67</sup>

This process is, in itself, rather astounding. In September 1945, almost six months after Germany's loss of the war and the emergence of the crimes committed at the hand of the Germans, several local business people, who delivered their goods to the kitchen of a satellite concentration camp in their near proximity, list, detail, and invoice for their dealings with this camp. The company responsible for the camp acknowledges the invoices, discusses the matter of the camp, and replies to the senders in writing that they "don't have the right of disposal" over the human beings, previously held in their camp, anymore, due to the unfortunate event of the military occupation. The HASAG discerns that they are willing to pay for any bills and deliveries until the date of the US American invasion in Meuselwitz. However, any deliveries to the camp afterwards, used by the US American and later Soviet troops to house former forced labourers and concentration camp prisoners until their repatriation, are no longer the HASAG's responsibility because the company lost their 'right of disposal'. Those invoices are to be forwarded to the town council – but the responsibility to pay for accommodating and nourishing the people who have been exploited and abused within the council's municipal area does not actually reside with them either:

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<sup>67</sup> Correspondence. HASAG to Kurt Löffler, Fleischerei, "(no subject)," 20. September 1945. Meuselwitz. *Hasag Abwicklung Schriftverkehr mit Firmen 1945*. 149\_3, Stadtarchiv Meuselwitz.



The invoices are to be paid for by the military troops who liberated the camps and occupied the town – or rather, their successors, since Meuselwitz was invaded by Americans, but fell under Soviet rule in July 1945.<sup>68</sup>

This exchange shows how little had changed from that first meeting in April with the US commander. The “foreigners” were still the greatest problem, and a hindrance to the return to normality. No one was willing to assume any responsibility for the fallout of their actions. Local businesses made money from trade with the camp, the town council encouraged and enabled the establishment and running of the camp, yet the responsibility to feed the survivors fell to the occupiers. There is little to indicate that the existence of the camp and the presence of forced labour in Meuselwitz was at least by now viewed as something reprehensible. Rather, the sense of victimisation that was already present in the protocol, seems to have increased. In the protocol, the “foreigners” posed a threatening presence from which the commandant had to protect the Germans – and not the other way around – and the general situation was one in which the “foreigners” had to earn their right to eat but the Germans were promised to be treated well. In their post-war correspondence, the HASAG all but openly laments that they lost their right to exploit due to the often repeated “invasion of the allied troops”, while one can only imagine the continuous frustration of the upright business men awaiting in vain the repayment of their trade with the concentration camp kitchens.

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<sup>68</sup> A similar situation unfolded in Taucha, near Leipzig, when the few remaining inmates of the satellite concentration camp asked for food, clothes, and accommodation. The town’s mayor wrote to the HASAG requesting their contribution, and also received a negative reply, Brigitte Reiche, “Zur medizinischen Betreuung und sozialen Lage der im Raum Leipzig während des Zweiten Weltkrieges eingesetzten ausländischen Zwangsarbeiter, Kriegsgefangenen und KZ-Häftlinge”, dissertation (Leipzig: Karl-Marx-Universität, 1990), 99-100.

The pettiness of the exchange brings to mind Hannah Arendt's concept of the "banality of evil", proposed in the subtitle of her account of Eichmann's trial in Jerusalem.<sup>69</sup> The trial itself as well as Arendt's discussion of it allowed for a new understanding with regards to individual responsibility and complicity. Eichmann was not directly involved with physical atrocity, yet his responsibility for the extermination of the European Jews is unquestionable. His 'normality', his complete refusal to acknowledge any actual wrongdoing on his part as he had only been following orders, and the pride he took in his dutifulness<sup>70</sup> – all of these attributes are evident in the invoices to the HASAG or the council employees balancing numbers regarding the accommodation of forced labourers, and all of these attributes contributed to the commitment of those atrocities on the community's very door step.

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The camps in Meuselwitz and Altenburg were in close enough proximity to the towns' residential areas to be able to be seen and known about. One just needs to refer back to Lenka Berlin's statement about that spring day: "Altenburg was in the middle of a town and we were able to see the homes nearby...".<sup>71</sup> This gaze, however, goes two ways: If she could see them, they could see her. In both Altenburg and Meuselwitz, the camps were in close proximity to residential areas, public roads, the

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<sup>69</sup> See also Hannah Arendt's discussion on the controversy caused by the title in the second edition of *Eichmann*, Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem – Ein Bericht von der Banalität des Bösen*, trans. Birgitte Granzow, (Munich: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1964), 12-19.

<sup>70</sup> Idem, 52-54, 173-189.

<sup>71</sup> Berlin, Interview 19673, VHA.

train stations and public train tracks.<sup>72</sup> Fred Schwarz mentions streams of Sunday afternoon walkers passing the camp's fences in Meuselwitz – possibly on their way to the allotments bordering on the camps – and Zsuzsanna Dallos remembers going on walks on the different sides of the Altenburg camp fence with a Czech forced labourer.<sup>73</sup> The approximately 6,000 German employees of the HASAG factory in Altenburg and the over 1,000 employees of the factory in Meuselwitz<sup>74</sup> did not only pass the camps on their way to work, but they also worked side by side with the camp inmates, functioning as their overseers, foremen, fellow workers. In both towns, it was common to force the camp inmates to work in street maintenance and building works, as well as in removing or defusing bombs.<sup>75</sup> The concentration camp inmates were a visible reality in Altenburg and Meuselwitz, and the violence they were subjected to in the camps and their work place was also visible.

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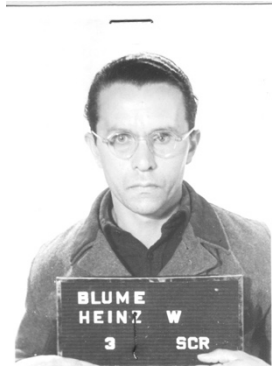
<sup>72</sup> See also Anna Friebe's assessment of the public gaze in Meuselwitz, Anna Friebe, "Die HASAG und das Konzentrationslager in Meuselwitz", in Brzęcka-Kosk, *Als Mädchen im KZ Meuselwitz*, 104-105. Alexandra Klei also points out that in areas where communities have memorials for satellite camps, these usually fail to "clarify the relations of the camps to and within the community. Places that had significance for the camp are neither represented nor marked. [...] These relationships are not represented in the public sphere; it can therefore be assumed that they play no role in the understanding of the significance of such a camp within the community", (211), for the whole discussion, see Klei, *Gestalt der Erinnerung*, 210-212.

<sup>73</sup> Schwarz, *Züge auf falschem Gleis*, 267, 280, 287; Zsuzsanna Dallos, Interview 21189, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, accessed 17. February 2015.

<sup>74</sup> Schilling, *Thüringen 1933-1935*, 118; Schellenberg, "Meuselwitz (Männer)", 529.

<sup>75</sup> Schwarz, *Züge auf falschem Gleis*, 291-292; Erhard Heine Haselbach, "Faschistische Verbrechen und antifaschistischer Widerstand: Konkrete Beispiele aus dem Kreis Altenburg", undated, presumably between 1988-1990, Buchenwaldarchiv (BwA), [Altenburg und Meuselwitz: 62-59-4], 50 (Image 28).

### 3. Staged Violence in Meuselwitz: “At least they didn’t clap.”



*Plate 5. Heinz Blume, Dachau, 24.10. 1947. Photographer: Unknown (Signal Corps). Sammlung Gedenkstätte Buchenwald-Archiv [027-01.020].*

Although there is relatively little known about him, the man shown in the picture above – or rather, his reported activity – was one of the main inspirations for my character of Baumann. SS officer Heinz Blume was first camp commander and then later labour allocation leader at the camp in Meuselwitz. In 1947, the US military took him to court as part of the Buchenwald trials. Blume was originally found guilty on three charges, but one year later, his case was reviewed and the death sentence commuted to imprisonment for three years.

One of the charges against Blume was that he did

wrongfully encourage, aid, abet and participate in the killing of approximately three non-German nationals, inmates of Meuselwitz Concentration Camp, who were then in the custody of the then German Reich, the exact names and numbers of such persons being unknown.<sup>76</sup>

This charge is the only one Blume was actually found to be guilty of in the re-trial of his case in 1948, albeit with the amendment that he only “committed assault upon”, rather than took part “in the killing of” prisoners. Blume’s testimony and defence against the charges was recorded as follows:

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<sup>76</sup> Deputy Judge Advocate’s Office – 7708 War Crimes Group – European Command – APO 407 – United States v. Heinz Blume – Case No. 000 Buchenwald-7, Dachau. 01. March 1948.

The accused testified that he never shot any inmates in Meuselwitz; that he beat inmates who violated the rules of the camp; that the inmates were informed orally on the roll call square as well as by posters on the bulletin board that they would be punished by beatings and the cutting of their hair for violations of camp regulations, especially those concerning stealing of food; that the accused did not report these violations to Camp Buchenwald as the inmates then would have been punished more severely; and that in the fall of 1944 five Polish female inmates presented him with a remembrance booklet.<sup>77</sup>

In the American court, it could not be proven whether or not Blume actually killed anyone or aided in the killing of anyone.<sup>78</sup> It was however taken as given that he both aided physical assault upon prisoners and also subjected prisoners to physical violence himself, even though this was allegedly done strictly to the 'rules'. Frank Sim, a Czech Jew imprisoned in Meuselwitz, recalls his own narrow escape from a punishment for violating camp regulations:

[...] I stole maybe a box full of beets, and I tried to bring it to my friends in the factory, but somebody had seen me and reported me... A SS-*Mädel*, SS-woman found these beets and she called down my number and that I will be punished in the evening so I put some paper into my pants, you know, to protect my body, and when this German [foreman Hesselwaage, M.B.] saw, he asked me what I did, and I told him I will be punished, and he asked, what was the name of the SS girl what caught me, and I said this one, and he said, right, and nothing happened, I wasn't punished...<sup>79</sup>

Frank Sim's testimony is remarkable for two reasons: Firstly, it exposes the hypocrisy of Blume's statement through the simple image of a man stuffing paper down his trousers to protect himself from a beating following camp regulations, exposing the

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<sup>77</sup> Idem.

<sup>78</sup> Psachija Adelst recalls in his interview for the VHA that Heinz Blume shot and killed his brother during the death march. He was called to give evidence against Blume in his trial and, during the time of the interview, still assumed that the death sentence had been carried out. Psachija Adelst, Interview 32068 *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, accessed 19. February 2015. John Walker also recalls in his interview that German guards started shooting prisoners at Graslitz and his cousin being hit. John Walker, Interview 4893, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, accessed 20. February 2015.

In her discussion of Blume's trial, Katrin Greiser notes that there seems to have been an unreasonable tendency to disregard the testimonies of survivors in Blume's trial. Greiser, *Die Todesmärsche von Buchenwald*, 435-437.

<sup>79</sup> Frank Sim, Interview 25683, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, accessed 19. February 2015. Nathan Goldlist described a beating he had to endure in Meuselwitz with the words "So, I figured, ok, I can take ten, fifteen, I counted, 15, 16, 20... I thought, maybe he'll stop by 25, he added up at 50. I... I couldn't live." Nathan Goldlist, Interview 18822, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, accessed 19. February 2015.

violence that is masked by those rules and regulations. Secondly, the openness with which all of this violence was negotiated is noteworthy. The entire exchange between Sim and the female SS auxiliary about the impending violence, Sim's reaction to it, his conversation with his German foreman – none of this happened in the camp. It all took part in the factory, and thus the German Hesselwaage was able to step in and intervene. He seemed to have prevented the beating and Frank Sim earlier in the interview accredits Hesselwaage with saving his life because of it.

### **The Kommandant**

Sim does not name the female SS auxiliary, nor does he say who would have administered this punishment – the woman herself or a superior, Blume, Bergmaier or another of the SS staff in the camp. Similarly, Gail Halpert, who was in the Altenburg camp with her three sisters, remembers a haunting encounter with the camp commandant, but was also unable to name him in her interview, on which I based Baumann's reaction to Halina's death (F/L, 45-47):

My younger sister, she got sick [...] and she died. And before they took her away, they had her in the hall, covered, and one of the SS, the *Kommandant*, he said, 'Do you want to go and say goodbye to your sister?', so when I uncovered her to look at her and I was crying very hard... He said 'If you don't stop crying I am going to take you both together. Take you wherever she goes.' So of course, I stopped crying and they took her away. She looked like she was sleeping. See, you can't forget that, it is always with you.<sup>80</sup>

Gail Halpert's sister Esther was fourteen years old when she died, and if the SS officer she remembers was indeed the camp commandant, it must have been Johann Frötsch. Again, the testimony reveals a haunting discrepancy between the rules and regulations, the casual cruelty of a man who first graciously invites a young

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<sup>80</sup> Gail Halpert, Interview 9005, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, accessed 18. February 2015.

woman to grieve for her relative and then threatens her with a violent death when her grief makes him uncomfortable, and the impact these rules had on Gail Halpert, who “can’t forget” the image of her dead sister.<sup>81</sup>

I have accessed approximately one hundred survivor testimonies in various forms. Most survivors remember either witnessing ‘punishments’ or being subjected to them themselves, but they only rarely recall the names of the Germans who assaulted them. Like Sim and Halpert, they usually only account for a SS woman or the *Kommandant*. In a way, this made it easier to streamline all of the SS and camp staff into the two characters of Else and Baumann in my play. But it also shows that maybe the question of who personally or individually committed the atrocity was not the most memorable thing for those survivors, but rather the impact of the atrocity, the violence.

Naming of perpetrators usually takes place in memoirs written for publication, rather than in spoken testimonies, like Fred Schwarz’ autobiography which I will discuss in more detail later on, and in the recollections of Maria Kosk, née Brzęcka

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<sup>81</sup> Another source for the death of Halina in the bombing are of course the reports of the air raid on Meuselwitz, during which many women died, and the impact this scene held for the men who had to clear away the dead bodies. Milos Pick described the moment as such: „After the attack, we carried parts of scorched female bodies in blankets. I remember how six of us at night [...] carried two blankets and a few pieces of arms, legs and other body parts that we collected from the ground and from the smoldering tree trunks. They swam in blood and excrement. Pizi Weiner had a girl in the women’s camp, a Russian partisan whom he had met in the factory where we worked together. Since he worked in the tool shop, he had made her a steel ring. Now he suddenly let go of the corner of his blanket. We told him off, because everything fell out again, we got sick again, and we knew that we would have to pick everything up again. Pizi picked up a woman’s hand with her forearm, dropped to one knee and looked at it in the moonlight. He recognized his ring and swore, ‘Shit, that’s Natasha!’ Then he threw the hand back into the blanket and we moved on. Even today, when I meet young people walking hand in hand, I see Natasha’s hand in front of me and the ring that sparkles in the moonlight.”, Milos Pick, *Verstehen und nicht vergessen: durch Theresienstadt, Auschwitz und Buchenwald-Meuselwitz; jüdische Schicksale in Böhmen 1938-1945*, trans. Liselotte Teltscherová, ed. Erhard Roy Wiehn (Konstanz: Hartung-Gorre, 2000), 45.

(1931-2013), who had been sent to Meuselwitz as a fourteen-year old girl with her mother and sisters. In the first written testimony by Maria Brzęcka-Kosk, a seven-page document held at the Buchenwald Archive, the survivor recalls the following incident taking place in Meuselwitz after a female auxiliary allowed her to rest at the camp during factory work hours:

The commandant ordered me to leave the block, put me against the short side of another building and aimed at me with his pistol. He wanted to shoot me. I looked him straight in the eye and all I could think of was which eye was real and which made of glass. Looking at him like that I approached him. Slowly he lowered the pistol and called the *Lagerälteste*. She had to ask me why I left work on my own account. [...] Once I had explained the whole thing, the commandant led me to another factory hall where I was given day work I could do sitting down [...]<sup>82</sup>

In 1996, when she wrote this testimony for the historians at the Buchenwald Memorial, Maria Brzęcka-Kosk did not recall or include the name of the commander of the Meuselwitz camp, although she vividly recalled his glass eye. However, in a later manuscript, intended for wider dissemination, Brzęcka-Kosk revisits this moment in much more detail. At this point, she had corresponded and worked with the historians of the Buchenwald Memorial and other institutions for several years, and thus it comes as no surprise that she was now able to name the commandant intending to murder her – it was Heinz Blume.<sup>83</sup> Blume is not only named, but also vividly described in the following pages and the entire episode is given much more

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<sup>82</sup> Kosk, "Erinnerungen einer 14jährigen Gefangenen", (BwA), 2-3.

<sup>83</sup> Kosk, *In der Erinnerung bewahrte Zeit*, (BwA), 29 (35); Brzęcka-Kosk, *Als Mädchen im KZ*, 47.



prominence by Brzęcka-Kosk compared to the rather short passage in her earlier testimony.<sup>84</sup>

### **‘716 Until He Was Killed’: The Execution**

The discrepancy between more polished, written memoirs and oral testimonies or testimonies written without publication in mind can also be seen in the following two sources by Michael Flack and Fred Schwarz, who were both prisoners at Meuselwitz, and who both describe an act of extreme violence which they had witnessed. Michael Flack does not name the perpetrators of the recounted episode in his oral testimony, while Fred Schwarz, in his published memoir, takes great pain to name the perpetrators and accomplices. Since they both came to Meuselwitz on the same transport, and the men’s camp population was relatively small, it is not beyond reason to assume that they speak of the same event.<sup>85</sup>

Michael Flack, a Czech Jew, who lived in Poland with his family, came to Meuselwitz via Theresienstadt and Auschwitz. In his videotestimony for the Visual History Archive, he recalls the following incident during his time at Meuselwitz:

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<sup>84</sup> The question of having a name, and being named, the name of the victim, to be remembered, and the name of the perpetrator, to be forgotten or, alternatively, to be prosecuted, is very important. As I said, most survivors in the interviews I accessed could not name the guards and other perpetrators of violence, while their own, and their family members’, naming was of prime importance in the interviews. In contrast, Peter Weiss names the perpetrators, but not the survivors, in *The Investigation*, because the perpetrators had their own names in the camps, while the victims were numbered, not named. In a way, this indicates the shift in memory from ‘perpetrators, victims, bystanders’ to ‘rescuers and survivors’ as indicated by Tim Cole and others, and which I touch upon in “The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly”. The encounter in my play between Lore and Andrey, in which he is astonished that she knows all the prisoners’ names, and mentions that he makes an active effort to learn all the Germans’ names so he can ‘find them later’ is based on this observation (F/L, 51-53), as is the mystery about Andrey’s name (F/L, 51). Else never made an effort to learn names: all the names she knows she is told by Lore in the play. Lore never told her ‘Andrey’s name, and so she does not know it, and Clara remedies this fact by making a name up (F/L, idem).

<sup>85</sup> see also: Schellenberg, “Meuselwitz (Männer)”, 528.

Some of the Germans who worked there were normal people, you know, they weren't supposed to talk to us, but after all, we were human beings, and sometimes we had to ask something and most of them were just like any foreman, you know, it was normal. But some abnormal things happened, and I think one I had to identify because it is deeply in my memory, you know. There was a Russian who used to be a tailor, I knew that because we called him Schneider, and he tried twice to escape and they caught him. First time, I didn't know what they did to him but second time they decided they had to show us "No escape from here". They brought him back. They tied him to a type of lumber. And we had to count aloud. The number of times they hit him until he was dead. 716. We had to watch it. It was a lesson, you know. How they organised it. "You have to show these kinds of people that is does not [do] to try to escape." Anyway, it remained in me. 716 until he was killed.<sup>86</sup>

The impact this organised spectacle of death had on him even fifty years later was evident in his reactions and delivery in the video testimony. Nor is that surprising – he describes, after all, how a man has been beaten to death in front of his eyes, as a form of violent spectacle, a lesson, organised for the on-looking prisoners, who were not only not allowed to look away from this violence, but forced to participate in it to some extent by counting the blows. In Michael Flack's memory, this violent spectacle forms a stark contrast to the normality of the everyday life in the factory and his encounters with the German co-workers. It was a horrendous abnormality, committed by an ominous "they" – it was "they" who brought the Russian back, "they" who tied him up, and "they" who had organised it. The language he uses to describe the perpetrators thus contrasts with the language in which he describes the German factory workers – "some of the Germans", "normal people", "like any foremen" – opposed to a generic, threatening "they". Interestingly, this is not so different from many Germans today, or even several decades ago, speaking about 'the Nazis', as if the perpetrators of atrocity had been a completely distinct group from the rest of the population, or, indeed the notetaker, who, in the spring of 1945, took down the American commander's assurance that soon everything would be as it had been in

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<sup>86</sup> Flack, Interview 17144, VHA.

“normal times”.<sup>87</sup> In Michael Flack’s memory, there is a clear distinction between the normality of human life and the abnormality of atrocity, and he, very graciously, extends this distinction to the German population, too. Some were normal and some committed atrocity. These things were distinct.

In the testimony of Fred Schwarz, there is less distinction between normality and atrocity. Fred Schwarz was an Austrian Jew who emigrated to the Netherlands and came to Meuselwitz via Westerbork, Theresienstadt and Auschwitz. While Michael Flack describes the normality of the factory and the abnormality of the camp, Schwarz includes a third space in his autobiography: the fence.

From a depot, we get brooms, then we line up at the mustering ground for roll call. Shouldering the brooms, as if they were guns in a regiment. The passers-by at the fence laugh. Left, right, and more and more people stop, it’s getting crowded on the other side at the tunnel as well now. The SS officers are offering them a Sunday afternoon entertainment. ‘Halt.’ One of the two comes up to me, probably because I’m close to the fence. He shouts: ‘Don’t act so stupid, you’re already looking like a rabbi as it is!’ The upright German citizens at the fence are laughing because of the ‘rabbi’. Then we march, the brooms still on our shoulders, out of the gate through a cordon of maliciously laughing people.<sup>88</sup>

In Michael Flack’s testimony, there are perpetrators, victims, and ignorant, ‘normal’ people. Fred Schwarz, however, introduces the bystanders, the spectators, the audience. It is clear from Schwarz’ testimony that he does not consider the “maliciously laughing” spectators as innocent or ignorant of the proceedings, but as participating in them. Later in his autobiography, he also describes the punishment of a Russian prisoner:

Roll call, night shift is still there, the Russians just like in the morning. Or are they still standing there? In Auschwitz that would be common, but here? Absolute silence. Bergmeyer [sic] is there, the Kapo is with him. In the centre of the square, a timber trestle, like in a gym. A few buckets are next to it. Then Blume arrives with a SS officer. They’re pulling a Russian along. His mouth is distorted, his nose bloody. So, they caught him after all.

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<sup>87</sup> “If, in the conversations that we have conducted, it is spoken about ‘the Nazis’, it usually has the function to distance oneself or one’s own family from the historical events in the “Third Reich”. [...] ‘The Nazis’ are the others – the ‘counter parts’ to the own grandfather or father.” Welzer et al., *Opa war kein Nazi*, 154-155.

<sup>88</sup> Schwarz, *Züge auf falschem Gleis*, 281.

He is brought to the trestle, when he fights back, they kick him in the backside. Then he is pulled over the trestle and tied to it. Bergmeyer gives the Kapo a knout and with the command, he starts beating. The screams of the victim are putting our teeth on edge. But that is not enough for Bergmeyer. He takes the whip and starts beating himself, he has only one hand, but he beats like he's possessed. A horrible scream, then there is silence. Thank God. But Blume takes the first bucket and empties the water over the poor guy. He lifts his head, wakes up. And immediately, the SS officer starts again, he uses the knout again, just as quickly as his boss. The screams are getting worse and worse, and then the man is silent. Again, a bucket, now it is the Kapo's turn again. The third time, the Russian doesn't react anymore. Untersturmführer Blume and the SS officer leave, laughing. The Kapo holds our roll call, the night shift leaves to the factory with the Volksturm, who watched the whole time with a pale face. The soaking man is left tied to the trestle in the freezing night. At the fence, countless men, women and children have been watching the spectacle. At least they didn't clap. I guess that is something.<sup>89</sup>

While Michael Flack recalls the violence of the event and the impact this had on him, Schwarz notes the brutality of the beatings merely in passing. He is indeed more concerned with the names of the perpetrators – who was there, who participated, who only aided in it. And it is interesting to note that he immediately draws a comparison to Auschwitz – clearly, for him, even though Meuselwitz is distinct from Auschwitz, the two are still connected. But the most striking aspect of his description is the presence of the bystanders at the fence.

The “countless men, women and children” who watched a man being beaten to death – presumably – and decided not to look away, not to walk away, but to stay and witness this event. Equally, they chose not to cheer the death of this man, nor to protest against it. They watched in silence. Fred Schwarz takes the silence of the onlookers to the execution as a somewhat positive sign, when he notes, not without irony, that “at least they didn't clap”. But does silence mean disagreement? Was this a silent protest?

The accounts by Michael Flack and Fred Schwarz already show how diverse the narratives of two different witnesses of violence can be. The testimony Heinz

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<sup>89</sup> Idem, 293-294.

Blume gave at his trial, stating that “that he beat inmates who violated the rules of the camp; that the inmates were informed orally on the roll call square as well as by posters on the bulletin board that they would be punished by beatings and the cutting of their hair for violations of camp regulations” indicates a completely different narrative, one in which he is cast as an orderly dispenser of appropriate physical punishment for “violations”, while the story of his victim, the nameless man who might have been a tailor, has been cut short in terror. With which narratives “the countless men, women, and children” at the other side of the fence would have left the spectacle is unrecorded, but would presumably be reliant of whether they had sympathised with the victim – like Michael Flack and Fred Schwarz – or with the perpetrator, as Pamela Stewart and Andrew Strathern point out in their discussion of David Riches’ theory of violence:

There is a triangle consisting of performer, victim, and witness. The apparent simplicity of this triangular representation hides a large number of complexities. For example, there may or may not be a direct relationship between all three parties, and this circumstance affects their narratives. Witnesses may be multiple and themselves have divergent views, and their disagreements may lead to further violence. All parties, however, maintain their own narratives, regardless of agreement or disagreement with others, and it is from the genesis and divergence of these narratives that the history of a violent act or a series of such acts is built up.<sup>90</sup>

If the history of this particular violent act is “built up” by the contestations of Heinz Blume, the pained memories of Michael Flack and Fred Schwarz, and the silence of the murdered man, I wonder which divergent narratives the watchers at the other side of the fence would contribute. Through their continued presence “the countless men, women, and children” became an audience of the spectacle that Michael Flack assumed to be held solely for the ‘benefit’ of the prisoners. In the process of writing

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<sup>90</sup> Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern, *Violence: Theory and Ethnography* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 35.

a play about this “lesson”, the situation of course invites to wonder about certain parallels to the relationship between a theatre audience and the events on stage. In much of our Western contemporary theatre, an audience is meant to watch a spectacle in silence, not to disturb it, in particular if the show is not a comedy, where at least scenic applause or laughter is far more common. The spectators of the ‘Sunday afternoon entertainment’ in Schwarz’ memoir did indeed laugh (maliciously), when the SS made a comic spectacle of the prisoners. Fred Schwarz does not mention if they also clapped. When the SS put on a tragedy of violence, however, the spectators did not laugh, they watched in silence, as do thousands of audience members in theatres when they witness staged violence, as is expected of them.

There is still a wide-spread theatrical practice that casts the audience as separate from the spectacle, but an audience is not distinct from what it sees, it is a participating party in creating it. The French philosopher Jacques Rancière discusses this position of the spectator in *The Emancipated Spectator* (2009), when he observes that much of our (Western) dramaturgy and understanding of theatre is based in the opposition of the active individual on stage and the passive collective watching them. In this mapping out of positions, the act of watching is rendered passive, and the individual spectator is turned into an anonymous mass to whom the play or performance merely happens. As Rancière points out, critics of this dominant mode of theatre production have challenged this set-up – Bertolt Brecht, for example, by using his form of Epic Theatre to coax the spectator into intellectual and material action, or Antonin Artaud by immersing and flooding the audience with his Total Theatre. Yet they both still assume the original position to be true: A spectator merely

watching the spectacle is passive and in need of being liberated from his passive gaze.<sup>91</sup> Rancière, on the other hand, maintains that

Emancipation begins when we challenge the opposition between viewing and acting; when we understand that the self-evident facts that structure the relations between saying, seeing and doing themselves belong to the structure of domination and subjection. It begins when we understand that viewing is also an action that confirms or transforms this distribution of positions. The spectator also acts, like the pupil or scholar. She observes, selects, compares, interprets. She links what she sees to a host of other things that she has seen on other stages, in other kinds of place. She composes her own poem with the elements of the poem before her.<sup>92</sup>

Fred Schwarz' autobiography was one of the first sources I accessed and his frank, unsentimental description of this simply horrifying public murder haunted me for the duration of the drafting and writing process. The question was not whether or not to include this moment in my play, but how to include it without forcing the spectator into the role of a passive observer in an act of staged violence, thus simply repeating the structures that shaped the historic event, perpetuating the violence against the victim once more, and enforcing a position of passivity on my audience, essentially equating them with the spectators at the fence. At the same time, this repetition might exactly be the right way to stage such an event – displaying the similarities of structured positions of passive and active, watching and acting – but how could I make this recreation a deliberate and transparent process?

I therefore decided to display my sources to the audience and leave it to the spectator to witness, to choose, to compare and to interpret the various sources, depictions on stage, and snippets of my own thoughts on the matter to create their own “poem” (F/L, 113-118). The use of the word “poem” in this context might sit

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<sup>91</sup> Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. Gregory Elliot (London: Verso, 2011), 2-23.

<sup>92</sup> Idem, 13.

uneasily, however, while I am reluctant to revert to Adorno's much over-used, misquoted and amended statement that it would be barbaric to write a poem after Auschwitz,<sup>93</sup> I would hope that such a particular kind of poem – singular and reflective – could be a more adequate response to the issue that I have discussed here than any attempt of mine to depict this moment with all its implications dramatically on stage.

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While in this chapter, I have mostly discussed the visibility of the violence that was done to people 'strictly according to the rules' and the staged nature of such displays of power, I will now turn to a more hidden chapter of violence, covert, denied, and silenced. As Myrna Goldenberg points out, the recent decades have seen the silence surrounding National Socialist atrocities that characterised the early years after the war broken by survivors willing to speak about their experiences. Their testimonies have helped not only to shed light on one of the darkest chapters in German and European history, but to also create a kind of master narrative of the persecution and extermination of the European Jews:

Concentration camp memoirs have forged our consciousness of the Holocaust. The words of Elie Wiesel, Primo Levi, Paul Celan, Tadeusz Borowski, Abba Kovner, Aharon Appelfeld, Dan Pagis, Arnošt Lustig, and Piotr Rwaicz, the 'chief witnesses', break the silence of the unspeakable and unimaginable. Because these men are exceptional writers and because their testimonies are eloquent and compelling, their memoirs have been regarded as typical of 'the' Jewish Holocaust experience. Yet hundreds of memoirs written by women survivors document "different horrors within the same Hell."<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Theodor Adorno [1951], "Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft", in *Theodor W. Adorno "Ob nach Auschwitz noch sich leben lasse". Ein philosophisches Lesebuch*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1997), 205.

<sup>94</sup> Myrna Goldenberg, "Memoirs of Auschwitz Survivors: The Burden of Gender," in *Women in the Holocaust*, edited by Dalia Ofer and Leonore J. Weitzman (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1998), 327.



In particular sexualised violence against women as part of National Socialist atrocity is rarely thematised. I remember vividly that during my middle school years, we were taught that, while millions of German women were raped by the advancing Red Army, German soldiers as a rule did not rape – because of the race laws that forbade *Rassenschande*. Female survivors rarely speak openly of sexualised violence or other specific “horrors” they were subjected to because they were not only Jewish, but Jewish *women*. The image of a Jewish concentration camp prisoner is therefore almost desexualised as experiences are streamlined into what Goldenberg names “the’ Jewish Holocaust experience”. Yet those “different horrors within the same Hell” also need to be considered, and in the following, I will discuss some of those horrors found in Altenburg and Meuselwitz, both camps with a predominantly female prisoner population.

#### 4. Hidden Violence in Altenburg: “This was a love story”

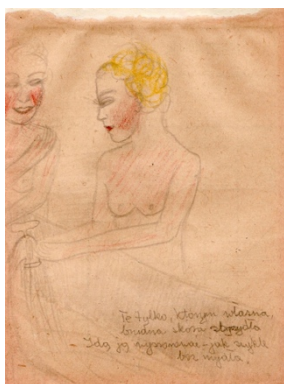


Plate 6. “Und nur ihre schmutzige Haut ekelt...”  
Drawing by Maria Brzęcka-Kosk approx. 1944/45.  
Kunstsammlung der Stiftung Gedenkstätte  
Buchenwald und Mittelbau-Dora.



Plate 7. “Fantastische Szene: ‘Aber Jurek ist doch der schönste...’” Drawing by Maria Brzęcka-Kosk, approx. 1944/45. Kunstsammlung der Stiftung Gedenkstätte Buchenwald und Mittelbau-Dora.

The two drawings are by Maria Brzęcka-Kosk, the young girl who had almost been shot by Heinz Blume. She had been given the paper by her older sister, and not only

drew for herself, but also illustrated poems written by another imprisoned woman.<sup>95</sup> Her drawings usually depict scenes from the camp's life – women queuing for food, women cleaning barracks, women passing their time on the free day – or more romanticised motifs like the one showing a young man courting a girl with a bouquet of flowers. Overall, the images dealing with camp life rarely show men. Maria must have encountered men on a daily basis in the factory and in the camp – the male SS staff, the factory workers or foremen, even, if only from a distance, the male prisoners. In her drawings, however, it seems that she had experienced her environment as predominantly female.

Gender differences in the experience of the persecution of the European Jews were already of research interest in the Warsaw ghetto, amongst others in a research project focusing on female responses to the challenges of ghettoised life under the German occupation, by Cecilya Slepak in 1941/42, which had been initiated by Emmanuel Ringelbaum as part of his effort to document Jewish war life.<sup>96</sup> Yet, for a long time, the specific experiences of women as a victim group of National Socialist atrocity and genocide have been overlooked, and the advance of both women's studies and gender studies has been arrested to some extent when it comes to

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<sup>95</sup> Kosk, *Bewahrte Zeit*, (BwA), 31 (36-37). Her lists of dreamt-up food also provided the inspiration for Adzi's desired meals in *Flieder*, see 41-42 (47-48).

<sup>96</sup> Dalia Ofer discusses this project in "Gender Issues in Diaries and Testimonies of the Ghetto", *Women in the Holocaust*, 163-167.

'Holocaust studies'.<sup>97</sup> In "The Split between Gender and the Holocaust", Joan Ringelheim illustrates this discrepancy with various examples from her experience in the field, spanning several decades. Her first example consists of an anecdote from 1979, when she together with other experts, such as Raul Hilberg and Sybil Milton, informally discussed the fear of children of survivors that their mothers had been raped. She notes that

[w]ithout apparent hesitation, those of my colleagues who responded claimed that the children were describing not actual incidents of abuse but rather fantasies induced by the media's sexualisation of the Holocaust. No one quoted any research; no one referred to any documentation of studies of interviews of survivors, male or female. There was just an immediate and resounding denigration of the question, and the discussion ended.<sup>98</sup>

Ringelheim continues to trace that eradication of female-specific experiences of National Socialist atrocity through her own practice as a researcher and scholar until the late 1990s and the conception and presentation of the Permanent Exhibition at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1998. According to Ringelheim, women as victims and perpetrators are visible through the Permanent Exhibition in

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<sup>97</sup> Sonja M. Hedgepeth and Rochelle G. Saidel, "Introduction", in *Sexual Violence against Jewish Women during the Holocaust*, ed. Sonja Hedgepeth & Rochelle G. Saidel, (Lebanon: University Press of New England, 2010), 1-5. See also: S. Lilian Kremer, *Women's Holocaust Writing. Memory & Imagination* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 1-4; Joan Ringelheim, "Women and the Holocaust: A Reconsideration of the Research", *Signs* 10, no. 4 (1985): 741-76.; Lenore J. Weitzman and Dalia Ofer, "The Role of Gender in the Holocaust", *Women in the Holocaust*, 1-19.

Even the, arguably, most 'popular' and well-known (female) victim of the extermination of the European Jews, Anne Frank, has been for a long time cast as the "eternal innocent child", with allusions to her specific experiences as a young woman in hiding cut from her published diary and the popular dramatisations of it, turning her into a universal and, ultimately, 'inspiring' victim of genocide, see also: Catherine A. Bernard, "Anne Frank: The Cultivation of the Inspirational Victim", in *Experiences and Expression: Women, the Nazis, and the Holocaust*, ed. Elizabeth R. Baer and Myrna Goldenberg (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 201-228. The notion of Anne Frank as someone whose life "epitomized the highest expression of the human spirit" also proved the starting point for Bernard Kopf's 1997 play *Dreams of Anne Frank*, in *The Theatre of the Holocaust. Volume 2*, 149-205.

<sup>98</sup> Joan Ringelheim, "The Split between Gender and the Holocaust," in *Women in the Holocaust*, 340.

photos, testimonies and so on, yet there is no sense of a conceptualization or indication of women, especially Jewish women, as a particular victim group. Ringelheim argues that the connection between motherhood, pregnancy and death is obscured, for example, by leaving out the fact that women and children made up 60-70% of those gassed upon their arrivals in the death camps:

[o]ne can say there is an implicit conception in the museum that women, whether Jewish or non-Jewish [...], do not constitute a group like Jews, Russian male POWs, Gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexual men, and so on. Because Jewish women, when victimised, were targeted as a subgroup of the larger group of Jews, they were not considered a class of victims by the museum. [...]<sup>99</sup>

20 years have passed since Joan Ringelheim had made these observations and the debates her, and others', attempts to include female-centred perspectives into 'Holocaust studies', had sparked.<sup>100</sup> However, the specifics of the female experience of National Socialist atrocity are still notably absent from many publications and exhibitions – the norm is still considered to be the male experience, although there is, of course, by now more room for female-specific experience.<sup>101</sup> Thus, for example, the concentration camp memorial museum Ravensbrück focuses almost

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<sup>99</sup> Idem, 348.

<sup>100</sup> See also Gabriel Schoenfeld "Auschwitz and the Professors", *Commentary* 105/6 (June 1998): 42-46, an essay that denounces the "acadamisation" of the Holocaust, and in which Schoenfeld accuses practitioners of feminist and gender studies of forcing a "naked ideological 'agenda'" (45) into the field of Holocaust studies, and the response by those he criticised, "Controversy: Holocaust Studies: Gabriel Schoenfeld and Critics", *Commentary* 106/2 (August 1998), 14-25, as well as Sara R. Horowitz' article "Gender, Genocide, and Jewish Memory" *Prooftexts* 20/1-2 (Winter/Spring 2000): 158-190, and the ensuing debate with Schoenfeld in "Controversy: Feminist Approaches to the Holocaust", *Prooftexts* 21/2 (Spring 2001): 277-283. For a more nuanced critical engagement with the role of gender in Holocaust Studies, see Lawrence L. Langer, "Gendered Suffering? *Women in Holocaust Testimonies*", *Women in the Holocaust*, 351-363.

<sup>101</sup> Zoe Waxman argues that while this norm is indeed changing, there is still a reluctance accepting testimony which does not comply with pre-existing narratives, see: Zoe Waxman, "Unheard Testimony, Untold Stories: the representation of women's Holocaust experiences", *Women's History Review* 12, no. 4 (2003): 661-677.

entirely on women as victims and perpetrators, since Ravensbrück had been the only concentration camp solely intended for women.<sup>102</sup>

Similarly, Jewish women, and women in general, as inmates of the concentration camp system, remain notably absent from many recent dramatisations of the camp life. The remake of the GDR classic, *Naked Among Wolves* (2015) is set among the mostly male population of the Buchenwald concentration camp, without any mention of the women forced into prostitution in the on-site brothel, or the large number of women used as forced labours in the camp's numerous satellite camps like Altenburg or Meuselwitz, the German production *Generation War* (2013) features a love story between a German woman and a Jewish man, but the one Jewish woman who appears remains sidelined; the Hungarian production *Son of Saul* (2015) focuses on the experiences of the *Sonderkommando* in Auschwitz. An exception might be the Polish production *Ida* (2013), in which a young woman searches her Jewish roots.

Women as inmates of the camps are at the centre of several plays written in the 1960s by survivor Charlotte Delbo, and Hedda Zinner's 1961 play about solidarity among female prisoners in Ravensbrück, *Ravensbrücker Ballade*. More recently, both Elizabeth Kuti's *Treehouses* (2000) and Marius von Mayenburg's *The Stone*

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<sup>102</sup> An exhibition on forced prostitution, curated by the memorial Ravensbrück, was shown in 2010 in Buchenwald. The special exhibition *Vergessene Frauen von Buchenwald*, about the exploitation of female prisoners in the armaments industry, was shown in Buchenwald from 2001-2002 and subsequently in France and Hungary. See also: "Exhibitions", Buchenwald Memorial, accessed 02. January 2017, <https://www.buchenwald.de/en/465/>. Hedgepeth and Saidel discuss the lack of focus on the former official camp brothel in the Auschwitz memorial, and the lack of engagement with female-specific experiences in the permanent exhibition of the Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, while a temporary exhibition in 2007, dealing explicitly with female experiences, only mentions the subject of sexualised violence. Hedgepeth and Saidel, "Introduction", *Sexual Violence*, 2.

(2008) are set in the aftermath, narrating family histories with a female point of view and focussing on familial memory. While theatre is, overall, slightly more inclusive of women both as writers and at the centre of a narrative than film, plays by smaller companies or less well-known dramatists are often not available in print or translation.<sup>103</sup> It is, however, theatre in particular with its very specific settings, allowing for a more direct connection between the audience and the performers than film, that should be able to provide a platform for the representation of such themes.<sup>104</sup> Judith Thompson observed in 1992 that

... theatre can be seen as an extremely important medium for women writers – in its intricate ability to subvert, or even dispense with, linearity and the illusion of ‘concrete realities’ [...] and in its multiple abilities to articulate, or embody, what is ‘normally’ thought of as ‘incoherent’.<sup>105</sup>

The notion of “incoherence”, and theatre’s possibilities of embodying such an “incoherence”, which cannot be spoken of, which cannot be articulated, will be of importance later on in this chapter, when I discuss survivors’ testimonies and the depiction of rape. It is Thompson’s notion of the shedding of “linearity and the illusion of ‘concrete realities’” which is highly significant for the narrative structure of both my play in general and the way I engage with female-specific issues in it. While the play moves more or less chronologically, this sense of linearity is broken by the synchrony of past and present on stage as well as through certain cyclical elements: frequent

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<sup>103</sup> See also Rochelle G. Saidel and Karen Shulman, *Women, Theatre, and the Holocaust Resource Handbook. Third Edition* (New York: Remember the Women Institute, April 2017), accessed 30. November 2017, [http://rememberwomen.org/Projects/documents/rememberwomen\\_women-theatre-holocaust.pdf](http://rememberwomen.org/Projects/documents/rememberwomen_women-theatre-holocaust.pdf).

<sup>104</sup> See also Robert Skloot’s discussion about his direction of *Throne of Straw*, in which he also notes that “theatre causes an encounter like none other because it is alive before us and forces attention to be paid with intensity and urgency unique to its form” (539), Robert Skloot, “Directing the Holocaust Play”. *Theatre Journal* 31, no. 4 (December 1979): 526-540.

<sup>105</sup> Judith Thompson, “The World Made Flesh: Women and Theatre” in *The Death of the Playwright: Modern British Drama and Literary Theory*, ed. Adrian Page (London: Macmillan, 1992), 26.

repetition of dialogue or situations (F/L, 31, 104, 113) as well as the seasonal character of the acts. The narrative is conveyed by Clara, the present repeatedly inserting itself into the past, and since most of the narrative is based on the memories of Clara's grandmother, none of it can be considered as absolutely certain and unquestionable; the moving of time and narrative has a more dream-like quality than one of a "concrete reality" (F/L, 61). The importance of dreamscapes and "dream images" for contemporary theatre have also been noted by Hans-Thies Lehmann in his groundbreaking discussion of postdramatic theatre in the late 1990s when he pointed out that

Indeed the stage discourses often come to resemble the structure of dreams and seem to tell of the dream world of their creators. An essential quality of the dream is the non-hierarchy of images, movements and words. 'Dream thoughts' form a texture that resembles collage, montage and fragment rather than a logically structured course of events.<sup>106</sup>

Clara moves through her memories, constructed from the nightmarish images of "Holocaust flicks" (F/L, 111) and her narrative, trying to hold on to a "logically structured course of events" while the texture of the play becomes increasingly fragmented.

Additionally, through constructing a narrative consisting of multiple strands, each based on historical sources, like, for example, Maria Brzęcka-Kosk's drawings or various women's testimonies, the concreteness of, what Myrna Goldenberg termed "'the' Jewish Holocaust experience", is not challenged, but rather extended by the multitude of female experiences of National Socialist genocide.

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<sup>106</sup> Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (London: Routledge, 2006), 84.

## Sexualised Violence in the Concentration Camp System

It is clear that women in Bosnia have been specifically targeted as women and that rape has been part of the genocidal strategy of 'ethnic cleansing'. When we think about this war, we visualize male and female victims differently because of the way gender functioned in this context. At the moment the image is indelible. And yet, this is an image that we cannot seem to form about the Holocaust. Although sex does not fully define or describe a woman's struggle, it is the most obvious place to begin if one wants to investigate women's experiences. If the obvious is avoided, it is easy to turn away from the more obscure or more complicated issues of women's experiences during this period.<sup>107</sup>

Joan Ringelheim

In "Memoirs of Auschwitz Survivors", Myrna Goldenberg examines three memoirs by female Jewish survivors. She finds that the three memoirs are all connected by the recurrence of the themes of hunger and obtaining food, which they share with men's testimonies, the importance of social bonding and a reliance on 'female' skills like homemaking as well as the fear of physical vulnerability and sex-specific violence and humiliation. Goldenberg highlights the fear of sexual assault and, in particular, the linkage created by the SS between women, children – motherhood – and death.<sup>108</sup> The fear of rape also caused great anxiety:

[a]lthough rape by the SS in the death camps was rare, the women were terrorized by rumors or threats of rape. ... (Issacson's) uncle told her that he had witnessed a mass raping of Jewish girls who were buried alive in mass graves that they had dug. Klein vividly portrays the tragedy of one of the girls in her barracks. While they waited for their clothes to be disinfected, all the women were nude and subjected to the soldiers' 'lewd and cruel threats', but one young girl was singled out and taken to the officers' barracks to be returned two days later, 'scarcely recognizable, incoherent face and body swollen and bruised.'<sup>109</sup>

While Goldenberg points to the psychological impact of rumours and threats of rape, and that in death camps, actual rape by the SS was "rare",<sup>110</sup> rape is mentioned as

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<sup>107</sup> Ringelheim, "Gender and the Holocaust", 346.

<sup>108</sup> Goldenberg, "Memoirs of Auschwitz Survivors", 327-339.

<sup>109</sup> Idem, 336.

<sup>110</sup> S. Lilian Kremer equally points out that rape by the SS in camps was rare, citing race laws and the 'ample supply of their own women' as a reason, but points to many female survivors' experience of camp initiation and procedure as sexual assault, as well as frequent verbal and physical sexual assault of female prisoners by SS. Kremer, *Women's Holocaust Writing*, 10-11.



a significant threat in Shimon Wincelberg's 1961 play *Resort 76*, set in a ghetto in Poland, as well as within the 1985 novel *The Unloved. From the Diary of Perla S.* by the Meuselwitz survivor Arnošt Lustig about the experiences of a young woman who worked as a prostitute in Theresienstadt.<sup>111</sup> These instances do not refute Goldenberg's findings about rape in the death camps, yet they qualify her statement to some extent, as does the research by scholars like Christopher Browning, Felicija Karay and Stephen Katz.

Christopher Browning has an entire chapter in his 2010 study of the Starachowice forced labour camps in Poland, *Remembering Survival*, focusing on the female-specific issues of childbirth, abortion and rape.<sup>112</sup> When discussing the occurrence of rape in camps, for example, and the question of its treatment – or lack of – in public discourse or survivor testimonies, Browning makes an important observation with regards to the production of said testimonies. According to Browning, the first wave of interviews and testimonies were made in the 1960s by German judicial interviewers. The second wave constituted mostly 1990s videotestimonies, often for family audiences and educational purposes – such as the Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive which I used extensively for this work. As Browning points out, it is hardly surprising that many survivors did not feel that issues such as rape or aspects relating to female bodies and sex were appropriate topics in these circumstances and thus might have chosen not to speak about them.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Arnošt Lustig, *The Unloved. From the Diary of Perla S.* (New York: Arbor House, 1985), 47; Shimon Wincelberg [1961 / 1981], *Resort 76* in *The Theatre of the Holocaust Volume 1*, ed. Robert Skloot (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press), 87.

<sup>112</sup> Christopher Browning, *Remembering Survival – Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp*, (New York & London: WW Norton, 2010), 185-191.

<sup>113</sup> Browning, *Remembering Survival*, 185.

Choosing not to speak about them, however, does not necessarily mean that these events did not take place or were rare.<sup>114</sup> After discussing questions of menstruation, consensual sex and giving birth, Browning continues to consider the question of rape, pointing out that “[t]he rape of Jewish women by Germans is another phenomenon that most survivors have difficulty confronting or discussing in their testimonies. According to Karay, it was a frequent phenomenon [...] including a holiday celebration gang rape in December 1942 [...]”.<sup>115</sup> He then discusses several accounts given personally to him by survivors about the public rape of a Jewish woman by a German SS-officer in front of the entire camp population in, what Browning terms, a “ritual of humiliation” reminiscent of certain events during the ethnic cleansing and public mass rape in Bosnia in the 1990s. Browning concludes that “[w]hile some aspects of the Starachowice experience have moved from the realm of communal to public memory, and after many decades are now spoken about openly, this incident remains in the realm of those hours that survivors cannot forget but also cannot find the words to speak about”.<sup>116</sup> Browning thus again emphasises the connection between specific sexualised violence against women and the notion of the ‘unspeakable’ that already surfaced in the discussions of Joan Ringelheim and Myrna Goldenberg.

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<sup>114</sup> Somewhat to the contrary, Hedgepeth and Saidel point out that sexualised violence was mentioned in testimonies, documentaries, literature and reports immediately after 1945. According to them, 500 testimonies of the VHA mention rape, over 1000 mention sexualised violence. They suggest that these experiences have been discounted due to the often-covert nature of the survivors’ accounts of such issues, as well as the lack of official documentation. Hedgepeth and Saidel, “Introduction”, 1-2.

<sup>115</sup> Browning, *Remembering Survival*, 189.

<sup>116</sup> Idem, 191.

Browning already mentioned the survivor and historian Felicja Karay, who focuses in particular on female-specific experiences in National Socialist forced labour camps, which she herself experienced in the HASAG camps in Skarzysko and Leipzig. Discussing sexual assault and harassment in her essay “Women in the Forced-Labor Camps”, Karay states that “[t]he testimonies of prisoners contain several allusions to sexual harassment by overseers even though Germans were prohibited from *Rassenschande*”.<sup>117</sup> Both Polish and Jewish women were subjects of assault, and there were rumours of both “forbidden sexual liaisons”<sup>118</sup> and sexual exploitation in all departments of the factory. In this discussion of sexual harassment, Karay’s language is noticeably unclear whether the sexual encounters she describes were of an abusive or consensual nature (inasmuch as it is possible to speak of a consensual relationship between imprisoned and guard).<sup>119</sup> However, she continues to state that in spite of the threat of *Rassenschande*, “[...] German commanders were reluctant to deprive themselves of any of life’s pleasures, and in all three Werks, there were known cases of individual and collective rapes of Jewish women.”<sup>120</sup> She concludes that “dozens of testimonies” speak of mass and gang rape of young Jewish women, who were subsequently murdered, as well as of the practice of commanders to choose the most attractive women of each transport as “housemaids” – all of whom were later murdered – and in at least one of these instances, one of the women was discovered to be pregnant and sent to the

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<sup>117</sup> Felicja Karay, “Women in the Forced-Labor Camps”, in *Women in the Holocaust*, 289.

<sup>118</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>119</sup> In a similar way, Milos Pick, a survivor of the Meuschwitz camp, indicates that Heinz Blume “held it with a woman from Warsaw [...] who dominated him. Then he was demoted.” Pick, *Verstehen und nicht vergessen*, 47.

<sup>120</sup> Karay, “Women in the Forced-Labor Camps”, 290.

“shooting range”. The survivor of the Altenburg camp Lenke Friedler also recalls “beautiful girls” being selected for, and never returning from, what the prisoners presumed to be “sexual work” in Auschwitz:

One thing that happened in Auschwitz was, asking beautiful girls to go to work. And check their hands. To go to special work. We knew this was a lie. These beautiful girls were going to the German soldiers to use as sexual... Objects. She never came back. And she never came back. And that were my friends, who I remember the most. They selected. And took them to the soldiers. That was in Auschwitz. That was all I know about sexual things. Otherwise, there can be no sexual thing because it's just girls there, and the German soldiers are not going to pick up a girl from there. They had the special ones to select them.<sup>121</sup>

All of these examples collect evidence and discuss the wider implications of sexualised violence against Jewish women and girls, often in labour camp settings.<sup>122</sup> Steven Katz in his 2012 article “Thoughts on the Intersection of Rape and *Rassenschande* during the Holocaust” follows similar lines of the connection between (female) sex and sexuality, pregnancy, birth, and being sentenced to death as many of those examples discussed above.<sup>123</sup> On the subject of rape, he concludes his findings with the hypothesis that while the rape of and sexualised violence against Jewish women is comparable to that of any other armed conflict or slavery, there are two distinctive features: The prohibition of offspring coming from these rapes and the notion of *Rassenschande*, indicating, at least in theory that the perpetrator of the rape was guilty of racial impurity.<sup>124</sup> Thus, while the rape of Jewish

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<sup>121</sup> Lenke Friedler, Interview 33196, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, accessed 18. February 2015.

<sup>122</sup> See also Myrna Goldenberg, “Lessons Learned from Gentle Heroism: Women’s Holocaust Narratives”, in *Women in the Holocaust: Responses, Insights and Perspectives. Selected Papers From the Annual Scholar’s Conference on the Holocaust and the Churches 1990-2000*, ed. Marcia Sachs Littell (Merion Station: Merion Westfield Press, 2001), 106-110.

<sup>123</sup> S. Lilian Kremer points out that “[t]he initial round concentration camp selections at the train depot was contingent on the deportee’s age, health, and gender. Women arriving at the concentration camps with young children were routinely murdered with their children rather than selected for slave labor. Ellen Fine writes, ‘Being a mother directly affected the chances for survival; being a father did not.’”, Kremer, *Women’s Holocaust Writing*, 14.

<sup>124</sup> Steven T. Katz, “Thoughts on the Intersection of Rape and *Rassenschande* during the Holocaust”, *Modern Judaism* 32, no. 2 (2012): 293-322.

women constituted for the perpetrators a welcome political act as an attack on the body of the Jewish community, it was also a fundamental violation of Nazi ideology. These two features, argues Katz, caused rape to lead to the murder of the assaulted woman to prevent her giving birth or being a witness, which would constitute another reason, apart from those cited by Browning, of why rape is such a little discussed issue in public discourse surrounding the persecution and extermination of the European Jews.<sup>125</sup>

### **Sexualised Violence in Altenburg**

Overall, the women in the video testimonies that I have accessed are hardly ever asked about female-specific issues like menstruation, forced nudity in front of male German staff, pregnancy, childbirth, abortion, rape or sexual assault as part of their experiences in the concentration and satellite camps. If such questions, mostly about menstruation, were asked, they were usually raised with regards to the interviewee's internment at Auschwitz, and then usually not repeated for their subsequent imprisonment at other camps. Questions concerning, for example, physical abuse or nourishment, tend to be repeated for all camps. While both male and female interviewees were asked repeatedly and in detail about physical violence that they had witnessed or endured themselves, I only encountered one interview in which the interviewer specifically asked about sexualised violence at the Altenburg camps.

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<sup>125</sup> Katz' findings correspond with numerous other scholars' discussions of the matter. Helene J. Sinnreich also discusses various rape scenarios, including those of (public) gang rape in different camps, one taking place in the Bruss-Sophienwalde camp, where a pregnant Jewish woman, who had asked the commandant for help, was gang-raped in front of the entire camp and then sent to Stutthof (also highlighting the connection between pregnancy and death) and an incident in Auschwitz-Birkenau, where German personnel raped twenty Jewish women in front of a labour group, with the male prisoners meant to applaud the action. Helene J. Sinnreich, "Rape of Jewish Women during the Holocaust", *Sexual Violence*, 111.

Ella Buchinger, originally from Hungary, was brought to Altenburg with some of her sisters, after her parents and younger siblings were murdered in Auschwitz. After recounting some of her experiences at the Altenburg camp, the interviewer asked her directly about sexualised violence:

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever know of any guards molesting the girls?

ELLA: Not really, we didn't hear. We didn't even know, at that time, I was so naive, if they would do something to me, I wouldn't know it. They can do, not can do, we never talked at home about it ... not even kissing a boy. First of all, we were raised that way, and then also, no desire ...

INTERVIEWER: So that never was a problem for the girls you knew, you saw?

ELLA: No. Nobody. Once it happened in this Altenburg. I went to the hospital to the barrack and one man, a tall, handsome man, asked me 'What number *du hast*, What *nummer du hast*?' And I told him the number from the dress '*Nein, ich meine, was Schuhnummer du nimmst*?' ... I said [my shoe size]. ... '*Komm* in the evening, I will give you shoe.' So, I went happily to my sisters, to my cousins, saying, 'you know what, I'll get new shoes', because I was wearing these heavy, wooden shoes. So, I had to go downstairs and all my sisters were standing in a line down the stairs, and he asked what shoe and I was looking and he came close to me and wanted to kiss me and I was scared and I started to cry, and he said 'Ok, ok, I am selling those shoes, what do you want?' And I asked can I take also for my sisters and he said '*Ja*, ok, ok.' But he didn't force me to do anything and I told all my sisters. This was a love story.

INTERVIEWER: And this was a German guard?

ELLA: It was a German. SS. But he was not by the girls, he was inside, overlooked all the clothing, shoes, he had thousands of pairs ... He wanted to give me shoes, he wanted maybe a kiss, I don't know what he wanted. And I brought shoes for my other sisters and they were so happy, everybody, but I told them this story and they said 'It's enough from the shoes.'<sup>126</sup>

What struck me most about this short episode recounted by Ella Buchinger were the many layers of taboo that she introduced, as well as the merging of boundaries between consensual and violent sexual activity. When asked about molestation, she immediately not only denies hearing about such incidents, but continues to explain that she would not even have known sexual abuse if she had encountered it, because she was "naïve" and this had never been "talked about at home". When the question is posted a second time, she reiterates that "that" was never a problem for "nobody", and then immediately launches into a rather complicated tale about an SS-officer

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<sup>126</sup> Ella Buchinger, Interview 42058, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1998, accessed 16. February 2015.

attempting to force himself on her in exchange for shoes, which she then calls a “love story”. Her account in the recorded interview also becomes notably incoherent at this point, to articulate and relate this story was seemingly harder for her than other experiences of the Altenburg camp.

The narrow escape told by Ella Buchinger is mirrored in the narrative of another female survivor from the same camp, Zsuzsanna Dallos, who, like Ella Buchinger, was a young Jewish-Hungarian woman who had come to Altenburg via Auschwitz and Ravensbrück. When she was asked by the interviewer if she remembered anything in particular about the German guards in Altenburg, she offered the following anecdote about a female guard:

I recall one woman who was a very unfriendly looking woman but I changed my opinion a little bit about her because when we got the sweater, each got a sweater, not an overcoat, to go to the factory in winter, they had a big storeroom and there was a German in charge for the store room and somehow it got a little bit late and the group left for the factory and I was the last one to receive this cardigan and the German woman didn't want to leave me unattended with this man. She stayed with me until I got my jacket and escorted me personally to the factory. I don't know what would have happened without her but the man didn't look good.<sup>127</sup>

Unfortunately, the interviewer did not follow up with any questions about why Zsuzsanna Dallos might have thought what could have happened or why the man “didn't look good”, or if indeed she had heard any stories about him before. Again, an unnamed threat is related only through hints, it cannot be articulated clearly by Zsuzsanna Dallos what her misgivings or fears were. I accessed the two testimonies within the span of a few days, and immediately wondered whether Zsuzsanna Dallos might be speaking about the same officer as Ella Buchinger, since both were describing a man working in the camp's storeroom and with clothing.

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<sup>127</sup> Dallos, Interview 21189, VHA.

Additionally, what stood out from both interviews was that neither survivor seemed to remember a man in a position of power possibly attempting a violent assault on them. Ella Buchinger remembered a man who gave her shoes for herself and her sisters, and Zsuzsanna Dallos came to recall the episode only because she remembered an act of kindness by the 'unfriendly looking woman' who stood by her.

These two interviews were the only video testimonies, which I accessed, that mentioned the SS-officer in the store room or discussed anything resembling sexualised violence in Altenburg or Meuselwitz. However, in the archives in Buchenwald, I found two undated written testimonies by two male survivors, Jacob Ihr and Walter Strasz, who had also been imprisoned in Altenburg together. Walter Strasz only mentions the insufficient sanitary conditions, which, he claims were worse for the women, since there were more female prisoners than male ones, and also indicates that certain SS-officers, like the commandant or the auxiliary Elisabeth Ruppert, who had served in Auschwitz before, were particularly brutal with the women.<sup>128</sup> The survivor Jacob Ihr, who escaped during the forced evacuation with Walter Strasz, describes in much more detail female-specific terror which he observed in Altenburg:

I want to particularly emphasise that commandant Frötsch terrorised the camp through his brutality as well as his blackmailing and raping of the female inmates. In the history of the camp Altenburg, *SS-Wirtschaftsführer Scharführer* Erich Klaus is also a prominent figure. [...] A whole series of rape, theft, blackmail and other brutalities have been committed by him.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Testimony. Walter, Strasz, "Bericht aus dem Lager Altenburg" (Mannheim, no date), Buchenwaldarchiv (BwA), [63-32- 1 bis 3]. This testimony is also included in Hackett, *Der Buchenwald-Report*, 228-229.

<sup>129</sup> Testimony. Jakob Ihr, "no subject" (no date), Buchenwaldarchiv (BwA), [Material Otto Halle 62-59-1].



Jacob Ihr not only indicits Frötsch for rape, but it is also at least possible that the SS-*Wirtschaftsführer* Erich Klaus, a SS-officer responsible for economic activity, might be the SS-officer in the storehouse, with whom Ella Buchinger and Zsuzanna Dallos had their respective encounters. If that were the case and this was the same man, there would surely have been rumours about him in the camp, which might explain the misgivings that both women indicated about this man without being entirely able to name them.

Jacob Ihr also singles out several female SS-officers and notes that: “[b]y refusing them medication and sanitary towels, the SS-supervisor Bassa-la, in her capacity as head of the health service, [...] brought the women in psychological and physical situations that are difficult to describe”.<sup>130</sup> While most female interviewees in their video testimonies recall that they stopped menstruating in Auschwitz, blaming either bromine or malnourishment in general, Jacob Ihr has a very specific memory of women being humiliated through the denial of sanitary towels by the supervisor Bassa-la,<sup>131</sup> which also poses a stark contrast to Ella Buchinger’s memory of an, although isolated, moment of solidarity between herself and the “ugly” female supervisor who would not abandon her in the storeroom.

### **Writing the ‘Unspeakable’**

Those testimonies were vital in forming the narrative in my play concerning Aniko, Baumann, and in particular Else, who I have situated in that conflicting position

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<sup>130</sup> Idem.

<sup>131</sup> Similarly, in his semi-autobiographical novel, Arnošt Lustig mentions a specific revenge-fantasy against the female SS auxiliaries in Meuselwitz who had mocked the female prisoners as “pigs [...] when the blood ran down their thighs”, Arnošt Lustig, *Finsternis wirft keine Schatten*, trans. Peter Ambros (Munich: dtv, 1997), 156.

between supervisors like Bassala or Ruppert, who apparently failed to see the women under their guard as human beings, and that unnamed “ugly” woman, who seemed to be able to empathise with Ella Buchinger. Else develops in the play from a careless disregard for the prisoners (F/L, 16-21), which is neither antipathy nor sympathy, to being increasingly brutal towards them (F/L, 32-36, 52-53, 77-79). Her anger and jealousy of Lore as well as her complicated relationship with Baumann both impact on her behaviour towards the prisoners. Mostly, however, she treats them like ‘sub-humans’ because if she were to acknowledge that they are, indeed, human beings, she would have to question her position in life, one which she fought hard for, and which is essential for her entire being.

The vital turning point for Else is the moment when she prevents Baumann from raping Aniko (F/L, 73-76). Else had previously interfered on behalf of the female prisoners, for example when Baumann jumps on Aniko after a row between him and Else. Else returns and partially confronts him, and then agrees to see him after work (F/L, 26-29). It would have been entirely possible for Else by this point already to know that Baumann not only brutalises the women, but also commits acts of sexualised violence. But she ignores the signs, preferring not to see them, until it is entirely impossible for her to do so when she walks in on Baumann. After a particularly fierce row between Else and Baumann, the commandant uses Aniko to relieve himself of his frustration. When Else comes between them, alerted by Agnieszka, she immediately and directly confronts Baumann, stops him, and offers her assistance to Aniko (F/L, 74). This is the only moment that she actually allows herself to have a real connection to one of the women she encounters every day,

free from her disdain, brutality or the patronising affections she feigns for Agnieszka, and it also sets her apart from Lore, who has the best of intentions, but never actually interferes.

The moment when Else chooses the Jewish woman over her German lover is meant to be a brief, but significant moment of female solidarity, which I convey through the careful arrangement of Aniko's nudity in the stage directions for the filmic part of this scene, which I originally wrote for the stage. On screen, Aniko is nude during Baumann's attack, but covered from the audience's gaze (F/L, 73). In my first draft of the scene, Aniko's nudity becomes visible only in the brief moment during which Else offers her comfort and assistance.

In the early 1970s, the film critic Laura Mulvey coined and defined the term of the "male gaze", the notion that visual and literary arts tend to represent the world from a male point of view in which women are hardly more than objects to be looked at:

In their traditional exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appliance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. Women displayed as sexual object is the leitmotif of erotic spectacle: [...] she holds the look, plays to and signifies male desire. Mainstream film neatly combined spectacle and narrative. [...] The presence of woman is an indispensable element of spectacle in normal narrative film, yet her visual presence tends to work against the development of a story line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation.<sup>132</sup>

Narrative cinema, according to Mulvey, invites the (male) spectator to share the male protagonist's gaze on the woman and identify with him, rather than her.

This perpetuates an ideological structure in which men are active, and women passive, victims, objects to look at. While Mulvey writes specifically about narrative

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<sup>132</sup> Laura Mulvey [1975], "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", in *Film theory and criticism: introductory readings*, ed. Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 808-809.

cinema and film, which offer far more options for controlling and constructing the spectator's gaze than theatre does, the implications of the male gaze has been discussed with regards to the stage. In the 1980s, Jill Dolan related Mulvey's thoughts on gaze, pleasure, and objectification concerning women in film to Bertolt Brecht's theories about *Verfremdung* and pleasure in the historical concept. Discussing the work of avant-garde artist Richard Foreman and his various attempts to control and obstruct the spectator's gaze, Dolan notes that while the artist achieves to some extent the formal control over the spectator's gaze, he does not challenge the traditional role of the women in his "stage picture" – she remains an "erotic object".<sup>133</sup>

Regardless of how much control I exercise (or attempt to exercise) over the audience's gaze, the fact remains that I have written a relatively conventional scene of attempted rape and have the sexualised violence depicted on stage, including female nudity. When I presented parts of the play in a rehearsed reading to PhD students as part of a Chase Programme in December 2017, in a version in which the film elements were not added yet, but played out on stage instead, the students questioned this decision, describing how they felt that the scene added a "thrill" to the audience, with the nudity and the violence being "titillating".

Their stance is not without merit. In her discussion of *The Night Porter* and *The White Hotel*, Rebecca Scherr states that

[i]n narrative accounts of Holocaust testimony, explicit discussions of sexuality and eroticism are almost nonexistent. If the theme does occur in eyewitness accounts, often it is the enforced lack of sexuality that is the object of commentary [...] However, a survey of fictional narratives that take the Holocaust as a subject matter reveals numerous works that treat

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<sup>133</sup> Jill Dolan, *The Feminist Spectator as Critic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988), 48-51. See also Sue-Ellen Case's discussion of the role of objectification in the development of radical feminist theatre: Sue-Ellen Case, *Feminism and Theatre*, 66-67.

sexual relationships and eroticism as dominant features of the main characters' experience of the Holocaust. [...] These fictional works of art replace the absence of sexuality characteristic of memoirs of camp experience with an overabundance of erotic imagery, a sign of a general discomfort with the historical facts or with the methods one can employ to represent the Holocaust. Moreover, it is the female body that becomes the site for displaying this erotic impulse.<sup>134</sup>

Scherr discerns that the depiction of sexuality and (sexualised) violence in the films she discusses, and in numerous other fictional works, constitute a fascination with “side-show perversions” that bears the danger of misrepresenting history and turning the memory of National Socialist atrocity, in particular of the extermination of the European Jews, into “sexy memories”. Alison Young, discussing the depiction of rape in film and the materiality of the spectators relating to the scene they are watching in *The Scene of Violence*, concludes that

[t]he cinematic crime-image of rape seems to show indifference to the materiality of that relation, subordinating the experience of looking at graphic sexual violence to the perceived need to dispel any lingering doubt as to the victim's veracity. Both cinema and the law demand corroboration, and both achieve it through the linking of violence and vision at the expense of the injured woman. Until such time as there exists a cinematic ethic as to the depiction of sexual violence – one which would require the invention of a new cinematic grammar – the spectator might do well to recall Frank Booth's command, and refuse the invitation to look at the crime-image of rape.<sup>135</sup>

I disagree with Scherr that because sexuality is rarely explicitly discussed in survivor testimonies, it therefore is ruled out as a central feature of the experience in the concentration camp system – as I have discussed earlier, survivors might not speak of such experiences for numerous reasons. However, I cannot negate the resonance of Young's point concerning the “linking of violence and vision” with regards to my ‘scene of violence’. In particular in view of the themes of ‘staged’ and ‘hidden’

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<sup>134</sup> Rebecca Scherr, “The Uses of Memory and Abuses of Fiction: Sexuality in Holocaust Film, Fiction, and Memoir”, *Experience and Expression: Women, the Nazis, and the Holocaust*, 278f.

<sup>135</sup> Alison Young, *The Scene of Violence. Cinema. Crime. Affect* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 73.

violence, which I have discussed so far, this link occurs not only “at the expense of the injured woman”, but also indicates the audience, as Young also discusses.<sup>136</sup>

Initially, I had tried to contain the dangers of writing such a naturalistic depiction of sexualised violence on stage by preventing the audience from sharing Baumann’s gaze on Aniko, but it would be naive to assume that the link of vision and violence would thereby be severed. This link is, after all, the main topic of this work. Therefore, I decided to disconnect the actress’ nudity and her gaze to some extent from the violent action, by introducing the video in this scene, as a way of distancing and doubling the problematic gaze. It does not sever this link of vision and violence, as described by Young, but I hope that, by having the actress who plays Aniko sharing the gaze of the audience onto the scene of violence as well as reciprocating the individual spectator’s gaze, the act of watching is not rendered into passivity, but shared as an active position (F/L, 73).

In her discussion of Aida Karic’s *The Trojan Women: An Asian Story*, which premiered in 2007 in Vienna, Elizabeth Son considers the scenes of violence in the production, in particular the display of blood-stained, nude female bodies, and quotes the choreographer Kim Smanjin:

She cited the scene with blood and wished it had been more dramatic with additional lighting and sound: ‘I don’t think we were able to make it as spectacular as it could have been’ (2008). Her desire to use theatricality shows the need to give fuller expression to military sexual violence and to shock viewers into confronting this horror. The reenacted scenes of violence are effective in this, but, in my view, the choice of nudity objectifies the actress and consequently spectacularizes sexual violence – weakening the redressive possibilities of the production.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Idem, 56-73.

<sup>137</sup> Elizabeth W. Son, “Korean Trojan Women: Performing Wartime Sexual Violence”, *Asian Theatre Journal* 33, no. 2 (Autumn 2016): 382.

Instead of using overt theatricality in order to “shock viewers” into confrontation, I aimed to use video and the shared, yet singular, views by the spectators, the actress playing Aniko, and the other actors witnessing the scene, to render the scene of violence into what Jacques Rancière terms the “third thing” between artist and spectator.<sup>138</sup> This “third thing” is not mine to utilise to produce “fear and terror” in the spectator or to shock them into a forced acknowledgment, but something else between all of us involved – writer, performer, spectator – to consider.

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As Katz, Browning, and others have pointed out and I have discussed before, pregnancy constituted a death sentence for Jewish women in the concentration camp system. I leave it intentionally open whether Else decides on her merciless course against Aniko because she is jealous of another woman, possibly carrying her lover’s child, or because she is indeed a fierce guardian of this imagined racial purity which is threatened by the birth of a Jewish child. For Aniko, it does not matter why she is sent to her death in the gas chambers. Whether it had been due to a sense of duty, of racist fanatics of racial purity, or simple, petty jealousy – she is sent to her death because she is a Jewish woman expecting a child and because a German guard can make that decision. I also, intentionally, do not answer the question whether or not the father of Aniko’s child is her husband or Baumann (F/L, 62-64). For Aniko, it is a necessity that the child is from her murdered husband, for Baumann and Else, the child is nothing but a perceived threat. I have already discussed the implications of motherhood and pregnancy for Jewish women above.

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<sup>138</sup> Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 14-15.

During selections, Jewish women with children or pregnant women were immediately sent to the gas chambers. Magda Frohlinger, a survivor of the Altenburg camp, discusses the implications of that policy with regards to her sister's experiences during the selection in Auschwitz.

MAGDA: [...] As a matter of fact, she was more chubby, I'm jumping now, and they selected us, nude... [...] And he said to her, in Hungarian, 'You're pregnant.' And my sister, 'No, no no no, never.'

INTERVIEWER: And what did he say to you?

MAGDA: Nothing. I was skinny. I was skinny. She looked constantly [at] the body.

INTERVIEWER: What did he say to her, when she said no?

MAGDA: Just nothing. Go. I mean, we heard that much already, who, the pregnant, which way they go, so she was fighting: 'no no no no'. But we didn't know he spoke Hungarian. [...] I had a first cousin, she had a nine-month-old baby. And the whole family didn't come back. And we were thinking about it, because she had her mother next to her, and usually, the young mothers handed the babies to the oldest, and she went.<sup>139</sup>

As Steven Katz points out, rape by a German also constituted a death sentence for the Jewish woman:

[...] Jewish women who were raped during the Holocaust [...] were not permitted to have children. Indeed, biological reproduction, the bringing into being of a child with half Jewish blood as a consequence of these sexual relationships, was the great fear. And, according to the ruling ideological imperatives, it had to be completely avoided. In principle and practice, the Third Reich opposed the birth of any child with a Jewish mother.<sup>140</sup>

In Altenburg, this prohibition of 'the birth of any child with a Jewish mother' caused at least five women to be sent to their death. A transportation note from the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1945 details the transport of three pregnant women and two women with a

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<sup>139</sup> Magda Frohlinger, Interview 44408, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1998, accessed 18. February 2015.

<sup>140</sup> Katz, "Intersection of Rape and *Rassenschande*", 302.

The misleading notion that Germans did not rape as a rule due to the prohibition of *Rassenschande* is also discussed by Helene J. Sinnreich. She points in particular to the role of centre-periphery relations: "In some cases, individuals at the lowest levels did not follow the policy dictated by superiors, sometimes resulting in brutality, and at other times in disobedience that took the form of saving Jews." This notion of agency is vastly important: If it was possible for numerous individuals to – openly or covertly – disregard the law forbidding them from having sexual relations with Jewish people at their own peril, this equally opens a room for agency in the other direction. Helene J. Sinnreich, "The Rape of Jewish Women during the Holocaust", 108-109.



child to the concentration camp Bergen-Belsen.<sup>141</sup> An accompanying letter to the note details that the children had been born on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December 1944 and the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 1945.<sup>142</sup> The children born in the camp must have been conceived before the women had arrived, whether or not the pregnant women had entered the camps already with child or whether their pregnancy was a result of rape within the camp cannot be determined.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Transportation form with handwritten notes, from HASAG Altenburg to Bergen-Belsen. No addressor, no subject. (11.01.1945), Buchenwaldarchiv (BwA), [63-32- 1 bis 3].

<sup>142</sup> Correspondence. Commandant Frötsch to Bergen-Belsen, "Überstellung von schwangeren Gefangenen und mit Kindern", Altenburg, 11. January 1945, reproduction in: Haselbach, (BwA), 50. One survivor from the Altenburg camp recalled that "In the last four weeks [...] there were constant air-raid warnings. [...] Two pregnant women and a girl were sent to another camp, the latter I met now. Another gave birth in our camp, she was sent away and is said to be alive." M. S., "Protocol Nr. 1961". Testimony given by a female Jewish survivor of Altenburg. Budapest. 25. July 1945. DEGOB, accessed 18. March 2018, [http://degob.hu/index.php?showjk\\_img\\_full=1961&page=1](http://degob.hu/index.php?showjk_img_full=1961&page=1)

<sup>143</sup> The prohibition of childbirth applied not only to Jewish women. Female civilian forced labourers in Germany were also regularly forced to have their children aborted or to give them up to homes where they were often murdered. For a discussion of pregnancy and motherhood of civilian forced labourers, see Reiche, "Zur medizinischen Betreuung", 113-119. Anna Elisabeth Rosmus, on whose life the film *The Nasty Girl* is based, discusses the fate of female forced labourers in Bavaria and the unwillingness to engage with this history in the 1990s, see Anna Elisabeth Rosmus, "Murder of the Innocent: Foreign Forced Labourers and Forced Abortion in Bavaria", in *Women in the Holocaust: Responses, Insights and Perspectives*, 139-159. For an overview of the situation of forced labourers in Germany with regards to sex and pregnancy, including punishments for German women in relationships with 'foreigners', see Spoerer, *Zwangsarbeit unterm Hakenkreuz*, 200-209.

## Excursus: “Untrue, Offensive, Cheap”. The Representability of the ‘Holocaust’

[If] language cannot represent any experience directly, some experiences, such as fascism and the Holocaust, are even less available for representation, are especially resistant to logical, linear description.<sup>144</sup>

Vivian M. Patraka

In the previous chapters, I have outlined some aspects of “fascism and the Holocaust” as they took place in the communities of Altenburg and Meuselwitz, and how I have attempted to translate these aspects for the stage. The second part of this commentary focuses on examples from film, theatre and public engagement, analysing their attempts to represent the experiences of National Socialist atrocities. Inbetween those two parts, then, seems to be the appropriate place to discuss some of the issues surrounding the ‘representation of the Holocaust’ and how related notions, traditions, interdictions, transgressions, and debates have impacted on the process of finding a form for the content of *Flieder*. I will do so by firstly discussing more generally the history of the debate regarding the (impossibility) of ever representing the persecution and extermination of the European Jews in art. Then, I will outline how these debates impacted on the overall form of *Flieder*, before engaging in more detail with the depiction of violence in three specific scenes in my play.

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<sup>144</sup> Vivian M. Patraka, *Spectacular Suffering: Theatre, Fascism, and the Holocaust* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 15.

### ***Dialectics, Binaries, and Interdictions: The History of Representation***

Cultural criticism finds itself faced with the final stage of the dialectic of culture and barbarism. To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. And this corrodes even the knowledge of why it has become impossible to write poetry today.<sup>145</sup>

Theodor W. Adorno

In the wake of the experiences of World War II and National Socialism, the German philosopher Theodor W. Adorno published his essay “Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft”, in which he formulated his culture criticism. Within this essay, Adorno articulated what might well be regarded as one of the most defining and quoted (and mis-quoted) statements about literature and art in the aftermath of genocide and atrocity in the very heart of Europe – and the starting place of intense and prolonged debate. While Adorno’s statement about writing poetry after Auschwitz indicates “the dialectic of culture and barbarism” – and does not, per se, formulate an interdiction of writing poetry after Auschwitz – this dialectic has been taken at face-value as binary opposites by many: George Steiner paraphrases “no poetry after Auschwitz”, while Alvin H. Rosenfeld asserts that to write poetry after Auschwitz it is “not only impossible but perhaps even immoral”.<sup>146</sup> Adorno himself qualified the statement repeatedly over the course of the following decades, clarifying that he never meant his words to be used to silence or censor writers. He also praised the work of Samuel Beckett and Paul Celan’s poem “Todesfuge” for their “proximity of the art to silence [as] an articulation of suffering”.<sup>147</sup> In 1966, he conceded that “perennial suffering

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<sup>145</sup> Theodor W. Adorno [1951], “Cultural Criticism and Society”, in *Prisms*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981), 34.

<sup>146</sup> George Steiner, *Language and Silence. Essays 1958-1966* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), 79; Rosenfeld, *A Double Dying*, 13.

<sup>147</sup> Michael Rothberg, “After Adorno: Culture in the Wake of Catastrophe”, *New German Critique* no 72 (1997): 69.

has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream; hence it may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems".<sup>148</sup>

Adorno's statement that writing poetry after Auschwitz was barbaric, is embedded in his larger critique of the culture industry and production, mass marketing and consumerability, during the phases of late capitalism. According to Adorno, through mass production and streamlining, cultural products become entirely homogenous in their attempt to naturalistically depict the world, as opposed to 'authentic art' which intends to transcend, rather than represent, reality. While the National Socialist concentration camp system and genocidal campaigns had been the subject of both documentation and art from their very conception, Adorno formulated his dictum before the depiction of National Socialism and its atrocities became the subject of popular mass culture in the 1960s and 1970s. A turning point in this development, termed variably the 'trivialisation', 'hollywoodisation' or 'Americanisation' of the Holocaust, was to be NBC's TV series *Holocaust* (1978), which sought to tell the entire historical development of the persecution and extermination of the European Jews through the example of a fictional German-Jewish family. Survivor Eli Wiesel (1928-2016) was one of the series' strongest critics, calling it "untrue, offensive, cheap ... a work of semi-fact and semi-fiction" and criticised the series for transforming "an ontological event into soap-opera".<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, translated by E. B. Ashton (London: Routledge, 1973), 362.

For a discussion of the reception history of Adorno's statement, in particular the transformation of meaning due to translation, and the seemingly contradictory implications of Adorno's last statement, see Antony Rowland, "Re-reading 'Impossibility' and 'Barbarism': Adorno and Post-Holocaust Poetics", in *Critical Survey* 99, no. 1 (1997): 57-69.

<sup>149</sup> Eli Wiesel, "The Trivialisation of the Holocaust", *New York Times*, 16. April 1978, accessed 05. November 2018, [www.nytimes.com/1978/04/16/archives/tv-view-trivializing-the-holocaust-semifact-and-semifiction-tv-view.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1978/04/16/archives/tv-view-trivializing-the-holocaust-semifact-and-semifiction-tv-view.html).

Wiesel not only distinguishes between the different modes of – acceptable – historical, factual documentation of this “ontological” event and the more untrustworthy fictionalisation of it, but also evokes the notion that with regards to this particular event, even more specific rules of representation apply:

We see naked women and children entering the gaschambers; we see their faces, we hear their moans as the doors are being shut, then – well, enough: why continue? To use special effects and gimmicks to describe the indescribable is to me morally objectionable. Worse: it is indecent. [...] I know: people will tell me that filmmaking has its own laws and its own demands. After all, similar techniques are being used for war movies and historical recreations. But the Holocaust is unique, not just another event.<sup>150</sup>

Wiesel thus emphasises that he objects to the series not because it is not “artistic enough” but because it lacks in authenticity; his critique is not solely directed against the specific form of this fictionalisation – as a melodrama, as a soap opera, as a mass-compatible product of popular culture – but questions the mode of fictionalisation as such. Ernst von Alphen notes this tendency throughout the history of representation of the persecution and extermination of the European Jews:

[...] the history of the Holocaust has always been radically reduced to the idea that it should be remembered and that historical modes of representation should be used exclusively to represent the Holocaust. Imaginative approaches of the Holocaust are suspect by definition, because they are considered as historically irresponsible. Favoured genres which are supposed to do the job of remembrance appropriately are documentaries, testimonies, diaries, in short genres whose function is unambiguously historical. Relating to other historical events imaginative genres like the historical novel, docudrama or history painting can be effective and are respected as such, in case of the Holocaust, however, these genres are met with suspicion.<sup>151</sup>

This clash of binary opposites between historical documentation and imaginative representation, combined with the question if Auschwitz could – and should – be visualised at all, is at the heart of another media event and the ensuing discussions surrounding it. The release of Steven Spielberg’s film *Schindler’s List* (1993) was

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<sup>150</sup> Wiesel, “The Trivialisation”.

<sup>151</sup> Ernst van Alphen, “Playing the Holocaust and Playing with the Holocaust”, in ‘*Holocaust’ Fiktion. Kunst jenseits der Authentizität*, ed. Iris Roebeling-Grau and Dirk Rupnow (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2015), 151.

accompanied by a heated debate considering its visualisation of atrocity and in particular the gas chamber, for the silver screen. Tim Cole points out that

In taking his cameras into the reconstructed gas chambers of Auschwitz, Spielberg demonstrates the distance in reflecting upon this event which lies between him and Wiesel. That distance is in some ways the distance between the first generation of 'Holocaust' survivors, and the second and third generations who are the cultural producers and consumers at the end of the twentieth century.<sup>152</sup>

Claude Lanzmann (1925-2018), director of the groundbreaking documentary *Shoah* (1985), was one of the fiercest critics of Spielberg's film, accusing it of failing to respect exactly that unique status already quoted by Wiesel in his rebuke of the TV-series *Holocaust*, and Spielberg of not reflecting at all both on his subject and his medium. Contrary to Spielberg, who filmed in black-and-white on location, and attempted to recreate the scenes as historically as possible, Lanzmann adhered to the almost biblical *Bilderverbot* and refuses to show any direct visuals of his subject matter in *Shoah*. This includes not only the recreation of material, but extends also to archival visual material. Instead, the documentary focuses on the traces left behind in the now and, in particular, the act of witnessing and remembering, and those who are in the position to do so in the film. However, this does not mean that there no images as such in *Shoah*, which, as Ranci  re points out, "like all other films, [...] shows us characters and situations. Like many others, it puts us straight into the setting of a poetic landscape".<sup>153</sup> Ranci  re continues that

*Shoah* is therefore not opposed to *Holocaust* as an art of the non-representable opposed to an art of representation. The rupture with the classical order of representation is not the advent of an art of the non-representable. [...] An anti-representative art is not an art that no longer represents. It is an art which is no longer limited in the choice of representable subjects or in the means of representation.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Cole, 1.

<sup>153</sup> Jacques Ranci  re, "The Ethical Turn of Aesthetics and Politics", *Critical Horizons* 7, no. 1 (2006): 13.

<sup>154</sup> Ranci  re, "The Ethical Turn", 14.

In an interview with German newspaper *Die Zeit* in 2013, Lanzmann notes that he “imagined that there would be a Before and After with *Shoah*. That the film would make it clear that there is the unshowable. And that images, staged images, but also thoughtlessly used archival images, destroy the conception of the inconceivable”.<sup>155</sup> Lanzmann is not the only one to position the forms of representation chosen in *Schindler’s List* and *Shoah* as irreconcilable binary opposites. Such an approach, however, runs not only in danger of “radically reducing” the options of artistic engagement, but also, as Miriam Bratu Hansen points out in her discussion of the two films, diminishes the very dialectic at heart of the issue – the struggle of how to represent, how to engage – into a fixed and rigid good/bad binary:

The critique of *Schindler’s List* in high-modernist terms, however, especially in Lanzmann’s version, reduces the dialectics of the problem of representing the unrepresentable to a binary opposition of showing or not showing – rather than casting it, as one might, as an issue of competing representations and competing modes or representation.<sup>156</sup>

In this sense, and entirely regardless of the artistic or historic value of the enormous amount of the mass (or, indeed, high) culture productions that have engaged with National Socialist atrocities in the last few decades, there is an intrinsic value in the debate about those productions, their form, and form of representation – a dynamic process of great importance to the process of remembrance as such, which would be all but impossible if artists had heeded Lanzmann’s interdictum. In his introduction to the anthology *The Theatre of the Holocaust*, Robert Skloot points out that

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<sup>155</sup> Claude Lanzmann, “‘Niemand war in Auschwitz’”, interview by Katja Nicodemus, *Die Zeit* 46, 07. November 2013, accessed 13. January 2018, <https://www.zeit.de/2013/46/regisseur-claude-lanzmann/komplettansicht>.

<sup>156</sup> Miriam Bratu Hansen, “‘Schindler’s List’ Is Not ‘Shoah’: The Second Commandment, Popular Modernism and Public Memory”, *Critical Inquiry* 22, no 2 (1996): 302.

Through such debate, we can distinguish three major and interconnected questions concerning the relationship of artists to the Holocaust. First, is it possible for the Holocaust to be dealt with in works of art? Second, if it can be dealt with, will the experience be cheapened, trivialized, or exploited in the treatment it is given? And third, what moral responsibility do artists have in taking up the Holocaust theme?<sup>157</sup>

Those questions, and how they affected the greater form of *Flieder*, will be the subject of the following section.

### ***Traces, Tropes, Translation: Forming 'Flieder'***

The Holocaust exceeds the parameters of our frames of reference. The horrific events represented by the term Holocaust are so inconceivable that [...] they can never be spoken, understood or ameliorated. In regard to representing the Holocaust, then, tropes are a way of mapping what cannot be mapped.<sup>158</sup>

Vivian M. Patraka

When I had finished my first stage of research for this project after a few months, I returned to the writing board with my head filled with the voices of the survivors of the Altenburg and Meuselwitz camps, whose testimonies I had accessed thanks to the *Visual History Archive*. Based on this research I wrote a few scenes, set in a New York kitchen, between two elderly Jewish sisters and a young woman. Those scenes were about cooking food and 'cooking up' (contradicting) narratives, a polyphony of languages, witnessing and remembering, accompanied by a chorus of lost voices recounting the experiences of the camps in Altenburg and Meuselwitz. When I presented those scenes to my supervisory panel, the response was essentially: "We have heard it all before – it's generic 'Holocaust writing'". With that feedback in mind I firstly returned to Germany for more research into the specifics of the two camps in Altenburg and Meuselwitz – as detailed in Part I of this commentary – and then began to gradually draft the narrative which came to drive *Flieder*. The

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<sup>157</sup> Skloot, "Introduction", *The Theatre of the Holocaust Volume 1*, 11.

<sup>158</sup> Patraka, *Spectacular Suffering*, 15.



content of the play – its characters, the historical events that I translated into its action, the reversal at the end – were thus fixed relatively early in a first draft, shifting the focus from a representation of the historical event to the question of how to engage with such a past.

The content of *Flieder* itself is centred in the topic of this excursus, and intrinsically tied to the discourse surrounding the issues of representability – in many ways, the entire plot is about the unrepresentability of “this past”. The suppression of history as a reaction not only to the responsibility of past atrocities but also as a reaction to the sheer terror of the “conception of the inconceivable” is at the heart of the identity switch of Else and Lore, and Else’s ousting of Lore out to the margins of their community in the figure of the Old Woman. Vivian M. Patraka points out that “the story of trying to represent and make meaning out of the Holocaust itself, both futile and inevitable, is an endless narrative”<sup>159</sup> and this observation is crucial for the dynamic between Andrea and Clara. Both of them, in the span of nearly 30 years, have to go through exactly the same trauma and discovery with regards to their family matriarch’s identity, their legacy and family history. As Andrea hints at in various moments of the play (F/L, 71, 95) and reveals in her final monologue (F/L, 124-128), it was her discovery of her mother’s deception at the eve of the peaceful revolution in 1989 that triggered her later suicide attempt. By then deciding to keep this revelation from Clara, in an effort to keep her daughter’s sense of self and moral alignment intact, Andrea inadvertently also subjects Clara to experiencing the exact same shattering of self. Their relationship is therefore crucial to the dramaturgical

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<sup>159</sup> Patraka, *Spectacular Suffering*, 21.

exploration of the notion of this past and its representations as a truth possibly too traumatic to bear.

However, the issue of how to present that content, how to form it, proved to be much more time and thought consuming, and I came to revise and rework that first draft for another two years. The point in time ‘2015’ became an important anchor for me in this endeavour – it was the year in which I wrote my first draft, it was a year of commemorative events – and I wanted to hold on to this specificity of the time, and the place, in order to avoid writing a ‘general Holocaust experience’. When discussing *Schindler’s List*, Miriam Bratu Hansen also remarks on over-familiarisation with certain “images and tropes” and their effect:

The film’s ‘reality effect’, to use Roland Barthes’s phrase, has as much to do with the way it recycles images and tropes from other Holocaust films, especially European ones; but as a classical narrative, it does so without quotation marks, pretending to be telling the story for the first time.<sup>160</sup>

Hansen already points to the distance that exists between the place, the event, and the image that has been formed of that place and event, through its numerous representations, retellings, remembering. I noted in my own writing process how difficult it was to form the play *without* making use of such recycled “images and tropes”. In her examination of theatre and the representation of fascism and genocide, *Spectacular Suffering*, Vivian M. Patraka notes that “tropes constitute the bridge between art and the events of fascism and the Holocaust”<sup>161</sup>. She describes, for example, how Lanzmann uses the “trope of translation” in *Shoah*, as does Leeny Sack in her autobiographical play *The Survivor and the Translator*, to emphasise the difficulties of representing the persecution and extermination of the European Jews

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<sup>160</sup> Hansen, “‘Schindler’s List’ Is Not ‘Shoah’”, 299.

<sup>161</sup> Patraka, *Spectacular Suffering*, 23.

and the experiences of the survivors. Other ‘tropes’ include the complexities of language, witnessing, food and hunger. Through employing such tropes, Patraka argues, “the plays take on a self-reflexive quality, calling attention to those textual features enacting the struggle with narrative in relation to presenting this history.”<sup>162</sup> All of these tropes are also utilised in my play, however, I decided to use “quotation marks” around them, in order to avoid “pretending to be telling the story for the first time” and to move more into the direction of the “self-reflexive quality” described by Patraka. Those quotation marks can take different forms, for example the use of film, as I described in the previous chapter, and will engage with as well in the second part of the commentary, to actively quote from a pool of shared visuals like *Schindler’s List* that form the image of ‘the concentration camp’. The trope of food, hunger, cooking and nurturing in the historical part of the narrative is bracketed by the various levels of engagement with food – from Clara’s and Andrea’s obsessive relationship with it to Mike’s self-reflective questioning of Clara “you want to get yourself down so much you can be an extra in the next Holocaust flick, that it? You think you can somehow cleanse yourself of historical guilt by making size zero?” (F/L, 111).

The use of language and translation is an essential trope in my play. There are not only different languages on stage, but Clara also actively translates her (German) grandmother’s experiences into English and, within this process, also increasingly interprets them to fit into her own moral universe. The bilinguality of the play is therefore critical for the form of the play – its entailed dangers of not

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<sup>162</sup> Patraka, *Spectacular Suffering*, 23. For the whole discussion, see 23-34.

understanding or misinterpreting adding a crucial sense of instability to the narrative. In a similar way, the scene titles could be utilised in a production. Titles like the deceptively universal “Mothers and Daughters”, which at first seem to generalise the specific relationship between Andrea and Clara, but indeed very consciously jars with the many other mother and daughter pairings in the play, can also add to this sense of instability. Originally, I only used the titles to structure my material, without thinking of their being included in a possible performance – indeed, I was opposed to the idea at first, since I felt that using them as titles in a production could prove harmful to the sense of fluidity, synchrony, and the dream-like atmosphere I wanted to achieve. Similar to my note about the occasional use of naturalistic staging practices in the “author’s note”, however, if used in “quotation marks” echoing practices like Brecht’s use of titles and epigraphs to achieve distance, the inclusion of the stage titles in a production could also add to the “self-reflexive quality” and “endless narrative” that Patraha describes and I also wanted to achieve in *Flieder*.

My intention in the treatment of all of these tropes, as well as during the forming and re-forming of the play as such, was to foreground the secondary nature of my engagement with the subject and point to the complex and difficult history of representing this particular historical event. Susanne Rohr already described this shift of focus in 2002 in her essay on the ‘Americanisation of the Holocaust’ and new forms of its representation:

Point of reference is no longer the Holocaust as historical event, but the discourse of its unrepresentability. The language in which this transatlantic discourse takes place, is neither the ‘syntax of silence’ nor the howling of the Holocaust, but a third thing between them:

the meta-language, which wants to reflect the process of translation between the two. And this translation process, like a resistance, leaves its traces in the text.<sup>163</sup>

The translation process in *Flieder* leaves various traces in the text. In particular in the first third of the text, for example, there is a certain resistance to naturalistic immersion in the depicted action through the doubling of film and stage, with the actors often merely edging towards the representation on stage, rather than embodying it – they observe the film, feed or voice lines, only partially act out what is shown. This ‘edging towards’ representation is also evident in the setting of the play, which takes place in a broken and dreamlike structure which is neither a naturalistic replica of the historical camps or a truthful version of a contemporary German town but a broken, unreal inbetween-space that is full of echoes and whispers.

Since the entire action is channelled and filtered through Clara, the discourse of the play is indeed “neither the ‘syntax of silence’ nor the howling of the Holocaust”, but a careful examination of the redemptive narrative conveyed to Clara by her grandmother. This seductive narrative takes on an almost all-encompassing drive – similar to developments noted with regards to films like *Schindler’s List* or within German memory culture, which I will discuss in more depth in following chapters – but it is also challenged and resisted within the play. Thus, for example, Clara inserts the poem “Whence cometh such warmth, so tender?” by Marina Tsevetseva (1892-1941), which Clara quotes in the very first scene and Mike teaches in New York during her absence (F/L, 7-9, 64), into the love story between her grandmother and

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<sup>163</sup> Susanne Rohr, “‘Playing’ Nazis, ‘mirroring evil’: Die Amerikanisierung des Holocausts und neue Formen seiner Repräsentation“, *Amerikastudien / American Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (2002): 548. (539-553)

Andrey. Repeatedly, when Andrey quotes from this poem while faced with Lore, Mike breaks from this role and attempts to hold the action and to question Clara as the author of this infringement (F/L, 41, 58, 99). Similarly, Andrea resists Clara's narrative-making, for example, when she reveals that Clara's romantic "good story" about how she lost her virginity in the rain after her prom (F/L, 15, 29) was nothing but wishful fabrication (F/L, 93). Finally, there are small 'errors' in the narrative itself, which become visualised, for example, when the film on screen becomes disintegrated and fragmented at times (F/L, 23) or when the action on screen is looped and thus locked, leading to different interpretations shown on screen and stage (F/L, 37). Such errors also occur on a textual level, for example, Clara repeatedly announces that her grandmother didn't know "the Russian man's name" – because Else indeed did not overhear Andrey's name, contrary to the other names of the group, only referring to him as "Ivan" – yet Clara names him 'Andrey' in the same breath (F/L, 49) or when Clara narrates Adzi's survival as she is killed (F/L, 91-92) and the lucky escape of Adzi, Aniko, Pepik and Sulaika as Else murders the latter two (F/L, 121-124). Crucially, I decided not to make one medium – narration, stage or screen – the 'correct' one throughout, with the others being the faulty ones. Instead each of the three can be as faulty or right as the others – it is their contradictions and corroborations that create the fabric of the text. Even though Clara attempts to streamline Patra's "endless narrative" – just as I did, as playwright, when I streamlined the various source material into one overarching narrative – there are thus traces left in her narrative that hint to a multitude of experiences and

meanings beneath the surface of Clara's 'official' telling of the story, and, crucially, it is Mike who comes closest to verbalising this during the execution of Andrey.

### ***Scenes of Violence: A Triangle***

While the question of the form of the play – the *how* rather than the *what* – has thus been an important and consistent one for the entire writing process of *Flieder*, it has taken a special precedence with regard to the depiction of violence in my play. The issues surrounding 'scenes of violence' and their representation on stage or in film are not confined to depictions of the persecution and extermination of the European Jews as such. From the discussions about 'torture porn' regarding the more graphic violence in the HBO fantasy series *Game of Thrones* (2011-) to the debate in British media whether the rape of the popular character of Anna in ITV's history drama *Downton Abbey* in 2013 was an accurate portrayal of a social reality or a cheap and voyeuristic plot device, the question of whether, and how, to depict violence, in particular sexualised violence, often centres on similar questions about respect, voyeurism, and the relationship between the artistic (and artificial) product and its real-life equivalent. However, due to the unique status that the persecution and extermination of the European Jews is often given in history as a mysterious and unimaginable event, those more general issues are amplified and highly loaded when it comes to 'Holocaust Drama'. I take issue with some implications of this argument, which I see in danger of turning the genocide committed by very real human beings in very real and specific sociohistorical circumstances into an almost transcendent act of inexplicable evil. It is also important to point out that *Flieder* is not set in Auschwitz, Buchenwald or Sobibor. While most certainly connected to

these places of industrialised death and part of the same concentration camp system and ideological and administrative setting, the camps in Altenburg and Meuselwitz did not have gas chambers or crematoria. And still, the question of how to depict on stage the moments of violence that have been committed in the camps in Altenburg and Meuselwitz and remembered, described, narrated by survivors and historians, has been the most difficult of the entire project. There are three ‘scenes of violence’ in particular taking place during the course of the play – the attempted rape of Aniko, the murder of Agnieszka, and the brutal execution of Andrey – which I felt very strongly I had to depict on stage without a potentially voyeuristic and defining naturalism.

In the attempted rape scene, as I discussed previously, I tried to allow the scene to be a “third thing” for consideration by all involved parties through the use of the doubled film and stage action. The murder of Agnieszka takes place in darkness, while Clara narrates her survival. To some extent, I make use of established theatrical forms and ‘tropes’ in both cases. In the former, I also create distance through means of estrangement, quoting Brecht’s method of *Verfremdung*, while hoping to be somewhat less didactic in my approach so that the scene of violence can indeed be Ranci re’s “third thing”. In the latter, I refer not only to the assertion that “to describe the indescribable is [...] morally objectionable”<sup>164</sup>, but also to the practice in classical Greek drama not to show acts of violence, but have them occur off-stage and be re-narrated by messengers – a tactic that is also relevant to plays

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<sup>164</sup> Wiesel, “Trivialisation”.



by Charlotte Delbo and Elfriede Jelinek which I engage with in more detail in the second part of this commentary.

In many ways, the scene depicting the attempted rape of Aniko is exemplary of the themes of this excursus. Its genesis, as I have already discussed in a previous chapter, moved from a carefully staged, but nonetheless rather naturalistic depiction to the inclusion of the film to make not the rape itself the focus of the scene, but the depiction of the rape. To include this scene was important to me for many reasons, not least because I did not wish to perpetuate the notion that rape did not happen in German concentration camps (which was the message communicated to me in school, and which I have discussed in more detail in the previous chapter). However, the question of representability is perhaps never so acute as when it comes to the depiction of sexualised violence, which led me to exercise excessive control over the gaze on the nude, violated female body – perhaps more so than is customary with regards to the stage (Sarah Kane's rather brief instructions regarding the rape of Ian by the Soldier in *Blasted* come to mind). Thus, for example, I imply in the stage directions (F/L, 73) that Aniko is nude under her clothes, even though some survivors of the Altenburg camp recall having been giving underwear, as I discuss in more detail in chapter 6. However, in my professional experience as a dramaturg, I have often found the staging of women in underwear to end up being much more titillating than if the actress had appeared simply in the nude – her state of undress functioning in a suggestive way very similar to the trope of the dishevelled rape victim in the plays of the English Restoration period. Additionally, as stated previously, the nude female body is never seen fully during the assault, only in the brief moment of

solidarity between Else and Aniko. Contrary, the actress portraying Aniko undresses to be fully nude on stage on her own – outside of the narrative space of the film. Her nudity, and the connotations it entails ranging from vulnerability to a reclaiming of the body, offer an additional comment on the issues of visualising the violent assault in the film.

I have already discussed the genesis of the scene of Andrey's public execution in a previous chapter. Following the outlined triangle of scenes here, in this last scene of very public violence, I might initially appear to break with theatrical convention by using a mode of almost postdramatic presentation by including the source material, which seems to constitute a stark contrast to the rest of the play. In one way, this impression is deliberate – I wanted to reduce dramatic representation in this moment to a minimum, as all other attempts of structuring this scene felt gratuitous and voyeuristic to the extreme. This break in form is therefore also a culmination of the forms of the other two scenes and the question of how to represent such violence: Maybe the correct answer is simply not to. Secondly, however, this scene also points to one of the issues at heart of the play as a whole – the highly complicated and compromised nature of Clara's narrative and the role of 'secondary witnessing' with regard to the descendants of perpetrators, as discussed by Christian Schneider:

The secondary witness who descends from perpetrators, enters with the model of secondary witnessing into another genealogy. He is initiated as a victim and at the same time is made speaker for the victims. This is the greatest wish of many descendants of perpetrators.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Christian Schneider, "Ansteckende Geschichte. Überlegungen zur Fiktionalisierung der Erinnerung", in *'Holocaust' Fiktion*, 30.

Clara insists on initiating herself as “speaker for the victims” and allows no other narrative, no other voice. The scene thus also has the important function to momentarily open the stage to a world and a history outside of Clara’s head and her all-consuming narrative – something that has already been hinted at in the discrepancy between depiction and narration of Agnieszka’s murder – and to indicate the voices that are silenced and drowned out by Clara’s. It is also important that it is Mike, who exists outside of the narrative universe Clara creates, to engineer this act of prying open. Mike’s more distanced position as a black American man can also be read as a comment on the issues surrounding the status of uniqueness with regards to National Socialist atrocities that I have discussed at the beginning of this excursus. Here again, the year 2015 is somewhat crucial, as the acceleration of the Black Lives Matter movement in the US coincided with my writing process. Without wishing to labour the point, or indeed, impose a view on the audience, the position of Mike in the play and within this scene, can offer the spectators a choice to consider other discourses regarding the unrepresentability of atrocity without forcing it on them.

Above, I have stated that I ‘initially’ appear to break with theatrical convention with the change in tone and form of this scene. ‘Initially’ because, as Vivian Patraka points out in her discussion of tropes in ‘Holocaust Drama’, playwrights juxtapose and avoid the use of tropes “to prevent cutting down the history of atrocity to assimilable size”:

For example, in the middle of Joan Schenkar’s *The Last of Hitler*, a play characterized by the quantity and flux of its tropes, the two broadcasters begin to read statistics, noting European country, number of Jews killed, and percentage of the Jewish population that represented.

The baldness of this citation seems a resistance on the part of the playwright to clothing this facticity in figurative language.<sup>166</sup>

To make use of, and allow for this jarring quality to be present on stage was to me to only way to include this scene which was otherwise frankly impossible for me to write. The contradiction of having a scene that is impossible to write yet absolutely essential to include eventually turned this scene into the fulcrum of the play, its impossibility making it the dramaturgical turning point. The execution of Andrey changes everything: the bond between Lore and Else is shattered beyond repair, as is the relationship between Clara and Mike. From then on, the careful edging towards representation and the doubling between stage and screen is equally halted – Clara’s all-encompassing narrative takes literally centre stage unchecked until the Old Woman steps in and ends the charade.

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During the forming of *Flieder*, I was always consciously, as well as in a more clouded way, in dialogue with and influenced by other works, memorials, historiographies and countless other ways of engaging with National Socialism and its atrocities of the past 70 years. As Susanne Rohr points out “[t]he Holocaust has become its own imagination space, a fictional, medialised Holocaustuniverse, a reservoir of images, which are used by the literary imagination just as it uses the images of other imagination spaces.”<sup>167</sup> In the next part of this commentary, I engage with some instances of this “reservoir of images”, how they have influenced *Flieder*, and how my own works fits within this “fictional, medialised Holocaustuniverse”.

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<sup>166</sup> Patraha, *Spectacular Suffering*, 33.

<sup>167</sup> Rohr, “Playing Nazis”, 550-551.

## **II. THE MAKING OF A NARRATIVE: ‘HOLOCAUST DRAMA’ AND THE DRAFTING OF MEMORIES.<sup>168</sup>**

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<sup>168</sup> Parts of chapters 1, 2 and 4 were presented in the paper “The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: The Representations of Good Germans, Bad Germans, and German Victimhood in Dramatic Narratives about the Third Reich” at *The Ever Present Past: How Public History Informs the Present* conference, organised by Sarah Marshall, Lewis Charles Smith, Jessica Fure, and Michael Sewell, University of Essex, 14<sup>th</sup> October 2017.

The term myth of the 'Holocaust' – for all its problematic connotations – is useful for distinguishing between the historical event – the Holocaust – and the representation of that event – the myth of the 'Holocaust'. It is a distinction noted by the writer Lawrence Langer who points out 'the two planes on which the event we call the Holocaust takes place in human memory – the historical and the rhetorical, the way it was and its verbal reformation, or deformation, by later commentators'. [...] The myth of the 'Holocaust' may have drawn on the historical Holocaust, but it now exists apart from that historical event.<sup>169</sup>

Tim Cole

For a long time now, one can speak of a 'second history' of National Socialism. By now, it is much longer than those twelve years of the 'Third Reich' and has pushed itself between our present and that time, which only its own debates have rendered into history.<sup>170</sup>

Peter Reichel

The beginning of the phenomenon which Peter Reichel named the '*zweite Geschichte*', "the second history of National Socialism", is to be found in the immediate aftermath of World War II. The liberation of the German concentration camps constituted not only a rescue mission for the advancing allied armies, but also an opportunity to collect evidence of German atrocities, in the very early years to convict the German population of their collective guilt and to prove at the American and British home front that their war effort had been justified. Camera teams accompanying the advancing armies created a wealth of graphic films and photographs of the camps immediately after their liberation. This material was used in the US American documentary *Death Mills* (1944-45), directed by Billy Wilder and shown as *Todesmühlen* in Germany in 45/46 to shock and educate, as well as the English *German Concentration Camp Factual Survey* (1945), directed by Sidney Bernstein and Alfred Hitchcock. The production of the latter dragged on, and, as a result of the advance of the Cold War and the quickly redefined role of (West) Germany not as enemy but ally, the film was not completed or widely distributed until

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<sup>169</sup> Cole, *Images of the Holocaust*, 4.

<sup>170</sup> Peter Reichel, *Erfundene Erinnerung – Weltkrieg und Judenmord in Film und Theater* (Munich: C. Hanser Verlag, 2004), 9.

2015.<sup>171</sup> Peter Reichel notes about these early documentaries that “[t]he photos and films only ever show the result of persecution and extermination, but never the prehistory, the process. And they showed – and show until today – the victims from the perspective of the perpetrators: As anonymous, dehumanised objects, as bodily remains, but not as human individuals with their own identities and history”.<sup>172</sup>

While these Allied documentaries were outraged accusation, the first German feature film after the war was more conciliatory. Wolfgang Staudte’s *Die Mörder sind unter uns* (*The Murderers are among Us*, 1946) depicts the relationship between Susanne Wallner, a concentration camp survivor, and Dr Mertens, an unwilling participant in National Socialist atrocity against the backdrop of a destroyed Berlin. Unlike the ‘living corpses’ of the Allied documentaries, Susanne Wallner, portrayed by Hildegard Knef, seems to have left the camp physically unharmed, radiating with beauty and positivity, while, similarly to the Allied documentaries, her history before the camp is never fully disclosed. The focus is on Mertens and his struggles, the source of his moral dilemma shown in flashbacks, while Wallner’s past remains undisclosed and she never speaks of the camp, the fictionalised survivor of the concentration camp system remaining as voiceless as most of the actual survivors shown in the Allied material.<sup>173</sup>

To speak, to bear witness, however, was of prime importance for many survivors. Amongst the most canonised and important memoirs are Primo Levi’s *If*

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<sup>171</sup> See also: André Singer’s documentary about the recovery and completion of *German Concentration Camp Factual Survey* by the British Imperial War Museum, *Night Will Fall* (2014).

<sup>172</sup> Reichel *Erfundene Erinnerung*, 166. For a detailed discussion of the use and impact of Allied ‘atrocity films’ in early post-war Germany, see 162-166.

<sup>173</sup> A fate shared by her neighbour, the presumable Jewish optician Mondschein, who waits for news of his son, and dies just before they arrive.

*This Is a Man* (1947) and Elie Wiesel's *La Nuit* (1958). Both survivors started to write in the aftermath of the liberation, although their texts were not published, or not published to wider attention, until the late 1950s.<sup>174</sup> *The Diary of Anne Frank*, first published in 1947 by her father in the Netherlands, and consequently edited and re-edited numerous times, was quickly to become one of the most read texts of World War II.<sup>175</sup> What Anne Frank's edited diary was to West German audiences – a defining narrative of the persecution and extermination of the European Jews, with considerable conciliatory potential – was Bruno Aptiz's novel *Nackt unter Wölfen* (*Naked Among Wolves*, 1958) about anti-fascist resistance in Buchenwald, with considerable socialist potential, for the audiences in the GDR: both became standard school reading, and were turned into successful films.

Thus, the immediate aftermath of the end of the war and the 1950s marked a number of literary publications, documentary and feature films, as well as the beginning of the speaking out of survivors themselves, about the experiences of National Socialist atrocity. Theatre, however, remained suspiciously quiet on the topic.<sup>176</sup> In West Germany, playwrights like Wolfgang Borchert or Carl Zuckmayer engaged more with the German experience of living under a dictatorship and its consequences than engaging artistically with the responsibilities of genocide, while

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<sup>174</sup> In his contemplations on the nature of giving testimony, of bearing witness, *Remnants of Auschwitz* (*Homo Sacer III*), the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben considers the ethical and political meaning of extermination and the possibilities of the human understanding of what had happened, examining the testimony and literature of survivors such as Levi and Wiesel. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer III. Remnants of Auschwitz. The Witness and the Archive*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (New York: Zone Books, 1999).

<sup>175</sup> see Reichel *Erfundene Erinnerung*, 145

<sup>176</sup> On the relative lack of theatrical representation in the 1950s, and in particular the importance of Anne Frank's *Diary* in both West and East Germany, see also: Gene A. Plunka, "Staging the Banality of Evil: Donald Freed's *The White Crow: Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Cecil Taylor's *Good*, and Peter Barnes's *Laughter!*", *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 27, no 1 (Fall 2012): 53.



also, in the 1950s, German classics and light entertainment were stage favourites – the conservative theatre aesthetics of that time a far cry from the experimental and political theatre culture of the 1920s. In East Germany, the theatre of the 1950s was still dominated largely by the work of Bertolt Brecht and his ensemble. In West Germany, this should change drastically with the onset of the 1960s – Rolf Hochhuth's *Der Stellvertreter* (*The Deputy*, 1963), about the involvement of the Catholic church in the extermination of the European Jews, and Peter Weiss' *Die Ermittlung* (*The Investigation*, 1965) about the Frankfurt Auschwitz process put the genocidal atrocities of the past German regime centre-stage, sparking controversy and indicating a cultural change that would cumulate in the events of 1968.<sup>177</sup>

The 1960s also marked the beginning of what Tim Cole, following the lead of Lawrence Langer, termed the “myth of the Holocaust” – indicating with the history of engagement with the ‘Holocaust’, not the ‘myth of the Holocaust’ used by Holocaust deniers. In the 1970s, popular culture eventually claimed its place in the “second history of National Socialism”, or, rather, in the “myth of the ‘Holocaust’” and made it mass-compatible: Marvin Chomsky's TV-series *Holocaust*, first shown on the American network NBC in 1978, turned the experiences of a fictional Jewish family experiencing persecution and extermination into a successful melodrama – with room for advert breaks. While many critics were appalled and feared a trivialisation

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<sup>177</sup> For the importance of the 1960s in German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with or mastering the past), see Reichel, *Erfundene Erinnerung*, 146-148. Hochhuth's and Weiss' plays, along with those of Heinar Kipphardt, of the 1960s are usually referred to indiscriminately as *Dokumentartheater*, ‘documentary theatre’. While all are based on extensive research, they make use of these documents very differently. For a discussion of this term, in relation to Kipphardt's work of the 1960s and 1980s, and the changing implications of the term ‘documentary’, see David Barnett, “Documentation and its Discontents: The Case of Heinar Kipphardt”, *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 37, no. 1 (2001): 272-285.

of the past, the series had significant impact. For the first time, the events of the persecution and extermination of the European Jews were represented for a mass-audience, by combining fact and fiction, interweaving perpetrators' and victims' stories, and attempting to represent the entire history – the whole mass of the victims – through the exemplification of two families. The assimilated German-Jewish Weiss-family comes to represent all the stages of the Jewish persecution: After teenage daughter Anna is raped by drunk Nazis and becomes mentally unstable, she is institutionalised, eventually becoming one of the first victims of the experimentation leading to the gas chambers in which most of her family are later murdered. Meanwhile the SS officer Erik Dorf, a former patient of Josef Weiss, is made to participate in mass shootings, because he argued for a more humane way of murder, and later takes part in the Wannsee conference. Dorf, however, never becomes a clear cut, simplified villain, but is rather an unwilling careerist and sympathiser. Neither are all the Jewish characters shown as meekly going to their fate: Josef's brother joins the Ghetto resistance and dies fighting, while Rudi, the teenage son of the Weiss' family, becomes a partisan. The only direct family member to survive, Rudi decides to emigrate to Palestine at the end of the series. The tempered depiction of the Germans and the pro-Zionist message of the fighting Jews returning to their homeland, seems to also cater to contemporary sentiments of potential audiences in Germany and Israel. And while the series caused rampant debate about the question of representability, moral aesthetics and the trivialisation of the extermination of the European Jews – with Elie Wiesel as one of its strongest opponents – the strategy of not alienating its audiences worked at least in West

Germany. When *Holocaust* was screened in January 1979 it marked a turning point in the willingness of the wider public to engage with their immediate past. Following the broadcast, tens of thousands called the provided service hotline to express their feelings.<sup>178</sup>

It did not, however, put the debates about the representation of Auschwitz on the big or small screen to rest. In 1993, Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* equally fictionalised events of the extermination of the European Jews for a world-wide audience. Both *Holocaust* and *Schindler's List* contributed to the pool of, what Reichel named, *Erfundene Erinnerung*, 'imagined memory' about National Socialist genocide.<sup>179</sup> By now, this pool includes hundreds of cinema and TV films, documentaries, novels, stage plays, and I would even add, to some extent at least, testimonies and memoirs.

In the following chapters, I will engage with a selection of these sources which impacted on my writing process. I am more concerned with the notion of narrative-making with regards to constructing or subverting master-narratives, and how these impacted on my own imagination than genre, discussing film as well as theatre. In "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly", I will consider the depiction of German

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<sup>178</sup> For a concise discussion of the introduction of *Holocaust* into German TV culture and its impact, see Reichel, *Erfundene Erinnerung*, 250-262; for a contemporary discussion of the impact of *Holocaust*, and a comparison to more self-proclaimed Left and documentary theatre, in particular, Weiss' *Investigation* and Hochhuth's *Deputy*, see also: Andreas Huyssen, "The Politics of Identification: "Holocaust" and West German Drama", *New German Critique* no. 19, Special Issue 1: Germans and Jews (Winter 1980): 117-136. Tim Cole compared the impact of *Holocaust* on Jewish American viewers to that of *Roots* on black Americans, Cole, *Images of the Holocaust*, 12. For the impact of films like *Holocaust*, in particular when used in school settings, see also Welzer et al., *Opa war kein Nazi*, 131-133.

<sup>179</sup> Reichel sees the success of *Schindler's List* in the "second-degree emotionalisation" it offers to the young generation, and a (dubious) move from the prehistory of National Socialism to the "overcoming of evil", history wrapped up in a Hollywood-Happy-Ending. Reichel, *Erfundene Erinnerung*, 157.

perpetrators and bystanders, as well as the notion of the ‘good’ German in a number of German and English-language films and plays, amongst others *Schindler’s List* and *The Investigation*. In “He Won’t Shoot You” I will examine the representation of women in depictions of the concentration camp system such as Charlotte Delbo’s 1966 play *Who Will Carry the Word?* and the 2008 film adaptation of Bernhard Schlink’s novel *Der Vorleser* (*The Reader*, 1995). In “With Bare Hands” I will focus mostly on film, mainly the two cinematic adaptations of Apitz’ *Naked among Wolves* from 1963 and 2015, as well as the two 1998 films *Life is Beautiful* and *Train of Life*, before discussing the role of agency and transgression both in my play and in the testimonies, it is based on. Finally, in “Kein Vergeben, Kein Vergessen”, I will locate my play within today’s German memory culture and discuss the visibility of National Socialist atrocity in German culture and landscape.

## 5. The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: The Representation of Good Germans, Bad Germans and Bystanders.

The World War – that was Hitler’s war, more or less forced upon the Germans and the world. The Wehrmacht – that was the brave, long-suffering, industrious, dutiful, decent German soldiers, in a word, the ‘real soldier’ on the one, and the evil Nazi on the other hand. On the screen, he appeared throughout not in the field grey of the Wehrmacht, but in the threatening-daunting black of the SS uniform. And since one needed the Nazis as a backdrop for the non-Nazis to present themselves even more favourably, the murder of the Jews could not be covered up entirely either.<sup>180</sup>

Peter Reichel

[...] Spielberg has in effect repositioned the terms of the Holocaust ‘story’ away from those favoured by Hilberg and others – the Holocaust encompassing essentially ‘perpetrators’, ‘victims’, and ‘bystanders’ – and has placed the emphasis squarely on ‘rescuers’ and ‘survivors’. *Schindler’s List*, after all, is a Holocaust film that focuses chiefly on the Jews who do not die at the hands of the Nazis but who, on the contrary, are actually saved by a Nazi who undergoes a moral conversion to goodness.<sup>181</sup>

Alvin H. Rosenfeld

Early depictions of German perpetrators of atrocity tend to show the “evil”, sadistic Nazi, as Peter Reichel points out, usually in SS uniform and equally usually distinct from the remaining German population. In Staudte’s *Murderers Are Among Us*, the military doctor Martens and the camp survivor Wallner are equal sufferers of the system, with Martens’ pain even more foregrounded than Wallner’s. His former superior Brückner, who had ordered the assassination of more than 100 Polish civilians, is shown as an utterly unlikable individual and war profiteer seemingly without any conscience, albeit not as the sadistic SS officer mentioned above. Those, and their deeds, were not only depicted on screen, but also by an extensive focus of the media during war trials, for example on the “Beautiful Beast” of Belsen,

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<sup>180</sup> Peter Reichel, *Erfundene Erinnerung*, 21f.

<sup>181</sup> Alvin H. Rosenfeld, “The Americanisation of the Holocaust”, in *Thinking about the Holocaust: After Half a Century*, ed. Alvin H. Rosenfeld (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 139.

Irma Grese, who was “sensationalised” by Western media, fascinated by the combination of her good looks and brutal crimes.<sup>182</sup>

This pattern of “evil” perpetrators and more or less innocent bystanders was changed dramatically through the international media event of Adolf Eichmann’s trial in 1961 in Jerusalem. Eichmann’s refusal to appear as anything but a bureaucratic clerk who just happened to have been deeply involved in the extermination of six million people challenged the image of the “evil” Nazi and caused Hannah Arendt to coin the term “banality of evil”. At the time of publication, Arendt was attacked for her depiction in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, because she highlighted aspects of Jewish complicity in the genocide as well as because of her discussion of Eichmann’s banality and her take on him and his deeds not as a manifestation of metaphysical “evil” but as an explainable process.<sup>183</sup> Amongst other criteria, she points to Eichmann’s class-based inferiority complex and his reliance on the judgment of “good society”, for example after the events of the Wannsee Conference:

[Eichmann’s] conscience was indeed set at rest when he saw the zeal and eagerness with which ‘good society’ everywhere reacted as he did. He did not need to ‘close his ears to the voice of conscience,’ as the judgement had it, not because he had none, but because his conscience spoke with a ‘respectable voice’, with the voice of the respectable society around him. That there were no voices from the outside to arouse his conscience was one of Eichmann’s points, and it was the task of the prosecution to prove that this was not so, that there were voices he could have listened to, and that, anyhow, he had done his work with a zeal far beyond the call of duty.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> See also Sarti, *Women and Nazis*, 121.

<sup>183</sup> The question of Jewish complicity is central to Harold and Edith Lieberman’s play *Throne of Straw* [1972] about Mordechai Rumkowski and the Lodz ghetto. Harold and Edith Lieberman, *Throne of Straw*, in *Theatre of the Holocaust, Volume 1*, 113-197.

<sup>184</sup> Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report*, 126.

Arendt's concept of the "banality of evil" has become a household word, and, ironically, by now seems to occasionally dominate the discourse about the depiction and motivation of perpetrators of National Socialist atrocity.

As Klaus-Dietmar Henke points out, Arendt describes the motivation of one perpetrator out of many: to cast the "type Eichmann" as the new prototype of perpetrator would be just as one-dimensional as the "evil" Nazi had been.<sup>185</sup> Yet, Gene A. Plunka notes that "[t]he Europeans would prefer to have portrayed Eichmann as a monster – it is reassuring to claim that only monsters commit horrific crimes. Arendt, however, focuses on Eichmann's normality – he was exactly like people in our own communities"<sup>186</sup> and elaborates that it was precisely this change in portrayal of the "evil" Nazi to a more personalised, individual view on perpetrators which enabled playwrights to turn to the subject.

There are numerous plays which explore this "banality of evil", in Germany, for example, Heinar Kipphardt's *Bruder Eichmann* (1983), and in Britain, Cecil Taylor's *Good!* (1981), which has also been adapted for the screen in 2008, as well as Peter Barnes' comedy *Laughter!* (1978). The latter two I will discuss in more detail in this chapter. Such nuanced depictions are missing almost entirely from Spielberg's *Schindler's List*, whose main villain, based on the historical figure of Amon Göth, is a sadistic torturer with no redeeming qualities. His 'evilness' and cruelty is so all-encompassing that it is impossible for the audience to identify with him at all, while Schindler can become the focus of all sympathies and the quintessential 'good'

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<sup>185</sup> Klaus-Dietmar Henke, "Das Böse – nur banal?", *Der Spiegel* 36 (2001): 176.

<sup>186</sup> Plunka, "Staging the Banality of Evil", 54. I would argue that it would not just be the Europeans who had this need for this reassuring claim – see my discussion of the US-American film *Schindler's List* later in this chapter.

German. The final play I wish to discuss in this chapter, Peter Weiss' *The Investigation*, also relies little on individualisation, albeit for different aesthetic and political reasons than Spielberg.

Weiss' documentary drama about the Auschwitz process shows perpetrators, bystanders, and victims, but most of them have no names, and no individual story. For the Marxist Weiss, the "banality of evil" is to be found in the socioeconomic process that made Auschwitz and Fascism possible, in the political before and after of that particular moment in time, not in the individual psyche of the perpetrators or victims.

### The "Banality of Evil"

In centuries to come when our complexes at Auschwitz're empty ruins, monuments to a past civilisation, tourist attractions, they'll ask [...] what kind of men built and maintained these extraordinary structures. They'll find it hard to believe they weren't heroic visionaries, mighty rulers, but ordinary people, people who liked people, people like them, you me, us.<sup>187</sup>

Peter Barnes

Peter Barnes' two-part comedy *Laughter!*, juxtaposing the torturous brutalities of Ivan the Terrible with the banal brutalities committed in a Nazi office space, premiered at the Royal Court Theatre in 1978. Christopher Innes points out that "[t]he pun implicit in the contrast between the title of *Laughter* and its subject of slaughter, two words identical but for a single letter, is typical. Barnes works through the fusion of opposites, both within and (in his characteristic pairing of one-act double bills) between plays".<sup>188</sup> Thus, *Tsar's* indulgence in blood and gore, depicting the tortures

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<sup>187</sup> Peter Barnes [1978], *Auschwitz*, in *Plays of the Holocaust. An international Anthology*, ed. Elinor Fuchs (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1987), 142. All subsequent references to this edition will be in-text (A).

<sup>188</sup> Christopher Innes, *Modern British Drama, 1890-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 305.



inflicted by Ivan, informs the second play *Auschwitz*, in which blood and gore are notably absent, smothered in office jokes.

*Auschwitz* is set at the WVHA, the SS Main Economic and Administrative Office, in Berlin in 1942, where three clerks, Cranach, Stropp, and Else are going about their daily work for the economic and administrative division of the SS, filing, dispatching and storing paper. For the largest part, the play is rooted in situational comedy steaming from an overly bureaucratic environment and its disgruntled agents – in a way not unlike Dario Fo's *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* (1970). The three “overworked and underfed” (A, 108) clerks try to maintain an order that is not only incomprehensible for the audience (and one might suspect also for themselves), but also seemingly devoid of any actual meaning, without correspondence in the real world. This tone is set very early in the play, with the very first words which Cranach dictates to Else:

WVHA Amt C1 (Building) to WVHA Amt D1/1. Your reference ADS/MNO our reference EZ/14/102/01. Copies WVHA Amt D IV/2, Amt D IV/4: RSHA OMIII: Reich Ministry PRV, 24/6D. Component CP§(m) described in regulation E(5) serving as Class I or Class II appliance and so constructed as to comply with relevant requirements of regulations L2(4) and (6), L( 4) and (7). Component CP3 (m) shall comply with DS 4591/1942 for the purpose of regulation E(5) when not falling in with the definition of Class I and II. There shall be added after reference CP 116 Part 2: 1941 the words: “as read with CP 116 Addendum 2: 1942. ...” Six copies, Fräulein Jost. Dispatch immediately. [...] I don't mince words. I've always believed in calling a CF/83 a CF/83. (A, 107-108)

Impenetrable bureaucratic language like this is interspersed with the characters commenting on their lives – retirement, second mortgage, Else's mother – and complaining about the war situation and the day-to-day challenges of their job, as when Cranach consternates that: “Kyklon [sic] B isn't being used to kill rats but to discredit this department. We built those complexes in Upper Silesia. If Gottlieb and Amt D prove they're overrun with vermin, we're blamed” (111).

Both Robert Skloot and Gene Plunka comment on the comic use of “corrupted” language in the play, and the seductive effect it can have on the audience, with the latter connecting Barnes’ use of language directly to Arendt’s concept of the “banality of evil”:

Barnes lulls the audience into passivity through the numbing bureaucratic language, allows us to identify with the three Nazi bureaucrats, and then lures us into laughter about genocide, all of which serves to make us complicit in a carefully crafted web of evil that Barnes traps us into accepting as normal activity. [...] The three bureaucrats work for a ministry that supplies concrete and cyanide for the death camps such as Auschwitz; as a passive audience, we become bored witnesses to the atrocities. Like millions of other Germans during World War II, we also become complicit with the banality of evil.<sup>189</sup>

The clerks’, and the audience’s, complacency is broken with the arrival of Gottlieb, an old Nazi fighter, who dislikes having been moved back to Berlin from the front and the camps. After he attempts to trick Cranach into telling anti-Hitler jokes in order to settle their office dispute, increasingly agitated by the bureaucrats’ smugness, and feeling suffocated “in this limbo of paper” (A, 135), he bursts into a long tirade about the realities of Auschwitz, including detailed accounts of selections, forced labour, and the gas chambers, interspersed with the clerks’ protestations, and illustrated by the filing cabinets exploding with paper and human dummies, which are torn apart by a *Sonderkommando*, while “Else covers her eyes, Stropp his ears, Cranach his mouth” (135-140). The three, however, can free themselves from Gottlieb’s presence and nasty reminders that their codes and abbreviations indeed correspond to a brutal and ruthless reality of atrocity, with Else reassuring them that “[w]e might not be much, but we’re better than Gottlieb” (A, 142). Their moral smugness should serve not only as a red light to the audience, who by now know of the clerks’ complicity

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<sup>189</sup> Gene A. Plunka, *Holocaust Drama. The Theatre of Atrocity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 32. See also: Robert Skloot, *The Darkness We Carry. The Drama of the Holocaust* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press: 1988), 63-65.

through Gottleb's speech, but, in the late 1970s, probably also know about the Eichmann-type. Even more acutely, the clerks' self-appraisal and acquittal of any responsibility also sits uncomfortably with the spectator who has, until recently, been invited to identify with the three.

Else's observation is followed by Cranach's statement about future tourists visiting Auschwitz and contemplating "what kind of men built and maintained these extraordinary structures", which I have chosen to introduce this section. This statement is extraordinarily cruel, since it mirrors the questions that we indeed tend to ask, are invited to ask, of those structures – we might also find it hard to believe that their inventors and managers were "ordinary people, people who liked people, people like them, you, me us", albeit not out of a sense of awe, but moral outrage.<sup>190</sup> Reunited in their self-chosen ignorance, the three clerks break into a sentimental sing-along and the lights go off. But the last word of the show is not given to the Nazi clerks, but to the "Boffo Boys of Birkenau, Abe Bimko and Hymie Bieberstein" (A, 144), a music hall double act who dance and joke while they are being gassed. The last words of the play are actually "oh, mother" (A,145) uttered by Hyme Bieberstein with his dying breath. The use of music, or rather, music hall style interludes as a distancing effect, drawing on Bertolt Brecht's theories, was a common trope among British writers of this time: Joan Littlewood employs a similar tactic in *Oh, What a Lovely War* (1963), as did Caryl Churchill in *Vinegar Tom* (also 1978), when, at the

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<sup>190</sup> Plunka cites Barnes on the controversial impact the play had during its London run: "Barnes has commented on the implications of the play's message about the need to assume responsibility, rather than laugh at the banality of evil: 'When we did *Laughter* at the Royal Court, I used to go into performances, and I felt waves of hate coming out of the audience. They actively loathed it. Actively. It came out like steam. The actors used to say: 'God we could feel it up on the stage.' The British want a theatre of reassurance, one of affirmation. They do not want a theater of disturbance.'" Plunka, *Holocaust Drama*, 38-39.

end of the play about a witch hunt, the authors of *The Hammer of Witches* appear as a music hall act.

Music, providing an ironic juxtaposition to the action as well as a means to cover up one's refusal to even acknowledge the impact of one's choices and actions, also plays a major role in Cecil P. Taylor's play *Good*, which premiered at the RSC Warehouse in 1981. *Good* depicts the rise of literature professor John Halder from 'innocent' bystander to SS officer involved in the extermination process in Auschwitz. Robert Skloot notes on the use of music that "[w]hen the music is upbeat, sentimental, and romantic, it serves as a distraction for Halder from his moral decline; for the audience it serves as a distraction from the seriousness of Taylor's story about moral decline, until finally 'distraction' becomes the theme itself."<sup>191</sup> There is a chorus of SS officers hollering a drinking song when Halder decides to join the SS<sup>192</sup>, while Halder's leaving his wife for his student Anne is accompanied by "My Blue Heaven" (G, 50-52).

With Halder's growing success in the new system, he grows distant from his only friend, the psychologist Maurice, whom Halder initially consults with concerns about his imagining of music, and who finds himself persecuted because of his Jewish background. Maurice, worried about the political situation, eventually begs his friend to get him exit papers, yet Halder is unable to empathetically listen to his friend, being more occupied with his own situation – "I can't even *speak* to him on

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<sup>191</sup> Skloot, *Darkness We Carry*, 55.

<sup>192</sup> Cecil P. Taylor, *Good* (London: Methuen Drama, 1983), 28-31. All subsequent references to this edition will be in-text (G).

the telephone now, without being thrown into a panic” (G, 32) – and preys on Maurice’s country house (G, 32-35). When contemplating the November Pogroms of 1938, Halder muses:

I’ve got a whole scale of things that could worry me... The Jews and their problems... Yes, they are on it... but very far down, for Christ’s sake... Way down the scale. That’s not so good, the Jews being so low down on my anxiety scale. [...] As an intellectual concept, it’s fairly high as a moral problem... The thing is, I am fundamentally a happy person. (G, 58).

His moral anxiety about his lack of moral anxiety about “the Jews and their problems” causes Halder to become increasingly irritated with Maurice, until, as Plunka points out, “Halder eventually blames the Jews for disrupting the complacency of his life as he begins to see Maurice not as a friend, but as an omnipresent reminder of his own ambivalence between his humanism and his ambitious drive to prosper in Nazi society”.<sup>193</sup> Eventually, Maurice disappears, and Halder is ordered to visit Auschwitz. As he already gave “humanistic” advice on the euthanasia programme, he is dispatched to the extermination camp by Eichmann himself, who wishes for Halder to report back to him on the conditions there. When Halder meets with commandant Höss and notices the prisoners’ band playing Schubert, the play concludes a full circle back to the first lines in which Halder muses on the nature of the band he keeps hearing. Robert Skloot notes that

[t]he music serves [...] to supply a brilliant coup de théâtre as the band members turn into the ragged concentration camp orchestra discordantly playing a Schubert march to welcome Halder to his new job as camp commandant. ‘The band was real,’ are Halder’s last words, an acknowledgment that there is a certain point beyond which we can no longer delude ourselves that we are not responsible for monstrous evil.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Plunka, *Holocaust Drama*, 29.

<sup>194</sup> Skloot, *Darkness We Carry*, 55.

*Good*, with its fluid structure and ambiguity with regards to what is 'real' and what is Halder's delusional reading of events, and with its atmosphere of 'strangeness', acted as a great inspiration for the structure of my own play. As Tylor utilises music in his play to create and enhance that sense of 'strangeness', I draw on the (perceived) opposition of filmed and remembered images, on repetition and fragmentation to achieve 'strangeness'. In the process of the play, Clara's self-defining narrative becomes more and more dis-membered – split between stage, screen and verbal accounts – mirroring the on-going fragmentation of her own 'self'.

Hans-Thies Lehmann discusses the notion of "guilt-time", noting that

It is no coincidence that theatre does not function generally as a memory-space alone, but that it had always so much to do with the past and the stories of *guilt* and duty that have been written by it, tragic, comic, grotesque, sad or bitter. A score from the past remains open and makes demands of present and future. An action leaves its traces for the future. Not only in tragedy, guilt is the reminder that the 'self' is not based on itself. In postdramatic theatre, it is the breaking of this experience itself that is at the centre, because theatre increasingly lacks the trust in the traditional dramatic canon to have the strength to communicate this time dimension of duty. [...] In the process, history often seems to get lost in both senses of the word: it does not feature or is shown as something one has lost or is losing.<sup>195</sup>

Thus, while Halder moves fluidly through his contemplations and versions of current events, Clara is similarly unanchored in her history and story. She moves not only through her own memories and those of her grandmother but also, in a way, through time and space, having not only lost her history as manifested by her grandmother, but subsequently losing her fixed understanding of both where she comes from and who she is.

Mostly, however, the plays discussed in this section, correspond to my choices regarding the depiction of Baumann and Else. Both are people who do monstrous things, but not 'monsters'. Baumann, similar to Eichmann and the clerks in

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<sup>195</sup> Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatisches Theater* (Frankfurt a. M.: Verlag der Autoren, 1999), 351-352.

*Auschwitz*, is a man of the system, and like Gottleb, a man employed not in an office, but at the frontline of atrocity. He displays a kind of every-day ideology: He is racist and anti-Semitic enough to work in a concentration camp and enjoy his power there, but not so rigidly dogmatic that he would not commit '*Rassenschande*' when it suits him. He willingly cheats on his wife with Else, but is far too rooted in "good society" to divorce her (F/L, 26-29, 73-76). He makes mention of his "duty" often enough, but spends more time searching for his cat than tending to the running of the camp (F/L, 26-29, 51-52). Else is a careerist who wants to improve her situation by all means: be it sleeping with her boss or brutalising prisoners, she would do almost anything to be the one in power for once. Like Baumann, she embraces the National Socialist ideology when it suits her – believing herself to be superior to the "Ruskis" and Jews flatters her hurt ego and inferiority complex (F/L, 88-90, 102-104). Yet, she is un-fanatic enough to adopt to a new political order in 1945 and to become Clara's role model. Both Baumann and Else might display sadistic behaviour, but mostly of a situational kind. Hilberg points out that "[m]ost often, brutalisation was an expression of impatience",<sup>196</sup> and in many ways, this observation is true for both characters. Thus, Baumann lovingly cares for his cat (F/L, 51-52), and Else sends Agnieszka to rest (F/L, 90), but equally they are able to brutally murder Andrey (F/L, 113-118).

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<sup>196</sup> Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders – The Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945* (London: Lime Tree, 1993), 54.

## The 'Good' German

The victims as a whole, however, have remained an amorphous mass. Millions of them suffered a common fate in front of pre-dug graves or in the darkness of hermetically sealed gas chambers. The death of these Jews has become their most important attribute.<sup>197</sup>

Raul Hilberg

The TV series *Holocaust* has been praised for giving a face, an individual story, to the “amorphous mass” of the murdered European Jews. Most members of the Weiss family, whom the audience gets to know during the four-part series and with whom they are invited to identify, die. In *Schindler's List*, however, almost all the Jewish people the audience is introduced to, survive. As Tim Cole points out

[...] the 1959 filmic 'Anne Frank' closes with the reassurance that 'in spite of everything ... people are really good at heart'. [...] *Schindler's List* is in many ways little different to the filmic 'Anne Frank' in that it also offers us a happy ending, where the 1,100 Schindler Jews survive, rather than one where the 6 million Jews not on the list are killed. [...] [I]n *Schindler's List* 'virtually every character in whom the audience has emotionally invested lives.' This is a 'Holocaust' where the people who matter to us as an audience live, rather than die. [...] *Schindler's List* tells of a 'Holocaust' where one 'good' man makes a difference, rather than a 'Holocaust' characterised by the banality of evil and the indifference of the many.<sup>198</sup>

This one good man is Oskar Schindler, and in order to tell the story of his miraculous rescue of the *Schindlerjuden* (!), Spielberg focuses fully on this character, and his struggle with his dark double, Amon Göth. Schindler is introduced as a flawed character – a womaniser, a member of the National Socialist party and a profiteer from war and forced labour, who eventually develops into a 'good' capitalist, using his money and influence to save lives.<sup>199</sup> In a way, Schindler is and remains a conformist throughout the film. He does not question or oppose the system in its

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<sup>197</sup> Idem, x.

<sup>198</sup> Cole, *Images of the Holocaust*, 77-78.

<sup>199</sup> Tim Cole not only points out how this narrative fits into the contemporary American myth of 'benign' capitalism, but also draws parallels between Schindler, the successful businessman who uses his fortunes to save Jewish lives, and Spielberg, who uses his fortunes (made from the profits of this film), to save Jewish memory in form of the *Shoah Visual History Foundation*. Cole, *Images of the Holocaust*, 80-81.



entirety, but only in its extremity, and continues to work within the system to save 'his' Jews, to which he is motivated by a blossoming universal humanism, rather than formulated political opinion. His conformism makes it even easier for a wider audience to identify with him – as opposed to agents of politically motivated resistance like Georg Elser, for example, an early opponent of National Socialism, who attempted to assassinate Adolf Hitler in 1939.<sup>200</sup> This unpoliticalness of the film is further emphasised by its entire lack of exploring the political background of the depicted events as well as by the focus on Schindler's 'moral' flaws – his womanising, his cheating on his wife, excessive drinking and smoking. Most of those he overcomes alongside his continual development as a 'rescuer', thus suggesting a 'good vs evil' morality tale, rather than a socio-political, historical situation.<sup>201</sup>

Shohini Chaudhuri thus points out about *Schindler's List* that "[i]ts unsubtle, Manichean thinking evades what Arendt called 'the banality of evil' [...]. It is customary to assume that perverted, sadistic dispositions are what motivated perpetrators of atrocity, setting them apart from 'us'".<sup>202</sup> Thus, while the audience is invited to identify with the slightly flawed, but essentially 'good' Schindler, his opponent Amon Göth is the stereotypical, 'evil' Nazi. He murders as he pleases, utterly unpredictable, as Tim Cole notes, he is simply a "psychopath",<sup>203</sup> and in addition, he is also whiny, lazy, and vain – easily bribed and easily seduced. In these stark black and white colours, there is little room for a "banality of evil", with which

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<sup>200</sup> Georg Elser has been the subject of two German feature films to date: Klaus Maria Brandauer's *Georg Elser – Einer aus Deutschland* (1989) and Oliver Hirschbiegel's *Elser – Er hätte die Welt verändert* (2015).

<sup>201</sup> See also, Cole, *Images of the Holocaust*, 83.

<sup>202</sup> Shohini Chaudhuri, *Cinema of the Dark Side. Atrocity and the Ethics of Film Spectacle* (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2014), 54.

<sup>203</sup> Cole, *Images of the Holocaust*, 83-84.

an audience could (uncomfortably) identify, and neither are there bystanders in Spielberg's universe. Apart from the 'evil' Nazi, the 'good' German and the Jewish victims, there are Polish children who indicate murder to the Jews trapped in the wagons by drawing their fingers across their throats or shout triumphantly "Goodbye, Jew", as they are moved into the ghetto. Even these children seem to be 'psychopaths', rather than agents in the far more complicated process of witnessing atrocity as a bystander.

In comparison, the "not always so uncomplicated"<sup>204</sup> role of bystanders is depicted more subtly in one of the first sequences of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (2008), when Bruno and his friends run through the streets of a militarised Berlin, playing airplane, and simply ignore the people with yellow stars moved onto trucks by soldiers with dogs – not because it gives the children a sadistic joy, but because they are immersed in their play and because they do not care. This notion is further explored through the character of Bruno's mother, Elsa, who has a window boarded up so that the camp, of which her husband is the commandant, cannot be seen from their house. Once her self-assigned blindness regarding the nature of her husband's 'work' is challenged by a SS officer mentioning where exactly the smoke from the camp's chimney comes from, she is distraught enough to confront her husband and to eventually remove her children from the proximity of this murderous enterprise, but not appalled enough to consider action beyond putting more distance between herself and the place of atrocity. Identification with characters such as her, or even Bruno's father, loving family man and killer, is still possible for an audience, because

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<sup>204</sup> Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders*, xi.

they are presented as conflicted human beings whose actions are not rooted in sadism or blind fanaticism, but who are what Jan Reemtsma termed, “normal Anti-Semites”, acting out of a sense of duty, ignorance, fear or complacency with regards to the workings of a system within which they are able to live in relative comfort: “banality of evil”.<sup>205</sup> Whereas, to return to the depiction in *Schindler’s List*, as Alvin Rosenberg observes, “[i]dentification with such a character as Amon Goeth [sic], who is the incarnation of the murderous passions of limitless evil, is out of the question for most filmgoers, who are more likely to align themselves sympathetically with the ‘good’ German Oskar Schindler, the “rescuer” of the Jews”.”<sup>206</sup>

To achieve his transformation and perform his rescue, Schindler needs ‘helpers’ and ‘exposure’ who aid him on his ‘quest’ to moral enlightenment (to borrow Vladimir Propp’s terms), and this is where the Jewish characters and the Jewish ‘catastrophe’ come in. As the journalist Philip Gourevitch points out “*Schindler’s List* depicts the Nazi slaughter of Polish Jewry almost entirely through German eyes”,<sup>207</sup> more precisely, through Schindler’s eyes, who is motivated through his witnessing of atrocity to become an altogether better person. Thus, even major Jewish characters like the accountant Itzhak Stern or Göth’s forced housemaid Helen Hirsch only really matter in their relationship to Schindler (or, in Helen’s case, also to Göth),

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<sup>205</sup> “These normal Anti-Semites, of whom there were enough in the NS-leadership elite as well, would never have initiated or initiate a far-reaching programme of discrimination and surely not a programme of murder. But as has been shown, they were willing to support such programmes more or less actively – for whatever reasons.” Jan Philipp Reemtsma, *Die Gewalt spricht nicht. Drei Reden* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2002), 89.

<sup>206</sup> Rosenfeld, *Americanisation of the Holocaust*, 142f.; see also Anna Stiepel, *Der “hässliche Deutsche”. Kontinuität und Wandel um medialen Außendiskurs über die Deutschen seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011), 99. For her discussion of the relationship between Schindler and Göth, see 100-104.

<sup>207</sup> Philip Gourevitch, “A dissent on ‘Schindler’s List’”, *Commentary* 97, no.2 (February 1994): 51.

for example, it is Stern's gentle reprimands that guide Schindler to his helping the Jewish prisoners.<sup>208</sup> The perhaps clearest example for this view on the extermination of the European Jews within Spielberg's film is the sequence of the liquidation of the Kraków Ghetto, juxtaposing the manic activities in the ghetto with Schindler, watching from afar on horseback, following the track of a little girl in a red dress, one of the few occasions of colour in the black and white film, and the later incineration scene, where the girl's dead body resurfaces again.<sup>209</sup> Both scenes are part of Schindler's quest, both are mostly seen through his eyes, the little girl becoming an agent of his transformation, as Cole puts it: "[h]er corpse acts as the trigger to Schindler's conscience and thus her brutal (off-screen) murder is linked to the scenes of final redemption. [...] She dies, so that others might live".<sup>210</sup> It is Schindler's reaction to the girl's pain that matters, and Schindler's alone – the girl has no history and no function beyond being his catalyst. As Gourevitch concludes after discussing the othering of Polish Jews in Spielberg's film:

All this might not be so bad if Jews in the movie were at least allowed to say something perceptive about their plight. For the most part, however, they are viewed either as a silent, cowering mob or as a shrieking, scampering mob. Of course, during the Holocaust Jews were sometimes reduced to such extremes, but hardly all, and never always.<sup>211</sup>

<sup>208</sup> see also Timo Werner, *Holocaust-Spielfilme im Geschichtsunterricht* (Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2004), 84.

<sup>209</sup> Daniel Schwarz links the little girl in red to Elie Wiesel's sister Tzipora in *Night*, Daniel R. Schwarz, *Imagining the Holocaust* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999), 218, while Tim Cole links her to testimony given at Eichmann's trial, Cole, *Images of the Holocaust*, 74, both arguing that, through images as such, Spielberg widened his source material from Keneally's novel to include other testimonies about the extermination of the European Jews, contributing to the film's reputation as the ultimate Holocaust film. There is also a little girl in a red dress in the Auschwitz trials, who was shot by Boger, an episode recounted in Weiss, *Die Ermittlung*, 118. In Thomas Keneally's novel, a little girl in a red dress is introduced as three-year-old Genia, who had previously been in hiding with a Polish family and was brought her to her relatives, the Dresner family, where she was picked up by her uncle later. Thomas Keneally [1982], *Schindler's List* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 106-109. I elaborate on this so much because it shows that there was a multitude of interconnections possible between the girl and other characters in the film, beyond her being a mere catalyst or symbol.

<sup>210</sup> Cole, *Images of the Holocaust*, 90.

<sup>211</sup> Gourevitch, A dissent on 'Schindler's List', 52.

And this “silent mob” remains silent even after its ‘deliverance’. Towards the end of the film, after the radio announcement of Germany’s defeat, Schindler addresses ‘his’ Jewish workers, stating that “[t]omorrow, you’ll begin the process of looking for survivors of your families. In most cases you won’t find them. After six long years of murder, victims are being mourned throughout the world”. Later, in front of the factory and the assembled survivors, Schindler is given a ring by the grateful Stern, and consequently has a breakdown which constitutes the only act of “mourning” for the murdered in the film – expressed by the German “member of the Nazi party”. Schindler, overcome by grief and guilt, laments his failures and collapses on the ground, unconsolated by Stern’s reassurances, where he is eventually hugged and comforted by some of the Jewish onlookers, who all remain, throughout, solemn-faced and dry-eyed. It is not their pain with which the historical part of the film concludes, but *Schindler’s*,<sup>212</sup> and in the final scene of the film, shot in colour, the surviving *Schindlerjuden* place stones on *Schindler’s* grave, where it is he, rather than the victims of genocide, who is, quite literal, “mourned throughout the world”.

Like Schindler, Lore seems to be a quintessential good German at the beginning of my play. She ticks all the boxes: she is not an outspoken critic or a politically active resistance fighter, but she displays a kind of universal kindness. She loves her SS-sister, yet quickly becomes the prisoners’ advocate. In particular Clara’s worship of Lore echoes with the depiction of ‘good Germans’ like Schindler in Spielberg’s film.

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<sup>212</sup> In a parallel to Shohini Chaudhuri’s linking of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* to tropes of English films concerning imperialism, this depiction bears certain similarities to the concept of the ‘white saviour’ and the ‘white man’s burden’, see also Chaudhuri, *Cinema of the Dark Side*, 58-67.

Although stemming from a different ideological root, this worship also bears similarity with the heightening of the role of communist anti-fascism in the GDR. Traces of this narrative can also be found in Erhard Heine Haselbach's account on the camps in Altenburg and Meuselwitz, presumably written in the late 1980s, which includes numerous accounts of support and outrage by Germans at the sight of "fascist crimes". Haselbach draws the conclusion that "knowingly or unknowingly, numerous people in Germany back then acted according to the appeals and examples of the communists".<sup>213</sup> For Clara, a product of both the socialist narrative of the upright anti-fascists and the "Hollywoodisation of the Holocaust", her grandmother is an unfaltering icon of righteousness and to her, the people Lore had allegedly saved serve mainly as a means of supporting that narrative (F/L, 76-77). Looking at Lore's actions more closely, though, they tend to appear suspiciously like mere attempts to console her own conscience, because in material terms and for most of the prisoners, they are utterly ineffectual. Several survivors of the camps in Altenburg and Meuselwitz remember acts of aid-giving by German factory workers: Thomas Kosta remembers a foreman who was a "social democrat" who indirectly helped him to survive, Milos Pick recalls a young woman offering to hide a friend of his in her home during the last days of the war.<sup>214</sup> Only a few, like Frank Sim or Helen Ilona Erdos recall the name of their aid-givers or even tried to find them after the war.<sup>215</sup> Often, however, the received aid consisted of sharing some food or information, and

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<sup>213</sup> Haselbach, *Verbrechen*, 27.

<sup>214</sup> Thomas Kosta, Interview 16932 *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, accessed 19. February 2015; Pick also mentions that Thomík Kosta had a "decent foreman" and another, communist foreman, Pick, *Verstehen und nicht vergessen*, 46.

<sup>215</sup> Sim, Interview 25683, *VHA*; Helen Ilona Erdos, Interview 38330, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, accessed 17. February 2015.

seems to have been heightened in the aftermath and by the interviewee's strong desire and need, back in the camp, to be seen and treated as a human being. This becomes very obvious in the 'onion story', recounted in very different versions by survivor Esther Berkovic and her daughters. Esther Berkovic recalled a German woman who gave her an onion to share with her daughters. Even after all this time, she was visibly moved by the gesture, and also mentions that she had written a letter for the German woman who had given her the onion, presumably for the approaching US forces, stating that she had received aid from her.<sup>216</sup> Her daughter Lenka Berlin also mentions this incident in her testimony: she remembers that her mother had always been begging for food for her daughters, but never received any until, shortly before they were taken on the death march, "one woman came with one onion but it took almost six months".<sup>217</sup> The third sister, Olga Blank, does not even mention the onion.<sup>218</sup> The notable frustration in the observation "it took almost six months", informs Lore's relationship with the prisoners in the camp. The one time Andrey approaches her to ask her for help for Aniko, she fails to hear him (F/L, 77-79). She remains inactive when their affair is discovered by Else (F/L, 105-106), which leads to Andrey's execution, witnessed by Lore as a spectator.

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<sup>216</sup> Esther Berkovic, Interview 19678, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, accessed 16. February 2015.

<sup>217</sup> Lenka Berlin, Interview 19673, *VHA*.

<sup>218</sup> Olga Blank, Interview 19674, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, accessed 16. February 2015.

## Bystanders to History

When we speak with people / who have not been in a camp / about our experiences today /  
It is always something unimaginable / That amounts for those people / And yet they are the  
same people / As were prisoner and guard there [...] / Many of those / who were destined /  
to portray prisoners / Had grown up under the same conditions / As those / Who got into the  
role of guard [...] / And had they not been made prisoner / They could have been a guard /  
We must lose the lofty position / that the world of the camp is incomprehensible to us / We  
all knew the society / From which had developed the regime / which could create such  
camps.<sup>219</sup>

Peter Weiss

Peter Weiss' documentary drama *The Investigation* opened in 1965 a few months after the conclusion of the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials, on which it is based, in 15 different theatres simultaneously. In his introductory note to the text, the author states that neither the court room nor of the camp itself are to be represented on stage, nothing to detract the audience from the words they hear. Weiss considers his play a factual "concentrate" of the proceedings, and so the nameless witnesses and the named defendants lead the spectators – or listeners, rather – through a journey from the outskirts of the camp right into its 'fiery pits' more or less anonymously, unemotionally, and with great detail on the material reality of the camp – not only the conditions of the inmates themselves, but the material basis for the genocide. For the Marxist Weiss, the "banality of evil" is to not to be found in the individual psyche of the perpetrators, who, in his words, "only lend the author of this drama their names, which stand here as a symbol for a system that let many others become guilty too, who never appeared before this court" (TI, 8), but in said system, a political, capitalist system that begot Auschwitz.<sup>220</sup> In order to make this point, Weiss

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<sup>219</sup> Peter Weiss, *Die Ermittlung*, 78. Subsequent references in-text as (TI).

<sup>220</sup> See also: Jürgen Kost, "Das historische Drama zwischen Dokumentarismus und Fiktionalität", *Zagreber Germanistische Beiträge*, Beiheft 8 (2004): 377-379.



not only edited his documentary material, but apparently also added text of his own to it – thus, Witness 3, who I quote above, is considered to occasionally express the author’s own opinions.<sup>221</sup> While *The Investigation* thus entails at least the danger of universalising Auschwitz and National Socialism as logical consequences of capitalism, disconnecting it from its racist and Anti-Semitic ideology, Weiss’ situates Auschwitz within the context of German socio-political and economic structures before and after National Socialism, as Tammis Thomas also reiterates:

It is certainly true that *The Investigation* seeks to expose the economic beneficiaries of Auschwitz. References to the extensive network of German corporate enterprises connected to Auschwitz recur throughout the play, with an emphasis on the economic continuity between the Auschwitz past and the corporate present of West Germany’s economic miracle. However, the play’s strong emphasis on the relationship between economic structures and the structures of Nazi violence and mass death does not constitute a simplistic Marxist attempt to explain Auschwitz solely with reference to the economic needs of German capital. [...] As Garloff rightly notes, the play seeks to represent the ways German industry collaborated with National Socialism, in general, and Auschwitz enterprises, in particular [...].<sup>222</sup>

Weiss’ focus on what had become of industrial players who profited from forced labour and extermination, such as IG Farben or Topf and Söhne, and his foregrounding of the repeated excuses of the defendants regarding their duty, group pressure, and the political culture of the time as causes of their deeds, highlights important aspects not only of the mind-set and political system that allowed Auschwitz in the first place. It also indicts a West German mentality of outraged innocence developing in the 20 years between Auschwitz and the trial.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Weiss’ play is often described as purely documentary, not least by the author himself, who in his introductory note to the play, emphasises that it contains nothing but the “facts” (TI. 7), however, various critics like Gene Plunka and Peter Reichel point out that Witness 3’s words are not part of the Auschwitz trial testimonies. Plunka, *Holocaust Drama*, 124; Reichel, *Erfundene Erinnerung*, 231; Kost, “Das historische Drama”, 378.

<sup>222</sup> Tammis Thomas, “The Gray Zone or Victims and Perpetrators in Peter Weiss’s *The Investigation*”, *Modern Drama* 53, no. 4 (Winter 2010): 559.

<sup>223</sup> See also Thomas’ discussion of the “powerful refutation” of the claims by the SS that they were merely victims in another uniform in Thomas, “The Gray Zone”, 574-575.

Weiss focuses on the masses and numbers, shunning an individual view on perpetrators and victims or tracing individual development: his witnesses speak for the “amorphous mass” who cannot speak for themselves anymore. He breaks this de-individualised approach twice, in the cantos 5 and 6, which tell the stories of Lili Tofler and Unterscharführer Stark, respectively. Lili Tofler is described as a “pretty girl” (TI, 85) who was arrested in the camp for writing a letter to another inmate and shot for not disclosing his name – according to Tammis, the “most powerful example” of “human solidarity among the prisoners” in Weiss’ drama.<sup>224</sup> Her execution is first described by another female inmate who knew her, then by two German witnesses – industrialists, for whom Lili Tofler had been forced to work, and, finally, by the inmate to whom the letter had been addressed. He had been arrested too, wrongly thinking that Lili had given up his name. He describes how, while in the arrest, “I heard there / that Lili had to stand every morning and every afternoon / for one hour in the wash room / for the entire time / Boger pressed a pistol to her head / This lasted 4 days” (TI, 95). The last word is given to the first witness again, who, when asked about Lili Tofler’s character by the judge, replied that “[e]verytime I met Lili / and asked her / How are you Lili / she said / I am always well” (TI, 96).

While Weiss’ play is often criticised for not giving any room to individual narratives or pain, I would argue that, even though the author most certainly focuses on the factual account of the mass proceedings at Auschwitz, this exchange very carefully juxtaposes the earlier accounts of calories or train times with a personal story and consciously puts a reminder of the humanity of the inmates – and guards,

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<sup>224</sup> Thomas, “The Gray Zone”, 565.

in canto 6 – right before moving to the topic of mass shootings and gas chambers. The account of Lili's positive nature and her refusal to give up her friend's name is followed immediately by the canto of Unterscharführer Stark, one of the youngest defendants, who had served in Auschwitz as a 20-year-old student. He not only took part in mass shootings but also in the first experiments with gas (TI, 97-106). Stark denies personal accountability, noting that, when he assisted in a gassing, he once hesitated, and was told that if he did not "go up / you'll go in" (TI, 108). When asked by the judge if he never had any doubts about his actions, while simultaneously studying the German classics and humanities for his A-levels, Stark replies that "[...] we learned above all / to accept everything silently / When one still asked something / it was said that / What is done is done according to law / It's no use / that today the laws are different [...]" / Mister Chairman / We were relieved of our thinking / as this was done for us by others / *The accused laugh in agreement*" (TI, 109f).<sup>225</sup>

Gene Plunka, criticises that Weiss "equates victims with executioners, thus removing individual responsibility from demonic activity in Auschwitz while concomitantly blaming the fascist system for the Holocaust".<sup>226</sup> I agree that Weiss most certainly places emphasis on the workings of the capitalist and fascist systems that enabled such atrocity, however, I would be careful to conflate a certain "interchangeability" of victims and perpetrators with "equation". Weiss does not remove "individual responsibility" from the defendants – insisting that the 24 men historically on trial in

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<sup>225</sup> Tammis Thomas discusses the laughter of the defendants in Weiss' drama in connection with Primo Levi's concept of the "grey zone": "As a result of stage directions that call forth the laughter of the defendants on ten different occasions, the collective laughter of the defendants echoes throughout the play. This is the satanic sound of the SS men revelling in their totalizing power as creators and enforcers of the gray zone." Thomas, "The Gray Zone", 579.

<sup>226</sup> Plunka, *Holocaust Drama*, 123.

Frankfurt merely represent a mass of people who were “guilty” but would never be tried for their crimes, as Weiss points out in his introductory note, does not render them innocent, it indicates the many who were never tried. While Plunka notes that “[t]he tales of Lili Tofler and Corporal Stark suggest that the exploitive nature of the fascist system, and not individual responsibility, determined their roles as victims or executioners”<sup>227</sup>, I would argue that the juxtaposition of these stories about two young people show exactly how much “individual responsibility” each was willing to accept. Lili Tofler withstood torture and died without naming her friend, while Stark still refused to accept any responsibility for his actions even 20 years after the fact. Of course, it was the “exploitative nature of the fascist system” which determined how they would enter Auschwitz – as inmate or as guard – and not some ontological difference between them, but the two cantos outline very clearly how differently they *chose* to act within their given roles, and what responsibility they were willing to take on or refused.

For Rachel Bennett, *The Investigation* is successful not only in depicting the reality of the camp through words alone, but to also in linking this depiction to the later debates about guilt and memory:

Weiss paints a picture of life and death in Auschwitz, demonstrating the power dynamics of the camp and the later negotiations of identity, memory, and guilt. [...] This staging of Auschwitz is constructed through words. Although Weiss wrote of the impossibility of representing the courtroom or Auschwitz on stage, these words recreate the camp. [...] Through these words we discover bodies. Weiss chose words filled with images to construct a non-linear narrative and to preserve an image of life and death in the camp.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Idem, 125.

<sup>228</sup> Rachel E. Bennett, “Staging Auschwitz, Making Witnesses: Performances between History, Memory, and Myth”, in *History, Memory, Performance*, ed. David Dean, Yana Meerzon and Kathryn Price (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 157.

Bennett discovers imagery in Weiss' carefully crafted, factual account, and notes, in particular, the open nature of the play, which allows for it to become a present reminder of genocide and atrocity, for example through its performance by survivors of the Rwandan genocide.<sup>229</sup> However, other critics, especially in the U.S., found huge fault with Weiss' play, not only with his political conclusions, but with his eliminating the word 'Jews' from the play, choosing mostly "the persecuted" (*Verfolgte*) instead. Both Lawrence T. Langer and James E. Young discuss the play critically, mostly for its omission of the racist persecution of the European Jews and its deliberate political stance.<sup>230</sup> Alvin H. Rosenfeld brands it an instrumentalisation and an abuse of the suffering of others,<sup>231</sup> and Robert Skloot is equally harsh in his discussion of it:

Weiss's deemphasis of the Jewish experience of suffering to the point where the word Jew never appears in the play, is a cruel and purposeful omission, one part of Weiss's attempt to 'flatten' the human image in the play. [...] *The Investigation*, in retelling the Holocaust experience, is another example of this failure of the German imagination; nowhere does it reject indifference as permissible response to suffering and oppression, and its documentary form may even encourage it. [...] Weiss's indictment of the capitalist system of the West for having produced Auschwitz, besides being dubious in the extreme, has produced a stage play of remarkably callous proportions, perhaps an ironic monument to the Marxist system he prefers. [...] Weiss's play, unlike Hochhuth's [...] reflects a refusal to extend to the slaughtered millions the compassion and concern befitting their brutal mass destruction. The loss of this generosity represents a constriction of imagination and sympathy, and their replacement by a political ideology does too little to guard against the problems inherent in abstracting and universalizing human suffering – a problem that may be at the root of the German relationship to the Jewish Holocaust.<sup>232</sup>

<sup>229</sup> Bennett, "Staging Auschwitz", 158-159; Plunka also points to the very successful performance history, Plunka *Holocaust Drama*, 116.

<sup>230</sup> Lawrence T. Langer, "The Literature of Auschwitz", *Admitting the Holocaust: Collected Essays*, ed. Lawrence T. Langer (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 89-108; James E. Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust. Narrative and the Consequence of Interpretation* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 64-82.

<sup>231</sup> Alvin Rosenfeld [1980], *Ein Mund voll Schweigen. Literarische Reaktionen auf den Holocaust*, trans. Annette and Axel Dunker (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 152-156.

<sup>232</sup> Robert Skloot, *The Darkness We Carry*, 104-105.

Robert Skloot simply ignores Weiss' biography in his condemnation of the author. Weiss' father was a Czech citizen who had converted from Judaism to Christianity, and while Peter Weiss had experienced exclusion in the 1930s, due to being a 'foreigner', he did not know of his father's Jewish heritage until the family's emigration. Thus, Peter Weiss' view on National Socialist atrocity was indeed rather doubled: he could actually imagine himself in an interchangeable role of victim or oppressor.<sup>233</sup> In a way, his choice of omission can also be read as a refusal to re-enact National Socialist racism and to distribute labels – after all, Weiss could have been murdered as a 'Jew', regardless of whether or not he himself considered himself one. Instead of using an identity label employed by the National Socialist murderers to identify and categorise their victims, Weiss creates a gap in the texture of his investigation, which can be filled in many ways by the audience: by their own knowledge, their empathy, or their own preconceptions. Beyond those biographical musings, Tammis Thomas argues eloquently that Weiss also negotiates the complicated structures of the concentration camp and the relationships between different prisoner groups as well as between victims and perpetrators, which Primo Levi also considers in "The Grey Zone", by focusing on how those structures themselves were designed by the SS to minimise the difference between the murderers and their victims:

[...] [T]hose who have who have interpreted *The Investigation* as Weiss's attempt to demonstrate the interchangeability of victims and perpetrators have confused the structures of Auschwitz, which were deliberately designed to blur the distinction between victims and perpetrators, with Weiss's attempt to represent those structures through the testimony of prisoner-functionaries.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> See also Plunka, *Holocaust Drama*, 123-124.

<sup>234</sup> Thomas, "The Gray Zone", 569.

## #

Films like *Schindler's List* or *Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* thrive on their literal qualities: the more realistic the film's portrayal is, the more impactful it becomes. In a way, Spielberg disproved all the concerns about whether or not a concentration camp or gas chamber could be depicted on screen – he depicted it and millions wept. No amount of stage blood could ever recreate such a 'real' depiction of a camp or atrocity on stage, therefore, theatre is strongest when it relies on distancing effects: the band in *Good*, the dark humour in *Auschwitz*, the contrast between form and content of the language in *Investigation*, distance the audience from what they see on stage, and prevent them from being fully submerged into the narrative. Nonetheless, there are also parallels between the stage plays and films that I discussed here. *Schindler's List*, *Good* and *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* have a tendency to simplify the roles of their German characters. *Schindler's List* turns complex political and social manoeuvres into a simplified morality tale, while the latter two focus mostly on individual psychology, thereby failing to take into account the larger political situation and implication – *Good* more so than *Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*.<sup>235</sup> *Auschwitz* and *Investigation* are, in very different ways, more successful in not depoliticising the "banality of evil": Barnes depicts the Eichmann-type and invokes the audience's complicity through their identification with the clerks, while making it clear that the characters are not simply witnessing events, but are actively complicit in shaping them. His characters embody the German philosopher Reemtsma's contemplations on German 'normal' anti-Semites "who did not vote for

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<sup>235</sup> see also Plunka, *Holocaust Drama*, 30.

the NSDAP for their programmatic Anti-Semitism, but who did not consider it a reason not to vote for them either”.<sup>236</sup> In Weiss’ *Investigation*, the continuation of key industries from National Socialism to West German capitalism is mercilessly displayed.

My play positions itself both within and against some of the narrative positions that I have discussed in this chapter. There is a sense not just of political continuity, but synchrony – Andrea’s kitchen being literally above the ground of atrocity (F/L, 9). More importantly, however, is the question of the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ German. Baumann, a more stereotypical “evil” Nazi, is mostly a portfolio against which the more complex characters of Else and Lore can unfold. These two are not as easily categorised as many of the characters discussed here, mostly because of their dichotomy, or rather, their “interchangeability”, which I will also discuss in more detail in the following chapter. But 70 years after the end of the war, Clara is clearly willing – and needs to – fill the gaps still left by Peter Weiss in *The Investigation*: she casts herself as the ‘good’ German (and, by default, has her black partner perform the role of the ‘victim’ in her narrative), and constructs her grandmother as a hero out of a need described by Raul Hilberg that “there is nothing to be taken from the Holocaust that imbues anyone with hope or any thought of redemption, but the need for heroes is so strong that we’ll manufacture them”.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Reemtsma, *Die Gewalt spricht nicht*, 89.

<sup>237</sup> Hilberg quoted in Cole, *Images of the Holocaust*, 81.



## 6. “He Won’t Shoot You Because He Enjoys You Too Much”: The Representation of Women.

[M]ost literary and cinematic recollections of the Holocaust in recent decades marginalize women. The specific handling of women has also been overlooked in current films. Testimonies regarding the sexual and medical abuse of women by the Nazis have been available to historians. Yet, as Pierre Colombat points out in cinematic representations, being a sexual object explains survival, not additional abuse.<sup>238</sup>

Esther Fuchs

In *Schindler’s List*, most women remain in the periphery, like the many female SS-auxiliaries in the margins of the camera, and act mostly as catalysts for the male characters. Both Göth and Schindler are shown frequently ‘womanising’, yet, their relationships with women are very different: Schindler is seen as charming, seducing, and flirting with women (even when he kisses a young woman who clearly resents this), while Göth and his ‘mistress’ are depicted as inconsiderate of each other, always with the threat of violence. Both the protagonist and the antagonist are further characterised through their relationship with women, first and foremost Helen. It is a defining moment when, in the basement of Göth’s villa, Schindler tells a fearful Helen that Göth “won’t shoot you, because he enjoys you too much”. Defining not so much for Helen, who is mostly characterised by her fear of and abuse by Göth, but for Schindler, who, in the same location in which Göth silences, nearly rapes, and brutally beats Helen, consoles her – a further step in his transformation to a ‘good’ German, and a further differentiation between Göth and Schindler.

Like Helen, the female prisoners appear mostly as helpless victims, and, possibly, as bodies to look at. In the infamous shower scene, when the train carrying

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<sup>238</sup> Esther Fuchs. “Images of Women in Holocaust Films”, *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 17, no. 2 (Winter 1999): 50.

the women from Kraków to Brännlitz gets diverted to Auschwitz and the women are led into a shower room, which the audience must assume to be a gas chamber, all the tropes of the depiction of female characters in (Holocaust) film and 'master narrative' seem to come together: the female victims as helpless mob and simultaneously a titillating sight, in dire need of rescue in the form of Oskar Schindler.<sup>239</sup> The camera turns the audience into a doubled voyeur, peeping in not only on the women's deadly fear and panic, but also on their naked bodies.<sup>240</sup> In a sense, the depiction of women in *Schindler's List* is exemplary for many established narratives about the persecution and destruction of the European Jews: more often than not, women remain ancillary and are overshadowed and eclipsed by the male experience they mostly serve to enhance.<sup>241</sup> Thus, in Shimon Wincelberg's *Resort 76*, Blaustain's pregnant and sick wife is mainly there to test his conscience and patience, while Madame Herskovitch remains rather undefined, as does Anya, Blaustain's sister, who urges for escape and militant resistance, but hardly features in the play. Harold and Edith Lieberman's *Throne of Straw* (1972) features a variety of female characters alongside the male cast, who are all active supporters or opponents of ghetto Elder Rumkowski, yet the central conflict of the play remains the male-dominated sphere of the ghetto leader, his complicity and struggle. S. Lilian Kremer observes that this tendency is overturned by narratives by or about women:

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<sup>239</sup> Tim Cole points out how Spielberg adopts a "gendered approach" (Judith Donneson), feminising (Jewish) victimhood and passivity while masculinising (Gentile) heroism and prowess throughout the film. Cole, *Images of the Holocaust*, 82.

<sup>240</sup> See also: Cole, *Images of the Holocaust*, 91-92; Chaudhuri, *Cinema of the Dark Side*, 66. Fuchs; "Images of Women in Holocaust Films", 53-54.

<sup>241</sup> see also: S. Lilian Kremer, "Women in the Holocaust: Representation of Gendered Suffering and Coping Strategies in American Fiction", in *Experience and Expression*, 261.

Unlike male narratives, in which women appear as minor figures and often as helpless victims, in women-centered novels female characters are fully defined protagonists, experiencing the Shoah in all its evil manifestations.<sup>242</sup>

Lilian Kremer focuses on novels in her discussions, which seems to allow her a wider margin of women-authored material than available in theatre or film.<sup>243</sup> While there are of course films and plays authored by women and about women's experience in World War II and National Socialism, ranging from Auschwitz survivor Charlotte Delbo's 1966 play *Who Will Carry the Word?* to Niki Caro's 2017 film *The Zookeeper's Wife*, due to the relative underrepresentation of women as dramatic writers and directors, they continue to be the exception from the norm.

In the following, I discuss a variety of representations of female characters in 'Holocaust' narratives focusing on the experiences of, but are not necessarily written by, women. Firstly, I examine the representation of female prisoners in women-centered narratives such as Gillo Pontecorvo's 1960 film *Kapo*, Daniel Mann's and Arthur Miller's 1980 television film *Playing for Time*, featuring Vanessa Redgrave, as well as Delbo's *Who Will Carry the Word?*. I then discuss selected testimonies by female survivors of the camps in Altenburg and Meuselwitz, and how their narratives of survival impacted on my play. In the last part of this chapter, I engage with the representation of female perpetrators, such as Hanna Schmitz, the illiterate camp overseer from the 2008 film *The Reader*, directed by Stephen Daldry and written by British playwright David Hare, based on Bernhard Schlink's novel of the same name. In all of these representations, I would argue, the female body plays a particular role,

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<sup>242</sup> Kremer, *Women's Holocaust Writing*, 5.

<sup>243</sup> See also Thompson, "The World Made Flesh", 24; "Female directors on decline in Hollywood, study shows", *the guardian*, 12. January 2017, accessed 22. September 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2017/jan/12/female-directors-on-decline-in-hollywood-study>.

be it as a site of atrocity, as a tool of survival or as a distinguishing attribute to the perpetrator. Equally, in many of these narratives, the seductiveness of the female body is foregrounded, often as a tool of aid in the struggle of survival – as criticised by Esther Fuchs in the quotation above. Such a focus of the physicality of female victims and perpetrators is notably absent in the depiction of their male counterparts. However, the ‘body’ is also central in many feminist writings, and in the following, I also explore this difference.

### Female Prisoners at the Centre

It is as if the symmetrical gestures of the two opposite figures of the survivor – the one who cannot feel guilty for his own survival and the one who claims innocence in having survived – betrayed a secret solidarity. They are the two faces of the living being’s incapacity truly to separate innocence and guilt – that is, somehow to master its own shame.<sup>244</sup>

Giorgio Agamben

Pontecorvo’s *Kapo*, as well as Miller’s *Playing for Time*, and, to some extent, Delbo’s *Who Will Carry the Word?*, all engage with what Primo Levi termed the “grey zone”, that “poorly defined” area of survival and collaboration which existed within the camps.<sup>245</sup> Levi himself mentions Pontecorvo’s 1960 film in his discussion about the position of collaborators like the camp’s Kapos, one which is, according to him, difficult to judge. In the film *Kapo*, the judgement for Edith’s initial and increasingly ruthless collaboration is rather clear – after she redeems herself by participating in an escape plot, she is killed. Judgement for Pontecorvo’s film was equally swift, with its infamous tracking shot of Therese’s attempted escape and subsequent death at the electric wire being severely criticised by the director Jacques Rivette in the

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<sup>244</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz*, 94.

<sup>245</sup> Primo Levi [1986], *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal, (London: Abacus 2013), 31-72.

influential journal *Cahiers du Cinéma*. French film critic Serge Daney described the aesthetic of *Kapo* as “‘artistic’ pornography” in his critique of the tracking shot.<sup>246</sup> The pornographic quality which Daney detects not only affects the spectator’s view on the beautification of the (suffering) female body, but also the voyeuristic outside gaze into this grey zone.

While Daniel Mann’s film version of *Playing for Time* certainly also at least aestheticises the suffering bodies of his female ensemble, along with the sensation that the cast, led by Vanessa Redgrave, collectively shaved their heads for the production,<sup>247</sup> Miller’s screenplay, based on Fania Fenelon’s memoirs, is overall rather subtle in its depiction of the women-centered narrative, including many specifics about the female experience of the concentration camps, like menstruation or same-sex relationships, that are otherwise often eclipsed. The film’s main theme is the question of how survival is possible, and not just physical survival, but, in a way, ‘spiritual’ survival: if collaboration is, to a certain extent, necessary to survive, how is it possible to maintain at least a fraction of dignity? Miller’s answer to this question is community. Fania is able to survive because she is not only part of a community, but feels a responsibility to this community, too. The women’s experiences as prisoners in Auschwitz, but as *privileged* prisoners, become bearable because of communal support, which allows them to navigate the difficult grey zone of compliance and complicity. One of the film’s most compelling strengths is that

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<sup>246</sup> Serge Daney [1992], “The Tracking Shot in *Kapo*”, trans. Laurent Krezschmar, *senses of cinema*, Issue 30, (February 2004), accessed 22. September 2017, [http://sensesofcinema.com/2004/feature-articles/kapo\\_daney/](http://sensesofcinema.com/2004/feature-articles/kapo_daney/).

<sup>247</sup> See also Susan C.W. Abbotson, “Re-Visiting the Holocaust for 1980s Television: Arthur Miller’s ‘Playing for Time’”, *American Drama* 8, no. 2 (Spring 1999): 70.

Miller manages to convey this sense of community, but never portrays the group – or indeed even the ancillary figures, *Schindler's* “shrieking mob” – as a homogenous entity: from the individuals in the transport to the women making up the orchestra, Miller shows the heterogeneous nature of not only the prisoners, but of those imprisoned as ‘Jews’, too. From Fania, who does not even consider herself Jewish, to the communist Hélène and the Zionist Esther to the utterly pragmatic Alma, the orchestra becomes a prism of different experiences.<sup>248</sup> While Fania focuses her survival on this group, her friend Marianne, on the other hand, chooses a path more similar to *Kapo's* Edith. The helpless and fearful teenager, who Fania encounters on the transport, distances herself from her friend and the community during the film, trading sex for food. Even though she initially attempts to share this food with Fania, Marianne eventually becomes only concerned with her own survival. Her degradation goes so far that she, when made *Kapo*, physically assaults her former friend.

In a way, Miller contrasts spirit and body in Fania's and Marianne's opposing survival strategies and elevates one over the other, connecting Marianne's selfish focus on bodily needs with sex, while linking Fania's suppression of those needs with a focus on the mind. Myrna Goldenberg notes a similar Cartesian dualism in her

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<sup>248</sup> This notion of heterogeneity comes into play when thinking about one of the pivotal moments in the play, when Fania sews her yellow star back on. Christopher Bigsby states that: “Fenelon and the others [...] arbitrarily chosen for their Jewish identity, are invited, by guards and prisoners alike, to embrace that identity as defining them. Fenelon resists. She is, she insists, ‘a woman, not a tribe!’. When she sews the yellow star back on her clothes, therefore, [...] she does so as a sign of solidarity with those around her and not because she accepts it as defining her.”, Christopher Bigsby, *Arthur Miller: A Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 313-314.

essay “Food Talk”, in which she discusses gendered responses to food and hunger in the concentration camps.

Centuries of Western scholarship marginalized women and their ‘work’, including food preparation and its role in sustaining the family. Women and food have both been largely private or ‘domestic’ issues, relegated more to the realm of the body than to the sphere of the mind. In traditional philosophy, the mind, or soul, which is identified as male, has greater value than the body, which is identified with the female. Expanding this theory further, the body, or the female, is ordinary and the ordinary is less valued than the ideal. Logically, therefore, traditional, in contrast to feminist, philosophy does not address the ordinary and the everyday. Food is ordinary in that it is basic to existence.<sup>249</sup>

Fania chooses to survive with the help of her community and by helping her community, in order to bear witness.<sup>250</sup> As pointed out by Susan Abbotson, she is supported in her quest to “live to tell the tale” by the figure of the camp electrician Shmuel, an almost cherubic “bringer of light” and enlightenment, who encourages her to look, to keep her eyes open.<sup>251</sup> Fania’s survival is therefore ennobled and spiritually justified. In order to survive, she must collaborate by playing for her time in the orchestra. They are despised and spat on by other prisoners, and find themselves in the almost impossible situation of entertaining and consoling the guards, their torturers, with their music. Music and art are in the danger of becoming corrupted by their complicity, but due to the strong connection between the women and by their calling as artists, they come out of the experience maybe not untarnished, but as spiritual as well as physical survivors, rather than ‘prostitutes’.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Goldenberg, “Food Talk”, 163. See also: Case, *Feminism and Theatre*, 9; Shaw and Lee, *Women’s Voices, Feminist Visions*, 217.

<sup>250</sup> Plunka *Holocaust Drama*, 58-59.

<sup>251</sup> Susan Abbotson notes that “[...] Shmuel is shown fixing wires – that is, making connections. His practical job is indicative of his more spiritual dimensions.”, 72, see also: Abbotson, “Re-Visiting the Holocaust”, 73.

<sup>252</sup> Plunka, *Holocaust Drama*, 63.

In contrast, Marianne literally prostitutes herself.<sup>253</sup> She becomes obsessed with herself and her bodily survival, thereby losing sight of the spiritual aid the group can offer, which leads to her total moral decay. While Fania becomes more physically frail, Marianne can boost physical strength, yet, it is implied, the process is spiritually reversed.<sup>254</sup> Because of the focus on music and art as aid of spiritual survival, there is a moralistic dimension to Miller's depiction (and, in a way, the suggestion that art can elevate atrocity) that sits uneasily, especially considering that universal moralistic assertions had little to no bearing in the concentration camp system.

In addition, due to his foregrounding of mind over matter, Miller also seems to dismiss the body, and bodily needs, very easily. This does not only clash with the importance that survivors like Primo Levi or Elie Wiesel reserve to physical experiences like hunger. But in particular in my focus on women-centered narratives, Miller's deferment of the body is jarring. French feminist Hélène Cixous writes in her seminal 1976 essay, "Laugh of the Medusa":

By writing her self, woman will return to the body which has been more than confiscated from her, which has been turned into the uncanny stranger on display – the ailing or dead figure, which so often turns out to be the nasty companion, the cause and location of inhibitions. Censor the body and you censor breath and speech at the same time. Write your self. Your body must be heard.<sup>255</sup>

In her play *Who Will Carry the Word?*, written in 1966 and first performed in 1974, French writer Charlotte Delbo conveys her experiences as a political prisoner in Auschwitz through the bodies of her all-female cast of 22. As in *Playing for Time*, the main theme of Delbo's play is the question of who can survive to carry the word, and

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<sup>253</sup> Bigsby, *Arthur Miller*, 318.

<sup>254</sup> Plunka, *Holocaust Drama*, 62-63; Abbotson, "Re-Visiting the Holocaust", 68-70.

<sup>255</sup> Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa", trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, *Signs* 1, no. 4 (Summer 1976): 880.



how survival is possible, and similarly to Miller in his screenplay, Delbo focuses on the community, the collective responsibility of the women in her play. However, and contrary to Miller, Delbo foregrounds the importance of the body, in particular the female body, not as a aestheticised object of a potentially voyeuristic gaze or a feminised 'symbol' of weakness, innocence or passivity, but as a site of remembrance and resistance. Karein K. Goertz asserts that

The most striking gender marker in Delbo's writing is her attention to the female body as the original site of violation, the repository of memory, and the medium through which the dead speak. The body is the privileged site of remembrance, authenticity, and agency.<sup>256</sup>

The women in Delbo's play, who are all named, rather than a silent, anonymous backdrop, and who have been part of a much larger transport,<sup>257</sup> are brutally reduced in the course of the play: only two of them will survive.<sup>258</sup> As the play unfolds, the women consistently comfort and support each other – during the cold at roll calls, they change positions (W, 283), Claire is brutally murdered when protecting a friend against a Kapo's onslaught (W, 285f), and they console each other with thoughts about an 'after' or 'before' (W, 315). When Francoise, at the beginning of the play, considers committing suicide, she is severely admonished by the same Claire who later dies protecting her friend, that "a fighter does not commit suicide", that she must not give up and also make an example of her strength for the younger women (W, 276). Later, when Francoise wonders how anyone can survive, her friends Réine and Gina insist upon the women's strength:

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<sup>256</sup> Karin K. Goertz, "Body, Trauma, and the Rituals of Memory: Charlotte Delbo and Ruth Klüger", in *Shaping Losses: Cultural Memory and the Holocaust*, ed. Julia Epstein and Lori Hope Lefkowitz (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 177.

<sup>257</sup> Charlotte Delbo [1966], *Who Will Carry the Word?*, trans. Cynthia Haft, in *The Theatre of the Holocaust, Volume 1*, 271. All further references to this edition will be marked in-text as (W).

<sup>258</sup> Robert Skloot praises the accumulation of the narrative power while the characters are decreasing. *Darkness We Carry*, 32.

Francoise: [...] What defense do we have again cold, against contagion, against lice, against filth, against thirst, against hunger, against fatigue, that overwhelming fatigue?

Rene: We are fighters. We must fight. Here, we fight against death.

Francoise: With bare hands, with bare heart, with bare skin. From where can we draw strength?

Gina: We must not give in. I want to return. I swear I will, and if I do not return – hear me well

Francoise – if I do not return you'll tell my father that at no time did I give in, at no moment. I'll never give in. (W, 290)

Gina is the last character to die in the play. Ordered by a Kapo to become a part of the “White Kerchief Kommando”, stripping and burning small children, she decides to rather kill herself – an action that had been so strongly ruled out by Claire and Francoise before – as a final act of agency:<sup>259</sup>

Gina: Words are lost on the one who is going to die. It's I who should talk to you. [...] Speaking cuts into resolution. Our husbands could still write a name on the walls of the cells where they spent their last night before Mont Valerien. I'll only write on your memory.

Francoise: Memory is frail here.

Gina: You'll hold out... The worst is over. (*Pause*) Remember what I told you, for my father.

Francoise: I remember. I will remember. I'll try to carry back the memory. I'll do everything I can, I give you my word. (W, 323)

Gina then goes to her death, which remains, like all violence and death, off-stage, similar to classical Greek drama. Delbo refuses to show the audience a literal representation of the death camp, and instead conveys the violence or action through the reaction of her cast. Once Gina leaves to walk into the barbed wire, not unlike Therese in *Kapo*, there is no attempt at a theatrical equivalent to that much contested tracking shot, but instead, Gina's death is experienced solely through Francoise's reaction to what she can hear: “*Francoise remains motionless, sitting in her place. You could say that she is counting Gina's steps, perhaps fifty; a shot*” (W, 324). For Gene Plunka, *Who Will Carry the Word?* is a “major theatrical achievement” because of its avoidance of literal or realist representation:

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<sup>259</sup> See also: Skloot, *Darkness We Carry*, 17.

The play is somber, grotesque, poignant, yet somehow nightmarish and unreal – all conveyed through stylised lighting effects, gray or muted colours, and orchestrated movements that defy realism or melodrama. The dialogue is ascetic yet poetic, as if to convey a sustained, somber rhythmic monologue of the body.<sup>260</sup>

Charlotte Delbo's focus on the bodily experience of the death camp goes hand in hand with the stylisation Plunka describes. The violence which her characters experience is not shown, but mediated through "poetic" dialogue and the rhythm developed by the bodies on stage.

While films like *Playing for Time* or *Schindler's List* rely on a more literal mode to portray the suffering of their characters and to emphasise their verisimilitude, most of the plays that I have discussed so far attempt to mediate their narrative through drawing attention to their own artificiality. *The Investigation*, while relying mostly on verbatim testimony, estranges the text through versification and its structure resembling Dante's *Inferno*, while *Good* and *Auschwitz* draw on music and comedy. Where *Schindler's List* actively attempts to recreate a sense of documentary and unmediated 'realness' through its use of black-and-white and handheld camera, plays like *Who Will Carry the Word?* draw attention to their role as a mediator of the past. Discussing three Israeli performances about the extermination of the European Jews in *Performing History*, Freddie Rokem notes that "some kind of aestheticization of the narrative is necessary" as

[t]he Shoah can never be brought onto the theatrical stage in a direct and unmediated form. Only through a combination of first-person narrative and a strong emphasis on the performative, the metatheatrical aspects of the historical narrative, can the story of that past be told on the stage.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> Plunka, *Holocaust Drama*, 82.

<sup>261</sup> Freddie Rokem, *Performing Histories. Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000), 36.

Paradoxically, to find my own mode of “aestheticization”, in particular with regards to the depiction of violent acts – from the forced labour to execution and rape – turned out to be an almost impossible task for me in the writing process of the play. I call this paradoxical since my very first idea of the play had been to mediate the past through the doubling of the contemporary narrator Clara and her young grandmother, having Clara re-imagine the past, rather than depicting it as ‘real’. Regardless, in my first three drafts of the play, I did just that: while Clara and Lore were already doubled, I relied entirely on a naturalistic depiction of the scenes set in the past, with the aspect of mediation and re-imagining a mere thought-construct not intrinsically woven into the script. I found myself in a deadlock, because I wanted to retain many of the more conventionally naturalistic scenes – like the conversations between Lore and Else, and, in part, even the titillating ones showing violence – since to me, these are the images and modes of representation that domineer the “second history” of the representation of National Socialist atrocity and genocide and by default inform my thinking and reimagining of the camps and the people associated with them: *Holocaust*, *Schindler’s List* – these representations (in)formed our visualisation of the violent past to an extent that makes it all but impossible to disconnect, only to be aware of.<sup>262</sup> James Young discusses the importance of mediation of the historical events in *At Memory’s Edge*, and points out that for many younger artists who

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<sup>262</sup> Bernhard Schlink also comments on this merging in *The Reader*, when his protagonist Michael Berg contemplates on the lack of images of “life and death in the camps” in his youth, compared to the 1990s: “Today there are so many books and films that the world of the camps is part of our collective imagination, which completes the collective real one. The imagination knows its way around in it, and since the TV series ‘Holocaust’ and films like ‘Sophie’s Choice’ and especially ‘Schindler’s List’ it actually moves in [this world of the camps], not only acknowledging, but complementing and embellishing it.” Bernhard Schlink, *Der Vorleser* (Zurich: Diogenes, 1995), 142-143.

engage with National Socialist atrocity and genocide without having experienced it themselves, the mode in which they learned about them, the mediation of the event is intrinsically linked to the depiction of the event in their art – a prime example being Art Spiegelman's *Maus* which thematises the mediation – the father as an (unreliable) source of information, the absence of the mother, and the artist son transforming his father memory in images and words – just as much as the remembered events themselves.<sup>263</sup>

Since Clara uses her imagination to fill the gaps she encounters in her grandmother's narrative and by the loss of her grandmother as a living role-model, she would also rely on the mediating images and modes of representation – like I did in the writing process, whether I liked it or not. Thus, I gradually came to develop the idea to have parts of those scenes that I had written for the stage to be moved onto the screen. By using film, and quoting the atmosphere and aesthetics of the 'original sources' in their depiction, the naturalism could be contained by Clara and her gaze, trained by *Schindler's List*, so to speak, imagining the past 'as something like this', while simultaneously problematising this gaze and displaying its constructed and artificial nature.<sup>264</sup> The films are projected on the screen that 'hides'

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<sup>263</sup> James E. Young, *Nach-Bilder des Holocaust in zeitgenössischer Kunst und Architektur*, trans. Ekkehard Knörer (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2002), 7-8. For Young's discussion of *Maus*, see 24-51. This sense of mediation also forms the starting point for Leeny Sack's 1981 solo piece *The Survivor and the Translator*, in *The Theatre of the Holocaust. Volume 2*, 115-149. For a discussion of how feature films can lead to "an enormous inventory of illustrative material pushing itself in front of the interpretation of the stories children and grandchildren are told by their parents and grandparents", see Welzer et. al., *Opa war kein Nazi*, 108-109.

<sup>264</sup> For a discussion of how film can influence familial memory in a German context, see also Welzer et al., *Opa war kein Nazi*, 105-134. The survivor Adrienne Kraus also utilises film to provide further details in her interview, when she describes the monotony of her forced labour in Altenburg referring to Charlie Chaplin films, Adrienne Friede Kraus, Interview 12555, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, accessed 18. February 2015.

the scaffold and the lilac on stage, which can be backlit to show those items – of violence and covering up – while the film can also read as covering up those items. In this sense, the film also functions as an additional retrospective reconstruction of the events. This reflects on stage how the filmed documentary material by the Allied forces, showing the conditions of the camps *after* liberation, came to be seen as a real image of what the camps had been like *before* they were liberated. These images, in turn, inspired the visuals of film productions like *Schindler's List* which provided additional material for a collective visual imagining of those places of atrocity. In effect, the need for imagery to fill the visual void in our imagining of the past atrocity led to many of the filmic visuals of the camps – be they documentary or fictional – to serve as a constructed memory of an event of which there is, in effect, little or no visual documentation.

Eventually, the film becomes absorbed into the stage – like Lore / Else and Clara / Lore, past and present collapse into each other – and is no longer used in the last third of the play (F/L, 113). With that mode of doubling the scenes and quoting the mode of mediation, I also intended to further problematise the 'gaze' and to avoid presenting the play as a closed entity that transforms a pre-mediated meaning unto the audience. In my discussion of the scene of Aniko's rape, I already mentioned Jacques Rancière's notion of the performance as a 'third thing' between artist and spectator:

In the logic of emancipation, between the ignorant schoolmaster and the emancipated novice there is always a third thing – a book or some other piece of writing – alien to both and to which they can refer to verify in common what the pupil has seen, what she says about it and what she thinks of it. The same applies to performance. It is not the transmission of the artist's knowledge or inspiration to the spectator. It is the third thing that is owned by no one, whose meaning is owned by no one, but which subsists between them, excluding any uniform transmission, any identity of cause and effect.<sup>265</sup>

The use of film allows the actors and characters again and again to watch their action together with the audience.<sup>266</sup> Watching, and examining, that what is watched, becomes a (watchable) action in itself on stage, as well as in the auditorium. The actors are spectators of the play in their own right and their searching for words and reactions to what they see and perform is not an assertive mimetic action so much as a contemplation on that “third thing” – that memory, that past, that performance of it – the meaning of which, I hope, can remain as unresolved to the performers and spectators as much as to me.

## Female Prisoners and their Testimonies

Nazi policy required that the Aryan woman be removed from the work force and transferred to the home to function as 'guardian of the hearth, bearer of children', producer of and guide to racially and genetically valuable large families. The non-Aryan woman was regarded as fodder for slave-labor Kommandos in the ghettos and concentration camps, where she suffered the humiliation of labor designed to exhaust, to punish, to kill. [...] When women fell in exhaustion, the SS killed them. For most women, camp labor was debilitating and deadly.<sup>267</sup>

S. Lilian Kremer

Actually, she was that kind of sister, when she had a plate of soup or something, her plate was also on top, mine on the bottom, and she always poured something down to the bottom. I said, 'No Lenke, I don't want that', she'd say, 'no, no, no, this is yours.' Because I should eat more.<sup>268</sup>

Magda Frohlinger, survivor of the Altenburg camp

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<sup>265</sup> Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 14-15.

<sup>266</sup> Film, and TV sets, are used in a similarly explorative mode by actors and spectator in Howard Brenton's 1989 play about Rudolf Hess, Howard Brenton, *H.I.D. (Hess Is Dead)*, *The Theatre of the Holocaust. Volume 2*, 331-399.

<sup>267</sup> Kremer, *Women's Holocaust Writing*, 15-16.

<sup>268</sup> Magda Frohlinger, Interview 44408, VHA.

That's the reason I wanted Rosie with me. Because I knew I always get something extra. Rosie wasn't like me, she was shy... I was a hustle and... If you don't try, you don't get. I even had cigarettes, I had lot of things. That kept us alive. [...] I tried to save always, I didn't do it for myself. I always shared.<sup>269</sup>

Lenke Friedler, survivor of the Altenburg camp

The body, and the body as a site of solidarity, plays a crucial role in the testimonies of the female survivors of the camps in Altenburg and Meuselwitz. Female survivors tend to speak often about the impact of the Nazis' assault on their bodies as an assault on their 'womanhood', and to give special focus to their hair. This seems to have been utilised to an extent by camp administration: Walter Strasz mentions that female prisoners in Altenburg had their heads shaven for "the smallest infringements", while Jakob Ihr also notes Elisabeth Ruppert's inclination to shave female prisoners.<sup>270</sup> S. Lilian Kremer discusses how male and female survivors describe certain shared experiences, like the camp initiation, very differently:

Although men and women suffered many of the same Holocaust hardships, their gender socialization produced divergent responses. Among the most dehumanizing experiences for both sexes was the camp initiation. [...] Men typically write of this experience in terms of loss of autonomy and personal dignity. [...] Women, socialized [...] to be modest, experienced the process, and write of it, as a sexual assault during which they were shamed and terrified by SS men [...].<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Friedler, Interview 33196, VHA.

<sup>270</sup> Strasz, "Bericht", (BwA); Ihr "(no subject)", (BwA); see also a testimony given by two Jewish female survivors in 1945 who note that shaving as punishment for stealing food and talking to men, G. L. and G.L., "Protocol Nr. 2248", Budapest. 17. July 1945. DEGOB, accessed 03. December 2014, <http://degob.org/index.php?showjk=2248>. Monika J Flaschka discusses the correlation between perceived female attractiveness and rape, focussing in particular on the role of hair and the shorn head in female survivors' testimonies. Her discussion of the connection between hair, attractiveness and feeling human that is present in many female survivors' testimonies reiterates just how humiliating this gender-specific punishment might have been for the women involved. Monika J. Flaschka, "Only Pretty Women Were Raped: The Effect of Sexual Violence on Gender Identities in Concentration Camps", *Sexual Violence*, 77-93. Since such focus is clearly cultivated, rather than 'natural', one might assume it to have lessened with the advance of the women's rights movement, however, Rose Weitz found obvious connections between hair, love, and power when she spoke to women about their hair in 2004 – including several cases of "woman-battering" where the abuser would forcibly cut the woman's hair during the attack as additional punishment. Rose Weitz [2004], "What We Do for Love", in *Women's Voices, Feminist Issues*, 253-262.

<sup>271</sup> S. Lilian Kremer, *Women's Holocaust Writing*, 10.



This notion of assault during the camp initiation became a prominent image of the 'Holocaust' as seen, for example, in the Auschwitz-based scenes in *Schindler's List*, as well as at the beginning of *Playing for Time*. It can also be found in numerous testimonies of survivors by the Altenburg and Meuselwitz camps, too, for example, in Magda Frohlinger's account of the selections in Auschwitz, which I discussed in "Hidden Violence in Altenburg", when she notes, as an afterthought that "[...] they selected us, nude...".<sup>272</sup> This experience of assault was emphasised by the connection many women drew between physical attractiveness, in which their hair was of paramount importance, the brutal selection in which most were deprived of those signifiers of 'womanhood', and the rumours and real instances of "beautiful girls [...] going to the German soldiers to use as sexual... objects",<sup>273</sup> as recounted by Lenke Friedler. After these experiences of assaults both on their bodies and on their identity as women, many survivors considered the change from Auschwitz to Altenburg as an improvement. Mary Clayman describes the difference in her interview:

The labour camp was almost like heaven compared to Auschwitz. We had a straw bunk bed, one bed for one person, not for ten people. And we had underwear and we had dresses. In Auschwitz, we didn't have underwear. And we had a place to wash ourselves. In Auschwitz, we didn't have a place... I don't know what we did, coming to think of it. There was a place where there was like a fountain and some lukewarm water and we washed ourselves [...].<sup>274</sup>

The possibility to wash and clean was of life-saving importance with regards to hygiene. However, for many women, grooming their body, in particular their hair, also held a significance beyond the purely physical needs, as can be seen in the

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<sup>272</sup> Frohlinger, Interview 44408, VHA.

<sup>273</sup> Friedler, Interview 33196, VHA.

<sup>274</sup> Mary Clayman, Interview 29752, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, accessed 17. February 2015.

testimony of Altenburg survivor Marianne Benedek. She recalled about the initiation process in Auschwitz that “[w]e were shaved, heads were shaved, all over we were shaved”,<sup>275</sup> and later, when speaking about the “fantastic feeling” she had during her liberation by American troops, she jumps back in her testimony to her transport from Auschwitz, recounting that “I had the most extraordinary thing happen to me when we were on the train to Ravensbrück. We went past a town and I saw a woman standing in the window and combing her hair”.<sup>276</sup> Not much later, she mentions how well she looked after the liberation. In Marianne Benedek’s testimony, hair becomes a strong signifier for all things ‘normal’, a reminder, a promise, possibly taunting, about what had been taken from the women in the camps and transports, and what they might be able to reclaim themselves, rarely in the actual camp situation, albeit the improved hygienic conditions in Meuselwitz and Altenburg were noted, but in particular once the women were freed or had freed themselves.

This tentative link to a notion of agency and reclaiming of an identity that they had been so brutally deprived of is very clearly expressed in survivor Helen Ilona Erdos’ recollections about one of her most immediate actions after her liberation at Waldenburg:

And as soon as I was freed, I wanted to have my hair curled. It had grown back and it was very straight and I wanted to have it curled. So, I went to the hairdressers with my German girlfriend who could speak fluent German and she told the hairdresser that if he would burn my head or burn my hair, then the Americans will shoot him. So that’s how he should be doing my hair.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> Benedek, Interview 34355, *VHA*.

<sup>276</sup> Idem. Survivor Lily Ebert recalls a similar moment, also on the transport to Ravensbrück, noting that “When we were travelling [...] from Auschwitz to Germany [...] when we looked out from the train, and I still remember today, I saw a woman with [...] a baby, and I thought, oh, there is a world out there, with babies, with a normal life, and I thought somehow [...] we couldn’t visualise, that [...] people have their normal lives.” Lilly Ebert, Interview 16210, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, accessed 07. October 2014.

<sup>277</sup> Erdos, Interview 38330, *VHA*.

Those two instances, the longing of the woman imprisoned in a transport, watching the mirage of another woman combing her hair, and the determination of the young girl to get her hair curled, caused me to include the headscarf in my play.<sup>278</sup> Lore hands the headscarf over to Aniko without a second thought (F/L, 53). It is an undeliberate niceness, one that costs her nothing and means very little. Aniko uses the headscarf, because it is both practical – it warms her – and because it is an ornament, even a small individualisation – it covers her shaved head. It is also a kind gesture in a time when these were rare. However, when Aniko's pregnancy is discovered, and she fears her imminent transportation to her death, she desperately presses the headscarf unto Sulaika, who equally desperately refuses to accept it until it is too late (F/L, 79). Between these two women, who have little to share but their bodies, pain, and rags, the headscarf suddenly has an enormous value, one it could never have for Lore, who can only ever be a bystander to these two women's solidarity.<sup>279</sup> The very real solidarity between Aniko, Sulaika and Agnieszka, born out of each woman's need to either protect or be protected and to have a real, human connection in a situation in which their humanity is under constant attack, is a stark contrast to Lore's weak, ultimately resultless, attempts at solidarity with the female prisoners or Else's undetermined position that, while rape might be a step too far, the rules of racial purity surrounding her employment and threatening her affair still

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<sup>278</sup> In Ella Buchinger's testimony, headscarfs, used to "not look like a boy", also play an important, almost mythical role: When one of her sister's scarf was stolen by another girl in the Altenburg camp, she was desperate to retrieve it. Once she had achieved this, she confided that she had a dream "and they told her, you have to find this scarf, until you have found it, you cannot be liberated. And after that, she was so happy", Buchinger, Interview 42058, VHA.

<sup>279</sup> On the importance of 'surrogate' families in the camps, in particular the mother-daughter and sister relationship, see also: Brana Gurewitsch, "The Camp Sister Relationship: A Ray of Hope in the Concentration Camp", in *Women in the Holocaust: Responses*, 49-63.

warrant the removal of the ‘offending’ person. For Aniko and Sulaika, this small piece of fabric is not only valuable – Aniko attempts to bestow it to Sulaika out of a rational pragmatism just as much as anything else – but it is also a way for Aniko to express gratitude and friendship, maybe to leave a mark on her. Sulaika’s refusal deprives her not only of the practical advantages of the scarf, but also of the possibility to have a memorandum of her friend – a luxury few people in the camps were ever offered. However, Sulaika does not refuse the friendship, when she refuses the scarf, she refuses to accept the impending loss of her friend and her own helplessness:

ANIKO: Take it, please.

SULAIKA: Why, you think they’ll give you some extra? You can give it to me afterwards.

ANIKO: No, I can’t.

SULAIKA: You think they’ll take it from you?

ANIKO: I think they’ll strip me bare. PAUSE.

SULAIKA: You’ll be fine, girl. You and little Béla.

ANIKO GRABS HER AND PUSHES THE SCARF INTO HER HANDS.

ANIKO: Take it, for the love of god, take it and wear it and let me...

SULAIKA TAKES THE SCARF AND TIES IT AROUND ANIKO’S HEAD.

SULAIKA: I’ll not let you walk about half-naked. You’ll get cold. (F/L, 79)

Thus, the headscarf, like the lilac, also becomes a way to cover things up, even when Lore hands it to Aniko in the first place. Her’s might well be a nice gesture, but equally a way to cover the visual reminder of Aniko’s status as a dispossessed prisoner, giving her physical appearance a false notion of normalcy to ease Lore’s conscience. When Aniko expresses clearly what both she and Sulaika know to be true, that “they’ll strip [her] bare”, Sulaika hushes her, when Aniko tries to force the scarf on Sulaika, the latter finishes the argument by tying the scarf around Aniko’s shorn head stating that she would not let her “walk about half-naked” – as if Sulaika had any power to prevent this. The threat to Aniko’s life is literally covered up, and through Sulaika’s statement connected back to the assault on the female body during the selection and Aniko’s rape. In various ways, all the women, apart from Aniko, are

guided by their own blindness to the situation. Else is aware of Baumann's behaviour, but turns a blind eye to it (F/L, 26-29,80-83). Lore is deaf to Andrey's attempts to rally her support for Aniko before the transport (F/L, 77-79). Agnieszka tries to warn the others about Aniko's fate, but is muted because she cannot make herself understood (F/L, 67-72). And Sulaika, in her need to protect at least this child, when she had been unable to protect her own children, entirely refuses to listen to Aniko's gentle attempts at saying her goodbyes (F/L, 79). Only Aniko, from the moment that Else noted her pregnancy, sheds all pretences that she might be able to survive. Only when it is too late, when Aniko is already past the gates, Sulaika realises her mistake, but is unable to reach her friend (F/L, 80-83). In one quick, floating moment, Sulaika transfers all her support and friendship to Agnieszka, with Aniko disappearing in the distance. Out of the despair of Aniko's loss, Sulaika makes the decision to take part in Andrey's attempts at sabotage if Agnieszka is kept safe, and out of Else's remorse of her role in Aniko's transport, Lore manages to smuggle Agnieszka back to the camp (F/L, 88-90). There, in the camp, Agnieszka is entirely on her own when confronted by Baumann, and thus the attempts to keep her safe result ultimately in her murder (F/L, 91-92).

## Female Perpetrators

Women were perpetrators just like men. Their role, however, is neglected in literary and filmic depiction. [...] Amon Göth's playmate is shown in her underwear just like Helen in her bath. Yet none of these films emphasises eroticism as much as Stephen Daldry's *The Reader* (2008). The eye of the camera follows Michael's gaze, watching Hanna put on her stockings. Often, she is even entirely naked. In Hanna evil is truly as ordinary as it is banal.<sup>280</sup>

Anna Stiepel

Even though the Western media and public has been fascinated by female perpetrators like Ilse Koch, wife of the commandant of Buchenwald, or the camp guard Irma Grese, women as perpetrators are often absent from or side-lined in many narratives about the concentration camp system and National Socialist regime:<sup>281</sup> in films like *Schindler's List* or even *Holocaust*, the female perpetrator is hardly seen.<sup>282</sup> In *Holocaust*, it is rather the figure of the complicit wife, represented in the character of Marta Dorf, married to the reluctant SS-officer Erik Dorf, that is scrutinised. As Esther Fuchs points out, "Marta Dorf is obsessed by her husband's career. She is the one who talks Erik into joining the Nazi party, and it is she who supports his decision to the bitter end".<sup>283</sup> The dutiful German housewife, who is more or less complicit in her husband's more outwardly murderous activities by providing a sense of normalcy and a warm home, can be found in various narratives, from the mother in *Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* to Johnnie Halder's 'unpolitical' but supportive young girlfriend in *Good*.

However, to presume that women's roles were entirely reduced to that of housewife and mother during the National Socialist regime would be too simplifying,

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<sup>280</sup> Anna Stiepel, *Der hässliche Deutsche*, 147.

<sup>281</sup> For a discussion of the media coverage of Irma Grese's trial, see Sarti, *Women + Nazis*, 121-123.

<sup>282</sup> See also Anna Stiepel, *Der hässliche Deutsche*, 135.

<sup>283</sup> Fuchs, "Images of Women in Holocaust Films", 51.

and German feminists and historians began to question the reduction of female German involvement in atrocity to that of an enabler, if it was acknowledged at all.<sup>284</sup>

Gudrun Schwarz concludes a 1992 contribution on women in the SS in a collection on hidden National Socialist crimes noting that

The previous cliché of 'female perpetrators' that was mostly aimed at women as mothers, could become corrected through focussing on women who worked effectively, rationally and professionally in their positions to stop the process of extermination from being stalled. [...] To engage with these groups contributes to making the different forms of women as perpetrators visible.<sup>285</sup>

Else in Barnes' *Laughter*, for example, is a female *Schreibtischtäter* – similar to Eichmann, she never commits any physical assault herself, yet she is intrinsically involved in mass murder. She is unmarried and complicit in the system on her own account and out of her own financial need to support her mother. Her character as a single woman actively supporting the National Socialist regime through working in offices, mirrors that of Traudl Junge in the 2004 film *Downfall*, albeit Else does not share Junge's subtle doubts about the regime. These women are a link in the chain

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<sup>284</sup> Until the late 1980s and early 1990s, the role of German women in National Socialism and atrocity, and the negative legacy of this involvement, were mostly side-lined by German feminists and not considered "her story", see Lerke Gravenhorst, "Nehmen wir Nationalsozialismus und Auschwitz ausreichend als unser negatives Eigentum in Anspruch? Zu Problemen im feministisch-sozialwissenschaftlichen Diskurs in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland", in *Töchter Fragen: NS-Frauen Geschichte*, ed. Lerke Gravenhorst and Carmen Tatschmurat (Freiburg: Kore, 1990), 17-39.

For further discussion on this topic, see also: Gisela Bock, "Frauen und Geschlechterbeziehungen in der nationalsozialistischen Rassenpolitik", in *Nach Osten: Verdeckte Spuren nationalsozialistischer Verbrechen*, ed. Theresa Wobbe (Frankfurt: Neue Kritik, 1992), 99-102; Gisela Bock, "Ordinary Women in Nazi Germany", in *Women in the Holocaust*, 92-93; Katharina von Kellenbach, "God's Love and Women's Love: Prison Chaplains Counsel Wives of Nazi Perpetrators", *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 20, no.2 (2004): 7-24; Katharina von Kellenbach, "Resisting Simplification: Gender Analysis, the Ethics of Care, and the Holocaust" in *Testifying to the Holocaust*, edited by Pam Maclean, Michele Langfield and Dvir Abramovich (Sydney: Australian Association of Jewish Studies, 2008), 70ff. For a discussion of the victim status of female German eyewitnesses, see also Judith Keilbach, "Witnessing, Credibility, and Female Perpetrators. Eyewitnesses in Television Documentaries about National Socialism", trans. Daniel Hendrickson, in *Gendered Memories. Transgressions in German and Israeli Film and Theater*, ed. Vera Apfelthaler and Julia B. Köhne (Vienna: Turia and Kant, 2007), 101-107.

<sup>285</sup> Schwarz, "Verdrängte Täterinnen", in *Nach Osten*, 222-223.

between the supportive wife, and the female camp guard. The depiction of female camp guards and SS-auxiliaries can range from a titillating mixture of transgressive sexual practices, violence, and the erotic symbolisation of fascism as a dominant woman in concentration camp sexploitation films to more balanced depictions like the camp staff in *Playing for Time* or Hanna Schmitz in *The Reader*, which have induced criticism for humanising the perpetrators. In *Playing for Time*, the chief guard Maria Mandel is one of the main perpetrators depicted to the audience, and she is shown as a character capable of extreme cruelty and genuine expressions of care, as Susan Abbotson notes:

Miller has been criticized for his depiction of Nazis as possessing human qualities from a love of good music to Mandel's infatuation with the little blonde boy, and her evident deep distress when she is forced to let him go to the gas. Mandel will one moment take a woman's child and viciously beat her with a riding crop, and the next display a genuine concern for Fania's wellbeing; but such contradictions are essential to Miller's depiction.<sup>286</sup>

If Miller's depiction of the camp staff triggered criticism, this pales in comparison to the storm that Stephen Daldry's film adaptation of Bernhard Schlink's novel *The Reader* caused. Peter Bradshaw's stern review of the film as a "middle-brow sentimental-erotic fantasy" in the *Guardian* was followed by a public feud with screenwriter David Hare, while Diana Relke dedicated an entire essay to the "storm of controversy" that the film had caused among US-American critics.<sup>287</sup> While the novel and the film also received wide-spread recognition and commercial success – Oprah Winfrey promoted the book and the film received several Oscar nominations

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<sup>286</sup> Abbotson, "Re-Visiting the Holocaust", 67.

<sup>287</sup> Peter Bradshaw, "The Reader", *the guardian*, 02 January 2009, accessed 29. September 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2009/jan/02/the-reader-kate-winslet-film>; Diana M.A. Relke, "The Goyishe Gaze: Reading Against American Movie Reviews of *The Reader*", *Canadian Review of American Studies*, 41, no. 3 (2011): 372.



– criticism was aimed at the focus on the perpetrators of atrocity and the second generation, rather than the victims, and was directed in particular at what was considered a too sympathetic portrayal of Hanna Schmitz, both love object of *Nachgeborener*<sup>288</sup> Michael Berg and former SS guard, and her illiteracy, often read as a metaphor for Germans being blind to the atrocities committed in their name.<sup>289</sup> An especially stern representative of that particular criticism levelled at the novel, which was also repeatedly directed at the film, was the writer Cynthia Ozick, who discerned that *The Reader* “is the product, conscious or not, of a desire to divert [attention] from the culpability of a normally educated population in a nation famed for *Kultur*”.<sup>290</sup>

While both novel and film are full of metaphors and symbols hinting at or openly displaying a covered-up connection to the extermination of the European Jews, to read the portrayal of Hanna as symptomatic of an entire people, rather than a particular strait of perpetrators, and to assume her illiteracy would render her innocent of her actions in the eyes of the audience, is too simplistic a view, as Bernhard Schlink also pointed out in an interview in 2009:

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<sup>288</sup> The German ‘nachgeboren’ means ‘to be born after, to descend from’. Bertolt Brecht’s 1939 poem “An die Nachgeborenen”, in English “To Those Born After” or “To Those Who Follow in Our Wake” directly addresses the next generation from the position of an exiled writer, by now the term is commonly applied to the generations following National Socialism. See also Bertolt Brecht [1939], “To Those Who Follow in Our Wake”, trans. Scott Horton, *Harpers Magazine*, 15. January 2008, accessed 09. March 2018, <https://harpers.org/blog/2008/01/brecht-to-those-who-follow-in-our-wake/>.

<sup>289</sup> See also Audrey Brunetaux, “Mise-en-scène, Aesthetics and the Shoah: The Ambiguous Portrayal of a Female Perpetrator in *The Reader*”, *Holocaust Studies*, 17, no. 1 (2011): 102-105.

<sup>290</sup> Cynthia Ozick quoted in Nicholas Wroe, “Reader’s guide to a moral maze”, *The Guardian*, 09. February 2002, accessed 05. October 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/feb/09/fiction.books>.

There is a whole stream of crass misinterpretations. As if I would say that only because Hanna Schmitz is illiterate, she would not be guilty. As if I would say that if only you're educated, you would also be moral. As if I would say that through learning how to read, Hanna Schmitz had understood her guilt and was cleansed of it. [...] Cynthia Ozick properly didn't know that here, it is part of general knowledge about the Third Reich that academics were proportionally overrepresented in the *Einsatzgruppen* and that, with that in mind, Hanna cannot be a typical perpetrator.<sup>291</sup>

While Hanna Schmitz in the film, depicted by Kate Winslet, is certainly not shown as an overly sympathetic character, there are issues in her portrayal. She is introduced in a rather affectionate way, helping the ill Michael, albeit already with a kind of militaristic efficiency that is off-putting and unsettling, especially in front of the backdrop of 1950s rebuilding in the German province. Winslet's corporality on screen makes it easy to understand why Michael is so fascinated by this older woman and keeps returning to her in spite of her often harsh character: the jarring, and frankly quite scary, militarism of her movements is interspersed with moments of vulnerability conveyed by her eyes and face as well as an unfortunately often rather conventionally staged, erotic nudity, both hinting at a softness, a kindness, behind that brutalist facade that is promised, but never delivered.<sup>292</sup> Her obsession with ordering, cleaning, and her tram conductor's uniform, combined with one of her first questions asked of Michael, "[h]ave you always been weak?", her disregard for him, the meticulousness with which she cleans her empty milk bottles before disappearing while not bothering to leave any kind of sign for him as he really did

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<sup>291</sup> Bernhard Schlink in Andreas Kilo, "Im Gespräch: Bernhard Schlink: Herr Schlink, ist 'Der Vorleser' Geschichte?", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20. February 2009, accessed 05. October 2017, <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/buecher/im-gespraech-bernhard-schlink-1100720.html?printPagedArticle=true#void>.

<sup>292</sup> See also Brunetaux's discussion of the introduction of Winslet's character in the film, Brunetaux, "Mise-en-scène", 109-116. For a truly excellent discussion of the gendered gaze on fascism in Schlink's novel, see Joseph Metz, "'Truth is a Woman': Post-Holocaust Narrative, Postmodernism, and the Gender of Fascism in Bernhard Schlink's *Der Vorleser*", *The German Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 300-323.

not “matter enough”, show, at least to the audience, if not to the young Michael, that she already displayed a world view in which order and efficiency were far more important than (other) people. The revelation of her involvement with the SS and in mass murder during the second part of the film thus does not really surprise the spectator, and her obsession with order also informs most of her defence: when she argues that she could not have opened the doors of the burning church, because the prisoners for whom she was responsible would have escaped in the ensuing chaos, she really means it.<sup>293</sup>

On the other hand, her depiction in the trial scenes is by far the most problematic in the film. Hanna is shown as isolated and different from the other defendants, who are overall older, clearly more affluent than her, with a far better understanding of the proceedings of the court. As Schlink points out, she is not a “typical perpetrator”, but the effect is not that the audience is invited to think about perpetrators as a spectrum rather than a monolithic group of evil, but that she is eventually used as a scapegoat by the other defendants. They quickly gang up on her and utilise her candidness as a way to incriminate her and minimise their own involvement. This move could have been easily discerned by the judge were he not himself predisposed to judge Hanna by her seemingly inappropriate behaviour towards the court. This setting could have been used to make a powerful statement about class on the one hand, and the legacy of the National Socialist past on the other: Hanna, as a working-class woman was clearly part of a perpetrator group that

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<sup>293</sup> see also Anna Stiepel's discussion of Hanna's obsessive washing, Anna Stiepel, *Der hässliche Deutsche*, 136-138.

is often minimised and overlooked, and, of course, easily ‘othered’ by her more powerful peers.<sup>294</sup> The more generous connection between the judge and the other more conventional and less candid defendants could have been elaborated to indicate the underlying complicit structures of West German society at that time, which made a true denazification all but impossible and, as one of Michael’s peers observed, turned the trial into a “diversion”. However, Hanna, is not simply shown as a perpetrator of convenience, rather than out of ideology, but, in combination with the often overly melodramatic music, the private gaze on her from Michael, and in particular the charged flashback montage when Michael realises her illiteracy, her singular status becomes emotionally and morally charged. Rather than her representing one type of perpetrator on a spectrum, she is, in a way, elevated out of the spectrum. The filming seems to imply a moral difference between her and the other defendants, rather than a structural one – she may not be a ‘good’ German, she may not be an overly sympathetic character, and her portrayal most certainly does not negate her responsibility, but she is still ‘morally’ differentiated: the true Nazis, it is implied, are yet again the others.

While there are many similarities between the portrayal of Hanna in *The Reader* and Else in my play, it was extremely important to me to avoid this last point of implying any kind of substantial difference between Else and ‘the Nazis’. Nor is Else shown as an isolated female figure like Hanna Schmitz, whom we hardly ever see interact

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<sup>294</sup> For a discussion of the taboo-breaking depicting of the spectrum of perpetrators, see Jochen Hörisch, “‘Ich bin ein Mensch wie ihr’ und ‘Was hätten Sie denn gemacht?’: Unkorrekte Konstellationen von Nazis, Sex und Religion in Bernhards *Der Vorleser* und Jonathan Littells *Die Wohlgesinnten*”, *Merkur*, 734 (Juli 2010): 593-602.

with other women: Else has her sister, the two support each other as well as they can, which, very often, is not very well at all; regardless, they are connected and part of a community.

Else and Lore are also both working-class women, which partially explains Lore's fascination with Andrey's soft hands and poems (F/L, 53-57).<sup>295</sup> Else, on the other hand, is very aware of her precarious status as the lover of the more powerful and middle-class Baumann and determined to climb the social ladder and leave her modest upbringing behind her (F/L, 16-21, 51-52). In an essay from 1990, Dagmar Reese discusses an interview she conducted with a woman who had been an overseer at the Siemens factory in Ravensbrück. Reese describes the woman's family background as typically working-class, with some ties to union and left-wing organisations that remain, however, superficially, and her interviewee, Mrs. K., moves fluently in her youth from the social democratic youth movement to the Hitler Youth. Both the class background and the apparent lack of a consciously formed political orientation evident in Reese's interview are also characteristics shared, to some extent, by the fictional characters of *The Reader*'s Hanna and my Else and Lore. Reese states that in decisions about work places in Mrs. K.'s youth, "[r]ational action is not present, Mrs K. does not have to justify her path of life. She does not decide, it is decided for her, and she accepts her fate".<sup>296</sup> This internalised lack of agency is also present in Hanna's response to the judge "What should I have done?

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<sup>295</sup> In her discussion of Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls*, Sue-Ellen Case notes the prominence of the sister-relationship as a 'familiar feminist metaphor', Case, *Feminism and Theatre*, 86.

<sup>296</sup> Dagmar Reese, "Homo homini lupus – Frauen als Täterinnen?", *Internationale Wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* 27, no. 1 (1991): 29.

Stay at Siemens?” and in Else’s “I’ve rules to follow” (F/L, 88). According to Reese, this lack is, along with material conditions, a major factor in Mrs. K.’s recruitment to Ravensbrück:

Their material situation made these young working-class women corruptible, their meagre education facilitated their betrayal and the long-practised subordination to and fear of authorities, which was characteristic of particular young women of this social class, made resistance unlikely. The perception of instrumental availability, which weaves through the interview of Mrs K. almost like a leitmotif, has therein its material core. This perception doesn’t even leave Mrs K. when she is to be held accountable for an action specifically undertaken by her.<sup>297</sup>

The action Mrs. K. undertook was to help a German prisoner send letters to her family. Once discovered, Mrs K. was briefly threatened with imprisonment herself, but eventually only fired and instructed not to speak about the conditions of the camp and her work there. Mrs. K.’s decision to aid the prisoner was, as Reese explains, a spontaneous act of empathy, not a mediated or thought-through action, as presumably, were many instances of the aid-giving in Altenburg and Meuselwitz which I discussed in the previous chapter. Lore’s aid to the prisoners in my play is similarly thoughtless in many ways, at least initially – she spontaneously offers Andrey refuge in her house (F/L, 53-55). In her case, as in Mrs. K.’s, the spontaneous nature of their action also leads to the feeling of having been hard done by once faced with the consequences:

A spontaneous emotion in the face of the other’s suffering motivates Mrs K. to give aid. Not her own reflection about the injustice done to another woman, but the tears of her counterpart are the decisive fact. Mrs. K. acts impulsively. But this implies that her action is one of a kind, that she does not consider a continuation of her own accord, and she suddenly feels dropped into a situation which she did not anticipate and in which she therefore is unable to ascertain herself, because she is incapable to judging the prisoner’s request realistically against her own risk and to align her actions to this judgment. Even in the aftermath, Mrs K. feels exploited, which is in crass opposition to the actual hierarchy between prisoner and supervisor [...].<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Idem, 31.

<sup>298</sup> Idem, 31-32.

Mrs. K. would be an unlikely subject for a 'good' German narrative, yet she combines aspects of perpetrator and aid-giver in her character. This dichotomy is embodied in my play in the characters of Else and Lore and their eventual reversal. The 'good' and 'bad' German, which are so very distinct in *Schindler's List*, and whose distinction Clara still tries to uphold and groom in her narrative, collapse at the end of the play. The two sisters become not so much exchanged, as indistinguishable from one another, and in retrospect, the entire narrative delivered via Clara is called into question.

## #

All of the narratives I have discussed in this chapter – fictional or testimonial – display a specific focus on the body in female-centered accounts of women as victims or perpetrators in National Socialist concentration camps. This focus comes with particular issues for my own portrayal of female victims. One of them is the question of how to deal with objectification or titillation in the presentation of suffering, naked or abused female bodies – *Schindler's List's* shower scene being one end of the that extreme spectrum, with Delbo's ascetically depicted female bodies being the exact opposite. Another question is how to engage with Primo Levi's grey zone of survival, compliance and collaboration, which is in itself immensely difficult to depict, yet in the case of female victims is often additionally complicated by the implications of trading sex for food or other favours to survive. Miller probes this issue with the character of Marianne in *Playing for Time*, but, by linking the use of sex for survival with general moral decay, his depiction is in danger of remaining similarly one-dimensional like that of protagonist and antagonist in *Schindler's List* – morally sound

people reject promiscuity and give aid, their opposites are violent, brutal, and sexually active. In the film adaptation of *The Reader*, Hanna's sex and sexuality are used to set her apart from other perpetrators. She is shown as different because she is a woman, and because she is a younger, beautiful woman, isolated from all other women encountered in the film – her Jewish victims as much as her co-defendants.

In my play, the female victims, perpetrators, and indeed descendants of perpetrators, are more closely intertwined than in the texts that I have discussed in this chapter. This is not to suggest an interchangeability of the kind that Peter Weiss has been accused of, to compare their current situations are in any way, or to call upon a notion of universal womanhood, but because of their similar socialisation as women, they often employ similar strategies. For example, this becomes evident in the way the women use food as a common denominator and reference point for care or normalcy. For Lore and Else, the source of their food supply as children was the orchard, and to evoke the memory of that garden, to speak of apples, allows them to revive a past connection they already no longer hold (F/L, 32-36). For Sulaika and Aniko, their “food talk” and “mind-cooking” both enables them to hold on to their dead and the memory of a ‘normal’ life, while at the same time, it can serve as a hope for a possible future (F/L, 23-25). Simultaneously, they use food to care as much as they can for Adzi, to feed her, to nourish her (F/L, 41-44, 62), while Adzi's sister Halina trades sex for food with Baumann, not only as a means of her own survival, but that of her sister, too (F/L, 36-40). In that sense, various women, both victims and perpetrators, are drawn or coerced into sexual relationships with Baumann – Halina, Aniko and Else, albeit all of these relationships are different, and only the last can



ever be considered consensual. Food and cooking serve as a means to solidify the solidarity between the female prisoners – and to some extent the male ones, when Pepik takes over the roles previously played by Aniko and Adzi to console Sulaika in her grief (F/L, 96-97). Food also becomes a way of processing trauma for the descendants of the perpetrator Else. Andrea, who knows what she does not want to know, eats her pain (F/L, 58, 79), as Clara attempts to cleanse her body of her perceived guilt and to starve her pain away (F/L, 112-113), while desperately trying to maintain her defining narrative.

## 7. “With Bare Hands, With Bare Heart, With Bare Skin”: The Depiction of Agency and Defiance.

One hears today, that, in general, it would be disrespectful and pointless to wish to ridicule the great political criminals, alive or dead. Even the common people, one hears, are sensitive in that regard, not only because they have been involved in the crimes, but because those remaining in the ruins couldn't laugh about such things. And one shouldn't break down open doors, of which there were too many in the ruins; the lesson was learned, it would be dangerous to ask a people to laugh about a dictator, whom it had failed to take seriously, and so on, and so forth. [...] The great political criminals must be exposed, and in particular exposed to ridicule.<sup>299</sup>

Bertolt Brecht

Defiance and resistance, the struggle for agency in an environment that made such all but impossible, are important themes in many of the works I have discussed so far, from Lili Tofler's refusal to give up her friend's name in Peter Weiss' *Ermittlung*, juxtaposed with the unwillingness to even consider resistance by the German defendants and witnesses, to Fania's determination to survive to bear witness, but equally to survive without compromising what she considered a life-saving moral code. Resistance, and how to resist, is among the main concerns of Delbo's *Who*

<sup>299</sup> Bertolt Brecht, “Anmerkungen”, in *Brechts 'Aufhaltsamer Aufstieg des Arturo Ui'*, ed. Raimund Gerz (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1983), 127.

*Will Carry the Word?* from the women's desperate fight to survive to Gina's equally desperate decision to kill herself, because to her, survival at all costs is no survival worth living.

Fascism and National Socialism as a resistible political force, rather than an ontological and overpowering evil, feature early on the works of writers such as Anna Seghers and Bertolt Brecht. Brecht's 1941 play *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, even makes this notion of possible resistance its title. Although Brecht set his allegory of Hitler's aided and abetted rise to power in the gangster milieu of prohibition Chicago, it was originally rejected by American theatres. It only premiered in 1958, two years after Brecht's death, in Stuttgart, and while it does not hold the same attraction as many other Brecht plays, it is still staged: the production by the Berliner Ensemble in the 1990s, conceived by Heiner Müller, also had a successful run in the USA, while the 2017 production of the Donmar Warehouse in London pointedly included references to the (resistible) rise of Donald Trump in its staging.<sup>300</sup>

In the former GDR, resistance and defiance against the fascist regime, in particular by communists, played an important role in the self-understanding and narrative-making of a nation who cast themselves firmly as the heirs of heroic antifascism. The defining text of this development was Bruno Aptiz' 1958 novel *Nackt unter Wölfen*, 1963 successfully adapted for the screen by director Frank Beyer. The

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<sup>300</sup> Arthur Horowitz, "The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui (review)", *Theatre Journal* 52, no. 1 (March 2000): 121-123; Michael Billington, "The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui review – Lenny Henry powers Trumped-up fascist parable", *the guardian*, 02. May 2017, accessed 28. November 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/may/02/the-resistible-rise-of-arturo-ui-review-lenny-henry-trump-brecht-donmar-bruce-norris>. For a discussion of Müller's production with regards to German engagement with its past post-unification, see Vera Apfelthaler, "The Castrated Villian, Still Irresistible. Comments on the German Condition in Heiner Müller's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (1995), in *Gendered Memories*, 219-229.

film ends with a militant uprising of the communist inmates of the Buchenwald concentration camp, whose legacy the GDR claimed for itself while simultaneously often excluding the same surviving inmates from political life. The 2015 film adaptation of the novel drops this scene, or rather, interprets it very differently, and in the first part of this chapter, I discuss the implications of this (imagined) militancy and its reversal. *Naked Among Wolves*, like much of the official GDR party line, is characterised by its seriousness – a characteristic it shares with takes like *Schindler's List*, albeit positioned at very different ends of the political spectrum. When *Schindler's List* came out, it sparked debates about what should or should not be shown in 'concentration camp' films. Only a few years later, Bengini's successful tragicomedy *Life is Beautiful* and Mihaileanu's somewhat less successful *Train of Life* (both 1998), also caused debate, this time, concerning the question of whether it can ever be acceptable to laugh about the persecution and extermination of the European Jews?<sup>301</sup> While Brecht argued for the political power of laughter, in the second part of this chapter, "Story-telling as Defiance", I argue that those two films actually do not invite the audience 'to laugh about the Holocaust' but to re-examine the past through imagining an agency that, to this extent, was historically almost certainly impossible.<sup>302</sup> This is particularly important since those films, both premiering at the dawn of the new millennium, came out at a time when National Socialism and its genocidal crimes slowly, but certainly, moved from 'past' to 'history',

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<sup>301</sup> Werner, *Holocaust-Spielfilme*, 30.

<sup>302</sup> Albeit there are some instances of truly remarkable resistance on a large scale level, for example, the entirely uncooperative stance of Denmark with regards to German Anti-Jewish measures, which Hannah Arendt describes in *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report*, 171-175, noting that "[o]ne is tempted to recommend the story as required reading in political science for all students who wish to learn something about the enormous power potential inherent in non-violent action and in resistance to an opponent possessing vastly superior means of violence", idem, 171.

becoming an event that, for the better or the worse, will be losing much of its direct and immediate impact the further it slips away from living generations. In the final section “Cooking Cats”, I give space to the many stories of agency and defiance by surviving inmates of the camps in Altenburg and Meuselwitz, and present some of those testimonies that impacted on my work. Throughout this chapter, I also analyse my own play against the other depictions of hidden agency, defiance and resistance discussed, in particular the notions of imagined and (re)told defiance and solidarity among camp inmates, often ignored by productions like *Schindler’s List*, and given more space only in the past few decades.

### Imagining Militancy

‘So every evening [...] a ballot, using cards or matches, was held in every block, and the following morning the losers did not go to work. At noon they were led out behind the barbed-wire fence and shot.’ Few examples could illustrate more effectively the notion of choiceless choice. The victims are offered an option that is no option, since the results of a lottery are governed by chance, not choice. And obviously, anyone who refused to participate in the macabre game certified his execution the next day. Refusal to participate in the ritual of extermination was not a meaningful alternative for the victim because he shared no responsibility for the situation which condemned him to such an existence. He lacked the power to act physically on behalf of his own survival, and without this power (which through luck or collaboration or good connections might be *bestowed* on him), no mere control of attitude or feeling of spiritual inviolability could salvage his moral self. Since the deathcamp universe eliminated conditions which support worth, the victim could not ‘choose’ extermination and remain human, while the survivor could not ‘choose’ life and remain human. He could strive for life and, if lucky, remain *alive*: but this was a struggle between states of being, not competing values.<sup>303</sup>

Lawrence L. Langer

Bruno Apitz’ novel *Naked Among Wolves*, about a small Jewish boy being rescued by communist inmates of the Buchenwald concentration camp, quickly became standard reading in East German schools and it was common practice to give a copy to 14-year-olds at their Youth Ceremony, which was also often accompanied by a

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<sup>303</sup> Lawrence L. Langer, “The Dilemma of Choice in the Deathcamps”, *Holocaust* (1989): 230-231.

trip to a memorial ground like Buchenwald. The nascent socialist state strongly advocated the notion that the perpetrators and heirs of National Socialism resided on the other side of the border and prioritised the plight, and militancy, of communists over other victim groups suffering under the National Socialist regime, creating for themselves not only a historic legacy as the descendent state of resistance but also a contemporary enemy.<sup>304</sup> Apitz' book was adapted for the screen several times, including a quickly forgotten TV adaptation in 1960. Frank Beyer's 1963 film adaptation was based on a screenplay by Apitz,<sup>305</sup> and not only well received at home, but also internationally, even though it was briefly banned in West Germany.<sup>306</sup> Shot in black and white, Beyer's claustrophobic film details the lives and decision-making of the communist inmates who, at first hide the child not for the party, but against the party's will, but for whom this child eventually becomes a living embodiment of what they are fighting for.<sup>307</sup> In a very different political setting, the film, similar to *Schindler's List*, offers a "happy ending", as Tim Cole formulated about the latter, in which it is not one good man who makes a difference, but a collective of men, who might initially act out of individual emotional reasons, but always operate within a closely defined political belief system. Peter Reichel notes that "[t]he rescue

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<sup>304</sup> Of course, this development was somewhat mirrored in West Germany, which saw itself as the truly democratic state, considering the East a continuation of totalitarianism, see also Welzer et al., *Opa war kein Nazi*, 162.

<sup>305</sup> For an account of the impact of both novel and film in the GDR see also: Evelin Preuss, "Naked among Wolves by Frank Beyer", *German Studies Review* 29, no. 3 (October 2006): 712-713.

<sup>306</sup> Reichel, *Erfundene Erinnerung*, 197.

<sup>307</sup> Hedda Zinner uses a similar plot development in her play *Ravensbrücker Ballade*, in which political prisoners decide to hide a female Soviet soldier wanted by camp command. Wera becomes not only a symbol of hope for the prisoners, but also enables the gulf between 'political' and 'criminal' prisoners to be bridged. The play ends with Wera announcing the advancement of the Red Army, while the dying Maria evokes the images of a better future. *Hedda Zinner, Ravensbrücker Ballade* (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1961).

and alleged self-liberation of the inmates becomes manifest in the rescue of the child: a concentration camp story with a happy ending. That it had another, less happy ending, was suppressed and silenced for a long time.”<sup>308</sup>

Beyer and Apitz, who himself had been a prisoner in Buchenwald for eight years, merge historical fact and fiction in their treatment: historically, the boy on whom the fictional character is based, came to Buchenwald with his father and was regularly registered, the communists only hid him within the camp when he was threatened by transport. In Beyer’s film, as in Philipp Kadelbach’s version, based on the new edition of the novel from 2012, the child is smuggled into the camp in a suitcase and immediately hidden by the inmates. What is left out in both cases is how the communist inmates managed to save the child from transport: by exchanging his name on the list with that of 16-year-old Sinto Willi Blum, who was consequently transported to Auschwitz and murdered.<sup>309</sup> The inmates involved in the self-administration of the camp, were only ever able to operate in Primo Levi’s grey zone – their agency was defined by the rules and regulations of the SS who were ultimately in control. Similar to the victims in the account about the death camp quoted by Lawrence Langer, there was only ever “an option that is no option”. Since the numbers for the transports were decided by the SS, the inmates could only save

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<sup>308</sup> Reichel, *Erfundene Erinnerung*, 195.

<sup>309</sup> Petra Sorge, “Die ARD und der vergessene Sinto-Junge aus Buchenwald”, 02. April 2015, accessed 03. December 2017, <https://www.cicero.de/kultur/willy-blum-der-vergessene-sinto-junge-aus-buchenwald/59076>.

Surrounding the release of the new edition, a public dispute took place between Stefan Jerzy Zweig, the survivor on whom the child in the novel is based, and Volkhard Knigge, the director of the Buchenwald memorial, about Knigge’s use of the term ‘victim swap’ when discussing Blum and Zweig. See also: Kate Connolly, “Mystery grows over the Jewish boy who survived Buchenwald”, *The Observer*, 18. March 2012, accessed 02. December 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/mar/18/mystery-boy-who-survived-buchenwald>.

one life against another. While neither film entirely erases the complicated relationship between resistance and compliance that was a dictate of necessity within the circumstances of the political work of the communist prisoners in the Buchenwald camp, leaving out this essential exchange of names on the list obscures the fact that “[t]he human and political solidarity of the inmates was more tightly confined than Aplitz and Beyer wish to make their audience believe”.<sup>310</sup> In both films, hiding the child from the SS runs parallel to the desperate attempts of the prisoners to avoid the forced ‘evacuation’ on death marches from the camp in the last weeks of war, arming themselves and preparing for self-liberation.<sup>311</sup> The clock is ticking – quite literally in Beyer’s version, where the running out of time and the lead-up to the hour of liberation is an integral part of the image system – since they must not act too soon before the arrival of the US army, yet any delay will cost more lives.

In Beyer’s film, this deadlock leads to a heroic uprising of the remaining inmates, a shootout with the SS, followed by masses of the newly liberated storming towards the gate tower, the child raised high among them, while one of their leader shouts into the camp’s loudspeaker: “comrades, we are free”. It is a moving scene – and a virile one, where the dispossessed and downtrodden rise up, aware of their power and prowess, “streaming from the huts like the revolutionary soldiers of Sergej Eisenstein across the Red Square”.<sup>312</sup> In the film version of Philipp Kadelbach and Stefan Kolditz, this end scene plays out rather differently. While the inmates also

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<sup>310</sup> Reichel, *Erfundene Erinnerung*, 199.

<sup>311</sup> For an account of the liberation of the Buchenwald and its mythologisation in the GDR, see David A. Hackett’s introduction to *Der Buchenwald-Report*, 21-29.

<sup>312</sup> Elmar Krekeler, “Zur Sonne, zur Freiheit”, *Welt am Sonntag* no. 13, 29. March 2015, 46.

prepare their uprising, it is never fully shown as such. While many critics praised the toned-down new ending,<sup>313</sup> there were also critical voices, for example Christoph Dieckmann's:

What did director Kadelbach wish to convey – the novel or the history for a *nachgeborenes* audience? The role of the communists is consistently minimised. A self-liberation of the Buchenwald camp does not take place, it is reduced to collective disobedience, when the command orders the deployment for evacuation. The inmates' weapons are not put to use, the SS only runs from the approaching Americans. One might assume that was similar to that. It also seems realistic that the 21,000 who escaped Buchenwald experienced the hour of liberty on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April 1945 as a trauma and not as a jubilant storm of the masses as in Apitz' book and Frank Beyer's film.<sup>314</sup>

While it is not entirely true that the weapons are never put to use – Kadelbach shows inmates storming the 'bunker', liberating one of their comrades, and other inmates marching off a group of imprisoned SS officers in the background – there is a world of difference, or indeed, several decades, between the optimistic, militant antifascists of Beyer's version and the traumatised and broken men who end Kadelbach's film. Even though I am less concerned with the 'fidelity to the text' which Dieckmann misses in Kadelbach's version of events, he is right in questioning whether the filmmakers wish to adapt the novel or to reconstruct a historically 'correct' truth. More than five years after Quentin Tarantino imagined the assassination of Hitler by a Jewish-American death squad and a Jewish cinema owner in *Inglourious Basterds* (2009), it would not appear to be out of the question to re-tell *Naked Among Wolves*, a fictional novel, including an anti-fascist militant uprising, even though this might not be entirely historically accurate. It would be too simple to just point to the fact that

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<sup>313</sup> Positive reviews include Elmar Krekeler's review in the *Welt* quoted above and Nikolaus von Festenberg, "Passion vom Ettersberg: So funktioniert überzeugendes Fernsehen: das KZ-Buchenwald-Drama "Nackt unter Wölfen"", *Der Tagesspiegel* no. 22360, 01. April 2015, accessed 29. November 2017, [https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TSP\\_\\_201504019228531](https://www.wiso-net.de/document/TSP__201504019228531).

<sup>314</sup> Christoph Dieckmann, "Nackt unter Wölfen: NS-Terror in Degeto-Farben", *Zeit Online*, 1. April 2015, accessed 28. November 2017, <http://www.zeit.de/kultur/film/2015-03/nackt-unter-woelfen-film-ard-philipp-kadelbach>.



Beyer's end scene fitted into official GDR narrative and to follow this way would be only to reproduce Socialist propaganda. Discussing *Schindler's List*, Alvin Rosenfeld noted that "Spielberg has in effect repositioned the terms of the Holocaust 'story' away from those favoured by Hilberg and others – the Holocaust encompassing essentially "perpetrators", "victims", and "bystanders" – and has placed the emphasis squarely on "rescuers" and "survivors",<sup>315</sup> and it is important to ask what "terms" are being repositioned here and where the "emphasis" is placed.

This is one of the main questions I asked myself when developing my play: if, in my fiction, I contribute to a narrative that places emphasis solely on traumatised or helpless victims, do I not run the risk of repeating the 'sheep to slaughter' argument and to overlook the many acts of resistance by victims of National Socialist persecution, undertaken under such impossible conditions, from the actual inmate revolt in Buchenwald, to the two uprisings in Warsaw, to acts of self-liberation and obstruction, to the many small acts which I will discuss in the last part of this chapter? Would I also not make it much harder for my spectators to allow themselves to imagine fascism as a resistible force if I forbid myself to tell defiance, agency, and resistance in my story? The imagining of resistance and solidarity that takes place in my play – Clara dreaming herself up a version of events where she takes the place of her 'good' grandmother – is rooted in this difficulty, and, indeed also, critically, in the East German tradition of casting oneself as the heirs of antifascism.<sup>316</sup> In Clara's version of events, the lines are clear and simple, the world is essentially black and

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<sup>315</sup> Rosenfeld, "Americanisation of the Holocaust", 139.

<sup>316</sup> For a discussion of the relationship between GDR politics, the novel and film, see Reichel, *Erfundene Erinnerung*, 193-200.

white with her grandmother as the good antifascist and Else as the bad Nazi. This simplified version is only questioned by Clara's mother Andrea (F/L, 72-73, 83-84) and retrospectively through the revelation to Clara that her imagined legacy is based on a lie.

### Story-telling as Defiance

*Train of Life* is about the dream to ironically adapt the enemy's system of notation and to become, by that, practically invisible to the Germans amidst the destruction. *Life is Beautiful* speaks about another dream: to maintain the power of interpretation of one's own fate – and to show the real terror, at least in the eyes of a child, as a game.<sup>317</sup>

Tobias Kniebe

Roberto Benigni's *Life is Beautiful* and Radu Mihaileanu's *Train of Life* share many characteristics: both films came out in 1998, both are tragicomedies, criticised for their treatment of their historical subject matter and praised for it: Benigni's film ran successfully at Cannes and won several Oscars, while Mihaileanu's, commercially less profitable, production was nonetheless a favourite at the Sundance and Venice Film Festivals.<sup>318</sup> Both films also fit in a long line of comedies situated in National Socialism and its genocidal campaigns – regardless of the renewed discussion about the appropriateness of such an approach: from Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* (1940) to Mel Brooks' *The Producers* (1967), and, in theatre, George Tabori's dark comedies, from his retrospective *The Cannibals* (1968) to the re-imagining of Hitler's life in *Mein Kampf* (1987), this approach is nothing new. Both films are also highly

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<sup>317</sup> Tobias Kniebe, "Der Traum, unsichtbar zu sein: Radu Mihaileanus Holocaust-Märchen "Zug des Lebens", *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 23. March 2000, 19.

<sup>318</sup> See also Kevin Thomas, "Comedy's Not the Right Track for 'Train of Life', *Los Angeles Times*, 05. November 1999, accessed 29. November 2017, <http://articles.latimes.com/1999/nov/05/entertainment/ca-30087>; Reichel, *Erfundene Erinnerung*, 320-322; Werner, *Holocaust-Spielfilme*, 108f, 124f.

theatrical and performative. Benigni draws on the tradition of *commedia dell' arte*, in particular in the first part of his film, while Mihaileanu makes performance and mimesis itself a central element of his film.<sup>319</sup>

While both films have mostly been discussed with regards to the question “[i]s the Holocaust suitable as a quarry for comedy”,<sup>320</sup> I mostly agree with Henryk M. Broder that these questions – or rather, their answers – are not only tedious by now, but I would also argue that they are not relevant with regards to these two films, as they do not make any claims to verifiability or a historical realism – they do not invite their audiences to “laugh about the Holocaust”. Both are very obviously fairy-tales, with the first words of *Train of Life* being “Once upon a time...” and Benigni’s written introduction “This is a fairy-tale”, and both put the notion of story-telling, of falsifying a horrible truth, of white lies to protect, at the core of their stories. In the second part of *Life is Beautiful*, Guido mobilises all of his resources to save his child. This plot line parallels to some extent that of *Naked Among Wolves*: the task is to save a child within a concentration camp from the SS who will surely murder it. While the communists in *Naked Among Wolves* achieve this through their militancy, Guido turns the entire experience of the concentration camp into a game. His imagination, story-telling, and dreaming, which already secured him the love of Dora in the first part, are now successfully employed to save their son – or semi-successfully, since Guido himself is murdered at the end of the film.

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<sup>319</sup> See also Werner, *Holocaust-Spielfilme*, 115-116, 131-132; David M. Brenner, “Laughter amid Catastrophe: *Train of Life* and Tragicomic Holocaust Cinema”, in *Visualizing the Holocaust: Documents, Aesthetics, Memory*, ed. David Bathrick, Brad Prager, and Michael D. Richardson (Rochester: Camden House, 2008), 261-277 for a detailed discussion of both films.

<sup>320</sup> Henryk M. Broder, “Spirale des Absurden”, *Der Spiegel* 24 (1999): 234.

Guido's desperate attempts at protecting and shielding his son are similar, in many ways, to Sulaika's attempts to protect and shield Aniko, her unborn child, and Agnieszka in my play. Just as Guido tries to ward off the terror by making it fun, Sulaika tries to ward off hunger by dreaming up food. Where Guido dreams up a future in which they win a tank as prize, Sulaika evokes a future in which she can cook for the ones she loves. But to "maintain the power of interpretation" is not enough to protect – where the SS has the absolute power over death and life, luck is quintessential to survive, as Lawrence Langer also pointed out. Thus, Sulaika's ultimate attempt at saving Agnieszka actually results in her death. However, this does not render Sulaika's constant attempts to save and protect, meaningless, it simply points to chance, also being determined by the Germans, as a major factor in any survival. When discussing *Life is Beautiful* Peter Reichel also noted the importance of pure chance in the 'reality of inferno':

Benigni did not prove that Auschwitz can be told as a tragicomedy. Neither was that his intention. But he did show us in the most touching way that one can and must protect a child who is threatened to be murdered with its parents, and maybe can save it, too, through a white lie, a fairy-tale, making up a prize game. The reality of inferno is not falsified, it is indeed very present. But what is shown is that and how rescue is possible: through chance, and the desperate-dedicated game of the father, who knows that he must die, but can maybe save his child.<sup>321</sup>

In *Train of Life*, the premise is somewhat different: after hearing disturbing accounts of German atrocities by their village fool Shlomo, a Jewish *shtetl* decides to 'deport' itself, rather than waiting for the Germans to do so. The villagers buy train wagons, sew uniforms, and train those selected to play the German SS personnel in speaking 'rigid' German, 'precise and sad'. David Brenner points out that unlike *Schindler's List*

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<sup>321</sup> Reichel, *Erfundene Erinnerung*, 323-324.

[...] *Train of Life* is unwavering in its rejection of a redemptive narrative scheme that characterizes a range of moralizing (and totalizing) productions. In place of that discursive mode, Mihailenau privileges a manic comedy that, by virtue of its conceit, is engaged with undermining and re-signifying stereotypes.<sup>322</sup>

In contrast to Spielberg's "cowering" mob, these Jewish characters are relentless in their (often blind) activism, yet also tremendously successful, with Mihailenau playing on every stereotype about 'the Jews' there is, apart from them going feebly to their slaughter.<sup>323</sup> During their evacuation towards the 'holy land', the villagers in their train become almost a microcosm of the socio-political movements of their time: conflict arises between the 'Germans' who merge a little too much with the roles they perform, and their 'Jewish' passengers, on top of everything, a communist cell forms, intent on setting in motion the people's revolution within the train. At the same time, the villagers manage to miraculously escape any real, outside danger: the partisans' following the train with the intention to blow it up are mostly incompetent, the real Germans are easily outsmarted. The one time when they seem to be actually cornered by another German transport, Shlomo recognises them as Roma who had the idea for the same performance, and the two groups combine their transports, traveling together. In one of the final scenes of the film, this literal train of life crosses the no-man's land into Russia, unharmed by German bombs, and Shlomo recounts in the voice-over:

Once in the Soviet Union, mostly everyone espoused the Communist cause. Some went to Palestine, mostly the gypsies. Others went to India, mostly the Jews. [...] Esther, beautiful Esther, went to America and had lots of beautiful children. There. That's the true story of my shtetl.

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<sup>322</sup> Brenner, "Laughter amid Catastrophe", 262.

<sup>323</sup> see also Werner, *Holocaust-Spielfilme*, 128, 132.

In a few, short sentences, Shlomo draws a beautiful utopia for the villagers – violent identity politics are avoided, the village lives on and prospers in Esther’s “beautiful children”. The re-assignment of notation that the film undertakes so thoroughly is complete – the destruction of 60% of the European Jews is turned into a story of not only survival, but life. The key term here is, of course, ‘story’. The last words of the film are, “Well... *almost* true”, while the camera shows Shlomo as a still, in prisoner stripes behind barbed wire, and then the screen goes black, the credits accompanied by the sound of Shlomo’s hectic breathing from the beginning of the film. Shlomo’s story was a dream of agency and defiance, of imagined solidarity, in which no one is seen murdered, but everyone dies, as David Brenner notes:

Though *Train of Life* depicts neither blood nor corpses, we are not given the impression that this story is a redemptive one in which only rescuers and survivors are privileged over the triumvirate of victims, perpetrators and bystanders.<sup>324</sup>

This short end sequence is possibly the most effective, evocative and touching one I have experienced in any narration about National Socialist genocide. Even though the narrative signals very clearly that the film is a fairy-tale, that this is not in any way a true event, it is easy to root for the villagers and their survival. Mihailenau dangles a ‘happy end’, what Brenner terms the “redemptive narrative scheme”, in front of the spectator’s nose, only to take it away – of course – with this last moment. The end is even more effective because the audience is left alone with their realisation that this is not a story like *Schindler’s List*, in which the protagonists the audience is emotionally invested in life, but “one where the 6 million Jews not on the list are killed”.<sup>325</sup> Mihailenau does not offer false comfort nor any kind of follow-up on the

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<sup>324</sup> Brenner, “Laughter amid Catastrophe”, 264.

<sup>325</sup> Cole, *Images of the Holocaust*, 76.

realisation: the death of the villagers of the *shtetl*, of not only the individuals but an entire way of life, is simply the end.

Mihailenau's film was highly important to me during the writing of my play, in particular in two instances. When I began to write my play, I originally planned to have only Andrey and Aniko die out of the group of prisoners I was writing about – Pepik, Sulaika and Agnieszka were to survive the camp and ensuing death march. Since these three characters were loosely based on survivors, there was initially no reason to change their survival in my narrative. However, during the writing process, the narrative itself began to challenge their survival. It suddenly seemed impossible to have Agnieszka escape Baumann, even though Maria Brzęcka-Kosk did really escape this situation, in my re-writing, it seemed like white-washing to focus on the few who survived by pure chance, rather than the many who did not. Like Clara, I wanted all of them to live, but it also felt increasingly wrong to write a play about National Socialist genocide and have almost everyone survive. I felt nauseous when fictionalising the death of survivors – a German playwright killing survivors in her narrative, like a reversed *Inglourious Basterds*? However, I am convinced that it would be falsifying to give in to the desire to have them live, as Clara's narrative suggests at points (F/L, 91-92, 121) because it would be as untrue of the essence of National Socialist genocidal campaigns as it would be if Mihailenau's train would have made it to Russia.

The second instance is the revelation of the true identity of Clara's grandmother. I initially wrote the confrontation of Old Woman and Clara over Pepik's and Sulaika's dead bodies as the last scene (F/L, 128), and only added the additional

scenes with Andrea in a later draft (F/L, 124-128). For many reasons, this *anagnorisis* of ‘Granny’s’ true identity should have happened earlier in the play, about three quarters in, to allow the results of the recognition to be fully explored. However, I did not want those results to be explored, because I wanted to avoid the sense of closure or indeed redemption, of rationalisation and explanation, this exploration would entail. Similar to Mihailenau, I wanted my play to end in the moment where Clara could no longer hide from her grandmother’s actions and their implications for herself – her legacy – in a fictionalised memory of good and bad, survival and redemption; a moment of “knowing and enduring”<sup>326</sup>, without having any coping strategies or mechanisms in place yet (F/L, 128).

### **Cooking Cats: Agency and Defiance in Testimonies**

In contradiction to the unyielding argument Lawrence Langer makes for the absence of death camp heroism [...], it is fair to assert that anything the inmate consciously did to stay alive was an expression of resistance. Numerous survivor testimonies document nonmilitary resistance that was directly responsible for prisoners’ survival, material that is iterated in the fiction.<sup>327</sup>

S. Lilian Kremer

Resistance in concentration camps can take many forms, as S. Lilian Kremer asserts, and in the testimonies of survivors of the Altenburg and Meuselwitz camps, there is ample supply of stories and anecdotes about what actions the prisoners took to stay alive and resist the German onslaught on their lives and agency. From those who chose to attempt appeasement as a way of survival, like Sulaika in my play (F/L, 41-44), over escape attempts like that of the unnamed Russian prisoner

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<sup>326</sup> Hannah Arendt [1960], “On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts about Lessing,” trans. Clara and Richard Winston, in Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1993), 3-31, accessed 26. January 2018, <https://signale.cornell.edu/text/humanity-dark-times-thoughts-about-lessing>.

<sup>327</sup> Kremer, *Women’s Holocaust Writing*, 16.



remembered by Fred Schwarz and Michael Flack, to accounts of attempted, organised militancy – the stories told by the survivors of the forced labour satellite camps give many examples where the prisoners fought for their personal agency in whatever small way they could. One of these ways was sabotaging production. Frances Katz, survivor of the Altenburg camp, recalled that they had to make “ammunition, to kill our own people, probably. [...] If you didn’t make 30 boxes, you were beaten, you were taken out... even disappeared, we don’t know where, maybe dead, we see no more this person”.<sup>328</sup> She describes here the harsh penalties for not making the quota – sabotage was, of course, punishable by death. Yet, some chose that option, as, for example, Lenka Berlin, who recalls her personal attempts in the Altenburg factory at obstructing production:

When I knew that the war was close to an end and [the civilian overseers] would talk about the Russians, and they were scared of the Russians coming in and they would hope that the Americans are coming in, and they weren’t checking us very closely. They always chose the right corner – left corner, right corner – left corner [to check the ammunition in the boxes], so I put all the bad ones around it, except the right corner and the left corner, I was trying to help the war effort.<sup>329</sup>

Her account, delivered so modestly, is the basis for the earlier acts of sabotage committed by Aniko and Pepik (F/L, 54). The collective, organised effort in the later part of the play (F/L, 90-91) is based on two other accounts from survivors of Altenburg and Meuselwitz. Leo Brenner recalled sabotaging an entire machine on his own during his deployment as mechanic in the Altenburg factory:

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<sup>328</sup> Katz, Interview 3480, VHA.

<sup>329</sup> Berlin, Interview 19673, VHA. Milos Pick describes a similar system of sabotage in Meuselwitz: “In the hall were only inmates, German civilian workers, German foremen and SS-officers. [...] Of course we did not try to produce good projectiles, and it turned out that everyone produced only scrap. However, this was only discovered after further steps carried out by female German workers on their grinding machines. At the inspection after their machines, they found only scraps. Therefore, an intermediate inspection was activated directly behind our station, but it was worked only by Polish women who passed the scraps”. Pick, *Verstehen und nicht vergessen*, 44.

So, I went up, they're seven feet high, and I was supposed to grease the machines. And I found a bolt on the sides [...] a big bolt, and when I was greasing the machine, I put the bolt in the side to bring the machine to a halt. [...] I sabotaged that machine. [...] They didn't go up there to look. I was up there. I said, 'I didn't know what happened.' The bolt was stuck in the gears, for about four days, until I removed that bolt and it started again.<sup>330</sup>

Leo Brenner acted alone and, it seems, quite spontaneously. Walter Thalheimer recalls a complicated system of sabotage in Meuselwitz, carried through with the aid of Belgian and Dutch civilian forced labourers and presumably known to their German communist overseer, that involved sabotaging tools. His account also shows how much planning had to be put into this act:

We worked with tool steels, there were maybe 20 or 30, [...], each one had a colour code, [...] any kind of colour code combination, and when I got the order to make a certain tool, it was written on there [...]. So, I went to the steels room with my work order, and said, this is what I need, and they'd give me a wink and a different type of steel. I immediately went to my lath, took the colour out and the colour code was gone. Now you couldn't tell, except experts, and they didn't have experts anymore. [...] And I made the piece, and I would make certain it was perfectly, within ten-thousands of an inch, it is very precise work, and I took a lot of pride in doing a good job, because I knew it wouldn't work out anyway, and then a tool steel has to be hardened, it's a different kind of hardening process for each kind of steel. [...] So when I finished my piece, I had a number stamp and I put number 23 on there, because that was what my blueprint called for, number 23, high carbon high chrom steel, I didn't know, I was dumb, I didn't know it was a different colour, and I went to the hardening room and they hardened it and sometimes it either exploded in the furnace, because it was the wrong temperature and the wrong kind of drenching. And other times, it looked fine and they started working with it and it squashed because it wasn't hard enough.<sup>331</sup>

Lenka Berlin, Leo Brenner and Walter Thalheimer were all lucky in that their acts of resistance and sabotage remained undiscovered. Zsuzsanna Dallos mentions a moment of near-discovery in her testimony about her time in Altenburg:

I was put to [work at] the scale where I had to weigh the ammunition, there was small *Hülsen*, small ammunition, and I remember one day, there was a hot situation, because we cheated, we measured more, brought up more than what was really produced and they went after it, but we survived that situation. And my mother was sitting and selecting little *Hülsen* [...] from one box to another and she fell asleep one night at one o'clock in the morning and the German supervisor slapped her on the face. And she told me afterwards, there was nearby an Italian, and he wanted afterwards to cheer her up, and the factory was pretty noisy and he sang for her "La donna é mobile" from *Ricoletto*.<sup>332</sup>

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<sup>330</sup> Leo Brenner, Interview 1662, VHA.

<sup>331</sup> Walter Thalheimer, Interview 3094, VHA.

<sup>332</sup> Dallos, Interview 21189, VHA; Esther Cizek recalls a similar moment of being (wrongly) accused of sabotage, Esther Cizek, Interview 3601, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, accessed 17. February 2015.

The almost throw-away line “but we survived that situation” indicates yet again how dangerous even those small acts of disobedience could prove to be. Zsuzsanna Dallos then continues to describe a moment of gentle and quiet solidarity when the Italian man sang for her mother. This moment stands out as it goes across the rigidly enforced gender divide between male and female prisoners, as recalled by survivors interviewed in 1945 “[...] it was strictly forbidden to talk to [the women]. If somebody was caught, he was severely punished”.<sup>333</sup> Additionally, Zsuzsanna Dallos does not mention whether the Italian man also happened to be Jewish or not, and if he was not, this brief act of support also crosses the lines of the (enforced) identity categories of prisoner groups, which usually remained rather rigid – Zsuzsanna Dallos also recounts that “[t]he Polish women, they called us ‘Yiddy, Yiddy’ and they pushed us, they didn’t like us”, while Marianne Benedek listed the various prisoner groups in Altenburg, yet, when asked if there was any interaction between them, stated that they “were not allowed to interact”.<sup>334</sup> Yet, Zsuzsanna Dallos also remembers that she had contact with forced labourers from Czechoslovakia and France:

And I was young and my hair was growing and there was a little romance, a nice French man, at New Year’s night made me, a little edible animal figure, the four legs were toothpicks. And a Czech, [...] made me a pendant, of, sort of Crominum, a heart, and he put a Czech lion, the symbol of Czechoslovakia, in the middle, and made me a hairpin as well. [...] It was toward the end that [...] this Czech man, said to me, somehow these other nationalities who were not Jewish, they had more freedom, living next, close to the factory, but not behind barbed wires and he walked on Sundays by the wire, you know, I tried to walk a little closer to the wire... And he told me one day that he wants to defect [...] and he said if I wanted to go with him.<sup>335</sup>

<sup>333</sup> K. Z. and R.B. “Protocol Nr. 2176”, testimony by two male Jewish survivors of Altenburg, *DEGOB*, Budapest. 16. July 1945, accessed 03. December 2014, <http://degob.org/index.php?showjk=2176>.

<sup>334</sup> Benedek, Interview 34355, *VHA*.

<sup>335</sup> Dallos, Interview 21189, *VHA*. See also Milos Pick’s account of the relationship between his friend and a Russian partisan, Milos Pick, *Verstehen und nicht vergessen*, 45.

These recounted moments of solidarity quite literally across the fence encouraged me in my depiction of the (imagined) solidarity in the rather diverse group of prisoners I made my protagonists. Like the Roma and Jews in *Train of Life*, my group pools their resources together and support each other in spite of their different backgrounds – or what the National Socialists had assigned as their background. Solidarity was important in almost all the accounts of survivors I accessed – be it more of a ‘nuclear family’ kind between mother and daughter or among larger groups, also described in Delbo’s *Who Will Carry the Word?*. Milos Pick, like many others, accredits his survival to the solidarity of his ‘comrades’:

Once in Meuselwitz, after the distribution, I foolishly didn’t hold my piece of bread for the day tight enough in my hand. Before I knew it, a strange inmate grabbed it from my hand and disappeared with it. In the evening, when everyone in my group cut a thin slice from his bread to give it to me, the comrades sure enough swore about being burdened with such a clumsy calf, but they still collected their bread. And it was like that in situations much worse. This is why I could survive, this is why I could return.<sup>336</sup>

Even though mutual support was often confined within a certain prisoner group, as I have just discussed, many, like Zsusuanna Dallos, also have at least one example where they received support or solidarity from outside of their prisoner group. Thus, Polish survivor Krystyna Gromek recounted that the Russian women (presumably Red Army soldiers) she was accommodated with, shared everything they “organised” equally with everyone: “That they’d eat alone – that didn’t exist. They showed great solidarity”.<sup>337</sup> Farida Chodshajewna Saiksjanowa, a Soviet citizen who was a PoW in Meuselwitz, recalled that:

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<sup>336</sup> Milos Pick, *Verstehen und nicht vergessen*, 60.

<sup>337</sup> Krystyna Gromek, “Interview”, Warsaw. 23. October 1996, interviewer Dr. Seidel, Buchenwaldarchiv (BwA), [Zeitzeugenberichte HASAG, FAK].

Suffering and torture brought everyone, regardless of their nationality or which language they spoke, closer. There was no strict discrimination amongst the prisoners: There were these kinds of friendships where one cried together silently. The normal, civilised human being will always be comradely and kind to another.<sup>338</sup>

While, in particular Jewish, survivors also recalled episodes or attitudes of, for example, anti-Semitism expressed by Polish inmates, like that instance in Zsuzsanna Dallos' testimony quoted earlier, or, like Magda Deutsch and Marianne Benedek, expressed that they did not dare to have contact with any other prisoners, for example the Roma and Sinti,<sup>339</sup> I decided to focus on those accounts and moments of solidarity, rather than division, between the prisoners.

I would like to end this section with an anecdote by Thomas Kosta, a prisoner of the Meuselwitz camp, which I have also included in *Flieder* (F/L, 108-109), and which, I feel, combines most of the themes of this chapter – militancy, solidarity, agency – with the ever-present themes of hunger, food, cooking and nurturing:

We very soon also made knives for ourselves [...], very sharp, we also had a knife with us, they didn't check us for weapons, and there was a very revolting, fat civilian, head of transport, who always harassed us horribly, and he had a wonderful tomcat, and then we said to ourselves, well, we have to resolve this somehow, and we caught this tomcat and, well, how do you get the tomcat into camp, so one took him and put him away, and then we cooked him for ourselves. And I must say that this was a wonderful meal then, although I haven't had it recently, and then, we knew, because we had read [Jaroslav Haek's novel *The Good Soldier*] *Shveyk*, that we had to destroy the remains, because they would look for them, so we threw them into the latrine. And then he of course searched for this cat and that was our revenge.<sup>340</sup>

A cat, and its survival, are also of central importance in Shimon Wincelberg's play *Resort 76*. At the end of the play, the starving occupants of the flat free the animal, rather than eat it – a moment of dignity and agency. In Thomas Kosta's testimony,

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<sup>338</sup> Farida Chodshajewna Saiksjanowa, "Correspondence with Dr. Seidel", 15. /21. March 2000, trans. Heinz Albertus, Buchenwaldarchiv (BwA), [Zeitzeugenberichte HASAG, FAK].

<sup>339</sup> Magda Deutsch, Interview 50580, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 2000, accessed 17. February 2015; Benedek, Interview 34355, VHA.

<sup>340</sup> Thomas Kosta, Interview 16932 VHA. Lustig also mentions eating cat in Meuselwitz, Lustig, *Finsternis wirft keine Schatten*, 62.

the cat's fate plays out somewhat differently: the starving prisoners not only gain a much-needed meal from its slaughter, but also their revenge on the abusive German overseer, a different kind of dignity and agency. The interrelation of food, dignity, and agency is also at the heart of George Tabori's play *The Cannibals*.<sup>341</sup> In Tabori's play, survivors, the children of the murdered, and a German *Nachgeborener* gather to re-enact an instance of cannibalism in Auschwitz which sealed the fates of the survivors and the murdered fathers. The debates between the prisoners about whether or not they should commit this act of cannibalism, are also concerned with those notions of dignity, morality, and agency, but they are no longer contained solely within the concentration camp universe, but expanded through the performative nature of this re-enactment to include the positions of those "born after" trying to entangle the 'strings' of their fathers' actions and their own memory.<sup>342</sup>

## #

The question of how to re-tell, how to imagine agency, defiance and resistance for a future audience, is at the core of many of the texts I chose to discuss. Frank Beyer's *Naked Among Wolves*, about the International Buchenwald Committee challenging and defeating the SS, and saving a child along with their humanity, was made with the involvement of survivors like the actor Erwin Geschonneck and author Bruno Aptiz himself, less than 20 years after the events it depicts. This proximity distinguishes Beyer's film from the other productions I discussed here, but the film

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<sup>341</sup> George Tabori [1968], *The Cannibals*, in *Theatre of the Holocaust. Volume 1*, 197-267.

<sup>342</sup> See also Sandra Pott and Marcus Sander "Abdankung des Dokumentarischen? Taboris *Die Kannibalen* als Gegenstück zu *Die Ermittlung* von Peter Weiss", in *Theater gegen das Vergessen. Bühnenarbeit und Drama bei George Tabori*. Ed. Hans-Peter Bayerdörfer and Jörg Schöner (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1997), 163-164.

nonetheless also presents a fictionalised version of events, a kind of coming-to-age story of the young socialist state, that seems less concerned with a historically accurate truth in its representation of the prisoners' self-liberation than with showcasing socialist ideals: the film imagines solidarity, agency, and militancy in a way that renders the narrative about a concentration camp into an optimistic tale about overthrowing oppression. Over 30 years later, Roberto Benigni's *Life is Beautiful* shows that agency does not have to be militant. In his film, it is a dreamer who manages to save his child by defiant story-telling. His film has a similar optimistic streak that assures the audience that atrocity can be overcome, possibly survived, not by a humane communism, but by love and imagination. This sense of optimism is simultaneously present and entirely lacking in Mihaileanu's *Train of Life*. While the entire narrative consists of a mimetic effort of enormous proportions that seems to be entirely successful in ensuring everyone's survival, the film ends revealing its own imagined nature. In Beyer's *Naked among Wolves*, resistance is a matter of national pride – similar, in many ways, to the importance of past and present Jewish militancy in Israeli narratives of nation-building<sup>343</sup> – while in Benigni's and especially in Mihaileanu's films, it becomes part of a healing fantasy. The newest film I discussed, Philipp Kadelbach's 2015 version of *Naked Among Wolves* tones down the self-liberation and role of the communist resistance in the camp, focusing instead on the trauma of the survivors and the brutal deaths of the murdered, departing from the novel it is based on to gain more historical accuracy. I also discussed in this chapter my own difficulty as an artist balancing the difficult line between showing

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<sup>343</sup> See also Talila Kosh, "What Do We Do With the Past (And Who Does It)? A Gendered Reading of Lea Goldberg's Play *Ba'alat Ha'Armon* (1954), in *Gendered Memories*, 199-209.

National Socialism and fascism as resistible political forces and highlighting the small acts of agency and individuality of those victimised by these political forces on the one hand, and avoiding white-washing of the enormous proportions and ruthlessness of the National Socialist genocidal campaigns. It is almost paradoxical that to show the reality of resistance in the camps can so easily lead to minimising the reality of genocide. I attempted to avoid slipping in this balancing act by ‘murdering’ most of my characters, whether they undertook acts of resistance or not, even though many of their acts are based on memories of survivors.

I have also begun to point to the issue of ‘legacy’ with regards to the National Socialist past. Mihaileanau comments on this legacy:

“In common with a whole generation I did not live in those times. I did not kill anybody. But like (a) young German girl I spoke to, who is still living a trauma, you have to ask yourself do you want that trauma for yourself? For your kids? When a country engages in war or votes in fascism then you have to be aware it will change your country for fifty or a hundred years”.<sup>344</sup>

Benigni and Mihaileanau are both, in a way, second-generation – Benigni’s father was a forced labourer in Germany, Mihaileanau is the child of Jewish concentration camp survivors – who are still personally connected to the generation they depict. They themselves would have had the chance to speak to survivors like the ones I could only see recorded. Benigni and Mihaileanau made their films at the turn of the century, when the great catastrophe of the 20<sup>th</sup> century began to slip away into another millennia and the generations who lived through it were inadvertently becoming less and less available to speak to about their experiences.<sup>345</sup> While Benigni and Mihaileanau chose performativity, overt fictionalisation and humorous defiance to re-imagine resistance not only within their narrative but also to resist

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<sup>344</sup> Mihaileanau quoted in Brenner, “Laughter Amid Catastrophe”, 267.

<sup>345</sup> see also: Werner, *Holocaust-Spielfilme*, 110, 112-114, 126f.



dominant modes of representation like *Schindler's List*, the third-generation German filmmaker Kadelbach, almost 20 years after Benigni and Mihaileanu, opted for a more naturalistic way of representation that could, again, shed light on historically accurate 'facts'. How to engage with the legacy of National Socialist genocides, the memory of them, and the trauma they caused and still cause, is important in all three of those productions, and also the topic of my next chapter.

## 8. "Kein Vergeben, Kein Vergessen": Trauma, Memory, and the Making of Memorials in Germany.

Forgiveness is not, it *should not be*, normal, normative, normalising. It *should* remain exceptional and extraordinary, in the face of the impossible: as if it interrupted the ordinary course of historical temporality.<sup>346</sup>

Jacques Derrida

How difficult it must be to find a reasonable attitude is perhaps more clearly expressed by the cliché that the past is still 'unmastered' and in the conviction held particularly by men of good will that the first thing to be done is to set about 'mastering' it. Perhaps that cannot be done with any past, but certainly not with the past of Hitler Germany. The best that can be achieved is to know precisely what it was, and to endure this knowledge, and then to wait and see what comes of knowing and enduring.<sup>347</sup>

Hannah Arendt

"Kein Vergeben, kein Vergessen" (roughly 'don't forgive, don't forget') is a slogan concerning German memory culture more common among the far-left, as opposed to the more conciliatory notions of 'lest we forget' or 'never again' usually favoured by those more in the centre of the political spectrum. In the essay "Whose Memory is it Anyway?", Björn Krondorfer considers the limitations of remembering, noting that simplifying 'never again' rhetoric can easily slip into sentimental pathos, and

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<sup>346</sup> Jacques Derrida [1997], *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, trans. Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes (London: Routledge, 2005), 32.

<sup>347</sup> Arendt, "On Humanity in Dark Times". See also Adorno's discussion of the notion of 'coming to terms with' the past from the previous year: Adorno [1959], "Was bedeutet: Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit", in *"Ob nach Auschwitz noch sich leben lasse"*, 31-48.

calls the notion of remembering as a means of overcoming history overly optimistic, warning against the instrumentalisation of such “politicised memory”.<sup>348</sup> He also draws attention to the role of forgetting in survivors’ trauma and testimonies:

But the non-survivors (the secondary witness) can, at best, only remember what they are being told – and this, we must understand, is already a product of oblivion, of a memory eroded, and thus shaped. Those who have talked to survivors or interviewed and recorded them may have noticed the phenomenon that inexperienced speakers stumble, are at loss for words, or, at times, become incoherent. The more inexperienced the remembering speaker, the more raw the memory; the more unshapely the memory, the more fragmented its traumatic content. Such rawness may not make a good public story but is more closely aligned with a memory less eroded. The more traumatised the survivor, the more caught in the past; the more difficult for the individual to revisit the past because of the fear of getting lost in the pain of the past as if still present.<sup>349</sup>

James Thompson also considers the connection between silence and narrative with regards to traumatic experiences, noting that

One of the many symptoms of traumatic stress is said to be that individuals will struggle to describe past incidents in detail. They may get flashbacks or have frightening dreams but they find it difficult to give a narrative account of the original events. The awfulness of the experience is somehow beyond cognitive recall and therefore beyond the bounds of a ‘narrative’ or structured memory.<sup>350</sup>

Thompson continues to argue that, in applied theatre, there is often an undue pressure on trauma survivors to make a narrative of their experiences, based on the assumption that only narrative-making can eventually heal the trauma. Where Krondorfer considers the role of the “secondary witness” in the process of narrative-making, and Thompson draws attention to the not unimportant role of silence for the traumatised individual, the German journalist Wolfgang Michal discusses the implications of the “secondarily traumatised” with regards to German filmmakers

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<sup>348</sup> Björn Krondorfer, “Whose Memory is it Anyway? Reflections on Remembering, Preserving and Forgetting”, *Testifying to the Holocaust*, 199-202.

<sup>349</sup> Idem, 211.

<sup>350</sup> James Thompson, *Performance affects: applied theatre and the end of effect* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 56.

engaging with their parents' and grandparents' complicity in *Generation War*.<sup>351</sup> To evoke intergenerational trauma when discussing descendants of German perpetrators – like myself, like my characters Andrea and Clara – might sit somewhat uneasily. I would argue that the term is indeed twofold: German trauma is often used to refer to experiences such as the bombing of Dresden and Germans as the true victims of World War II. I will not engage with that aspect in any depth in this chapter, but there are various mentions of Dresden in the sources discussed that allude to it. The German secondary trauma more interesting to me is the experience of 'knowing and enduring' a negative legacy of complicity and violence, and aligning it with familial ties and sense of self. This "knowing and enduring" can be doubly complicated in the case of German feminists aiming to distance themselves from a patriarchal and chauvinist history.

In this final chapter, I therefore engage with those notions of memory and narrative-making, trauma and silence, within a contemporary German context, and, when applicable, the role of German women in this context. In the first part, I discuss two instances of what I have termed, perhaps unkindly, 'master narratives', examining examples of memory-making that impacted Germany on a national level: firstly, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin, which constitutes the first attempt at a national 'ground zero' for remembering the exterminated European Jews. The Memorial proved divisive from its very conception, and while it is by now a deeply ingrained feature of the capital's (memory) landscape, both its existence as

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<sup>351</sup> Wolfgang Michal, "Wunschtraumata der Kinder", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 22. March 2013, accessed 25. September 2017, <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/medien/unsere-muetter-unsere-vaeter/unsere-muetter-unsere-vaeter-wunschtraumata-der-kinder-12123324.html>.

well as the way the public engages with the memorial still spark controversy. Secondly, I discuss the German TV production *Generation War* (2013), which constituted a little media sensation both in Germany as well as abroad. While the mini-series was overall celebrated in Germany, it caused anger and even legal proceedings against the filmmakers in Poland. This structure of (physical) memory-making and artistic engagement is mirrored in the second part of this chapter with regards to 'micro narratives': I firstly engage with local initiatives and places of memory (or forgetting) in Altenburg and other, regional examples.

These form part of an approach to put more focus on local places of terror, rather than distant Auschwitz as a defining metaphor for National Socialist atrocity, which already began in the 1980s and 1990s. Oliver Storz' 1995 film *Drei Tage im April*, for example, based on real events, tells of the complicity of the inhabitants of a small village in the province, who push a train with dying concentration camp prisoners out of their station to be rid of it. While this depiction has been criticised for showing the villagers as mostly clueless as to who these prisoners could be, it is still rare in its focus on the everyday corruption through the National Socialist system of terror, as Thilo Werner also points out:

In the present reception of the Holocaust, extermination camps are distant places that hardly anyone finds on a map. In contrast, Storz shows with his film tyranny and war as they occurred "locally". Because: 'It was not just Dachau, it was not just Auschwitz.' In fact, there were only a few places near which no satellite concentration camp and resting place for inmates could be found. Thus, *Drei Tage im April* does not visualise life in the big cities, but the situation in the countryside seemingly untouched by NS crimes.<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> Werner, *Holocaust-Spielfilme*, 95-96.

Five years earlier, Michael Verhoeven's *Das schreckliche Mädchen* also focused on the German province.<sup>353</sup> His "nasty girl" Sonja, based on Anna Elisabeth Rosmus, wants to research the legacy of resistance against the National Socialist regime in her town, and is faced with the realisation that the legacy is quite different to what she had expected to find, in particular with regards to the role of the Catholic church. Her growing realisation of her town's history of complicity and compliance, even active participation, in the National Socialist regime is accompanied by increasingly active hindrance by the townspeople: threats, lawsuits, physical attacks, and, finally, the attempt to silence her by accepting, indeed celebrating, her most recent discovery. In the 1980s and 1990s, such resistance against exposure of the past might still have been the result of very direct culpability, by now, however, it might have more to do with shifting narratives, in particular within a family context. In the second part of "Micro Narratives", I thus discuss two more recent dramatic productions, *The Stone* by Marius von Mayenburg and Nobel Laureate Elfriede Jelinek's *Rechnitz (Der Würgeengel)*, both from 2008, that engage with changing memory, discourse, and the role of the *Nachgeborene*. In the third part, "Silence and Narrative", I engage in more depth with notions of prescriptive narrative, in particular the attempts to find positive meaning in the legacy of genocide on a public level, and equivalent attempts to redeem parents or grandparents on a familial level, and how this links with the treatment of silence and speaking in my play.

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<sup>353</sup> For a discussion of the relationship between the National Socialist past and its filmic representation with regards to the development since *Holocaust* and recent German productions, including *Drei Tage im April* and *Das Schreckliche Mädchen*, see Frank Bösch, "Film, NS-Vergangenheit und Geschichtswissenschaft. Von "Holocaust" zu "Der Untergang", *VfZ* 1 (Oldenbourg, 2007): 1-32.

## Master Narrative(s)

Once, not so long ago, Germany had what it called a 'Jewish Problem'. Then it had a paralyzing Holocaust memorial problem, a double-edged conundrum: How would a nation of former perpetrators mourn its victims? How would a divided nation reunite itself on the bedrock memory of its crimes?<sup>354</sup>

James E. Young

In previous chapters, I have already discussed various modes of 'master narratives' with regards to the representation of National Socialist atrocity and genocide. In my examination of staged and hidden violence, I have commented on the focus on male survivors' testimonies and how this affected the memory and awareness of the experience of female victims. In "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly", I have examined both the West German claim of guilty innocence as well as the "Americanisation of the Holocaust" with regards to the rise of prominent Hollywood fictionalisations such as *Schindler's List*, which reposition the depiction of the extermination of the European Jews within a politically and culturally North-American mode, while, in the previous chapter, I have engaged with the state-sanctioned narratives of heroic German Anti-Fascism favoured by the GDR. With the German re-unification of 1990 and the ensuing move of the united German government from Bonn to Berlin in 1999, a new, reunified German narrative of remembrance had to be found, which can be exemplified by the turbulent discussions concerning the realisation of a national 'Holocaust memorial': the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe.

In *At Memory's Edge* (2000), James E. Young gives a detailed discussion of the process from the conception of such a memorial by a citizen's group to the realisation of the competition and selection process, complicated by the German

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<sup>354</sup> James E. Young, *At Memory's Edge. After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 184.

general elections of 1998 which ended Helmut Kohl's 16-year-long reign with the newly elected coalition of Social Democrats and the Green Party, as well as Young's own role in the process from sceptic observer to committee member. He carefully elaborates on the fear of the creation of a 'monumental' compensation for the committed crimes, putting an end to the engagement with them, from which the unified Germany could start into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and if there even should be a central monument of remembrance in a city that was home to so many different sites of terror.<sup>355</sup> However, over the course of his engagement and eventual involvement, Young repositioned:

Did I want Germany to return its capital to Berlin *without* publicly and visibly acknowledging what had happened the last time Germany was governed from Berlin? With its gargantuan, even megalomaniacal restoration plans and the flood of big-industry money pouring into the new capital in quantities beyond Albert Speer's wildest dreams, could there really be no space left for public memory of the victims of Berlin's last regime? How, indeed, could I set foot in a new German capital built on the presumption of inadvertent historical amnesia that new buildings always breed?<sup>356</sup>

For Young, the memorial, eventually to be realised after a concept of a field of stelae, concrete slabs, by Peter Eisenman, provided no sense of false redemption or mythologisation, but invited visitors to find their own way to and of remembrance and refused to resolve the issue of remembrance in Germany with a unified, reassuring 'final solution'. The memorial, which was opened to the public in 2005, has also not replaced other places of remembrance. In 2008, it was joined by the Memorial to the Homosexuals Persecuted under the National Socialist Regime as well as the Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Murdered under the National Socialist Regime in

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<sup>355</sup> Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 184-223.

<sup>356</sup> Idem, 195-196. Young discusses the implications of Berlin as seat of the government of a united Germany. (East) Berlin had served as the capital city of the GDR for forty years.

2012. Young expresses his hope that the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe would keep open the memory of loss and emptiness caused by Germany:

In the end, by choosing to create a commemorative space in the center of Berlin – a place empty of housing, commerce, or recreation – the Bundestag reminds Germany and the world at large of the self-inflicted void at the heart of German culture and consciousness. [...] But because the murdered Jews can respond to this gesture only with a massive silence, the burden of response now falls on living Germans – who, in their memorial visits will be asked to recall the mass murder of a people once perpetrated in their name, the absolute void this destruction has left behind, and their own responsibility for memory itself.<sup>357</sup>

In an interview, the memorial's architect Peter Eisenman specifies Young's assessment of the memorial as a place for Germans, not necessarily the descendants of the victims of persecution. While Young assumes that the measures planned to contain the more 'undignified' reactions like running and climbing that a field of several thousand stelae in the middle of a city might invite, Eisenman points out to the *Berliner Morgenpost* that for him, his memorial is intended as a place of "present reminder":

Peter Eisenman: I wanted to create a daily present reminder of the Holocaust for the Germans, not a private, but a public reminder. Something, which ordinary citizens could visit without feeling guilty.

Morgenpost Online: Many use the memorial as a place for picnics, children play catch, you can even find condoms there. Does this not bother you?

PE: Well, you can find those things also on graveyards, in churches and other public places. And the playing, goodness, it's fun for the children to play there. Why shouldn't they do it? That's ok.

MO: Is that what you understand by 'daily present reminder'?

PE: Look, you're not responsible for the Holocaust. Why shouldn't you eat something at the memorial? Only when those reservations have been overcome, and people say, come on, let's have lunch at the field of stelae, then something has been achieved.

MO: And what about the feelings of the victims and their descendants?

PE: This is not a memorial for the victims. It is a memorial for the German population.<sup>358</sup>

Eisenman thus constructed the memorial as an 'unholy' place of remembrance, yet I am not entirely sure if the practice reflects that notion. While it is indeed common

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<sup>357</sup> Idem, 223.

<sup>358</sup> Sabine Gundlach, "Warum man am Holocaust-Mahnmal spielen darf", Interview with Peter Eisenman, *Berliner Morgenpost* 05. May 2010, accessed 23. January 2018, <https://www.morgenpost.de/berlin/article104142463/Warum-man-am-Holocaust-Mahnmal-spielen-darf.html>.



for people to sunbathe on the lower stelae or have their lunch there, I also vividly remember a cold winter day some ten years ago when a Finnish friend and I had lingered on the sides of the field after visiting it, discussing our reactions to it, and were thoroughly admonished by a guard for desecrating the field by smoking. In 2017, a controversy was sparked by the comedian Shahak Shapira, who presented 'selfies', taken by visitors on the memorial ground and uploaded on social media, with the significant alteration that, when moving the mouse cursor over the photo, the background changed to a historical picture of a German concentration camp. For Shapira and his supporters – similar to my guard – those 'selfies' were disrespectful of the memorial and the memory. Critics of his campaign pointed out that replacing the memorial site in the pictures with one of actual atrocity was effectively applying a similar 'degradation' to that which the original 'selfie' takers were accused of, only to make a point.<sup>359</sup>

Whether or not one finds 'selfies' at a site of remembrance distasteful or not, whether one approves of Shapira's campaign or finds it moralising, the discussion shows there is still an on-going debate on how to remember 'correctly'. This debate is closely connected to the question of how to position notions of 'redemption', 'forgiveness', and a sense of German victimhood as a result of a perceived pressure to 'apologise' and 'feel guilty'. This is also evident in many recent filmic productions about German National Socialism, for example *Dresden* (2006), which tells the

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<sup>359</sup> "Selfies am Holocaust-Mahnmal – angemessenes Verhalten?", *Deutschlandfunk*, 19.01.2017, accessed 30. January 2018, [http://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/yolocaust-von-shahak-shapira-selfies-am-holocaust-mahnmal.1895.de.html?dram:article\\_id=376770](http://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/yolocaust-von-shahak-shapira-selfies-am-holocaust-mahnmal.1895.de.html?dram:article_id=376770). See also: Shahak Shapira, <https://yolocaust.de> [accessed 12. February 2018]. The images in question have been taken down by now, but the website includes a summary of the project by Shapira and quotes reactions to the project by anonymous users.

destruction of Dresden by allied bombers from the perspective of a nurse from a National Socialist background, who falls in love with an English pilot. The focus on German 'trauma' combined with a female protagonist who can overcome political indoctrinations through her caring love on the one hand simplifies the discussion of individual and collective political responsibility and, on the other hand, makes room for the old trope of German victimhood. This is a recurrent pattern in German mainstream films, as can be seen in the following example of *Generation War*.

*Generation War*, written by Stefan Kolditz and directed by Philipp Kadelbach – the same writer-director team that produced the 2015 version of *Naked Among Wolves* – first aired in Germany in 2013 under the more telling title *Unsere Mütter, Unsere Väter* – 'our mothers, our fathers'. The TV miniseries focuses on the lives of five friends, and begins with their last meeting in Berlin in 1941 before they disperse to their various fates. Wilhelm and Friedhelm are dispatched to the Eastern front and Charlotte is to be a volunteer nurse at a field hospital, while the hedonistic Greta and her Jewish boyfriend Victor will initially remain in Berlin. Two years into the war, and six years after the establishment of the Nuremberg laws, Viktor celebrates with the other four, with no divide between them. At no point do any of the characters voice any kind of inner conflict stemming from the fact that they fight in a war or support a regime that also persecutes one of their best friends, stripping him first of his civil and eventually all human rights. When the characters express support or enthusiasm for the regime, they do so out of naivety or duty, but in the end, all of this will be overcome by their friendship – as Katherine Stone notes:

National Socialism is reduced to a handful of horrendous individuals, signalled by a cinematic code identifying Nazis by their 'Aryan' physicality as well as their brutality. As Ulrich Herbert muses, 'die Nazis, das sind in diesem Film nicht unsere Mütter und Väter, sondern die anderen' ['the Nazis in this film are not our mothers and fathers, but the others']. German society, it seems, still lacks an appropriate idiom for describing how an otherwise quite rational and decent individual could support National Socialism and, ultimately, the eradication of the Jewish people.<sup>360</sup>

While the loss of the friends' innocence in the war is amply thematised in the duration of the film, any ideological or indeed anti-Semitic motivation is thus far from them: Charlotte might betray the identity of a Jewish doctor posing as a gentile nurse in the hospital, Friedhelm and Wilhelm might take part in war crimes, but due to their friendship with Viktor, we know that the protagonists never really act out of a political or ideological motivation – this remains the domain of the SS officers in the film, who are more or less as one-dimensional as Göth in *Schindler's List*. As a matter of fact, the protagonists rarely act at all. This tendency has also been observed by David Wildermuth, who states about the portrayal of the Wehrmacht in *Generation War*:

When specifically considering the portrayal of the German military, one dominant archetype emerges: the apolitical soldier or lower officer who neither supports nor opposes National Socialism, but is devoted to the timeless military virtues of duty, courage, and self-sacrifice. Because of their apolitical nature, a tension exists between them and their superior officers who are often convinced National Socialists. Given the aggressive wars of conquest that accompanied National Socialism's normative vision of an eastern empire, there is also a curious lack of agency on the part of these soldiers.<sup>361</sup>

The war happens to them, and they are victims of circumstance, like Friedhelm, for example, who only joins the Wehrmacht reluctantly and with humanistic objections, but in time turns into a ruthless super-soldier, proving his self-fulfilling prophecy: "the war will bring out the worst in us". His brother Wilhelm, on the other hand, who starts out as a textbook 'dutiful soldier', deserts his unit through a mistake, and lives in an

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<sup>360</sup> Katherine Stone, "Sympathy, Empathy, and Postmemory: Problematic Positions in *Unsere Mütter, unsere Väter*", *The Modern Language Review*, 111, no. 2 (April 2016): 462.

<sup>361</sup> David Wildermuth, "*Unsere Mütter, unsere Väter*: War, Genocide and 'Condensed Reality'", *German Politics and Society*, Issue 119, 34, no. 2 (Summer 2016): 67. See also the discussion of the 'universal soldier' in Welzer et al., *Opa war kein Nazi*, 120-128.

abandoned hut for a while. Upon his discovery, he is sent to a punishment company, thus ending up on the more or less right side of history without any active decision-making on his part. In some way or other, they are all victims of the system: Friedhelm, who dies to protect still-delusional Hitler Youth members against Red Army soldiers, just as much as Victor, who escapes deportation and fights with Polish partisans for a while, until they find out he is Jewish.<sup>362</sup> While his friendship with the German protagonists is never affected by this, the Polish partisans nearly kill him, expressing the clearest statements of Anti-Semitism in the entire film, which caused great controversy about the series in Poland.<sup>363</sup>

The film's exploration of German victimhood can be most acutely observed with regards to the two female protagonists, Greta and Charlotte. Initially, both collaborate with the National Socialist regime. Charlotte volunteers at a front hospital and betrays a Jewish woman in concealed identity. Her actions are motivated by a naive belief in German duty, while Greta, an aspiring singer and performer, decides to enter an affair, both for private and career reasons, with a high-ranking Nazi out of her own opportunism and desire for fame as well as in order to procure exit papers for her boyfriend Viktor. In the latter parts of the miniseries, both women drastically change their positions. Greta makes defeatist comments and threatens her lover with

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<sup>362</sup> See also Keilbach's discussion of the dramaturgy regarding female eyewitnesses in German TV documentaries contributing to a presentation of German perpetrators as "victims of history", Keilbach, "Witnessing, Credibility, and Female Perpetrators", 107-110.

<sup>363</sup> "Produktionsfirma in Polen vor Gericht", *Spiegel Online*, 18. Juni 2016, accessed 22. January 2018, <http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/tv/unsere-muetter-unsere-vaeter-macher-in-polen-vor-gericht-a-1103564.html>. For an American perspective on the drama's reception in Germany and Poland, see A.O. Scott, "A History Lesson, Airbrushed: 'Generation War' Adds a Glow to a German Era", *New York Times*, 14. January 2014, accessed 22. January 2018, [https://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/15/movies/generation-war-adds-a-glow-to-a-german-era.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/15/movies/generation-war-adds-a-glow-to-a-german-era.html?_r=0).

exposing their relationship to his wife, for both reasons, he has her arrested and eventually shot. The possible political dimensions of Greta's actions are therefore downplayed and overshadowed by the private aspect. Both Greta and Friedhelm, the most conflicted and interesting characters in the film, are killed by its narrative.

As Wolfgang Michal observed:

The singer, who got too intimate with the Nazis, and the younger brother, who developed from a sensitive outsider to an uninhibited and suicidal front-addict, had to pay with their lives. Noteworthy, that especially those two film-figures have no equivalent eye-witnesses in the accompanying documentation. None of the questioned witnesses speaks about her Nazi-affairs, no witness mentions joyfully committing atrocities. No one would have wanted such parents. Therefore, they did not survive (in the film).<sup>364</sup>

Charlotte, however, comes to represent another archetype of German (female) victimhood. She only 'betrays' her tentative, romantic love for Wilhelm after believing him dead and ensuing an affair with a doctor – out of despair and loneliness, not opportunism. She even begins a friendship with the Ukrainian nurse Sonja, which nearly leads to Charlotte's downfall: when searching for Sonja, she misses the evacuation of her hospital. Both women are captured and nearly raped by Red Army soldiers. Charlotte, however, is saved by a female officer – the same Jewish woman whom she betrayed in the beginning. Discussing the filmic treatment of Greta and Charlotte with regards to other conventional representations of female characters as 'victims and recusants' in recent German films, Katherine Stone remarks that:

This narrative sleight of hand enables victimhood to be conflated with innocence, both of which are treated as immutable identity categories rather than as evaluations of a given experience or action. Such a treatment of the concepts victimhood and innocence in turn shores up essentialist notions of morality, which were radically thrown into question by the Holocaust. This trope, which pervades post-war memory culture, is particularly obvious in recent historical films, in which female protagonists fulfil a redemptive function. They make it possible to imagine that the moral ruination of the nation was not total and that moral rehabilitation was therefore possible. [...] The focus on women in recent films about the Nazi past creates a space for remembering the horrors of war without also needing to reflect on the individual's responsibility for the political events that precipitated it.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>364</sup> Michal, "Wunschtraumata der Kinder".

<sup>365</sup> Stone, "Sympathy, Empathy, and Postmemory", 459.

Avoidance of responsibility can be, paradoxically, inherent in an all-encompassing admittance of guilt, particularly if the case is further complicated by the need to take responsibility for a crime committed not by oneself, but by one's parents. Hannah Arendt discusses this in her response to Martin Buber's condemnation of the execution of Adolf Eichmann as a mistake bound to add to the sense of guilt experienced by many young Germans. Arendt is critical of these expressions of 'public guilt':

It is quite gratifying to feel guilty if you haven't done anything wrong: how noble! Whereas it is rather hard and certainly depressing to admit guilt and to repent. The youth of Germany is surrounded, on all sides and in all walks of life, by men in positions of authority and in public office who are very guilty indeed but who *feel* nothing of the sort. The normal reaction to this state of affairs should be indignation, but indignation would be quite risky – not a danger to life and limb but definitely a handicap in a career. These young German men and women who every once in a while – on the occasion of all the *Diary of Anne Frank* hubbub and of the Eichmann trial – treat us to hysterical outbreaks of guilt feelings are not staggering under the burden of the past, their fathers' guilt; rather, they are trying to escape from the pressure of very present and actual problems into a cheap sentimentality.<sup>366</sup>

Primo Levi comes upon a similar phenomenon when he discusses "Letters from Germans" in *The Drowned and the Saved*, some twenty years after Arendt's observations in 1963. Discussing the letters of a young student and an older Doctor, he notes that they both use a similar justification strategy for the actions of their parental generations in the case of the former, and their own actions in the case of the latter, that relies on the seductive quality of National Socialist propaganda and in particular that 'one' man, Adolf Hitler. In a somewhat less damning assessment than Arendt's, Levi concludes that such defence mechanisms "[...] can be accepted from young people who, understandably, try to exculpate their fathers' entire generation; not from the older people compromised and falsely penitent who try to limit the guilt

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<sup>366</sup> Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report*, 251.

to a single man.”<sup>367</sup> The sense of exoneration which Levi describes is a lot closer to the depiction of characters in productions such as *Generation War* and *Dresden* than both the “hysterical outbreaks of guilt” that Arendt admonishes and the indignation she would prefer. Wolfgang Michael describes this “immunisation against criticism” of the parents by their “secondarily traumatised” children with regards to *Generation War*

And now there is a grandiose television film, made by the children and grandchildren of the traumatised – the director was born 1974, the author 1956 – and tries the impossible. The children and grandchildren, the secondarily traumatised, imagine what their parents ‘experienced’. But through their imagining (therefore fictionalising) it, they whitewash it, because it is, after all, about their parents and grandparents. The doubly used, possessive pronoun ‘our’ in the title is a precautionary and cleverly chosen usurpation of the audience: it makes immune against criticism. Children want to stand by their parents. That is understandable and likable. But they might hinder their parents’ overcoming of trauma. The filmmakers moralise, they are merciful with their mothers and fathers, their protagonists are simply too good. After every scene, you want to hand out five medals for bravery. Our parents are saved by the impressive ruthlessness which is pretended by the artificial blood-hyperrealism of the war scenes. The docu-drama thus does not represent the traumata of the parents, but the wish-fulfilment traumata of their children. These are imagined flashbacks with which the secondarily traumatised want to relieve their parents of guilt and shame and demand justice for them.<sup>368</sup>

“Hysterical outbreaks of guilt” and “cheap sentimentality”, the violent indignation and anger of 1968, and the wish to exonerate the parents – these are all aspects of German memory culture that feed into the ‘master narrative’ of German remembrance. When the German writer Martin Walser gave his acceptance speech for the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade in 1998, it might have well been that sense of “cheap sentimentality” that he intended to criticise by stating that

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<sup>367</sup> Levi, *The Drowned*, 217.

<sup>368</sup> Michal, “Wunschtraumata der Kinder”.

everyone knows our historical burden, the everlasting shame, not a day on which the shame is not held up to us. [...] Auschwitz is not suitable for becoming a threat routine, an always available means of intimidation or a moral club, or just a mandatory exercise. What is produced by ritualisation has the quality of a lip service.<sup>369</sup>

His speech sparked a heated controversy, in particular with the then president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Ignatz Bubis, who accused Walser of being an “intellectual arsonist” whose reasoning could and would be easily appropriated by neo-Nazis. Both Walser and Bubis somewhat retracted afterwards, but the debate shows just how difficult it can be to negotiate the landscape of remembrance.<sup>370</sup> What remains is a frail and certainly fraught public and national sense of responsibility, regret, and remembrance, and that “never ending shame”, as Walser described this ‘master narrative’, is of course also very open to attacks from the right. The head of the right-wing AfD party in Thuringia, Björn Höcke, spoke to the youth organisation of the party in Dresden in January 2017, and where Walser’s speech sparked controversy in literary salons and feuilletons, Höcke’s fuelled a fire:

The only intention of the bombardment of Dresden and the other German cities was to take our collective identity from us. The intention was to destroy us with root and branch, to erode our roots. And, combined with the systematic re-education started after 1945, this has almost been achieved. [...] Until today our state of mind, our mood, is that of an utterly defeated people. We Germans, and I am not speaking about you patriots, who have assembled here today, we Germans, that is our people, are the only people in the world who planted a

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<sup>369</sup> Martin Walser, “Erfahrungen beim Verfassen einer Sonntagsrede”, speeches on the occasion of peace prize of the German Book Trade Award Ceremony, 11. October 1998. Friedenspreis des deutschen Buchhandels, 2015, accessed 22 January 2018, [https://www.friedenspreis-des-deutschen-buchhandels.de/sixcms/media.php/1290/1998\\_walser\\_mit\\_nachtrag\\_2017.pdf](https://www.friedenspreis-des-deutschen-buchhandels.de/sixcms/media.php/1290/1998_walser_mit_nachtrag_2017.pdf), 11-12. See also Walser’s additum from February 2017 in which he specifies his fears about the “instrumentalisation of the Holocaust”, ratifies his fears concerning the memorial, and distances himself from the AfD-representatives using his speech and fears as “facts”, 14.

<sup>370</sup> Andreas Öhler, Martin Walser and Michel Friedman, “Interview: Herr Walser, ich kaufe Ihnen die Ahnungslosigkeit nicht ab”, *Zeit*, 19. February 2015, accessed 13. January 2018, <http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2015-02/martin-walser-michel-friedman-debatte-auschwitz-christ-und-welt/komplettansicht>.



memorial of shame in the heart of its capital. [...] We need nothing else but a remembrance policy change of 180 degrees!<sup>371</sup>

His speech is punctuated by those calls of 'Volksverräter' (traitors to the people) that echo through the background of the second part of *Flieder* (F/L, 61-62). For all the critique it evoked, Höcke's position most certainly resonated with some people – the election success of the AfD in September 2017 is partial proof to that. It is a clearly stated point of the AfD's programme to challenge what it terms the "current restriction of the German memory culture to the time of National Socialism".<sup>372</sup> Of course, these attacks on 'our memory culture and responsibility' are contested and criticised across party lines, in public discussions and media. However, these attacks that put German victimhood at their centre and criticise the current, public mode of remembrance for enforcing a narrative of shame on Germans today, also resonate with certain notions of victimhood that are expressed in mainstream cultural products like *Generation War* which also feed into this very 'master narrative' itself. In the following, I would therefore like to consider some 'micro narratives' of local engagement and theatrical responses to atrocity and responsibility that might not operate on such a large scale as a national memory or a public broadcasting station, but which focus more on responsibility, agency, and taking claim of narratives locally.

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<sup>371</sup> Björn Höcke, "Gemütszustand eines total besiegten Volkes", speech in Dresden, 17. January 2017, *Tagesspiegel*, 19. January 2017, accessed 13. January 2018, <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/hoecke-rede-im-wortlaut-gemuetszustand-eines-total-besiegten-volkes/19273518-all.html>. See also: Sascha Lobo, "Schauen Sie diese Rede", *Spiegel Online*, 18. January 2017, accessed 13. January 2018, <http://www.spiegel.de/netzwelt/web/bjoern-hoecke-rede-offenbart-gesinnung-kolumne-von-sascha-lobo-a-1130551.html>.

<sup>372</sup> Alternative für Deutschland, *Programm für Deutschland. Das Grundsatzprogramm der Alternative für Deutschland*, Stuttgart 30. April / 01. May 2016, 48, accessed 14.09. 2016, [https://www.afd.de/wp-content/uploads/sites/111/2017/01/2016-06-27\\_afd-grundsatzprogramm\\_web-version.pdf](https://www.afd.de/wp-content/uploads/sites/111/2017/01/2016-06-27_afd-grundsatzprogramm_web-version.pdf).

## Micro Narratives



Plate. 8. Taucha, January 2017. © M.B.



Plate. 9. Taucha, January 2017. © M.B.

I came across these buildings and the graffiti (“NEVER AGAIN FASCISM. In memory of the forced labourers who lost their lives here.”) while on a walk in Taucha, near Leipzig, in January 2017 with a group of friends. We were wondering what these structures might have been as we approached them and I mentioned that there used to be a satellite concentration camp for a HASAG factory somewhere in the area. I did not expect these buildings to be remains – partly, because I assumed that there would be some form of informational sign if that were the case, partly because I did not think that those structures would have survived for so long – but the graffiti opens a link to the numerous places of forced labour in Taucha.<sup>373</sup> My friends, who have been residents of Leipzig much longer than me, did not know about the camp in Taucha, or, indeed, the other camps and factories of the HASAG company.

In 2001, the Leipzig Nazi Forced Labour Memorial was founded, which is located on the premises of the previous HASAG headquarters in Leipzig and researches the history of forced labour as well as offering outreach educational

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<sup>373</sup> See also Klei’s discussion of areas of previous satellite camps without any markers or memorials, Klei, *Gestalt der Erinnerung*, 212-213.

programmes. Part of their programme are so-called “Neighbourhood Tours”, which explore the traces of National Socialist forced labour in different neighbourhoods, and it is part of their mission statement to heighten awareness of the everyday visibility of National Socialist atrocity within their local community.<sup>374</sup>

In Altenburg and Meuselwitz, apart from the plaques and memorials erected by the citizen groups I mentioned in the introduction to Part I and “Blank Spaces” and the engagement by local researchers and the history society I indicated in my foreword, the Altenburg city council also commissioned a historian, Dr. Marc Bartuschka, in 2013 to research the camp in Altenburg. He presented his findings to the mayor in 2015.<sup>375</sup> While these are not yet publicly accessible, the research, and the development of a work group dedicated to the memory of atrocity in Altenburg, mark the beginning of a (renewed) discussion about how to engage with local sites of atrocity. Such engagement has been undertaken in various cities recently, for example, the historian Jürgen Nitsche presented a book on the history of Jewish life in Mittweida, about an hour’s drive from Altenburg, in January 2018. Nitsche lives in Mittweida himself, and the project apparently was enthusiastically endorsed by the town’s mayor.<sup>376</sup> Whether or not the work group and researchers in the case of the

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<sup>374</sup>“Neighbourhood Walks”, Leipzig Nazi Forced Labour Memorial, accessed 23. January 2018, <http://www.zwangsarbeit-in-leipzig.de/en/nazi-forced-labour-in-leipzig/educational-offerings/neighbourhood-walks/>; “Zur Konzeption der Gedenkstätte, ihren Aufgaben und Zielen”, Leipzig Nazi Forced Labour Memorial, Leipzig: Förderverein “Dr. Margarete Blank” e.V., 2013, accessed 19. January 2018, [http://www.zwangsarbeit-in-leipzig.de/fileadmin/Dateien/Gedenkstaette/Konzept\\_GfZL\\_2013\\_.pdf](http://www.zwangsarbeit-in-leipzig.de/fileadmin/Dateien/Gedenkstaette/Konzept_GfZL_2013_.pdf).

<sup>375</sup> Christian Repkewitz, “Dem Dunkel entrissen – Forschungen zum KZ-Außenlager vorgestellt”, 04. February 2015, accessed 24. June 2016, <http://www.abg-info.de/aktuelles-aus-politik-und-wirtschaft/dem-dunkel-entrissen-forschungen-zum-kz-aussenlager-vorgestellt/>.

<sup>376</sup> “Gebundenes Gedenken an die Juden in Mittweida”, *MDR*, 27. January 2018, accessed 28. January 2018, <https://www.mdr.de/sachsen/chemnitz/buch-ueber-juden-in-mittweida-erschienen-100.html>.

Altenburg concentration camp will receive similar support, and whether such an undertaking will be approached in Meuselwitz, remains to be seen.

While it is without question important to remember those lives exterminated and exiled during National Socialism, there also is a danger of obscuring German complicity and responsibility in a process focusing solely on the victims. Discussing the role of forgetting in memory culture, Björn Krondorfer focusses in particular on the ‘intergenerational’ memory of National Socialist atrocity and the thematic differences in the memory of Jewish survivors and their descendants and their German counterparts:

Germans [...] forget to ascertain their own degree of complicity and culpability. They also tend to forget Jewish victims. Among older German generations, one way to forget Jews is to focus on one’s own German suffering (Germans as victims of the Nazi dictatorship, of Soviet barbarity, Allied bombings of German cities, Allied post-war injustices, etc); in this case, the perception of one’s own alleged victimhood blinds people to the true victims of the Nazi persecutions. Younger German generations tend to forget Jews by uncritically presenting their own family histories without Jews. Doing so allows them to present a family unblemished by the worst excesses of Nazi ideology.<sup>377</sup>

This selective memory lies at the heart of Marius von Mayenburg’s 2008 play *The Stone* which engages with those issues described by Kronendorfer, albeit with the variation that the protagonists do not exactly “forget Jews” but, similar to Clara, rather use them as a tool of reinterpretation of their own family history. In *The Stone*, the relocation of three generations of German women – grandmother, mother, daughter –to ‘their’ old family home in Dresden after the re-unification in the early 1990s kicks off a stream of memories about that home, its previous owners, and the little ‘memorial’ twists that make the memory of how the house had been acquired just so much more bearable.<sup>378</sup> Witha, the grandmother, did not “write out” Mietze and her

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<sup>377</sup> Krondorfer, “Whose Memory is it”, 220-221.

<sup>378</sup> Marius von Mayenburg, *The Stone*, trans. Maja Zadek (methuen drama: London, 2009). Following references to this edition will be in text (TS).

husband – the Jewish homeowners and colleagues, from whom she and her husband Wolfgang ‘bought’ their house in 1935 – so much as re-write them for her daughter’s and eventually granddaughter’s benefit. While the staged flash-backs cumulate to tell a story of coercion, complicity and eventual betrayal, Witha recasts her husband as a quiet aid-giver to the Jewish family in her stories to her daughter Heidrun. This version informs granddaughter Hannah’s school talk about her grandfather as her role model (TS, 5-6), as well as her wish to leave Dresden for a school year in New York where she intends to find the Jewish survivors whom her grandparents had rescued (TS, 37). This version also serves as validation for Heidrun in her confrontation with Stephanie, the young woman who grew up in the house in the GDR when Witha and Heidrun had moved to West Germany.<sup>379</sup> Stephanie’s anger and pain at having been forced to abandon her home where she lived with her grandfather, is rejected by Heidrun on the basis that said home has only ever been *her* home, rooted in her father’s act of – imagined – resistance:

What I’m trying to say is: this is not your garden. It never was. This is my father’s house, he fought a lonely battle here, he put the spikes on the garden wall to protect his family from the Nazis, he lived with the humiliations and the danger, but they didn’t manage to break him, he had stones thrown at him and in the end, he was shot up there, in the room that maybe was your nursery for a few years. There weren’t many people like my father, people who proved that resistance was possible, people who risked their lives for others. My father was one of those exceptions and yet no one knows his story. You – you lived here for a while, in his house, fine, you didn’t pay a penny in rent all those years since we had to leave the country, and we never complained. But now you stand in his garden, sit at our table, in all your youthful ignorance and impudence, and talk about a place you obviously know nothing about – aren’t you ashamed of yourself? [...] This place is occupied. You didn’t realise, but the house was always inhabited. The whole time. From the room where my father died down to the basement where my mother survived the bombing. You were only visiting. (TS, 43-44)

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<sup>379</sup> Both the role of (false) memory and the way it can influence contemporary narratives are also at the heart of Jonathan Lichtenstein’s play *Memory*, which premiered two years prior to *The Stone*. Set in a rehearsal room, the play-within-a-play explores three generations of a German Jewish family in National Socialist Germany and Berlin shortly after the re-unification, as well as the encounter between a Jewish soldier and a Palestinian home-owner in Bethlehem during the construction of the West Bank Wall. Similar to Mayenburg’s play, *Memory* moves through different times, and indeed space, anchored by different kinds of walls, with a similar focus on familial memory as in Mayenburg’s play, but within a more global context.

But of course, Mietze and her husband had never made it to New York, they were betrayed by “someone” (TS, 47-49), the father had not been shot by Russians, but killed himself as an “upright German” (TS, 40-41), the spikes were put up by Mietze’s husband “to protect his family”, and only inherited by Witha and Wolfgang (TS, 10-11). *The Stone* has an overwhelming sense of ordinariness and everydayness about it; as a result, the revelations of the family’s complicity and consequent white-washing do not come across as shocking, but as very familiar. The small stories of German aid-giving and eventual victimisation that form the base of Heidrun’s and Hannah’s sense of self, belonging, and home are told and retold by the women, while the flashbacks qualify that self-satisfied version of events for the audience, in particular when showing Mietze’s anger, frustration, and isolation. There is a cyclical feel to the way time moves in *The Stone*, backwards and forwards, with the intergenerational household at its centre, but there is still a distinction between then and now, the generation of perpetrators and the *Nachgeborene*. The past seeps into the present, it informs and forms the present, but it is still separated from it.

In Elfriede Jelinek’s play *Rechnitz (Der Würgeengel)*, first performed in 2008 in Munich, this separation is no longer in existence, there is no past with which one has to come to terms with, because past and present collapse into each other, nearly indistinguishable.<sup>380</sup> Jelinek’s polyphone choral monologue is no history drama, reconstructing the events of the past, but rather questions mode and form of the reconstruction, that is, both the speaking about the event as well as the theatrical

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<sup>380</sup> Elfriede Jelinek, *Rechnitz (Der Würgeengel)*, directed by Jossi Wieler for the Münchner Kammerspiele, 2008, DVD (Berlin: Alexander, 2011). Following references to this production will be in text (R).

form itself.<sup>381</sup> ‘Messengers’ speak about events that are not seen, in this case, the massacre of almost 200 Jewish forced labourers in Rechnitz at the end of a high-society party, which has never been ‘come to terms with’ in the sense that neither the perpetrators have faced punishment, nor the murdered have been found. The ‘messengers’ describe what they have seen, witnessed, heard. Similar to Charlotte Delbo’s *Who Will Carry the Word?* the atrocity is not shown, but, as in Greek drama, conveyed through the word. However, and unlike in *Who Will Carry the Word?*, in Jelinek’s play, there is no more dramatic mimesis or even defined characters. While Mayenburg’s *Nachgeborene* Heidrun and Hannah are faced with their past at points in the play, Jelinek’s messengers are not *Nachgeborene*, but witnesses who describe the “proud suffering and proud regrets [...]” (R) of the latter, evoking the “cheap sentimentality” and “hysterical outbreaks of guilt” already observed by Hannah Arendt. Arendt notes that the past cannot be ‘mastered’, only be borne; in Jelinek’s play, the past cannot be come to terms with because it is inseparable from the present:

Past and present elide in each other. In that sense, it would be short-sighted to view the messengers [...] as the *Nachgeborene*, who act here instead of perpetrators and victims and qualify what had happened through their offering of so many different versions of memory, repression and ‘guilt pride’. It is rather a construct in which perpetrator and *Nachgeborene* elide in each other, a collective unconsciousness, which is characterised by its incapability to negate, to judge – as this would constitute the prerequisite to consider present and past separated from each other.<sup>382</sup>

With regard to the treatment of time, I would place my play inbetween those two mapped out here. The distinction between past and present, history and interpretation, that is still rather clear in Mayenburg’s play, even though one is

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<sup>381</sup> see also: Gerhard Scheit, “Stecken, Stab und Stangl; Rechnitz (Der Würgeengel)”, in *Jelinek Handbuch*, ed. Pia Janke (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2013), 159.

<sup>382</sup> Scheit, “Stecken, Stab und Stangl; Rechnitz (Der Würgeengel), 159.

intrinsically informed by the other, is collapsing in my play, yet, I do not follow through with this collapse with the same resoluteness as Jelinek, in particular not regarding the form of the play. There is more of an interplay between past and present than in Mayenburg, yet, in order to have an interplay, one still needs two distinct poles between this can take place.

### **“Don’t Feed the Monster”: Silence and Narrative**

“Why should we assume there are positive lessons to be learned from (the Holocaust)?” essayist Jonathan Rosen has asked in an article [...]. ‘What if some history does not have anything to teach us? What if studying radical evil does not make us better? What if, walking through the haunted halls of the Holocaust Museum, looking at evidence of the destruction of European Jewry, visitors do not emerge with a greater belief that all men are created equal but with a belief that man is by nature evil?’ ‘[...] Neither art or narrative redeems the Holocaust with meaning – didactic, moral, or otherwise. In fact, to the extent that remembering events seems to find any meaning in them, such memory also betrays events by blinding us with our own need for redemptory closure.’<sup>383</sup>

James E. Young

In November 2016, I found myself at the parliament of Thuringia, with an official addressing the audience at the opening of an exhibition to mark the anniversary of the November Pogroms of 1938.<sup>384</sup> The speaker evoked the “bad times”, but assured the assembled audience that we had “learned from the past” and created a new, different Germany. Everyone clapped, then there was coffee. There seems to be a version of our collective re-telling of Germany’s genocidal past which can be read as if National Socialism and the extermination of the European Jews were an unfortunate mistake on the way to democracy, to be regretted, but eventually vindicated by our democratic success story. There was no sense of Arendt’s “knowing and enduring”, only closure, almost a celebration of the advancement from

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<sup>383</sup> Young, *At Memory’s Edge*, 37-38.

<sup>384</sup> “Deutsch und Jüdisch: Eine Kabinettausstellung des Leo Baeck Instituts auf Reisen”, an Exhibition by the Leo Baeck Institute New York and Berlin.



racist, anti-Semitic perpetrators of genocide to upright democrats. Although it is and maybe always must be a balancing act to critique those modes of remembrance, in order to avoid using a type of criticism and language used by the right,<sup>385</sup> I find such narratives too simplifying both of the past and our present.

The notion that there must some kind of sense to be found in the aftermath of National Socialist atrocity, a liberating meaning, and that one must speak, narrate, formulate this meaning is at the heart of the conflict between Andrea and Clara (F/L, 25-26). Similar to the speaker in Erfurt, Clara constructs her own, personal redemptive meaning from her assumed grandmother's story and re-narrates it to herself and those around her. To her, this positive memory of her grandmother is to be celebrated and narrated – any other way to engage with their past is wrong. Her attitude is in stark contrast to her mother Andrea, who reacts by silently refusing to make a narrative (F/L, 72-73). In the first scenes of the play, Andrea is introduced as a rather stereotypical and superficial trope of a motherfigure: a somewhat unemancipated homemaker, feeding and nattering while her offspring has to do the challenging work with regard to their past (F/L 9-11). However, there is more to her as a character, although this is mostly revealed in retrospect. Thus, for example, in Andrea's final monologue, she describes taking Clara with her to a demonstration in 1989 (F/L, 124-128) – a defining memory for Clara, which she, however, assigns to her grandmother in her monologue (F/L, 112-113). Andrea has already gone through the fragmentation of the self-defining narrative that Clara experiences at the end of

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<sup>385</sup> As has been rightly pointed out by an audience member during a podium discussion I attended in February 2018 – “Darf man das? Holocaust-Darstellungen und der gute Geschmack”, public discussion, Theater der Jungen Welt, Leipzig, 17. February 2018.

the play and this experience not only foreshadows Clara's development, but her silence is the canvas against Clara's narrative can unfold. Therefore, Andrea, and her pain, might easily be sidelined – she is, by definition, not an eloquent character, fading against the more forceful and central Clara. Yet, *visually*, Andrea is always there, more centralised, in many ways, than any other character: she resides in her kitchen, above all the proceedings, actively watching them and eating on her pain. She is the only one who can actually communicate with the Old Woman beyond repetition (F/L, 84-85) and at least once she demonstrates that she can shape the world of the narrative just as much as Clara, albeit not necessarily through words, but again visually through her actions when she makes it snow (F/L, 61-62).

When, at the end of the play, Andrea finally speaks, she does not have one clearly identifiable voice, instead her voice is as fragmented as her experience. Unlike Clara, she has overcome, even rejected, the temptation of the coherent redemptive narrative which defined and formed Clara's sense of self. In her monologue, her voice is made up equally by that of her mother and of Clara – she repeats and inserts their voices, letting them exist on their own rather than inserting them into her own, consistent narrative (F/L, 124-128). In that sense, her monologue also mirrors the way in which I treated the testimonies for the execution of Andrey (F/L, 113-118), which I also allowed to stand on their own instead of integrating them into the play like all the other material discussed here – and Clara's preferred way to tell her narrative.

Those clashing positions with regards to the narrative-making of a traumatic experience – or memory – and the “not-telling” are also of importance in Thompson’s discussion of trauma studies and applied theatre.

Within performance studies in general and in applied theatre in particular, the assumptions emanating from the popularity of the trauma diagnosis have led to the prescription of ‘telling one’s story’ as the preferred method and necessary precondition for ‘relief’, ‘liberation’ or ‘healing’. According to this approach, constructing a narrative from the pain of the past allows it to be contained or healed. The prescription for cure has then transformed itself into a proscription as the binary opposite of speaking your experience, that is, silence or ‘not-telling’ is somehow denigrated as a dangerous retreat, a failure or the site of continued harm.<sup>386</sup>

Michele Langfield also notes that for many survivors, silence might have constituted the only way to live without being overcome by the past in her discussion of (gendered) coping strategies in video testimonies.<sup>387</sup> Yet, there has been a similar compulsion on the survivors of the extermination of the European Jews to narrate their experience – just recall the scene in Claude Lanzmann’s *Shoah* when the director pressures the barber in his shop to speak about his experiences in Treblinka, even though the man is visibly upset and begs to be allowed his silence.<sup>388</sup>

There is of course a difference in coercing survivors to speak as opposed to perpetrators, and I would be far from wanting to argue for a widespread silence to fall over Germany’s past. However, the notion that “constructing a narrative from the pain of the past allows it to be contained or healed”, which Thompson discusses, includes not only the danger that other kinds of narratives – which might not have the ability to heal or contain – become side-lined. After all, in the common appeal that the past needs to be narrated for the benefit of future generations, the notion

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<sup>386</sup> Thompson, *Performance affects*, 45.

<sup>387</sup> Michele Langfield, “‘The Hurt Will Never Go Away’: Reflections on Survival Strategies and Ways of Coping in Holocaust Videotestimonies, Melbourne, Australia” in *Testifying to the Holocaust*, 93ff.

<sup>388</sup> See also Jacques Rancière’s discussion of this scene with regards to the question of (un)representability and notions of authority, speech, and silence, Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 91-95.

that something positive is to be learned from the violent past is always indicated. But this notion of prescriptive narrative-making also implies the danger of disallowing or disregarding other modes of engaging actively with a traumatic or painful experiences that are not 'speaking', as Thompson also elaborates:

Positioning silence against speaking reduces it to a passive failure rather than giving it any possibility for agency. Silence, in fact, could be an active means of coping at certain points in the history of a person's relation to an appalling experience. It is not only the dwelling place of the feeble and deluded but also potentially the tactic of the strong. While Butler tends to conceive of silence only within the terms of narration and speech, she does echo this by endowing a refusal to speak with positive qualities. Silence is permitted a sense of resistance when she argues that it 'either calls into question the legitimacy of the authority invoked by the question and the questioner or attempts to circumscribe a domain of autonomy that cannot or should not be intruded upon by the questioner'.<sup>389</sup>

Similarly, Andrea's silence about the true identity of her mother is as much an act of agency as Clara's narrative-making – she remains silent to protect her daughter's love and admiration for her grandmother, which is so important for Clara's sense of self, at the cost of their own relationship (F/L, 72-73). Andrea allows for herself to be constructed as the villain in Clara's campaign to heroicise her grandmother as the ultimate positive role-model, with Andrea's own pain only serving as a means to further feed Clara's fury (F/L, 92-96).<sup>390</sup> In a way, Andrea's silence is also a defiant rebuttal of Clara's assumed position as the questioner or judge of her mother's and grandmother's actions (F/L, idem). The accusatory relationships between Andrea and Clara – and, in Andrea's monologue, Andrea and her mother Else – is also rooted in intergenerational complications in East German families, where the

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<sup>389</sup> Thompson, *Performance affects*, 67.

<sup>390</sup> In her study on muteness and voice in 'Holocaust' literature, Sara R. Horowitz also discusses the role of overly-articulate characters, in particular with regards to works dealing with collaboration, noting that "excessive talking represents not the antipode of muteness but its other face", Sara R. Horowitz, *Voicing the Void. Muteness and Memory in Holocaust Fiction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 181. In that sense, Clara's articulate narrative-making and Andrea's silent refusal mirror each other.

involvement in the National Socialist regime by one generation and the involvement in the Socialist dictatorship by the next generation are often simultaneously pitted against and used as a vindication for each other, while the discrepancies between the official memory culture and the familial memory are enormous.<sup>391</sup>

In looking for her grandmother as a hero adhering to her own moral code, Clara follows a general trend that has already been observed by Harald Welzer, Sabine Moller and Karoline Tschuggnall in the study *Opa war kein Nazi* in 2002. Welzer and his co-authors conducted intergenerational interviews about memory within a family context. The authors note that in those interviews and conversations, 2.535 stories were told and that

[n]ot a few of them change on their way from generation to generation in such a way that anti-Semites become resistance fighters and Gestapo officers the protectors of Jews. There are reports of shootings in the talks, [...] but all this leaves no trace in the individual interviews with the children and grandchildren – it is as if they have not heard these stories at all. However, they use every hint, even the most remote, that their grandparents have done something ‘good’ to invent versions of the past in which they always act as integrity, good people.<sup>392</sup>

In the sense of familial ‘white-washing’ and intergenerational ‘German’ whispers presented in this study, the doubling of Else and Lore in my play, the ‘real’ twist of Else assuming her sister’s identity, would not even have been necessary. The authors’ findings suggest that Clara would have been able to ‘invent versions of the past’ in which her grandmother was a heroic resistance fighter all on her own. However, as I have already discussed in “He Won’t Shoot You”, the Else/Lore dichotomy in my play does not only provide a foil for Clara’s fantasies: to have two sisters shows perpetrators and bystander not as isolated, but within a community,

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<sup>391</sup> See also Welzer et al., 162-194.

<sup>392</sup> Harald Welzer et al., “*Opa war kein Nazi*”, 11.

while their eventual (inter)changeability challenges the ‘good German – bad German’ simplifications I have engaged with in “The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly” and in this chapter. With regards to intergenerational memory, Isabel Heinemann summarises Welzer’s conclusions in her review of the study:

Firstly, the memories of the witnesses change in the family conversation, they are constantly updated by the children, grandchildren and contemporaries themselves. The more inconsistent and contradictory the stories are, the better they seem to lend themselves to transmission and continuation. Secondly, a total of two-thirds of the recorded family conversations are victim or hero stories. [...] On the one hand, the generation of grandparents prefers to emphasise subjective suffering and personal courage when describing their behaviour under National Socialism; critical reflections on wrongdoing or participation in crime are rare. This fits into today’s expectation of morally correct behaviour, at the same time it meets the expectations of the audience. On the other hand, children and grandchildren are victimising or heroising their parents / grandparents, which is more convenient and easier to reconcile with personal loyalties. [...] <sup>393</sup>

Even though I did not know Welzer’s study when I wrote my play, the intergenerational memory of Else and Clara is consistent with Welzer’s conclusions. The grandmother, Else, casts herself as Lore’s rescuer, who undertook a great risk to save her sister from the danger of being accused of fraternisation (F/L, 102-104, 118-119, 124-128). She later assumes Lore’s identity as aid-giver and rescuer, which is appropriated by Clara. <sup>394</sup>

Heinemann finally discusses the results of the authors’ engagement with Germans who were expelled or otherwise victimised and found that their experiences were “told in pictures of the Holocaust: transports to cattle cars, the brutality of Allied soldiers shooting indiscriminately at German civilians, mountains

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<sup>393</sup> Isabel Heinemann, “Rezension zu: Welzer, Harald; Moller, Sabine; Tschuggnall, Karoline: “*Opa war kein Nazi*”. *Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust im Familiengedächtnis*. Frankfurt am Main 2002”, *H-Soz-Kult*, 18. September 2002, accessed 20. February 2018, [www.hsozkult.de/publicationreview/id/rezbuecher-1544](http://www.hsozkult.de/publicationreview/id/rezbuecher-1544).

<sup>394</sup> And this identity is already at least dubious since it is formed entirely by Else as grandmother and further developed by Clara. The prisoners, with the possible exception of Andrey, do not necessarily share this view point (F/L, 69, 107-109).

of corpses, etc. This is where the principle of 'Wechselrahmung' takes hold. Fourthly, as previously demonstrated, witnesses often resort to set pieces from film and literature in their stories"<sup>395</sup>. As Clara extends and updates her grandmother's narrative, inserting her own reality and expectations, her view of the past is also (in)formed by film and literature (F/L, 30-31). The principle of 'Wechselrahmung' is the base of the Old Woman / Lore appropriating the last sentence said to Lore by Sulaika: "you took everything from me" into the Old Woman's lament "she took everything from me" (F/L, 121), through which she equates her pain and loss to that of the concentration camp prisoner Sulaika.

Finally, Clara's determined focus on her grandmother as aid-giver, rescuer, resister is not only reflective of such tendencies in contemporary representations, as I have discussed with regards to *Generation War*, and of intergenerational memory and discourse, but also mirrors the developing positions of the women's movement in Germany with regards to their legacy of National Socialism. The contributions to Lerke Gravenhorst's and Carmen Tatschmurat's *TöchterFragen: NS-Frauengeschichte*, entries and reactions to a conference in Würzburg in 1990, engaging with female complicity and resistance during National Socialism, indicate the painful moment of shifting the preferred narrative of women as resisters to or

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<sup>395</sup> Heinemann, "Rezension zu: Welzer".

"Wechselrahmung" ('doubled framing') is defined by the authors of the study as "the composition of scenes of the past from narrative and visual set pieces known from documents on the persecution and extermination of the Jewish population.", Welzer et al., *Opa war kein Nazi*, 16. Krondorfer notes that "[...] Germans in a post-genocidal society want to present themselves as decent human beings. Unfortunately, in order to regain such 'decency', postwar German discourse has frequently relied on a language of lamentation and self-pitying. Such self-referential language of suffering promotes a memory that claims personal and national innocence; it also thwarts compassion for all those who fell victim to the Nazi genocide." Krondorfer, "Whose Memory is it", 221-222.

sufferers from National Socialism to one of women as bystanders, accomplices and perpetrators.<sup>396</sup> While some contributions also detail the widespread resistance to such an interpretation from many conference attendants, they also argue for, and mark, the beginning of owning National Socialism as a legacy and responsibility for German feminists. And while the women's movement began to critically engage with the representation of female involvement in National Socialism over thirty years ago, the by now thoroughly challenged view on women as either victims of or resisters to National Socialism still informs representations like that of Charlotte and Greta in *Generation War*, or even the shock factor of a female perpetrator in *The Reader*. In my play, I therefore also attempt to construct a narrative of female genealogy and "her story" that takes this complication, as formulated by Lerke Gravenhorst, into account:

The construction of a positive 'her story' is aimed at overcoming women's oppression. However, this becomes false if it is to give foil for a women's history of women in and from Germany, which also includes the participation that imposed an inhumane fate on the persecuted and victims of the Nazi regime or that has omitted to prevent such a fate. The understandable desire for a possibility of closeness and identification with positives in women is still present today, fifteen or twenty years after the emergence of the New Women's Movement. But may feminists in and from Germany interested in a feminist narration of the history of National Socialism and women in National Socialism really tell this story primarily in the interest of creating a positive female tradition? In this particular German context, is it not first and foremost about claiming a part of the '*negative property*' of Germany for women in and from Germany?<sup>397</sup>

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<sup>396</sup> Lerke Gravenhorst and Carmen Tatschmurat eds., *TöchterFragen: NS-Frauengeschichte* (Freiburg: Kore, 1990).

<sup>397</sup> Lerke Gravenhorst, "Nehmen wir Nationalsozialismus und Auschwitz genug als unser negatives Eigentum in Anspruch? Zu Problemen im feministisch-sozialwissenschaftlichen Diskurs in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland", in *TöchterFragen*, 37.



## #

To conclude, there is still a vivid and ongoing debate about how to remember the victims of National Socialist atrocity and how to engage with the legacy, the “negative property” of German National Socialism on a public national and regional level, as well as within a family context, and, of course, in film and on stage. While more large-scale public narratives, like that of national memorials, can be easily identifiable targets for attacks from the right and other revisionists, they, as well as the narratives of the “never again rhetoric” and “hysterical outbreaks of guilt”, can also be in danger of simplifying the process of “knowing and enduring” preferred by Arendt into politicised affirmations of the present or notions of gaining positive knowledge from our violent history. Micro narratives such as those by the local activists and researchers which I have presented here are by no means immune to any of these dangers, but when they draw attention to the everydayness of persecution and terror, they can help to enable people to “know precisely what it was, and to endure this knowledge” on a local level, which at least opens up the possibility for a multitude of ways of “knowing and enduring”, rather than a prescriptive one.

Similarly, I would argue that large-scale productions such as *Generation War*, while surely not without merit, are always more prone to simplification, if only due to their need for mass appeal, which tends to already favour ‘hollywoodised’ modes of story-telling, and, in correspondence to simplistic conventional gender-roles and Manichean characterisation, can easily cumulate to a depiction of German victimhood rather than the nuanced exploration of a generation that was probably intended. In contrast, plays such as *The Stone*, which engages with familial shifts of

memory and the forgetting of unsavoury history with a cast of intergenerational women, and *Rechnitz*, which concerns itself with the narrative-making and discourse about past and present, are important contributions to a discursive and diverse memory culture that concerns itself not only with what has been, but also with how we remember it, narrate it, and are continually shaped by it. This is also very much how, and where, I would like to situate my play within this context, namely as one contribution amongst many, a discursive offering, rather than a definitive one.

## CONCLUSION

But children had it the worst of all, for although it would seem that they had fewer memories to haunt them, they still had the itch of memory as strong as the elders of the shtetl. Their strings were not even their own, but tied around them by parents and grandparents – strings not fastened to anything, but hanging loosely from the darkness.<sup>398</sup>

Jonathan Safran Foer

With this project, I set out to investigate the visibility of two of Germany's many National Socialist satellite concentration camps. The issue of visibility was quickly joined by memory and gender, legacy and agency. I engaged with these issues artistically as a playwright and contemplated the issues and how to represent them on stage in the accompanying commentary. To conclude this project now seems monumentally difficult: a conclusion suggests closure, an end of the investigation, conclusions to be drawn – all of these concepts I have refuted in my last chapter.

Working in the archives, I often felt a strong sense of continuity when coming across a thesis from ten or twenty years ago which discussed one of the camps in Altenburg or Meuselwitz or used a familiar source. As in the memorials at Buchenwald and Ravensbrück, where the memorial area is covered in layers from decades of remembrance and engagement – first attempts of memorialisation after the liberation, Soviet military use of the camps, early GDR installations, changes after the re-unification, the introduction of interactive multimedia – there seems to be a continuous discussion with the past, a re-grouping, re-arranging, and re-imagining.

There is a multitude of ways to engage with the National Socialist past and history of violence, some of which I have discussed in this commentary, and it is unlikely that any single one of them will 'do it right' on its own.

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<sup>398</sup> Jonathan Safran Foer, *Everything is Illuminated* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002), 258-259.

Similarly, I only found the way to my play through engaging with a multitude of voices and stories, sources and inspirations, that often felt eclectic and too widely spread. I both tried to add my own voice to that former multitude and to disentangle the latter in this project. While my work, in this sense, has been concluded, the play itself remains unfinished without the voices of a director, the performers, designers and others involved in a production process, not least the spectators. And, in many ways, this script will always remain in this state of un-finishedness, open to different productions to re-group, re-arrange, and re-imagine; marking theatre, I think, an appropriate medium to engage with all those “strings”.

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