"Adapting the Heroic German in post-1990 World War Two Films: From "Schindler's Ark" to "Valkyrie"."

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Adapting the Heroic German in post-1990 World War Two Films: from *Schindler's Ark* to *Valkyrie*

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Abstract

This thesis argues that since unification, contemporary popular Hollywood and German films encourage public debate and commemoration of the Holocaust and National Socialism. This thesis builds on the established Hollywood and German dynamic that was revealed in the debate surrounding *Holocaust* (Dir. Marvin J. Chomsky. 1978) and *Heimat* (Dir. Edgar Reitz. 1984) to examine the contemporary differences and debates between these two film industries' representation of the Holocaust and the National Socialist past through popular film. Specifically, the focus of this thesis is the interpretation of the morally ambiguous heroic German character, as portrayed in German and Hollywood film.

The films chosen are adaptations of popular texts, remakes of other films, and/or based on historical figures and include: *Schindler's List* (Dir. Steven Spielberg. 1993), *The Pianist* (Dir. Roman Polanski. 2002), *Aimée & Jaguar* (Dir. Max Färberböck. 1999), *The Reader* (Dir. Stephen Daldry. 2008), *Amen.* (Dir. Costa-Gavras. 2002), *John Rabe* (Dir. Florian Gallenberger. 2009) and *Valkyrie* (Dir. Bryan Singer. 2008). All feature a heroic German character, for which Schindler is the prototype.

The way in which contemporary issues surrounding popular representations of the Holocaust and National Socialism are negotiated through this characterisation in German film reveals a nuanced approach to national narratives, while Hollywood discusses specifically American or universal values through the portrayal of German history. The trope 'the heroic German' has become acceptable in contemporary popular culture on both sides of the Atlantic, and as such has transformed into the heroic Nazi trope. This thesis also concludes that these films reflect the needs of contemporary audiences by acting as a prosthetic and cultural memory and that *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* is truly a process without a foreseeable end.

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Introduction

Unravelling Representations of Germany's National Socialist Past: From Perpetrator to The Heroic German

1. *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*

This thesis is an exploration of contemporary *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* but with a difference. *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* or the 'struggle to come to terms with the past' is a controversial term that originated in West Germany (Federal Republic of Germany (FRG)). It refers to "all judicial, scholarly, public and private, and legislative and administrative measures adopted to treat the National Socialist dictatorship and its crimes."[1] *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* is an extremely problematic term as it implies that it is a process with a defined end. Although it was a West German policy it has remained in place since German Reunification (1990). This has caused issues because former East Germans (German Democratic Republic (GDR)) have to adopt *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* as a process even though they remember themselves as being the anti-fascist state. It is a term that has been explored in literature and film with each re-enactment or representation of the fascist past.

While this thesis investigates the representation of the Holocaust and the fascist past through film, it does not question whether it is appropriate to have films that represent the Holocaust. Instead it accepts that the Holocaust is widely portrayed in film and that this is likely to continue as will the questioning of the appropriateness of this visual form. More specifically, this thesis builds on previous studies into the cinematic representations, adaptations and shifts in perceptions of the past in both the U.S. and Germany as it investigates the transnational dynamic between the two countries. This dynamic was exposed in the controversy surrounding *Holocaust* (Dir. Marvin J. Chomsky. 1978)[2] and *Heimat*[3] (Dir. Edgar Reitz. 1984) and how this complex dynamic

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[1] Mayerhofer, Bernd. "Politics and Contemporary History in Germany – Background." *Goethe Institute*. N.p. Sep. 2009. Web. <http://www.goethe.de/ges/pok/ein/en5023188.htm>. 29 Sep. 2013.

[2] *Holocaust*. Dir. Marvin J. Chomsky. Perf. Meryl Streep. NBC, 1978. DVD. Holocaust is a 4 part mini-series that focuses on the Weiss family from their persecution with the rise of Nazism until the aftermath of the Holocaust.

has continued and developed in the post-unification cinema industries. This research will primarily focus on the cinematic representation of the past in both German and American film since 1990. Before 1990, Thomas Elsaesser states that:

> Anyone looking for traces of the Holocaust in post-war West German films of the 1950s and 1960s is likely to be disappointed: such, at any rate, is the common assumption. But the same seems no less true of the so called "New German Cinema" of the 1970s [...] Fascism and especially the German family under National Socialism eventually became major topics, the Jewish experience – persecution and annihilation – rarely figured. Nor did the post-war Jewish Diaspora and the difficult Jewish-German dialogue, sometimes known as the "negative symbiosis" after Auschwitz.[4]

It is fair to say that little changed in German film in the 1980s.[5]

Hans Kundnani proposes that there have been three distinct periods in the FRG, which divide the collective memory about the National Socialist past. The first, which is the early post-war period, was where the prevailing attitude in the FRG was that of German victimhood, where society concentrated on rebuilding itself which led the society to see themselves as victims of Hitler's Reich, of the Allied bombing campaign and mass rape of German women by the Soviet Army. Kundnani states that the focus was less on an investigation into their actions and past but more on the physical rebuilding of Germany and of the economy. The second period was prompted by the Auschwitz and Frankfurt trials in the 1960s, as the anaesthetic-like effects of the previous post-war decades were beginning to wear off and the younger generation began to question their parents, labelling them the Auschwitz generation. This process or paradigm shift in perceptions led to the dominant view of Germans as perpetrators. Finally, Kundnani discusses how this perpetrator perception continued through reunification until approximately 2002 to 2003. This coincided with a change in government of unified Germany in 1998 and the 9/11 attacks in 2001. He argues that these political processes prompted the slow re-emergence of the German collective

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[3] *Heimat – Eine deutsche Chronik /Heimat: A Chronicle of Germany*. Dir. Edgar Reitz. Perf. Marita Breuer. Edgar Reitz Film, 1984. DVD. *Heimat* is 11 episodes long, running to 15 hours 24 minutes, which focus on the life of Maria Simon from her meeting her future husband, the National Socialist period, the American occupation and finally her death in 1982.

[4] Elsaesser, Thomas. "Absence as Presence, Presence as Parapraxis: On Some Problems of Representing "Jews" in the New German Cinema." *Framework*. 49.1 (2008):106-120. Print. Here 106.

[5] These included *Der Gelbe Stern* (Dir. Dieter Hildebrandt. 1980), *Die Befreiung von Auschvitz* (Dir. Irmgard von zur Mühlen.1985), *Goethe in D* (Dir. Manfred Vosz. 1985), and *Mit 22 Jahren wollte man noch nicht sterben* (Dir. Rainer Ritzel. 1988).

memory again as being one of victimhood.[6] Kundnani proposes that in the 2000s there was developing debate surrounding whether the collective memory of Germans should be as victims or as perpetrators, which he emphasised using the debate between the Coalition Government leaders of the Social Democratic Party and the Green Party. Both Joschka Fischer of the Greens and Gerhard Schröder of the SPD as well as other leading figures were from the paradigm-breaking 1968 generation. He assesses how their responses to two foreign policy crises illustrated the shift in memory dynamics between perpetrator and victimhood in Germany.

This thesis argues that these changing memory contests began earlier in the 1990s and would continue to evolve as a response to the pressures in Germany to create a new national narrative in the wake of reunification. I will also argue that as a result of the release of the film *Schindler's List* (Dir. Steven Spielberg. 1993) shifts and nuances were developed in the portrayal of victims, perpetrators and heroes in film. I will endeavour to unravel, through analysing adaptations and appropriations of the past, changing representations and the continued recasting of Germany's National Socialist history. This research is therefore posited within, and expands upon, works by memory theorists, film historians and cultural critics from the 1990s onwards.

2. Appropriation/Ownership of History Debates

Since *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* was a West German policy, it is surprising that this process has been assisted through Hollywood and transnational filmmakers. This has led to controversy surrounding the supposed appropriation of history by the U.S., which was initially exposed in the debate that resulted from the films *Holocaust* and *Heimat*. The American mini-series *Holocaust* reached over 20 million West German viewers and provoked widespread public discussion.[7] It was so popular that it was sold to Israel and other countries in Europe. Jeffrey Herf explains that the subsequent discussion was held by conservatives, the left and the social-liberals at a politically sensitive period. This was because a ruling in the Constitutional Court stated that if Nazi war criminals had

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[6] Kundnani, Hans. "Perpetrators and Victims: Germany's 1968 Generation and Collective Memory." *German Life and Letters*. 64.2 (2011): 272 – 282. Print. Here 272-3. This thesis employs the MLA referencing system as set out in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. This includes the distinction of the medium of the publication, which was brought out in the 2009 edition.

[7] Herf, Jeffrey. "The 'Holocaust' Reception in West Germany: Right, Center and Left." *New German Critique*. 19.1 (1980): 30-52. Print. Here 30.

not been charged with crimes as of 31st December 1979, then these perpetrators could not be brought to trial. Consequently, pressure from Poland, Israel and the wider Jewish community in the U.S. was exerted on West Germany with the aim of changing this constitutional policy. Before *Holocaust*, from 1950 to 1977, only 1,204 convictions were delivered of the 84,403 cases opened in 1945. *Holocaust* was referred to repeatedly in parliamentary debates and in public, which resulted in the statute of limitations being revoked in January 1979.[8]

K. Hannah Holtschneider offers a consideration of the *Holocaust-Heimat* debate by placing it among other contentious historians' debates, such as the Bitburg Controversy (1985), the *Historikerstreit* (1986-89) and the Goldhagen Controversy (1996).[9] The Bitburg Controversy was sparked by a visit by U.S. President Ronald Reagan and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl to the Bitburg Military Cemetery which contained the graves of the Waffen-SS. The state visit was a celebration of the normalisation of relations between the two countries forty years after World War Two. The commemoration was exacerbated by Reagan appearing to equate the victims of the Holocaust with the dead German SS Soldiers by claiming that "they were victims" while Kohl attempted to perpetuate his version of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.[10] The Goldhagen Controversy was provoked by the publication of the American Daniel Goldhagen's controversial work[11] in which he argues that Germans were uniquely anti-Semitic and that this mentality grew from medieval attitudes and religious biases and that these perpetrators were ordinary Germans. The *Historikerstreit* or historians quarrel/dispute spanned 1986-89 where left- and right-wing intellectuals in Germany argued about the uniqueness of Nazi crimes in comparison with those committed by the Soviet Union.

Rather than just a debate between the U.S. and Germany regarding the ownership of memory of the Holocaust, Holtschneider views the historians' debate as

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[8] Ibid: 34-5.
[9] K. Hannah Holtschneider. *German Protestants Remember the Holocaust: Theology and the Construction of the Holocaust*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2001. Print. Here 63.
[10] (I. Levkov (ed.), *Bitburg and Beyond: Encounters in American, German and Jewish History* (1986); D.E. Lipstadt, "*The Bitburg Controversy,*" in: *American Jewish Year Book,* 1987; E. Wiesel, *And the Sea is Never Full* (1999), 225–50; and C.E. Silberman, *A Certain People: American Jews and Their Lives Today* (1985), 360–66.).
[11] Daniel Goldhagen. *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996. Print.

typical of an internal German debate on how the past should be remembered for the present as any "representation of the Holocaust in Germany reflects on German self-understanding." Debates on memory of the National Socialist past and the Holocaust, she argues, are therefore debates on German identity, how it can be positive while also remembering the victims. With regards to the films *Holocaust* and *Heimat*, Holtschneider claims that *Holocaust* "confronted the perspective of the perpetrators of the Holocaust with its victims."[12] Because debate around these two films can be viewed as part of the ongoing broader historians' debates and thus not as a unique debate, Holtschneider, in addition, views *Heimat* as an attempt to present a version of the National Socialist past from a German rather than Jewish perspective. She argues that Edgar Reitz, the director of *Heimat*, viewed memory as a personal experience and that America as a result could not represent it because they could not remember that experience. This memory contest argument forms the basis of Reitz's attack on the representation of the fascist past in *Holocaust* which prompted him to create a more authentically German representation in the form of *Heimat*.[13]

Marcia Landy introduces a more nuanced perspective as she argues that *Heimat* "disregards prevailing psychoanalytic formulations [...] concerning the need for Germans to mourn the past and confront their guilt."[14] Rather than *Heimat's* history and melodrama, Landy presents the idea that this film relied on a different psychological paradigm, which encourages self-esteem and identity by making anti-Semitism and the Holocaust remote to the audience.[15] This remoteness was conveyed by not portraying the suffering of Jewish characters on screen, alluding only to the growing persecution towards them.[16] Ilan Avisar also recognises that *Heimat* glossed over "the disturbing parts of German history."[17] He too acknowledges the impact of *Holocaust* on Germany and its influence on the creation of *Heimat*. However, Avisar analyses *Holocaust* as a

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[12] Holtschneider 2001: 63.
[13] Ibid: 63 – 69.
[14] Landy, Marcia. "The Historical Film: History and Memory in Media." *The History on Film Reader*. Ed. Marnie Hughes-Warrington. New York: Routledge, 2009: 42-52. Print. Here 42
[15] Landy, Marcia. *Cinematic Uses of the Past.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996. Print. Here 243, 246 and 248.
[16] The issues and processes of remoteness are considered in more detail in Chapter Two in *The Pianist*.
[17] Avisar, Ilan. "Holocaust Movies and the Politics of Collective Memory." *Thinking about the Holocaust After Half a Century.* Ed. Alvin H Rosenfeld. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997: 38-60. Print. Here 44.

means of teaching Germany about its own history and concludes that this film is a "dramatic illustration of the impact of foreign images on German culture".

While *Heimat* glossed over the realities of the Holocaust, Anton Kaes argues that *Heimat* was more than a television mini-series as it was watched by 25 million viewers, gathering an average of 9 million viewers per episode in Germany before it was shown on American television in 1985.[18] Kaes detailed how Reitz conceived of *Heimat* as a counter-production to *Holocaust* and how Reitz justified *Heimat* in public as the German answer to the spectacle and aesthetically commercial *Holocaust.*[19] Reitz claimed that Americans were "taking narrative possession" or appropriating the German past. This process led Reitz to declare a call to German filmmakers to "take possession of their own history". As Germany had readily disavowed its history in the 1960s, Kaes uses Reitz's claim as proof that because of these films in the 1980s Germany had to assert "vehemently their 'ownership' of German history".[20]

Ian Aitken also recognises that Reitz's objection to *Holocaust* included his concern that it "attempted to impose a foreign (i.e. American) interpretation on recent German history," which extended beyond concerns regarding appropriation.[21] Kaes argues that Reitz's focus on "history from below" challenged the dominant perception of National Socialism and thus prompted a new counter memory that everyone was not an ardent Nazi.

Siobhan Kattago refines the dominant historical argument by suggesting that *Heimat* was representative of a reactive public shift towards the normalisation (rather than universalisation) of the Holocaust. While this shift might have been viewed as controversial, she proposes that it could lead towards a positive national identity in reunified Germany. A national German identity had moved beyond "the Jewish question"[22] in *Holocaust* as this film broke the "taboo against portraying Auschwitz". These nuanced normalising and revisionist processes prompted identification with not

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[18] Kaes, Anton. *From Hitler To Heimat The Return of History as Film.* Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989. Print. Here 163 and 183.
[19] Ibid: 184.
[20] Ibid: 184-5.
[21] Aitken, Ian. *European Film Theory and Cinema: A Critical Introduction.* Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2001. Print. Here 220.
[22] Ibid: 46.

just the victims but also the perpetrators. This national identity shift "unleashed [an] unprecedented confrontation with the Nazi past."[23]

Michael Geisler was the first to explore the origin of *Heimat*, drawing on Reitz's argument that Americans in *Holocaust* "had expropriated German history." [24] The only defence for Germans, Reitz argues, was to produce their own stories. Geisler reiterates that *Heimat* was made as a "reaction against American cultural imperialism." He argues that the implication is that German culture acted as a form of resistance to Hollywood domination and therefore American historical appropriation. Geisler suggests that, "like most of the German left, Reitz is not interested in referring to the many contradictions of the United States; rather he is satisfied with projecting a mythical 'America.'" Geisler argues further that Reitz sought to "establish a connection between fascism and America"[25] in *Heimat*.

Geisler adopts a three step critical analysis approach to *Heimat*. The first (the context in which the film was made) looks at how the historical discourse manifests itself as the left's suppressed desire for a national identity. The second (the consequence of the film) focuses on the reception of *Heimat*, which Geisler attributes to historical and socio-political conditions in West Germany. The third analytic step (the content of the film), which needs to be viewed as a reading of *Heimat* i.e. as an audio-visual text in itself. These three steps are used as part of the methodology of this thesis when analysing a selection of film adaptations. For example in a close textual, i.e. audio-visual,reading of the film, it is relevant to be aware of the subtle connections evolved between the Simon family and the Americans in the film, or in the wake of National Socialism the welcoming and acceptance of American imperialism and dominance in the village. With such nuances made explicit Geisler concludes that *Heimat* was "appropriated by the hegemonic structures of bourgeois media culture" instead of by the German left. Other factors are also identified by Geisler. For example, since October 1982, a new conservative coalition in West Germany had been in power with the stated goal of implementing the *Wende* (turning point). As the film was released in 1984, five years after the film's conception, the political climate had thus changed. The Christian

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[23] Kattago, Siobhan. *Ambiguous Memory: The Nazi Past and German National Identity*. Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2001. Print. Here 45.
[24] Geisler, Michael E. "'Heimat' and the German Left: The Anamnesis of Trauma". *New German Critique*. 36 (1985): 25-66. Print.
[25] Ibid: 64-5.

Democratic Union (CDU) now dominated political culture and wished to present the "13 years of social-liberal rule [as] nothing more than an aberration." This political shift supports Jay Winter's approach[26] as he compares the process of remembering during the 1970s and 80s where the CDU Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, believed that he personally ended *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*[27] the assumption was that once the process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* had ended then the normalising process could begin; a new national identity with self-esteem could then evolve.

This politicising of memory as considered by Geisler and Winter, or the idea of contested memory in more general terms, was debated after the release of *Holocaust* and *Heimat* as Reitz assumed and thus presented on screen what he considered to be the normal German memory of the Holocaust which ran counter to then official memory narrative that all Germans were perpetrators. In this context, it is understandable that *Heimat* could have been considered to be apologia as it appears to portray a form of denial of the widespread impact of fascism on Germany. Geisler claims that Reitz was not promoting apologia, but instead claims that the German population would have already had knowledge of the Holocaust and fascism that they would bring to their watching of the film. In other words, "instead of creating monsters he [Reitz] expects the viewer to do a lot of work in superimposing his or her prior information about the Holocaust on these images of almost perfectly everyday occurrences."[28]

Where Avisar comments on the remoteness of *Heimat*, Geisler argues that instead of providing an explanation for the Holocaust, Reitz encouraged the viewer to "use his or her knowledge of fascism and the Holocaust as a kind of overlay, trying to match the monstrosity of the historical crimes with the difficulty of assigning responsibility on an individual level."[29] *Heimat*'s apparent remoteness or distancing of historical events from the Holocaust can be viewed, however, as a challenge to the West German narrative that all Germans are perpetrators. It can be argued that any subsequent representations following *Heimat*'s lead distort national and transnational memories. It

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[26] Winter. Jay. "Notes on the Memory Boom: War, Remembrance and the Uses of the Past." *Memory, Trauma and World Politics: Reflections on the Relationship between Past and Present.* Ed. Duncan Bell. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006: 54-73. Print. Here 55.
[27] Ibid: 50-51.
[28] Ibid: 54.
[29] Ibid: 56- 57.

is also relevant to consider that, prior to the 1980s *Historikerstreit*,[30] there was little to no public debate in Germany regarding the Holocaust (as evidenced by the lack of engagement by New German Cinema) even though the Holocaust was taught in schools. What underlying knowledge German film goers would bring to *Heimat* would also have come from the public debates surrounding both the Holocaust itself and the provoking film *Holocaust*.

Transnationally, as evidenced by the critiques from the American and European academics cited above, the *Holocaust-Heimat* debate has been widely dissected, their commonality being that *Holocaust* instigated the film *Heimat* and encouraged widespread debate in Germany about uses of the past, appropriation of the past and memory. The critiques also went into great textual analysis with *Heimat* but relegate *Holocaust* into a few lines. Consequently they present *Holocaust* as a commercial melodrama of little filmic importance other than its reactive effect on Germany and Reitz's film career. There is one exception. Lawrence Baron instead focused primarily on the impact of *Holocaust* rather than *Heimat*. He referred to how NBC capitalised on its commercial and cultural success of *Roots* by similarly broadcasting *Holocaust* over four consecutive nights. By re-employing this marketing strategy *Holocaust* reached 120 million American viewers.[31] This distribution strategy and how it led to the appropriation of history and change in perception of audiences and politics, film industries and cultural and historical memory is reflected in subsequent film representations considered here.

Baron details not only that NBC presented the movie as an event and distributed study guides to schools and organisations in preparation for the event[32] but also that the narrative of *Holocaust* was deliberately centred on an assimilated Jewish-German family rather than an orthodox Jewish family so that it would create easier audience identification.[33] This lack of presumed American audience identification with the Jew as 'the other' could, he argues, replicate the anti-Semitic stereotype and sentiment that was propagated by the National Socialists. Although employing melodramatic themes, the

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[30] Considered in more detail in Chapter Three.
[31] Baron, Lawrence. *Projecting the Holocaust into the Present: The Changing Focus of Contemporary Holocaust Cinema*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc, 2005. Print. Here 52.
[32] Ibid: 52.
[33] This was also a consideration of Roman Polanski's when he created *The Pianist* as he chose the story of an assimilated Polish-Jew to further audience identification. To be discussed in Chapter Two.

subplots and characters in *Holocaust* were based on several real historical figures and events.

The favourable reception of *Holocaust* in America influenced U.S. President Jimmy Carter to establish the Holocaust Commission, which recommended the building of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. The film thus had an impact not just in Germany but also substantially within the U.S. Baron also argues that without *Holocaust* filmmakers such as Steven Spielberg would have not been able to present the Holocaust as realistically or graphically.[34] By looking in this thesis at not just the impact of American films on Germany, such as the debates within Germany or the acceptable uses of the past and memory, but also in the U.S., the cultural importance and complexity of popular and commercial films is revealed layer by layer using a comparative methodology. Randall Halle adopts such an approach when he considers that "in order to compare American and other national film production, the critic must take care to attend to parity."[35] This means that while you can compare Hollywood with German film it is not wise to place one or the other in a position of superiority and efforts should be made to compare like for like films, i.e. commercial with commercial.[36] Halle argues it is only by using comparative approaches that we can examine transnational representations and how and why these change. Only through transnational comparisons can national specificity be revealed with all its nuances.[37] This thesis will develop this argument and, in addition, assume that the dynamic between Germany and the U.S. that was exposed in the controversy surrounding *Holocaust* and *Heimat* continued in the post-unification cinema industries. The relationship between Germany and U.S. post-reunification film industries is important to analyse as it has not been used previously as a basis for understanding the complex and often fraught dynamic and how it has impacted and influenced the representations or changing narratives of national and transnational histories.

All of the above academics discuss the appropriation of history and memory, including the diminishing of the realities of the Holocaust as represented in *Heimat.* These issues form the basis of an evolving theme in this thesis: that German and, in

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[34] Ibid: 52 – 55.
[35] Halle, Randall. *German Film After Germany: Toward a Transnational Aesthetic.* Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008. Print. Here 16.
[36] Halle 2008: 27
[37] Halle 2008: 28

part, European films continue to present this remoteness from the Holocaust in the vein of *Heimat* while the American albeit commercial productions have continued to engage with the Holocaust in a similar manner to *Holocaust*.

The struggle to come to terms with the past is also an evolving or changing narrative. This change or shift is analysed in detail in this thesis through a selection of Hollywood, German and transnational films since German Reunification in 1990. As Germany reunified it was thrown into the spotlight and debated in countries such as in the UK as the then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher openly voiced her opposition to a unified Germany.[38] Germany embarked on creating a new national narrative in 1990 which would be presented in film and popular culture. It was observed by other countries that Germany needed to create such a narrative that served a purpose of its own citizens but also other countries. This thesis acknowledges as well the growing German and U.S. dynamic that there was an East German/West German dynamic. In addition, this thesis develops the argument that the creation of a reunified Germany has prompted the need to create a new historical narrative contextualised within contemporary international politics with the aim of creating a prosthetic memory that is not only accepted within Germany but internationally as well.[39]

2.1 History through Film: Processes of Adaptation

The process of coming to terms with the past has been widely undertaken by individual filmmakers and countries in regard to their own past, whereas in the U.S. the German past has been used as a background to act as an allegory in order to explore contemporary issues. Each film and text chosen for this thesis directly engages with war, although there is often no depiction of combat. Instead, it is the complexity of the consequences and the impacts of war and genocide that are considered and presented. As a result of the varied depictions of the period there are many films that could have been chosen to analyse, however, there are few that actively present the ongoing *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and debates surrounding the appropriation of history, as

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[38] Volkery, Carsten. "The Iron Lady's Views on German Reunification: 'The Germans Are Back!' *Der Spiegel*. N.p. 11 Sep. 2009. Web. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/the-iron-lady-s-views-on-german-reunification-the-germans-are-back-a-648364.html>. 28 Sep. 2013.

[39] Landsberg, Alison. "Prosthetic Memory: The Ethics and Politics of Memory in an Age of Mass Culture." *Memory and Popular Film*. Ed. Paul Grainge. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003: 144-61. Print. Here 148.

portrayed in *Holocaust* and *Heimat*. For example, this thesis includes a selection of popular Anglo-American films, German national films, and German and European co-productions and transnational films, the majority of which are adaptations of popular texts or remakes of other films.

For Eric Rentschler the process of adaptation "involves the appropriation of meaning from a prior text,"[40] which does not entail strict fidelity to the source as exemplified in these filmic selections. Expanding the field of adaptation study beyond the issues of fidelity, according to Rentschler, to include sociology, intertextuality, and theoretical and historical dimensions provides a way to reveal how filmmakers have engaged with history and literary history. Robert Stam considers the notion of fidelity as a persuasive force as adaptations focus on the significant parts of their sources. However, Stam considers that focusing on fidelity should not be a "methodological principle" as strict fidelity is not possible since adaptation is inherently different and original.[41]

Fidelity to a source is more difficult to achieve when the nature of filmmaking has become more transnational. Although Rentschler only focuses on German literature and German film, adaptations are not solely created nationally. As the films selected for this thesis are adapted from Holocaust stories, it can be argued that the Holocaust lost its particularism and instead becomes a means to promote and symbolise universal human suffering and values.[42] If the Holocaust has become a universal trauma it can be argued to have become a universal memory. Adaptations also create another layer of complexity relating to national specificity. Andrew Horton and Joan Magretta propose that:

> for the most part, Hollywood has made of adaptation a commercial process, a kind of industrial recycling which turns one product (a best-selling book) into another (a box-office success). For the best of the European directors, adaptation

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[40] Rentschler, Eric. "Introduction: Theoretical and Historical Considerations." *German Film and Literature: Adaptations and Transformations.* Ed. Eric Rentschler. New York: Methuen Inc, 1986: 1-8. Print. Here 3.
[41] Stam, Robert. *Literature through Film: Realism, Magic, and the Art of Adaptation.* Oxford: Blackwell publishing, 2005. Print. Here 3.
[42] Bell, Duncan. "Introduction: Memory, Trauma and World Politics." *Memory, Trauma and World Politics: Reflections on the Relationship between Past and Present.* Ed. Duncan Bell. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006: 1-32. Print. Here 14.

> has been and is an activity of an entirely different order, essentially artistic and personal.[43]

The insinuated debasement of Hollywood film and the amplification of European films is not considered in this thesis because it is too homogenising.[44] This argument also assumes that Hollywood films because of their commercial nature have little cultural importance, which is not the case as seen in the choice of films in this thesis.

When considering the films and the texts on which films were based, attention has naturally been given to whether the film or text is engaging with fascism and the Holocaust. The countries of origin of the film and its place in the context of a broader film and textual canon have also been considered. The films focused on are the Hollywood films *Schindler's List* (Dir. Steven Spielberg. 1994) and *Valkyrie* (Dir. Bryan Singer. 2008); the German films *Aimée & Jaguar* (Dir. Max Färberböck. 1999) and *John Rabe* (Dir. Florian Gallenberger. 2009); and the transnational European co-productions *The Pianist* (Dir. Roman Polanski. 2002), *Amen.* (Dir. Costa-Gavras. 2002), and *The Reader* (Dir. Stephen Daldry. 2008). Most of these films have been successful owing to their focus on the personal true stories relating to the complex heroic German character trope. Although these films have courted popular audiences in their format, some flopped at the box office in Germany and the U.S., such as *Amen.* and *John Rabe*.

2.2 New Character Tropes, from Heroic German to Heroic Nazi

The differences in transnational acceptability have revealed national specificity, for example, post-1990s Germany rejected the heroic Nazi trope, while transnationally it gained more acceptance (cf. *John Rabe*'s popularity in China). However, it is interesting to note that the figure of the heroic Nazi was popular (in actuality) in West Germany since 1945 and is embodied in one of the most famous 'good Nazi figures', Albert Speer. This highly educated architect became Hitler's Minister for Armaments. He was the only defendant at the Nuremberg Trials who admitted responsibility for his actions during the Third Reich and apologised for them. The label 'good Nazi' is under dispute as he used forced labour in the production of the V2 rockets in Camp Dora. Speer has

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[43] Andrew Horton and Joan Magretta. Eds. *Modern European Filmmakers and the Art of Adaptation.* New York: Frederick Ungar publishing Co, 1981. Print. Here 4.
[44] The hierarchy placed between Hollywood and European films is also considered by Halle 2008: 16.

been the subject of many books, documentaries and has featured as a character in many films, most recently *Der Untergang* (Dir. Oliver Hirschbiegel. 2004), which conforms to commonly held beliefs and stereotypes regarding Speer as the good Nazi. This film was repeatedly both criticised and lauded transnationally and nationally for its humanistic portrayal of Adolf Hitler but not for its depiction of Speer.[45] The debate over whether Speer was complicit in the Holocaust made him symbolic of the people who claimed that they did not know of National Socialist crimes even though they were involved with the National Socialist regime. That this film retained this representation of Speer as the good Nazi and that this aspect was received without criticism implies that not only contemporary German society still wishes to see the good Nazi but that international audiences too view the good Nazi as a relevant character.

As part of the exploration in this thesis of the tropes and themes in these films, the nuanced shifts between the character of perpetrator to the heroic German or, more ambiguously than the latter, the heroic Nazi, has been uncovered at various levels. Paul Cooke argues that the "film [*Der Untergang*] presents an image of the Third Reich in which it is reasonably easy to divide the population into good and bad Germans."[46] Cooke argues that throughout film binary opposition is created where ordinary Germans are constructed as victims of Nazi leadership and therefore the ordinary German becomes the good German. In contrast to Cooke's approach, this thesis argues that although the good German could be obvious in its representation in film as a form of opposition to Nazi leadership, these characters are anything but ordinary. Instead the good German is a figure who is frequently exemplified to mythic proportions which must surely include the heroic.

The most famous heroic German in regards to resistance to fascism was probably Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg. His legacy was troubled as the myths of him as a resistor and as a traitor were intertwined. The conspiracy to eliminate Hitler and overthrow the fascist Government in a military coup on 20th July 1944 is well known throughout Germany, and has also been included as part of school curriculums in many German and Anglo-American schools as an example of organised resistance

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[45] Higgins, Charlotte. "Bunker film 'is too kind to Nazis'" The Guardian. N.p. 5 Apr. 2005. Web. <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2005/apr/05/secondworldwar.filmnewsl>. 28 Sep. 2013.

[46] Cooke, Paul. "*Der Untergang* (2004): Victims, Perpetrators and the Continuing Fascination of Fascism." *A Nation of Victims?: Representations of German Wartime Suffering from 1945 to the Present.* Ed. Helmut Schmitz. New York: Rodopi, 2007: 247-262 Print. Here 253.

against Hitler and the Third Reich. Yet by using data obtained from an Allensbach Institute survey in 1970, Bill Niven reveals that:

> [in 1970] 40% of West Germans and West Berliners over the age of 30 have no idea what happened on 20 July 1944: in the case of people under 30 [in 1970], the percentage, 54%, is even higher. 40% of the over 30s surveyed approve of the attempt on Hitler's life, 7% are against, while 53% have no opinion on the matter: 29% of the under 30s surveyed approve of the attempt, 5% are against, and 66% have no view on the question.[47]

Niven goes on to argue that the under 30s, i.e. the 68ers (as the survey was conducted in 1970), prompted the revisionist memory shift relating to the July Plotters and Stauffenberg from the role of traitor to resistor. In other words Kundnani's argument for three different time periods, and thus three different attitudes towards complicity and perpetration is corroborated by Niven.

Other shifts are also worthy of note as an indicator of a change in political perceptions, for example, with the change from CDU-led coalitions in 1969 to the SPD and FDP coalition, as well as the growing student movement, the collective memory surrounding German engagement with the Holocaust and World War Two was challenged. These socio-political changes prompted a new discursive paradigm that pressed for a more public engagement with the collective memory of Nazism. As concluded by Kundnani, these shifts changed perceptions and memories as Germans were once again remembered as perpetrators.

Niven implies that shifting attitudes and more altered remembrances continued into the 80s and 90s as the definition of resistance changed from active resistance and grew to include the maintaining of an alternative to National Socialist culture. Niven supplies the examples of the inclusive Memorial Site for German Resistance that opened in 1985 and included remembrance across many institutions, including Stauffenberg and the military resistors. By the 50th anniversary of the July Plot in 1994, the symbolic significance of the event led 1994 to be viewed as the year of resistance

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[47] Niven, Bill. "The figure of the soldier as resister: German film and the difficult legacy of Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg." *Journal of War and Culture Studies*. 2.2 (2009): 181 – 194. Print. Here 187.

and was used as part of the reasoning behind deployment of the *Bundeswehr* for the first time out of NATO operations and instead for peace-keeping.[48]

Resistance issues were also brought to the fore by the release of *Schindler's List*, which was watched by over 5.7 million Germans in less than 15 weeks and provoked discussions about moral character, collaboration and why there was less resistance originating from within the Third Reich and in particular from within the *Wehrmacht*.[49] Niven explains that these discussions came to a climax in 1995 with the opening of the 'Crimes of the *Wehrmacht*' exhibition where the moral responsibility of the *Wehrmacht* for the atrocities came to the fore. Within the debate that ensued between ideal resistance and Germans as perpetrators, it is unsurprising that it took until the 2000s for a German film to be released for a mainstream audience that depicted the July Plotters and the *Wehrmacht* as victims. The most recognised member of the group of Plotters, naturally, is the man who planted the bomb and directed the coup, Claus von Stauffenberg (15 Nov 1907 – 21 July 1944). Stauffenberg has been, from as early as the 1950s, used as an exemplary heroic German figure in German history. Stauffenberg and the July Plot have been popularised predominantly as a result of their near success. In the 1940s, however, Stauffenberg was for a short while not considered a hero but a traitor. Bill Niven argues that even up until the 1960s, there was the view held in society that was vocalised by the extreme right *Sozialistische Reichspartei* (Socialist Reich Party) that Stauffenberg had committed treason and this was used at election rallies by this group, which included Otto Ernst Remer (who played a role in crushing the attempted coup) to gather attention and support. It was not until 1952, when Remer was imprisoned on the charge of insulting the memory of the dead, that the July conspirators were officially acknowledged as resistors not traitors. This shifting attitude, Niven argues, was extended to being a part of the process of recruiting members of the officer classes in the *Bundeswehr* in 1955, who were enlisted from ex-*Wehrmacht* officers who had to agree that Stauffenberg was not a traitor and had been loyal to his country before being enlisted.[50] The soldiers, he explains, then had to swear an oath to the principles of justice and freedom rather than to the ruling powers, thus towards the acts of conscience

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[48] Niven, Bill. *Facing the Nazi Past, United Germans and the Legacy of the Third Reich.* London: Routledge, 2002. Print. Here 71--92.
[49] Niven 2002: 80.
[50] Ibid: 184.

that motivated the conspirators.[51] Niven concludes that the Stauffenberg story encouraged debate in the 1950s about acts of conscience within the newly formed Army, which often believed Stauffenberg's resistance to be a privilege of his rank and family status or alternatively as perhaps something that all soldiers could or should have done.

These early debates within the Bundeswehr coincided with the appearance of two German films illustrating the failed coup, Falk Harnack's *der 20. Juli* (1955) and Georg Wilhelm Pabst's *Es geschah am 20 Juli* (1955). These films had been preceded four years earlier by the Hollywood film by Henry Hathaway *The Desert Fox: The Story of Rommel* (1951), which was the first film to present a German officer in a positive light. Hollywood thus paved the way for representations of the heroic German, in this case a commanding officer. It is interesting to note that, as a consequence of the nature of the perceived bourgeois or aristocratic officer classes involved and elite status of the conspirators, East Germany did not incorporate the Plotters as part of its collective memory and history as Stauffenberg and his collaborators challenged the socialist ideals the East German government were promoting.

The heroic German in this thesis is defined as being a man or woman of German nationality. These figures have been motivated by altruistic behaviour and are often presented in the films selected as gentile Germans. The Israeli memorial centre, Yad Vashem, uses certain criteria when awarding gentiles, not Jews, who, during World War Two, assisted in the rescue of Jews. Yad Vashem calls these individual rescuers 'The Righteous Among the Nations'.[52] Although the importance of this award in recognising heroic rescuer figures is acknowledged in this thesis, it also recognises other gentile Germans who performed heroic acts during the National Socialist period, not exclusively the rescuers of Jews (for example John Rabe who rescued Chinese lives). Although gentiles historically have been victims as a consequence of persecution due to political or religious beliefs and sexual orientation, the victimhood in this thesis has been restricted and deliberately omits focusing on the gentile German filmic character. Generally it has been assumed that, if the German is Jewish then they will be traditionally assigned the status of victim, therefore their actions are to be considered in the context of survival. If they are gentile Germans, their actions are assumed to not

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[51] Niven 2002: 69.
[52] Oliner, Samuel P. and Oliner, Pearl M. *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe.* New York: Macmillan, 1992. Print. Here 2.

have the need to be motivated by the basic human will to survive and, therefore, it could be argued that they had the choice to be perpetrators or heroic in their actions.

For example, one of the first films released in 1990 West Germany that engaged with the Holocaust, which begun filming in the 1980s, was *Das schreckliche Mädchen* (*The Nasty Girl*. Dir. Michael Verhoeven. 1990). Based on the true story of Anna Rosmus (who began her historical research in the 1970s), the lead character began her investigation into her town during the Third Reich first as an essay contest in school and then in university. Expecting to find her town innocent of all crimes she learns that there had been eight concentration camps in the area and that various high ranking townspeople had been complicit in the murder of the Jews in her town. As a consequence of her investigation, the townspeople turn on her and even attempt to kill her and her family. At the end, the townspeople embrace her efforts to reveal the crimes of the town. However, it is understood to be a cynical attempt at appeasement. The protagonist in this film is a heroic gentile German portrayed on the cusp of post-unification cinema, as she notably engages with the Holocaust. However, unlike Oskar Schindler, she was not from the generation involved in the National Socialist crimes.

The presentation of a heroic gentile German based during the National Socialist period was primarily promoted in the U.S. with the release of *Schindler's List*. The film set the precedent for the heroic German based during the National Socialist period for future films from the U.S. and Germany. That the heroic German in contemporary German films is required to engage with the Holocaust to suit audience expectations is an important thesis argument to develop. This differs from the use of the heroic German in West and East German films in the 1950s and 1960s where figures were used to legitimise the state, but they did not engage with the Holocaust. These include the depiction of André Höfel in *Nackt unter Wölfen* (*Naked Among Wolves*. Dir. Frank Beyer. 1963) [53] in East Germany and Claus von Stauffenberg in *Es geschah am 20. Juli* (Dir. Georg Wilhelm Pabst. 1955) in West Germany. Unlike East German films, there has yet to be an explicitly communist hero in films made since unification. Instead the former East's history has been appropriated in the creation of popular films based during the final years of the East German state, such as *Good Bye, Lenin!* (Dir.

[53] Although this film is set in a concentration camp which also contained Jews, it is about communist resistance and communist prisoners rather than about the Holocaust and the mass extermination of Jews.

Wolfgang Becker. 2003) and *Berlin is In Germany* (Dir. Hannes Stöhr. 2001) which were directed by West Germans.

The majority of the films analysed in this thesis have been adapted from literary sources or well-known stories such as the July Plot. The literature has been a mixture of the controversial, award winning, international best-sellers or obscure. Above all, they have all featured an apparently heroic German, whose narrative has been adapted for film. The characterisation of this heroic German has understandably changed to meet filmic expectations, which have a preference for ambiguity rather than simplicity. Analysis of the adaptation of this character helps to reveal different approaches to the heroic German in literature, film and contemporary taste. For example, with respect to the German best-seller *Der Vorleser*, which was adapted into the Hollywood film *The Reader*, not only did the language change as a result of the adaptation from German to English, but the characters of the protagonists, Michael Berg and Hanna Schmitz, changed as well. In the novel, Berg is the narrator of the story and provides justifications for Schmitz's actions, whereas in the film there is no narrator. Instead, Berg and Schmitz's actions are presented on screen without being filtered through Berg's perspective and, with it, a different view on events can be gathered by the audience as opposed to the reader. The adaptation differences highlight that, not only was there a difference in countries' motivations, audience and readers' sensitivities and a 13 year time difference between the novel (1995) and film (2008), but also there has been an attitude shift, which was also observed by Kundnani from perpetrator to victim, in what has been viewed as an acceptable narrative. As a result, the source materials of each of the films discussed in this thesis, which are adaptations or remakes, have been examined at length so that the nuances between the two can be revealed.

As to how the various dynamics and debates described above about appropriation of history continue in films, this thesis will show that character tropes at various levels evolve from heroic German to German heroine to heroic Nazi. This is a form of revisionism. The thesis will argue that the characters are all marked with complicity issues, which mean there is ambiguity surrounding their actions.

These little shifts in attitudes, perceptions and representations, are indicators of a larger paradigm shift. Thomas Kuhn used the paradigm shift to describe a specifically

scientific change.[54] It has since been used to describe any change in a discipline, "whether they shift us in positive or negative directions, whether they are instantaneous or developmental, Paradigm Shifts move us from one way of seeing the world to another".[55] This thesis argues that there has been a paradigm shift in the way that the Holocaust and fascism are being remembered through film. To evidence this major shift in the representation of the Holocaust and the fascist past, the micro level development of the character trope the heroic German is used. The micro-level developments make up the larger or macro level filmic shifts in national and transnational prosthetic memories.

3. Transnational Revisionism of the National Socialist Period in Films

For contemporary society, film has become one of the primary conveyors of history and memory and as a result the historical film genre has produced become some of the most popular films ever made. After *Schindler's List*, the German hero character trope who engaged with the Holocaust and not just with fascism, became popular in Germany. The real-life character, Schindler, has also become the prototype heroic German that subsequent versions of the heroic Germans have attempted to mirror. The number of films that directly engage with the Holocaust has doubled from the 1990s[56] to the 2000s.[57]

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[54] Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 2nd ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962. Print. Here 117.

[55] Leshem, Shosh and Trafford, Vernon. "Overlooking the conceptual framework." *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*. 4.1. (Feb. 2007): 93-105. Print. Here 96. (Quote form Covey, Stephen. *The habits of highly effective people.* New York: Fireside, 1989. 30.)

[56] Eight co-productions were released that directly engage with the Holocaust 1990-2000: *Europa, Europa* (Dir. Agnieszka Holland. 1990), *Korczak* (Dir. Andrzej Wajda. 1990), *Das Schreckliche Mädchen/The Nasty Girl.* Dir. Michael Verhoeven. Perf. Lena Stolze. Miramax. 1990, DVD), *Der Daunenträger* (*Warsaw – Year 5703*. Dir. Janusz Kijowski. 1991), *Wielki tydzień* (Dir. Andrzej Wajda. 1995), *Volgelstrasse* (*The Island on Bird Street*. Dir. Søren Kragh-Jacobsen. 1997), and *Aimée & Jaguar*.

[57] 15 co-productions released directly engage with the Holocaust 2000-10 such as *Invincible* (Dir. Werner Herzog. 2001), *Nirgendwo in Afrika.* (Nowhere in Africa. Dir. Caroline Link. Perf. Juliane Köhler. Zeitgeist Films. 2001. DVD), *Taking Sides* (Dir. István Szabó. 2001), *Amen.*, *The Pianist*, *Laissez passer* (*Safe Conduct*. Dir. Bertrand Tavernier. 2002), *Rosenstraße.* Dir. Margarethe von Trotta. Perf. Maria Schrader. Studio Canal, 2003. DVD, *Der neunte Tag/The Ninth Day*. Dir. Volker Schlöndorff. Perf. Ulrich Matthes. Kino International, 2004. DVD, *Operation Walküre*, *Zwartboek* (Black Book. Dir. Paul Verhoeven. 2006), *Ghetto* (Dir. Audrius Juzėnas. 2006), *Der letzte Zug* (The Last Train. Dir Dana Vávrová. 2006), *Good* (Dir. Vincente Amorim. 2008), *The Reader*, and *Protektor* (*Protector*. Dir. Marek Najbt. 2009).

Along with the increased popularity of Holocaust films there has been an increasing academic interest in German films since the release of *Lola Rennt* (Dir. Tom Tykwer. 1998). *Lola Rennt* reinvented the fairy tale for modern German audiences which encapsulated great story-telling mixed with an energetic portrayal of the new capital city, which shifted in 1999, from Bonn to Berlin. Because of this film, and all these shifts and what they represented, academic film critics and cultural commentators started to explore the increasing transnational popularity and interest in German films. Although *Lola Rennt* captured modern audiences in the 1990s, the revival of films since the film's release that concentrate on the problematic issues and representations of the National Socialist past, a divided Germany and recent German reunification, has also been subject to scrutiny by national and international audiences and critics. Margot Norris explains that in the early 1990s, 52 per cent of Germans were of the opinion that with the reunification of Germany the National Socialist past was officially over.[58] However post-1990s, fascination with the National Socialist past remained as it had not just been the backdrop for German film and European co-productions but for Hollywood films as well. Such a fascination has meant that this period of history is frequently dissected and has thus become a rich and multi-faceted source for stories. These stories are of universal interest and have been adapted or changed to suit audiences as accessible universal meanings are conveyed. Halle considers that universalisation is a form of revisionism that comes with transnationalism, which latter concept does not "inherently mean the loss of particularity".[59] This transnational fascination with the fascist past and films that are set in or engage with the National Socialist past can be revealed by examining the German winners and nominees submitted for consideration of an Academy Award (Oscar). Between 1990 and 2011, out of 21 films submitted, seven focused on the National Socialist past;[60] five of those

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[58] Norris, Margot. *Writing War in the Twentieth Century*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000. Print. Here 102.
[59] Halle 2008: 15.
[60]The films are: *Das Schreckliche Mädchen/The Nasty* Girl. Dir. Michael Verhoeven. 1990, *Schtonk!*. Dir. Helmut Dietl. Perf. Götz George. Artificial Eye, 1992. DVD, *Nirgendwo in Afrika, Aimée & Jaguar*. Dir Max Färberböck. Perf. Juliane Köhler. Senator Film, 1999. DVD, *Der Untergang/Downfall*. Dir. Oliver Hischbiegel. Perf. Bruno Ganz. Constantin Film. 2004, DVD, *Sophie Scholl – Die letzten Tage/Sophie Scholl – The Final Days*. Dir. Marc Rothemund. X Verleih AG. 2005, DVD. *Das weiße Band*. Although *Das weiße Band* is based in time just before World War One, it has been recognised for its engagement with fascism.

received nominations[61] for Best Foreign Language Film and one, *Nirgendwo in Afrika* (Dir. Caroline Link. 2001) won.

Although German films still do not achieve the same box office returns as their Hollywood counterparts, this does not prevent them from being a popular cinema industry. *Der Untergang* grossed $92 million worldwide upon its cinematic release.[62] It won 13 awards and was nominated for an Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film. Produced by Bernd Eichinger, who also produced *Das Boot* (Dir. Wolfgang Peterson. 1981), which depicted the lives of ordinary German sailors, *Der Untergang* automatically leads the audience to presume that this film was a glossy, big budget and emotive production with a basis in history and this knowledge also drew in a large cinema audience who were fans of Eichinger's previous work. Eichinger's historical films can be viewed as a form of revisionism as they focus on personal stories or memories of the past.

3.1 Identity: From National to International and from Institutional to the Personal

The film historian Robert Rosenstone claims that: "A century after the invention of motion pictures, the visual media have become arguably the chief carrier of historical messages in our culture."[63] This statement reveals the poignancy of cinema as a medium as it can be used to explore traumatic periods in history, such as the Holocaust and the National Socialist past. Many academics, such as Lawrence Baron, argue whether trauma can be used as the "basis for the aesthetics of a mass medium" as "trauma denotes the sense of degradation, impotence, or suffering experienced personally by survivors, victims, and witnesses of a terrible tragedy."[64] However, film has played a key role in the development of memory, as the majority of people who are living today are not first-hand witnesses of the Holocaust. Unlike the generation who lived through

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[61] These are *Das schreckliche Mädchen*, *Schtonk!*, *Der Untergang*, *Sophie Scholl – Die letzten Tage* and *Das weiße Band.*

[62] Compared to one of the most recent Hollywood event films, Ron Howard's adaptation *The Da Vinci Code* (2006), which achieved $224 million in its opening weekend, the scale of success and popularity has to reflect not only finances in terms of box office returns but also reviews, awards, and also the type of cinema industry. See Cooke, Paul. "Introduction: World Cinema's 'Dialogues' with Hollywood." *World Cinema's 'Dialogues' with Hollywood.* Ed. Paul Cooke. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007: 1-16. Print. Here 2.

[63] Rosenstone, Robert. "Introduction." *Revisioning history: Film and the construction of a new past.* Ed. Robert Rosenstone. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 1995: 3 – 14. Print. Here 2.

[64] Baron 2005: 5.

the Holocaust, the post-unification generation's memory of the Holocaust is prosthetic as it has had to learn about its past from cinema as well as a variety of other media.

It is assumed that for Germany, as a newly united country, its engagement with the past is prevalent as the nation – those who experienced first-hand the Holocaust and those who experienced a divided Germany – decides on what is and what will be its united historical discourse. It is almost 70 years since the end of World War Two. Generations are becoming further removed from these traumatic events. How the German nation perceives itself in relation to these events assists in the promotion of its national identity at home and abroad. As war is a national experience, each country portrays its own memory of the event differently in popular culture, by either focusing on national memorialisation or personal memory narratives. However, the American view of the German past is influenced by its own issues; it is the American view of the German past and the German view of its past that is being directly explored.

Germany is constrained to promote a positive national and international narrative because the nature of public memory debates in Germany means that the memory of Germany as a nation of perpetrators of genocide and murder has to remain prominent. Therefore, there is a limit to what can be presented to promote a positive national identity. The film and textual case studies chosen reflect this gap in positive national memory as they present the personal and individual actions of people who transcend society en masse. The representation of individual memories has become more prevalent since reunification. How memory and history are presented can result in revisionism.

Films thus facilitate the interpretation of moral battles to a mass audience, promoting what Alison Landsberg has dubbed the 'prosthetic memory' for the generations who are removed from the events depicted onscreen.[65] Landsberg considers the Holocaust an issue of memory; to preserve the Holocaust in history is to preserve it in memory. This is because living memory is connected to life span i.e. the lifespan of the body. She argues that mass cultural technology, i.e. film, has the ability to preserve and replace this living memory as an alternative memory for those who did not live through an event. This is the prosthetic memory. This reliance on cultural technology is

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[65] Landsberg 2003: 148.

complementary to Mary Fulbrook's argument that national identity can only be constructed on the beliefs, culture and customs that exist within society. Fulbrook argues that this "sense of collective identity will be stronger if there is a legacy or a shared myth of a common past or a perceived future,"[66] which can be provided for in film as it propagates myths of the past as, by its nature, it is not reliant on historical accuracy for its popularity. With this in mind, popular films have been chosen as case studies for this research. The interaction between memory, identity and film is explored as each case study depicts events that are further removed from personal memory as the original witnesses to fascism and the Holocaust have died.

Popular culture is understood to be "simply culture that is widely favoured or well-liked by many people".[67] Although a broad definition it can be understood as the antithesis of high culture and is often associated with mass production. It can therefore be considered that popular film is film that is supposed to be low-brow and for mass audiences. For the purposes of this thesis the definition of popular film is films which have attempted to achieve success, both critically and commercially. Assumptions are disputed as the German films selected offer mainstream narratives while the Hollywood films are challenging.

4. Analysing Shifts in the Adaptation Process

As this thesis uses Geisler's steps, the context in which films were made, how they were received i.e. their consequences, and how the characters in the films were adapted and presented i.e. the content, has also been analysed. The analytic process of the films also draws on traditional film theory and its application as exampled in edited works, some significant volumes of which include Buckland, Collins' (et al) and Trifonova's (ed),[68] which employ a mixture of semiotic, psychoanalytic and critical film theories, such as

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[66] Fulbrook, Mary. *German National Identity after the Holocaust*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1999. Print. Here 17.
[67] Storey, J. *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*. 5th ed. Essex, England: Pearson Education, 2009. Print. Here 5.
[68] Buckland, Warren. *Film Theory and Contemporary Hollywood Movies*. New York: Routledge, 2009. Print., Collins, Jim (et al). *Film Theory Goes to the Movies: Cultural Analysis of Contemporary Film*. New York: Routledge, 2003. Print. and Trifonova, Temenuga. Ed. *European Film Theory*. New York: Routledge, 2009. Print.

Landsberg's prosthetic memory and Mulvey's the gaze.[69] Without being able to consider the role of the prosthetic memory at a macro-level and the gaze at a micro-level analysis of the chosen films in this thesis would be incomplete and limited.

Pól Ó Dochartaigh's work is of particular relevance as it sets out how the basis of films, often a novel, is adapted and changed to suit audience expectations. He supplies the example of *Jakob der Lügner* and compares four aspects of the novel and the films: "(1) humour; (2) characterisation of Jakob and of Germans; (3) resistance; (4) the 'happy ending' syndrome."[70] Where the East German novel (by author Jurek Becker. 1969) and film (Dir. Frank Beyer. 1975) were international critical but not commercial successes, the American film flopped, achieving neither commercial nor critical acclaim. It was regularly compared by critics to another Holocaust comedy *La vita è bella* (*Life is Beautiful.* Dir. Roberto Benigni. 1997). Both films present the psychological (psychoanalytic) methods used by father figures towards children to preserve their innocence from the National Socialist crimes being committed around them. Ó Dochartaigh focuses on characterisation in films that use heroic characters. He argues that this focus on the heroic places undue prominence on the a-typical, i.e. not the ordinary German (further explored in Chapter One), and this filters through to central cultural memory.[71] Jakob is considered by Ó Dochartaigh to be an anti-hero and the German characters are a multi-faceted group. This differs from the American film, which turns Germans into caricature villains and Jakob into a Jewish resistance hero.[72] He concludes that the American film conforms to American expectations "far more rigidly that the GDR film to any SED expectations."[73] The adaptations and/or remake differences in the film case studies - rather than fidelity to the source - is considered in this thesis in a similar method to Ó Dochartaigh in particular to point two, characterisation of the victim and of the perpetrators.

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[69] Burgoyne, Robert, "Memory, History and Digital Imagery in Contemporary Film." *Memory and Popular Film.* Ed. Paul Grainge. Manchester: Manchester University Press 2003: 220-36. Print. Here 223.
[70] Ó Dochartaigh, Pól. "Americanizing the Holocaust: The Case of 'Jakob the Liar'. *The Modern Language Review.* 101.2 (2006): 456-471. Print. Here 462.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid: 458, 462-3 and 466-7.
[73] Ibid: 471. S.E.D. being the Socialist Unity Party in the former East Germany.

4.1 Beyond The Good German

There is a distinction between the good or heroic Nazi and a good or heroic German. This is best evidenced with the controversial titling of Joseph Kanon's novel (2001)[74] and Steven Soderbergh's film *The Good German* (2006), which offers an example of the issues surrounding this character trope.[75] The title of this text and film is misleading, as the reader and the audience expect a good German as its protagonist. *The Good German* is a best-selling novel in the U.S and the UK, however for its release in Germany the title was changed to *In den Ruinen von Berlin* (*In the Ruins of Berlin*) to appeal more positively to a German audience than the ironic noir title provided by Kanon. It also stimulated publicity surrounding the novel, as interviewers repeatedly asked Kanon why he had changed the title for the German publication.[76] It was assumed, by Kanon, that the trope the good German in the context presented in the novel would be uncomfortable to readers in Germany. The discourse at the time of publication did not favour *der gute Deutsche* as a title that readers would find appealing. This was a consequence of the contemporary debates, whereby "reconstruction of the good or bad faith of the participants in these particular historical events"[77] could be used to white-wash German history in a manner not dissimilar to the *persilschein* Kanon describes in his novel as they turned from perpetrators to victims. The choice of *In den Ruinen von Berlin* was a direct reference to a song of the same title sang by Marlene Dietrich in *A Foreign Affair* (Dir. Billy Wilder. 1948),[78] which is a film also based in post-war Berlin. It was believed that the connotations surrounding this film and Dietrich would be picked up by German readers. The film adaptation kept the untranslated English title *The Good German*, which also served to remove the film from the title 'der gute Deutsche' as with the novel. This suggests there was a persistent sensitivity regarding the trope 'der gute Deutsche' in Germany.

These little shifts are indicators of a larger shift, a paradigm shift. They can be used as evidence to answer a larger question, how can there be a shift from the narrative

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[74] Kanon, Joseph. *The Good German.* London: Sphere, 2007. Print.
[75] *The Good German.* Dir. Steven Soderbergh. Perf. George Clooney. Warner Bros, 2006. DVD.
[76] Kanon, Joseph. "Reading by Joseph Kanon from *The Good German.*" *Institute of Germanic and Romantic Studies.* N,p. 22 Oct. 2009. Web. <http://www.sas.ac.uk/videos-and-podcasts/culture-language-literature/reading-joseph-kanon-good-german>. 21 Apr. 2011.
[77] Bullivant, Keith. "Reconstruction and Integration: The Culture of West German Stabilization 1945-1968." *German Cultural Studies: an Introduction.* Ed. Rob Burns. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995: 209 –256. Print. Here 220.
[78] *A Foreign Affair.* Dir. Billy Wilder. Perf. Jean Arthur. Paramount Pictures, 1948. DVD.

of Germans as perpetrators to Germans as heroes during the National Socialist period? The films chosen are used as evidence with the aim of answering this question.

4.2 Criteria of Film Selection

Films and texts that engaged with fascism and the Holocaust in German and American film were chosen and grouped together for a point of comparison. For example, the Hollywood director Spielberg was influenced by European film and Polanski, a European director, has also produced films in Hollywood. Although *The Pianist* was released almost a decade after *Schindler's List*, it was repeatedly compared to *Schindler's List* by film critics and reviewers. Chapter Two evaluates the significance and impact of the cinematic representation of the heroic German within this Hollywood and European dynamic. In contrast to the dynamic presented with *Holocaust* and *Heimat*, *The Pianist* was not created by the director as a reaction to *Schindler's List.* Nonetheless, *The Pianist* could not have been made, as Polanski himself acknowledged, without *Schindler's List.*

For purposes of clarity, and as far as film selection is concerned, the remit of this research deliberately excludes analysis of the first instances of the use of the ambiguous German hero in other national cinemas. For example, in the last decade there has been an increase in historical films from Poland, Norway and France, which have depicted historical resistance and subversive figures. These have included films such as *Katyń* (Dir. Andrzej Wajda. 2007) and *Wciemności* (*In Darkness*. Dir. Agnieszka Holland. 2011),[79] which focus on individual and collective resistance efforts in occupied Poland. Resistors and collaborators have also been the focus of Norwegian films such as *Svik* (*Betrayal*. Dir. Håkon Gunderson. 2009) and *Max Manus: Man of War* (Dir. Joachim Rønning. 2008). The same has developed in French cinema as the French heroes are also depicted and centred on resistance efforts by groups, such as *Les Femmes de l'ombre* (*Female Agents*. Dir. Jean-Paul Salomé. 2008)[80] and *L'Armée du crime* (*The*

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[79] *Wciemności/ In Darkness*. Dir. Agnieszka Holland. Perf. Robert Więckiewicz. Sony Pictures Classics. 2011. DVD.

[80] *Les Femmes de l'ombre/Female Agents.* Dir. Jean-Paul Salomé. Perf. Sophie Marceau. TFM Distribution. 2008. DVD.

Army of Crime. Dir. Robert Guédiguian. 2009).[81] Complicity in France is also discussed in films such as *Elle s'appelait Sarah* (Dir. Gilles Paquet-Brenner. 2010) and *La Rafle* (Dir. Rose Bosch. 2010), as they present the complicity of the French in the deportations of Jews from France in 1942. Another direction of research could include not only other types of national cinemas, but also women as members of groups. These could include the films *Sophie Scholl – Die letzten Tage* and *Rosenstraße*, which, although they have a female protagonists also deal with the personal relationships between female resistance figures and are not just representative of a German-Jewish symbiosis. Or another direction would be analysis of recent German and Hollywood films such as *Der Untergang*, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, *Der neunte Tag*, *Stalingrad* and *Eichmann*, which focus on sympathetic portrayals of leading Nazi figures and soldiers or resistance within the Church, could be used to explore the acceptable portrayals of characters that are traditionally viewed as complicit with Nazism or directly complicit such as Eichmann.

Given the Holocaust films focused on in this thesis, it is argued that this selection will facilitate and encourage development of a new understanding of the dynamic between cinemas in an international and transnational setting.[82] It will also provide new, more nuanced arguments concerning the interplay between memory studies and film studies. As a result, each chapter explores a different theme and notes the prominent academic and critical exploration of each film and text, before introducing the thesis argument. Therefore, each film and text is posited within not only the socio-political discourse that was present at the time of its release, but also within the academic and film criticism, to which it was subject. The aim is to find out how generations removed from fascism could come to terms with the past. Comparative analysis reveals that films act as a prosthetic memory for audiences removed from first-hand experience of National Socialism and the Holocaust. Adaptations can be problematic as they focus on different aspects of a story or change characters to suit their own needs through the creation of the imaginary image (written word) to explicit images (audio-visual).

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[81] *L'Armée du crime/The Army of Crime.* Dir. Robert Guédiguian. Perf. Virgine Ledoyen. Studio Canal. 2009. DVD.

[82] Chapter One will consider transnationalism and all that it entails for this thesis.

As well as the context, in which these films were made, consideration has been given regarding the limits of the thesis. This has included the inclusion and dismissal of films and texts, as well as the limitation to the contemporary period. The films and texts that have been considered have not only presented a dynamic relationship between the U.S. and Germany but have also been considered popular and have achieved a commercial and critical success. Therefore, films or texts which have not been made with these motivations to be commercially successful have been alluded to but not been considered for textual analysis. Similarly, films that were striving to achieve a popular status and that have not succeeded, as they were either critically or commercially unsuccessful, have been considered for analysis. For example, the film *Amen.* has been discussed, as the text on which the film was based was commercially and critically successful. The film also received limited critical success. But it was not a commercially successful film even though that was the intention. There are, alternatively, many more popular films that deal with World War Two and the Holocaust made in Germany, Austria, the U.S. and UK that could have also been discussed if the Hollywood and German interplay was not considered, such as *Das weiße Band* (*The White Ribbon*. Dir. Michael Haneke. 2009), *Der neunte Tag* (*The Ninth Day*. Dir. Volker Schlöndorff. 2004), *Die Fälscher* (*The Counterfeiters*. Dir. Stefan Ruzowitzky. 2007), *Rosenstraße* (Dir. Margarethe von Trotta. 2003), *The Grey Zone* (Dir. Tim Blake Nelson. 2001), *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (Dir. Mark Herman. 2008), *Inglourious Basterds* (Dir. Quentin Tarantino. 2009) and *Django Unchained* (Dir. Quentin Tarantino. 2012), which while set in pre-civil war US, the character of Dr King Schultz can be read as an allegory for the German Holocaust rescuer.[83]

Along with Geisler's three step approach to film and Ó Dochartaigh's consideration of character adaptations, the mediating of cultural memory by filmmakers is to be understood, according to David Eldridge in *Hollywood's History Films*, to be determined by several factors:

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[83] *Die Fälscher/ The Counterfeiters*. Dir. Stefan Ruzowitzky. Perf. Karl Markovics. Metrodome Distribution, 2007. DVD, *The Grey Zone*. Dir. Tim Blake Nelson. Perf. David Arquette. Lionsgate, 2001. DVD, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. Dir. Mark Herman. Perf. Asa Butterfield. Miramax Films, 2008. DVD, and *Inglourious Basterds*. Dir. Quentin Tarantino. Perf. Brad Pitt. The Weinstein Company, 2009. DVD, *Django Unchained*. Dir. Quentin Tarantino. Perf. Jamie Foxx. The Weinstein Company, 2012. DVD.

> How and why were the films made? Who made them, and which ideas influenced the filmmakers? How did the films interpret history, and what biases affected the interpretation? [...] How [has] the filmmaker interacted with professional historiography public attitudes, political utilisation of the history [to...] convey a perspective on the past through cinematic means.[84]

As to film more generally, the representation of the National Socialist past in film has remained Germany's biggest and most popular cultural export. These heritage films have used mainstream conventions but not mainstream memories as they have focused on the extraordinary, the mythic ambiguous hero.[85] As academic focus, in the past, on transnational film has been limited to films which are believed to be of cultural, traditionally art-house, value, this thesis has insteadfocused on populist narratives and films which has revealed a wider role of film to actively engage with and thus contextualise the past according to the socio-political climate in which they were produced. The next chapter, Chapter One, seeks to review and expose the accepted assumptions underlying contemporary literature surrounding film and traumatic memory.

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[84] Eldridge, David. *Hollywood's History Films*. London: I. B. Tauris & Co, 2006. Print. Here 3.
[85] Ibid: 631.

Chapter One

Facilitating Appropriation and Revisionism of Memory and History

1. History on Film

Modern societies attempt to deal with the present through their interpretation of the past.[1] Graham Bartram argues that the presence of the fascist era had a profound impact on the way people thought in the post-war period, specifically in Germany, France and Italy. By focusing on these three nations in particular, Bartram ignores the presence of the fascist era in American representations in the post-war period; this is where this thesis differs. By including the U.S., the thesis includes the immigrants who moved to the U.S. from Europe during and after the fascist era, and subsequently their interpretation of the fascist era on film. Aspects of Bartram's regard of the fascist era and how it is still presented on film in Germany can be applied to this thesis, such as his assertion that the fascist era continues to be part of the structuring of the historical consciousness of generations, which consciousness continues to provoke national identity issues. Before representations and the memories of the fascist era and the Holocaust can be analysed, there is an issue about how to define a Holocaust film.

Holocaust film can be defined, according to Judith Doneson, as any film that includes the beginning of Jewish persecution in 1933 to the last of the concentration camps, which were liberated in 1945.[2] Conversely, this thesis argues that any film that engages with the Holocaust or the memory of the Holocaust is a Holocaust film, including, for example, films that deal with the post-war trials of concentration camp guards or present survivor testimony. This thesis extends Doneson's definition as it contends that any film that was influenced by the Holocaust ought to be termed a Holocaust film.[3] With the aim of presenting a broader and more up-to-date consideration of the representation of "history on film" this thesis includes films that

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[1] Bartram, Graham. et al. "Introduction." *Reconstructing the Past: Representations of the Fascist Era in Post-War European Culture.* Ed. Graham Bartram. et al. Keele: Keele University Press, 1996: 11-31. Print. Here 11.
[2] Doneson, Judith E. *The Holocaust in American Film.* Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2002. Print. Here 6.
[3] Ibid: 7.

others would not. For example, *The Reader*, which is based in the post-Holocaust period but engages with Holocaust survivor testimony and post-war trials.

Ewout van der Knapp focuses on the film *Nuit et brouillard* (*Night and Fog*, 1955), as a case study on film. [4] Although this is not a film that is one of the primary texts in this thesis, Knapp's approach to this film can be transposed onto the film texts in this thesis. Knapp argues that memory and identity can be influenced through the medium of film. *Nuit et brouillard* was chosen as "It played a crucial role in the dissemination and appropriation of images of the past, discussions about it helped to define or construct identity and to shape memory."[5] Similar considerations were employed in the selection of films for this thesis, the main distinguishing factor being each film's interactions with international audiences, filmmakers and writers. For example, the chapter on *Schindler's List* considers the Australian author (Thomas Keneally) of the novel from which the film was adapted; the American-Jewish director (Steven Spielberg); Israeli awards (Yad Vashem); American and German audience reception, which necessarily includes political memory, public debates, public reviews from film and academic critics, interviews, surveys, and box office returns. A similar approach was utilised by Knapp and other contributors in examining *Nuit et brouillard* as a representation of the Holocaust as a cultural artefact that can become the "litmus test for the state of collective memory."[6] Knapp observed that a foreign product, or film, is capable of being part of the transmission of history to another national culture. It is on this basis that the thesis examines the films and texts on which they were based.

Max Silverman views *Nuit et brouillard* as a "landmark in representing the horror of the Holocaust"[7] and "an early (and, perhaps, still the most powerful) reflection on the complex connections between everyday life and horror in representations of the Holocaust." Silverman also focuses on the depoliticisation of the Holocaust. He argues that this process has turned the Holocaust into a sacred and sensationalised event that has no comparison. Later Silverman changed his opinion of *Nuit et brouillard* as a

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[4] Knapp, Ewout van der. "Transmitting the Memory of the Holocaust." *Uncovering the Holocaust: The International Reception of Night and Fog.* Ed. Ewout van der Knapp. London: Wallflower Press, 2006: 1-6. Print.
[5] Ibid: 2.
[6] Ibid: 2-3. Here the litmus test refers to questions asked of future politicians and judges in the U.S. which is a metaphor based on the chemistry litmus test for acidity.
[7] Silverman, Max. "Horror and the Everyday in Post-Holocaust France: *Nuit et brouillard* and Concentrationary Art." *French Cultural Studies*. 17.1 (2006): 5-18. Print. Here 6, 7 and 15.

Holocaust film and considers it should be engaged with beyond Judeocide but instead as a form of concentrationary cinema. [8] By considering *Nuit et brouillard* to be a form of concentrationary cinema, he makes it different from Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1973-85), as *Shoah* focuses solely on the destruction of European Jews.[9] Although this change in terminology, from Holocaust film to concentrationary cinema, as a way to approach *Nuit et brouillard* does uncover a new perspective, the broader Holocaust film terminology as suggested by Doneson can and is applied to *Nuit et brouillard* as with other films considered in this thesis.

It is also argued that film continues to be a medium that can not only deal with the past but also hold the attention of large audiences. Representing history and the Holocaust in film had been a source of concern for many academics as, according to Robert Rosenstone, film has become the major source of historical knowledge for the majority of the world's population and it presents it in a way that is only one linear story that denies historical alternatives.[10] Although this may be the case of a singular film, a film is not released in isolation; the socio-political context in which the film is released also offers to the audience historical alternatives.

The process of forgetting was also a part of the *Historikerstreit* in the 1980s, which consequently led to the argument by conservative historians such as Ernst Nolte that the Holocaust should be normalised, in order to promote a positive German national identity. This was countered by philosophers such as Jürgen Habermas who believed that to normalise the past would betray Germany's victims. Maja Zehfuss considers the possible multiplicity of memory and brings the revisionist argument up to unification by focusing on the 1995 debate regarding how to commemorate the 8th May 1945.[11]

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[8] Silverman, Max and Pollock, Griselda."Concentrationary Cinema." *Concentrationary Cinema, Aesthetics as Political Resistance in Alain Resnais's Night and Fog*. Eds. Max Silverman and Griselda Pollock. Oxford: Berghan books, 2011: 1-54. Print. Here 4 and 9. He suggests that to approach *Nuit et brouillard* as a concentrationary rather than Holocaust film is a tool to differentiate between the death camp experience that is associated with the Jews and the concentration camp whose function was to create a "physiological and psychological mode of existence where men and women were intended to suffer until they gave in to its agonising deprivations," thus making it a different type of experience.

[9] Ibid: 11.

[10] Rosenstone, Robert. "History in Images/ History in Words." *The History on Film Reader*. Ed. Marnie Hughes-Warrington. NY: Routledge, 2009: 30-41. Print. Here 31.

[11] Zehfuss, Maja. "Remembering to Forget/ Forgetting to Remember." *Memory, Trauma and World Politics: Reflections on the Relationship between Past and Present*. Ed. Duncan Bell. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006: 213-230. Print. Here 213. Zehfuss describes the debate regarding how to commemorate the 8th May 1945 that was published in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, "Against

Zehfuss speculates that the secret to German redemption is remembering the past with the possibility of moral emancipation of the perpetrator through the memory of guilt.[12] If the memory of guilt would emancipate a nation, according to Zehfuss, then the myths of resistance should logically condemn the nation. Although Zehfuss is critical of these resistance myths, they have prevailed. These are myths that "escape the bounds of experience, they are simplified, highly selective and widely shared narrations of an imagined past."[13] Bell believes that this can be seen in Landsberg's ideas on the prosthetic memory, which "generate social solidarity, create alliances between various marginalised groups and help people to understand past injustices."[14] This thesis pulls together various conceptual issues in order to show that history on film can act as a form of prosthetic memory. In turn, prosthetic memory acts as a form of remembrance as considered more fully below and is used to reveal a more a nuanced and multi-layered analysis of transnational and national narratives, including pre- and post-unification Germanies. According to Landsberg, films serve to facilitate an interpretation of moral battles and the impact of war to a mass audience, through what she calls the prosthetic memory, which is used by generations who are removed from the events depicted onscreen.[15]

Prosthetic memory differs from what K. Fierke argues is a habitual cultural memory.[16] Instead of representing a trauma, forgetting is imperative while adhering to the compulsion to repeat the performance and language of memory. Fierke develops this line of argument by suggesting that public commemoration is a form of habitual memory and thus a form of forgetting. This is contradictory, because, as he explains, memory is ahistorical as it is simplified into mythic archetypes.[17] The words mythic and archetype assume that these memories take on an epic, fantastical quality that becomes legendary. These memories have also become an acceptable standard or model as a way

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Forgetting" where it is described as a paradox as it embodies the zero hour, liberation, beginning of expulsion and the beginning of the division of Germany.

[12] Ibid: 215.

[13] Bell 2006: 27.

[14] Ibid: 27 – 29.

[15] Landsberg 2003: 148.

[16] Fierke, K. M. "Bewitched by the Past: Social Memory, Trauma and International relations." *Memory, Trauma and World Politics: Reflections on the Relationship between Past and Present.* Ed. Duncan Bell. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006: 116-134. Print. Here 117.

[17] Ibid: 116.

to remember, rather than forget. There is thus a place for heroes as part of memorialising history and memory, and this is reflected in film.

2. German Memory and Identity Contests: *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* after Reunification

Anne Fuchs and Mary Cosgrove propose that memory contests refer to a special feature of German memory debates since unification, which came about as a result of the historical distance from National Socialism which, in turn, prompted a rediscovery of private family memories. This created a "pluralistic memory culture which does not enshrine a particular normative understanding of the past."[18] Although a pluralistic memory culture exists in Germany as a multitude of different stories are presented through the variety of films that are being released, the success of these films, or memories that are represented in these films, varies. It would appear that one type of past being presented is more popular from which it could be inferred that a singular normative understanding of the past is being accepted. However, it can be argued that the memory contest is being conducted not solely in Germany but internationally, as the tropes and films (memories) that are being imported into Germany stimulated and encouraged contests and debates regarding how to engage with the past and which memories are acceptable national narratives. It should be added at this point that memory debates are not an exclusively German phenomenon. The memory of events and the symbolism of what is remembered and what is forgotten (officially, personally and historically represented), for example the Nanking Massacre (Chapter Four) have been contested within various nations, especially those undergoing a form of political turmoil.

2.1 The 'Double Burden' of the Past and the Use of Memory

Memory, especially of traumatic events, has been used as a rallying point in the creation and affirmation of identity. It is difficult to discuss memory without discussing identity. An approach to the past and symbolic traumatic events in history, their public remembrances and personal memory can thus reveal the attitudes towards identity in

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[18] From Cosgrove, Mary and Fuchs, Anne. "Introduction." *German Life and Letters* 59.2 (2006): 3-10. Print. Here 4.

contemporary society. Duncan Bell argues that memory studies in these fields are undergoing a boom which utilises historical images and tropes to shape identity in society.[19] This notion of there being increased interest about the interplay between memory and history had been expanded by Jay Winter who argues that the Holocaust bred this interplay, which emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as the second and third generations removed from fascism became fascinated with German memory.[20]

While Winter focused on the importance of detailed investigation of memory and thus *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, Bell, in contrast, asserts that history and how it forms collective memory is not concerned with the details of the past, but rather how the past is remembered and thus used to construct contemporary identity. The memory of the past has been formed and reshaped by cultural interchanges in contemporary culture as well as acknowledging the persistent contemporary fascination with fascism and the Holocaust.

Bell gives examples of trauma, such as the two World Wars and the Vietnam War. But he does not state for which countries these events would have been traumatic, or how trauma could instead be viewed as a positive rupture. Bell's approach to history, memory and identity is Western centred and, as such, implies a disregard for other histories or traumatic events that would have also embodied a symbolic meaning for other societies and cultures. In addition, using genocide, war, terrorism, civil war and radical regime changes as examples of collective trauma defines trauma as a negative memory.[21] Bell refers to Cathy Caruth, who claims that trauma is transmissible through all of society, while Jeffery Alexander views trauma as a social construct. If these interpretations of trauma are accepted, then Bell's claim that trauma is a challenge to identity appears to be disputed as Caruth and Alexander view trauma as a unifying and transgressive social construct. This thesis also proposes that trauma is a rupture or an event that radically "impacts on the body social" or is a "disorganisation in the orderly taken for granted universe".[22] What then is the place for German unification in German history with all of its trauma? German reunification is a radical disorganisation of the taken for granted universe. That is to say, the negative implications of reunification such

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[19] Bell 2006: 1 1- 2.
[20] Winter 2006: 55.
[21] Bell 2006: 5.
[22] Ibid: 8.

as the political, cultural and economic absorption of the former East state into the West have been overshadowed by the ongoing annual public remembrances of the positively united Germany. This specifically German trauma of both Nazi Germany and Reunification is called in Germany 'the double burden of the past'.

Generally, from a historical point of view, traumatic events are characterised by being negative ruptures in the history of a nation or culture, for example, the Holocaust, the National Socialist period, and the Nanking Massacre. They are all considered to be symbolic points in history. German reunification as a rupture, on the contrary, can be considered to be a form of trauma but with positive as well as negative implications, for example, the reaffirmation of identity of those who have been traumatised. As a consequence of the unification rupture, the issue of identity, and more importantly of how the traumatic past is remembered, would mean a new cultural transmission of memory would be initiated and a different national political agenda promoted.

What makes the German past so different is not only that the trauma, or the positive rupture, prompts the need for a new national identity, but that the new German nation as a whole also has to deal with the memory of fascism and the Holocaust. If memory is established through the use of a usable past, i.e. not a negative past, as identified by Bell, then how are the Holocaust and Nazism used as part of an identity when a national memory is meant to be valorised, according to Allan Megill, in moments of crisis such as during Germany's unification? This thesis expands on the underlying complexity of this memory contest, as the memories being represented on film analysed in this research show that the character trope and mythic tales of heroic figures have been manipulated during this period to establish a usable and valorised past.

It has been suggested by Joanna Bourke that this crisis encourages the emergence of a victim culture and has been co-opted by perpetrators of violence.[23] This does appear to be the case for Germany. The important forgetting changed into the promotion of remembering. Winter also indicates that this process of remembering during the 1970s and 80s changed the perception of the victim from a German to a Jewish victim. Winter offered the cultural example of the author and Holocaust survivor

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[23] In Bell 2006: 9.

Primo Levi who published his first book in 1947 (*If this is a man*) but did not become an international figure until the 1970s.[24] Debates on *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* have persisted since the origin of the term in the 1950s. The process of coming to terms with the past includes debates prompted by the U.S.'s use of the Holocaust as a source of universal moral values and suffering. This use of the past is viewed within Germany as a form of appropriation. The complex issues surrounding ownership of history, the Holocaust and memory thus need to be considered.

3. Americanisation of the Holocaust since 1959

The use of culture to provoke memory contests and debates became apparent in the reaction in Germany to the screening of the American mini-series *Holocaust* in 1979. The imported nature of the ownership contest and how to represent the Holocaust differs from the understanding of contest as presented by Fuchs and Cosgrove. They presented a memory contest as a questioning of established cultural norms and values, which questions the validity of these norms in the creation of imagined communities. Fuchs and Cosgrove argue that it is the "proper management of the nation's past" that should be advocated by Germany's internal politics.[25]

In contrast, Peter Fritzsche introduces the role of the third party in the various debates, i.e. countries such as the U.S., Israel and former occupied countries, where he details the importance of being sensitive to the perceptions of international audiences.[26] These countries, Fritzsche argues, have to be taken into consideration when Germany publicly debates the Holocaust and Nazism.[27] Fritzsche does not consider the role these international outsiders have in prompting debate regarding Nazism and the Holocaust in Germany.

Fuchs and Cosgrove's arguments thus have some limitations including that they omit how international forces influence public debate surrounding

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[24] Winter 2006: 60.
[25] Fuchs and Cosgrove. 2006: 4
[26] Fritzsche, Peter. "What Exactly is Vergangenheitsbewältigung? Narrative and Its Insufficiency in Postwar Germany." Ed. Anne Fuchs and Mary Cosgrove. New York: Camden House, 2006: 25-40. Print. Here 37.
[27] Ibid: 37.

Vergangenheitsbewältigung.[28] They also view memory contests as a competition between "the personal and historical" and "the private and the public" as history has turned to a "bottom-up experience", which can, they argue, lead to historical revisionism.[29] In previous years, films surrounding the Holocaust focused on a top down approach to history i.e. a focus on the mass and faceless Nazi institutions. Although memory and history may have become a bottom-up experience, which has been reflected in the proliferation of films and literature that are based on personal memories, Fuchs and Cosgrove's use of the term "historical revisionism" implies historical denial. Denying the personal memories that conflict with official historical narratives is too a form of suppressing or denying history and in turn revises it. Development of this form of suppression and form of revisionism is an important aim of this thesis. It is relevant to distinguish that the evolution of revisionist issues from official to personal memory, which has led to universalising trauma rather than maintaining the specificity of a traumatic event, are thus more to do with the quantity of these personal memories becoming increasingly popular and mainstream in culture and in film. It is this latter medium and how it encapsulates various aspects and entwining of issues relating to memory and appropriation that is the remit of this thesis. For example, focus on the resistor, or the a-typical, during Nazism and the Holocaust spotlights the minority and their mythic qualities and all that they symbolise. Analysis of these a-typical narratives including through psychoanalysis, such as through Fierke's "the mythic", Landsberg's "prosthetic memory" and Mulvey's semiotic aspects of "the gaze", can affirm or cast doubt on whether denial or negative revisionism is indeed occurring; or encouraging debate and memorialisation of the past; or whether it can be combating institutionalised remembering and hence forgetting.

Fuchs and Cosgrove, like Bell, draw on Caruth and employ her argument that if the Holocaust becomes symbolic of universal trauma then it loses its importance. As these authors are all specifically focusing on the potential of the Holocaust being the source of universal symbolism of the identity of Germany, they ignore the use of the Holocaust in other countries, such as the U.S., where the questioning of universal morals and nature of the Holocaust has been adopted as a universal narrative. This thesis differs in two regards. First, their argument regarding internally provoked

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[28] Fuchs and Cosgrove. 2006: 4-6.
[29] Ibid: 6.

memory contests is extended as it contends that the U.S.'s use of the Holocaust acts as a provocation that initiates German memory contests. Secondly, it also argues that universal values deriving from the Holocaust have profoundly influenced society at various levels. For example since the collapse of communism, Europe has become closer and as a result, a European cross-border identity is being encouraged. As a result, some histories are not yet being presented onscreen.[30] Such memories, they argue, are still "raw and troubling,"[31] for example in countries that were occupied by first Nazism, such as France, and in later cases communism, such as Poland, presenting their multifaceted relationship with the fascist past. These troubling memories and Germany's continuing historical relationship with the Holocaust are moving further into the realm of post-memory. As observed by Fuchs and Cosgrove the consequence of this remoteness from the Holocaust has filtered into the need for Germany and the world to represent the Holocaust on film.

Colin Townsend discusses the impact of both the American film *Holocaust* and the German work *Heimat* and their impact on the German viewing public.[32] The increased public debate that ensued as a result of *Heimat* and *Holocaus*t had a significant impact on a high percentage of the generation who had not experienced the fascist era in West Germany. Townsend further explains the attitudes in West Germany towards popular films, such as *Das Boot*, where the image of the decent German officer was criticised abroad. In Germany, *Das Boot* was received with "a countrywide sigh of relief" as, prior to this film, Nazis and the average German soldier or civilian had always been considered and thus portrayed to be different breeds of people.[33] This form of revisionism, as well as the ahistorical and universalising forms of revisionism, is a key theme in this thesis and is discussed further in this chapter as it focuses on the mythic archetype and other character tropes and images. Ilan Avisar describes the prominence of images in culture. Avisar argues that the process of film representation is similar to the act of memory, as both "cinema and memory engage in framing the past,

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[30] Bell, Erin and Gray, Ann. "Introduction: History on Television in Europe: The Past Two Decades." *Televising History: Mediating the Past in Postwar Europe*. Ed. Erin Bell and Ann Gray. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010: 1-12. Print. Here 4-5.
[31] Ibid: 8.
[32] Townsend, Colin. "Edgar Reitz's *Heimat*: Poetic Evocations of a Nazi Past." In *Reconstructing the Past: Representations of the Fascist Era in Post-War European Culture*. Ed. Graham Bartram. et al. Keele: Keele University Press, 1996: 186-201. Print. Here 1.
[33] Ibid: 192 – 195.

editing the past, and reifying the past in pictures and narratives."[34] Avisar also uses the example of how the NBC mini-series *Holocaust* introduced the Holocaust into German public discourse. Avisar sees *Heimat* as an epic that "drastically minimises the period of the Third Reich as a negligible element in German historical consciousness."[35] Relativisation of National Socialist crimes and the promotion of Germans as victims, he argues, are key to understanding revisionism, which he argues, can be seen in the quantity of films that focus on acts of resistance to Nazis. American cinema, he explains, displays a continuous interest in the Holocaust and presents it as a grand drama.[36]

Although this series was very popular, it did not direct attention to the National Socialist war crimes, institutions and sympathisers that were rife in rural as well as urban areas. As a consequence, Geisler argues that the series attempts to white-wash the National Socialist past. In contrast *Holocaust* runs the risk of sensationalising and Hollywood-ising the Holocaust. However, it does not shy away from showing that the average German was complicit.

Through nostalgia and personal memory, the past has not been presented objectively in either *Holocaust* or *Heimat*. However in comparison and post-1990, the presentation of the themes of nostalgia and personal memory has continued as film has continued to turn towards individual and personal memories. It is the audience's attitudes towards these post *Holocaust* and *Heimat* films and themes that have diversified. For example, and surprisingly, it is not just American representations of fascism that were popular internationally as there have also been German films that were successful in the U.S. These include the film *Europa, Europa* (Dir. Agnieska Holland. 1990) where the main protagonist has been likened to a "young Jewish Indiana Jones,"[37] and twenty-five years earlier *Der junge Törless* (Dir. Volker Schlöndorff. 1966), both of which influenced the recent film *Napola – Elite für den Führer* (*Before the Fall*. Dir. Dennis Gansel. 2004).[38] Although these films were received well, they are

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[34] Avisar 1997: 38.
[35] Ibid: 44.
[36] Ibid: 44 – 48.
[37] Doneson 2002: 200.
[38] As well as having a scene lifted from *Europa, Europa*, the lead Friedrich Weimer copies Solomon Perel practising the fascist salute in front of a mirror in his new NaPolA uniform. Unlike Perel, Weimer does not break into a tap dance but instead looks pleased with himself. As with *Der junge Törless*, hazing and the strict military(esque) life are present.

still comparatively less successful than the Hollywood(esque) version of the Holocaust and have less of an impact on the U.S. than the U.S. has on Germany.

In the aforementioned two films, as in all the films considered in this thesis, with the exception of *Valkyrie* which is an action thriller, the melodramatic has been considered an effective way to re-animate the past to the audience when images of the National Socialist past and the Holocaust have been recycled to the extent of being "devoid of meaning."[39] History on film, because of its repetition, can "dull the thinking and makes it impossible to see or understand the very events" that are being presented. It is only through melodrama, as Marcia Landy states, that history can be accessed through this larger than life representation as the reality it creates produces a moral universe.[40] The moral universe is explored predominantly through the moral compass of the complex character tropes as represented in German films and Hollywood films that endeavour to depict and universalise the Holocaust.

4. Transnationalism

4.1 Universalising the Holocaust

Where the representation in Germany of the trauma of the Holocaust has been complicated by post-war division, now re-unification, as well as the nature of being the perpetrator nation, different representations and references to the Holocaust and the National Socialist past have been used in other nations, such as the U.S., for other purposes, and these adaptations have been more readily accepted by American audiences. According to Helmut Schmitz a number of critics, such as Niven, argue that "the evolution of a more inclusive picture allows for the representation of Germans as both perpetrators and victims, without reverting to reactionary politics, because the historical responsibility of German perpetration has been securely established within public memory."[41] While this may be the case, the observers of the representation in film of trauma, which trauma is a direct result of fascism in Germany, have noted that

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[39] Landy 2009: 49-50.
[40] Ibid: 50-1.
[41] Schmitz, Helmut. "Introduction: The Return of Wartime Suffering in Contemporary German Memory Culture, Literature and Film." *A Nation of Victims?: Representations of German Wartime Suffering from 1945 to the Present*. Ed. Helmut Schmitz. New York: Rodopi, 2007: 1-30. Print. Here 13.

the winners have been remembered and memorialised as the greatest generation. Bell argues that the memory of the Holocaust and fascism had been used by non-German politicians. For example, former U.S. President George W. Bush used the Holocaust and all of its symbolism as a means to legitimise the actions of his administration. Bell argues that by likening the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, as well as the subsequent War on Terror to the fascist past, in his rhetoric, Bush is attempting to glorify the U.S. through an appropriated past.

With this form of revisionism, the Holocaust loses its particularism and instead becomes a means to promote and symbolise universal human suffering and values.[42] If the Holocaust has become a universal trauma, and therefore a universal memory, the transnational dimension and dissemination of this memory can also, Bell argues, play a role in international relations. Using Stephan Feuchtwang as an example, Bell put forward the case that to transcend the initial injustice (trauma) a "civil ritual of recognition (is) essential for reconciling the oppressors and the oppressed" and it is an international process.[43] The Holocaust Memorial in Washington has encouraged this universalism and is considered to be an "expression of Jewish-American pride".[44]

The internationalisation, rather than the Americanisation, of German history is considered by Fritzsche to have begun before the Holocaust and is attributed to World War One.[45] In addition, he recognised that, after the Holocaust, German history became part of other countries' historical narratives. It is these other countries' narratives that pose the question regarding collective guilt and it is consequently Germany's narrative that has to supply the answer to the implicit question, were all Germans collectively guilty of Nazi crimes?[46]

However, as Janet Ward explains in relation to the universalisation of this period, pre-9/11 there was already a development in how the Holocaust was being presented in film as it moved towards universalisation.[47] The move towards a globally applicable memory of the Holocaust increased, Ward argues, as from 1990 to 2004 more

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[42] Bell 2006: 14-7.
[43] Ibid: 19 -21.
[44] Winter 2006: 66.
[45] Fritzsche 2006: 37.
[46] Ibid: 37.
[47] Ward, Janet. "Holocaust Film in the Post-9/11 Era: New Directions in Staging and Emplotment." *Pacific Coast Philology*. 39 (2004): 29-41. Print. Here 34.

than 170 Holocaust films were produced. She argues that the universalising of the Holocaust was appropriated by any nation or group that wished to act or assume the "role of memory witnesses".[48] Ward contends that since 9/11 Jews in Holocaust films changed into the "arbiters of their own fates ... not as victims but as fighters".[49] This victim mentality has instead, she argues, been adopted by gentile Germans.[50]

Rather than a victim mentality, Konrad Jarausch suggests that: firstly, the excessive focus on nationalism during the Third Reich eventually led to West Germany's rejection of this form of nationalism; West Germany then turned to "cultural Americanisation, political Sovietisation or normative Europeanization"; and unification of the two Germanies then prompted new memory debates regarding self-conception.[51] This self-conception would have the ability to influence behaviour as a result of a process of self-reflection. While Germany turned to American culture, the U.S. also used German history, in particular the Holocaust, to promote universal values.

4.2 Universalising Narratives in Film

What has so far been considered by many of the authors described above is the universalising and transnational appropriation of the Holocaust narrative. A further distinction is necessary relating to transnationalism and the complexity of factors that impact on the actual production and portrayal of these universal values on film. This portrayal of the Holocaust narrative is more of a bottom up approach, which is one based on personal stories, in comparison to the appropriation of the Holocaust to promote universal values, which is a top down (institutionalised, or master narrative) form of revisionism of memory and history, now institutionalised within American culture. Doneson argues that these latter kind of Holocaust narratives entered popular culture, education and a variety of museums and memorials.[52] On the other hand, grassroots personal stories are not often the subject of museums and memorials.[53] Such

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[48] Ibid: 35-6.
[49] Ibid: 37.
[50] Ibid: 36-7.
[51] Jarausch, Konrad H. "Reshaping German Identities: Reflections on the Post-Unification Debate." *After Unity: Reconfiguring German Identities*. Ed. Konrad H Jarausch. Oxford: Berghan Books, 1997:1-24. Print. Here 1.
[52] Doneson 2002: 4.
[53] This has begun to change in the 2000s in Germany with the opening of the Silent Heroes and the German Resistance Museum.

narratives are often conflicting or jarring with the more national memories and master narrative surrounding the Holocaust. There are exceptions, where personal stories have been adopted by nations as a symbol of the trauma of the Holocaust, such as Anne Frank.

The story of Anne Frank can be used as a bridge for the purposes of this thesis between the two (top down and bottom up) forms of transnationalism and their evolving narratives and adaptations. Doneson claims that the Holocaust did not emerge as part of American culture until 30 years after the war.[54] The Holocaust evolved into a metaphor that served as a guide for contemporary audiences and as a result it evolved to reflect different public attitudes.[55] But universalising the Holocaust in film is likely to have occurred much sooner, i.e. 1959 with the release of the film *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Dir. George Stevens), which is based on Jewish-Dutch history and became a transnational story. Although this was not the first Holocaust film to have been released in the U.S.,[56] it was the first Holocaust film to capture the American imagination as it won three Oscars and was nominated for five others including Best Picture. It was also the first Holocaust film that employed and depicted universal values and a less condemnatory ending.

Looking further back in time than Doneson, Trudy Gold explains how the Holocaust was used as part of American history since the concentration camp was illustrated in American cinema beginning with *The Young Lions* (Dir. Edward Dmytryk, 1958) and developed into survivor stories, such as *Sophie's Choice* (Dir. Alan J. Pakula, 1982). [57] Primarily, and more contemporarily, Gold explains how *Schindler's List* was viewed by a third of the population of Germany and had a "profound effect on global consciousness of what the Holocaust was."[58] Although this is a grandiose statement regarding the film, it did stimulate transnational debate and had an effect on subsequent Holocaust films, detailed analysis of which is undertaken in Chapter Two.

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[54] Ibid: 5.
[55] Ibid: 7-8.
[56] Previous American Holocaust films have included *The Stranger* (Dir. Orson Wells. 1946), *The Juggler* (Dir. Edward Dmytryk. 1953) and *Singing in the Dark* (Dir. Max Nosseck. 1956).
[57] Gold, Trudy. "An overview of Hollywood cinema's treatment of the Holocaust." *Holocaust and the Moving Image: Representations in Film and Television Since 1933*. Ed. Toby Haggith and Joanna Newman. London: Wallflower Press, 2005: 193 – 197. Print. Here 194-5.
[58] Ibid: 196.

Historical films, Marnie Hughes-Warrington argues, also supply a happy or hopeful ending to the history presented on screen.[59] Although this is typical of Hollywood films, this has certainly not been the case for European films. With regards to the presentation of happy endings and the focus on individual history, Avisar argues that besides the presence of happy endings in films, American optimism also is present in the above three exampled films, such as the belief that the individual is master of their own fate. This trust in "human will, resourcefulness, courage, tenacity, and other positive virtues that enable man to struggle with difficult ordeals was in fact, usually defeated by the infernal conditions of Nazi terror."[60] This also prompts moral transformations in characters, Avisar's example being Rick in *Casablanca* (Dir. Michael Curtiz. 1942), who starts out as an egocentric manipulator and ends up as a moral hero. Avisar claimed that American cinema appropriating the Holocaust implies that popular American film productions played the role of preserving "the memory of the Holocaust and its universal lessons." The successful dissemination of American values, he argues, is embodied in the popularity that *Schindler's List* received worldwide.[61] Although the film was indeed extremely popular, Avisar's line of argument ignores the contested debates this film prompted in Germany, which included the appropriation of German history by American culture, thus indicating that this film was not received with blanket appreciation.

Although the appropriation of the Holocaust found its way into American culture, Alvin H Rosenfeld reveals that scholars have concluded that there is "a serious knowledge gap" in both adults and youth in the U.S. with regard to basic information about the Holocaust, compared to Europeans and, as expected, adults and students in Germany scored the highest among the national population groups surveyed.[62] Rosenfeld asked why, when Americans know the least about the Holocaust, do they seem to care the most?[63] This, he argues, is due to the American ethos, which is to place

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[59] Hughes-Warrington, Marnie. "Introduction: History on Film: Theory, Production, Reception." *The History on Film Reader.* Ed. Marnie Hughes-Warrington. New York: Routledge, 2009: 1-12. Print. Here 5.
[60] Avisar 1997: 53.
[61] Ibid: 55 – 56.
[62] However, this has not been conveyed in subsequent films such as Uwe Boll's controversial film *Auschwitz* (2011) which presented young German school children as being ignorant about the Holocaust.
[63] Rosenfeld, Alivn H. "The Americanisation of the Holocaust." *Thinking about the Holocaust After Half a Century.* Ed. Alvin H Rosenfeld. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997:119-150. Print. Here 120.

power in the individual, and to highlight moral conduct and collective deeds of redemption. This process is facilitated, he asserted, because the American approach to history is pragmatic thus requiring that they learn lessons from the past. Rosenfeld argues that learning from the past, including other peoples' pasts, is why films such as *The Diary of Anne Frank* are so popular in the U.S. These films not only address the genocide of the Jews but are accessible stories to all.

With regards to "happy endings", the film depiction of Anne Frank's life ends on an optimistic tone as it concludes with her uplifting sentiment that "in spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart". Americans are, Rosenfeld argues, typically given stories and images of the Holocaust that turn upward at the end rather than plunge downward into the terrifying silences of a gruesome death. Rosenfeld proceeded to critique American engagement with the Holocaust as audiences are not "subjected to unrelenting pain" because their "civil religion, as it had been called, places the stress emphatically on closures that are optimistic and affirmative."[64] *Schindler's List*, he argues, buys into this civil religion as rescuers are pushed into the centre of the narrative as moral heroes of the Holocaust. The overall story of the Holocaust provides a redemptive meaning or lesson. Although it can be argued that *Schindler's List* does conform to the traditional Hollywood narrative, the use of language to promote a negative criticism by Rosenfeld of American culture ignores the fact that American film and literature does offer negative depictions in film and negative portrayals of its own culture, for example in films such as *The Great Gatsby* (Dir. Baz Luhrmann. 2013), the remake of *Funny Games* (Dir. Michael Haneke. 2007), *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Dir. Don Siegel. 1956 and remake Dir. Philip Kaufman. 1978), *Clueless* (Dir. Amy Heckerling. 1995), *American History X* (Dir. Tony Kaye. 1998), *Fight Club* (Dir. David Fincher. 1999), *American Psycho* (Dir. Mary Harron. 2000), and the *Dark Knight Trilogy* (*Batman Begins* (2005), *The Dark Knight* (2008) and *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012) Dir. Christopher Nolan), to name but a few from the 1950s to the present.

The focus on typical Hollywood and European narratives is useful to an extent when analysing the films chosen in this thesis, but this methodological approach ignores the fact that American filmmaking during the 1960s and 70s underwent resurgence as it turned to European cinemas for inspiration. The traditional Hollywood studio system

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[64] Ibid: 123 – 126.

had collapsed, thus bringing in the era of American New Wave or New Hollywood cinema. This era of directors was not only influenced by Jewish film-makers who had emigrated from Europe before and during the war, but also by the cinematic success of French New Wave cinema and European art films. Germany in this period was also undergoing a film revival called New German Cinema which was based on the rejection of what they called Papas Kino, which were the popular Heimat and comedy films of the 1950s and early 60s. These earlier films had uncontroversial themes and story lines that refused to engage with their past. These New German filmmakers, such as Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Volker Schlöndorff, Werner Herzog and Edgar Reitz, established a new type of cinema, which was founded on what they considered to be artistic merit rather than the commercial films that had come before them. These auteur directors' films were received well in the U.S., in particular Schlöndorff's *Die Blechtrommel* (*The Tin Drum*. 1979), which won the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film, and were influential on American filmmakers such as Spielberg.

It was not just Germany that was turned to for inspiration by American filmmakers. Eric Rentschler argues that the presence of Americans in German national films presents a Transatlantic give-and-take where German filmmakers from New German Cinema look at Americans as the other while simultaneously seeing themselves and an ersatz homeland.[65] Ó Dochartaigh argues that the Holocaust entered the American consciousness in the late 1960s and early 1970s as it spread with the contemporary concerns and positions of Jews in the U.S. [66] Ó Dochartaigh uses *Jakob der Lügner* as an example of this process by looking at the 1969 novel (author Jurek Becker), and the two films made from this novel, the first made in the GDR and the second in the U.S. Ó Dochartaigh details the ideological climates in which the films were made, and shows how the same material can be adapted to conform to societal expectations.[67] The comparison made between an American presentation of German material (or vice-versa) is also used as part of the methodology of this thesis in order to reveal the contemporary climate during each film's production.

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[65] Rentschler, Eric. "How American is it: The U.S. as Image and Imaginary in German Film." *The German Quarterly*. 57.4 (1984) 603-620. Print. Here 605-618.
[66] Dochartaigh, Pól Ó. "Americanizing the Holocaust: The Case of 'Jakob the Liar'". *The Modern Language Review*. 101.2 (2006): 456-471. Print.
[67] Ibid: 459 – 471.

4.3 Transnationalising the Film Industry

Three types of film industry productions are discussed in this thesis: Anglo / American Hollywood; German national; and transnational cinema. National cinema is often indicated by the use of a language other than English, in this case German. Andrew Higson argues that national cinemas have had a variety of relationships with Hollywood and promote a sense of self-reflected nationhood.[68]

Paul Cooke outlines the revival of German films and German film production has attracted a variety of filmmakers to Germany, which has not only meant the promotion of German culture abroad but has also been the source of economic prosperity.[69] Unlike the Hollywood system, German films are publically funded with over €290 million allocated per year to the creation of films.[70] As a consequence, the majority of film budgets in Germany are under €5 million.[71] This, Cooke argues, had led to a series of films that are co-produced, most commonly with France, with whom Germany has 17 formal co-production treaty arrangements.[72] The *Bundesregierung* allocates €76 million for the creation of what they call "culturally valuable films."[73] The allowance funds German films, including collaborations with other nations, to encourage film-making and to improve quality and profitability of cinema production. Most films that are produced today are thus not national but rather transnational. Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden claim that the transnational can be "understood as the global forces that link people or institutions across nations."[74] Transnational cinema is "the dissolution of any stable connections between a film's place of production ... and the nationality of its makers and performers."[75] Mette Hjort adopts the use of a scale,

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[68] Higson, Andrew. "The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema." Eds. Elizabeth Ezraand Terry Rowden. 2006: 15-26. Print. Here 15-18.
[69] Cooke, Paul. *Contemporary German Cinema.* Manchester: Manchester University Press. 2012. Print. Here 26.
[70] Ibid: 30.
[71] Based on the figures for 2007. There are four main film funds available: first the European Union's Measures to Encourage the Development of the European Audiovisual Industry (MEDIA); second the Council of European Eurimages; third the Beaftragte der Bundesregierung für Kulture und Medien (Office of the Federal Commissioner for Culture and the Media, BKM, which includes the Federal Film Prize; and finally the Deutscher Filmförderfonds (German Federal Film Fund DFFF. Established in 2007, it has invested €178 million in film production and has seen returns of €1.1billion. Cooke 2012: 31-4 and 48.
[72] Ibid: 37.
[73] German Federal Film Fund. 'Brief information – Information on the German Federal Film Board (FFA).' *FFA*. N.d. N.p. Web. <http://www.ffa.de/index.php?page=publikationen>. 26 Mar. 2013.
[74] Ezra, Elizabeth and Rowden, Terry. "What is Transnational Cinema?" *Transnational Cinema, Film Reader.* Ed. Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden. 2006: 1-12. Print. Here 1.
[75] Ibid: 1.

thus allowing for what she calls strong and weak transnational film.[76] She describes how film becomes transnational through production and distribution practices, funding sources, casting decisions, themes, identities, and the use of a variety of film professionals and is therefore so broad a term that a film can unintentionally become transnational.[77] Hjort views films based on cultural similarities as well as national contexts to be indicators of a transnational film. Films also, she argues, become transnational irrespective of similarities between the countries making the film when funding takes a priority.

With the exception of *Aimée & Jaguar* which is categorised a national film production (in Chapter Three), the German films selected for this thesis (*John Rabe* and *Amen.*) are co-productions where actors, filmmakers, directors, funding and locations are often combined with other countries artists, funding or locations. *The Reader* is considered to be an Anglo-American-German co-production, as it employed a British director and screenwriter and has mostly German actors. It adopts a predominantly Anglo-American Hollywood(esque) rather than European film style applied to a German story. These three films are thus more appropriately categorised as transnational rather than strictly national film productions.

Transnational films require popular universal narratives that rely on international recognition. Kathleen Newman further describes that audiences outside of the U.S. are believed to have had access to more than one type of national cinema.[78] This ignores the popularity of transnational cinema productions distributed in the U.S. and the influences these films have had on American filmmakers. Although co-productions are common in Europe, due to the nature of the funding system restricting the availability to create big-budget films, Newman's argument also ignores the increasing amount of Hollywood film co-productions between European countries and the U.S.[79] It can be assumed that these co-productions would naturally have an effect on American audiences ason

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[76] Hjort, Mette. "On the Plurality of cinematic transnationalism." *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*. Ed. Natasa Durovicova and Kathleen Newman. New York: Routledge, 2010: 12-33 Print. Here
12.
[77] Ibid: 13-14.
[78] Newman, Kathleen. "Notes on Transnational Film Theory: decentred subjectivity, decentred capitalism." *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*. Ed. Natasa Durovicova and Kathleen Newman. New York: Routledge, 2010:3-11. Print. Here 4.
[79] Ezra and Rowden 2006: 2.

European audiences. Newman notes that there are differences for example between transnational film and global film, which is commonly associated with Hollywood cinema.[80]

As to the term "Hollywood", Ezra and Rowden view this as shorthand for dominant cinema or global cinema, as the American film industry had "systematically dominated all other film cultures" whilst producing films that are "mainstream" and "inoffensive" thus homogenising the industry.[81] The majority of worldwide film industries attempt to create Hollywood(esque) films to gain bigger box office returns and critical acclaim in their industry which is in the form of internationally recognised film awards. Consequently, there is continuously a dynamic between Hollywood and other film industries as they compete for box office returns and acclaim. To achieve the same circulation as Hollywood films, other national cinema industries adopt "familiar genres, narratives or themes" to appeal to a wide audience.[82] Hjort too argues that academic focus on transnationalism film has been limited to films that are believed to be of cultural, traditionally art-house, value.[83] This issue is also relevant and taken into account in this thesis, as popular rather than art-house films have been chosen. This thesis will offer a counter-argument that popular films can be of cultural value as well as art-house films. In support of this argument, Hughes-Warrington discusses the way in which commercial imperatives are sought in film, alluding to the fact that popular film must appeal to the "lowest common denominator."[84] By drawing on academics such as Rosenstone and Landy, Hughes-Warrington observes the trend that academics place importance on serious historical films rather than popular films. She argues that academics suggest that melodramatic films or films that are made to entertain and make a profit, are unable to represent the history or the past with any complexity or depth. Hughes-Warrington asserts, as does this thesis, that "box office performance and historiographical complexity need not be mutually exclusive."[85]

Randall Halle highlights that comparing Hollywood with other film industries creates a hierarchy where national cinema is considered to be marginal. Halle

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[80] Newman 2010: 9.
[81] Ezra and Rowden. 2006: 2.
[82] Ibid: 6.
[83] Hjort 2010: 26.
[84] Hughes-Warrington 2009: 1.
[85] Ibid: 4.

recognises that through comparison and transnationalism, national specificity can be revealed. [86] For example, Halle considered the historical genre to be a special form of narration or narrative which presents the complexities of European transnationalism. He believes that it is significant to note that from the 1990s historical films thrived, as the historical genre is used "as a vehicle for the imagining of the national community". Halle argues that the future of a community relies on its ability to imagine a common past and that this is achieved through the use of film. Halle also argues that the representation of history in popular film has become commodified to achieve broad circulation and that the decades-long taboo surrounding the depiction of the Holocaust and analysis of fascism has been broken.

Halle details the relationships and dynamics of transnational filmmaking, from production and funding mechanisms to "Hollywood films distributed by European mechanisms, to joint ventures intended to circulate across the Atlantic, to solely European co-productions supported by EU monies, to specifically nationally funded films seeking access to transnational distribution networks."[87] This thesis considers all these levels of definition, and the films chosen as case studies are, or have attempted to be, popular historical and transnational films. The films selected are also broadly speaking heritage films as they aesthetically pay a great deal of attention to presenting a historically accurate set. Heritage films have often been assumed to be lacking in political engagement by critics such as Hughes-Warrington, however, in this thesis it is counter-argued that heritage films actively engage with the past according to the desires of the socio-political climate in which they were produced. For example, the text *Schindler's Ark* on which *Schindler's List* is based has often been labelled 'faction'. Faction is defined as being a mixture of major historical events, in this case the Holocaust, with a mixture of fictional characters. Hughes-Warrington assumes that "people in the past were motivated by values and beliefs like our own."[88] This imposing of homogenous beliefs and values onto people of the past, which manifests in film characterisation, also acts as an indicator of the socio-political climate in which the film was produced. This thesis takes into account the varying socio-political climates and does not view a film as an isolated event.

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[86] Halle 2008: 89-96.
[87] Ibid: 96.
[88] Ibid: 4.

4.4 Audience Homogeneity?

There are several issues relating to adaptation that are relevant to the argument's development in this thesis. These include: challenging the homogeneity of audiences; analytic tools and methodologies; and processes that facilitate adaptation. The role adaptations play in regards to influencing the attitudes of global audiences is key to this analysis. Jostein Gripsrud contends that film as a medium has an "enormous potential for influencing the masses" and this has been a significant issue in the majority of film theories. [89] Audiences form a temporary community that functions to secure memories of personal and public events.[90] Ezra and Rowden argue that these 'imagined communities' have become linked globally rather than by national boundaries.[91]

The securing of memories of the Holocaust and fascism by these various audiences, as Bell also describes, is of interest with reference to Landsberg's prosthetic memory. Hughes-Warrington, though, also noted that this psychoanalytic theory is problematic as it "implies that memories belong to, or are even private to, particular individuals and cannot be shared by other individuals."[92] She argues that films should not be viewed as a form of prosthesis but instead that viewers are active participants in film and historical culture as the relationships between audiences and films are not fixed.[93] Understanding the role of prosthetic memory as well as acknowledging that audiences are not homogeneous is a further aim of this thesis which recognises the transmission of memory, including the evolving process of prosthetic memories, through film.

5. Methods of Analysis

The textual analysis of each film uses several methodological approaches (as well as Geisler's three step approach to film), including one that requires an understanding of film semiotics and to an extent an acknowledgement of academic criticism's use of

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[89] Gripsrud, Jostein. "Film Audiences." *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*. Eds. John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998: 202-211. Print. Here 202.
[90] Hughes-Warrington 2009: 5.
[91] Ezra and Rowden 2006: 1.
[92] Hughes-Warrington. 2009: 6.
[93] Ibid: 7.

psychoanalytic film theory as understood also by Robert Burgoyne (et al) in *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics: Structuralism, Post-structuralism and Beyond.* Burgoyne et al argue that adopting a psychoanalytic approach when analysing film is "a way of accounting for the cinema's immediate and pervasive social power".[94] Film negotiates relations between the human psyche, which is derived from "Freud's theory of human subjectivity and unconscious production". Burgoyne et al propose that psychoanalytic film theory offers a method to compare the individual with cinema.[95] A psychoanalytic approach thus provides additional methodological tools which facilitate the exploration of how meaning is produced and expressed in various filmic forms and how or whether audiences relate to, interpret and integrate different layers of meaning with their existing knowledge and experiences.

For Ernest Jones psychoanalysis is, among other things, a "special technique for investigating the deeper layers of the mind". It is also "the province of knowledge which ... is practically synonymous with the 'science of the unconscious".[96] Burgoyne et al use psychoanalysis to reveal deeper layers of the mind. Their approach tackles the psychoanalytic construction of the cinema-viewing subject by applying the term 'metapsychology', which Freud used for his study of the unconscious. Burgoyne adopts the position that "psychoanalytic film theory meant integrating questions of subjectivity into notions of meaning-production."[97] The notion of meaning-production is also considered by Kenneth Allan who writes that "culture must be based on a theory of how meaning is produced".[98] Culture is a representation of a perceived abstract, which derives meaning through two mechanisms. The first mechanism focuses on emotions (sense-meaning) and the second mechanism relates to giving symbols the same meaning as another (affect-meaning). For example, in *Schindler's List* the superimposing of a work-shop fire (affect-meaning) over Oskar Schindler's heart is symbolic for the viewer who can see it as the emotional awakening (sense-meaning) of this man and his

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[94] Burgoyne, Robert J, Litterman-Lewis, Sandra and Stam, Robert. Eds. *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics: Structuralism, Post-structuralism and Beyond.* London: Routledge, 1992. Print. Here 126.
[95] Ibid: 125.
[96] Jones, Ernest. *What is Psychoanalysis?* Westport: Greenwood Press, 1948. Print. Here 18.
[97] Burgoyne et al: 126.
[98] Allan, Kenneth. *The Meaning of Culture: Moving the Postmodern Critique Forward.* Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1998. Print. Here 132.

responsibility as a saviour. Allan argues that culture demands that the object[99] (Schindler) is separated from the experience (i.e. the filmic representation of emotional awakening) and is reflexively interpreted; it is then external factors, i.e. the audience that puts pressure on how the object (Schindler) is interpreted.[100] The above kinds of symbolism (semiotics) are used traditionally in psychoanalytic approaches to convey meaning in film where objects are used as cues for portraying history, and an object is used to be indicative of the past, as with Schindler.

When considering trauma, the flashback, as understood as a symptom of post-traumatic stress, is a form of recall that the traumatised face as a form of reality of the past.[101] The flashback is understood by Cathy Caruth through psychoanalysis and psychiatry as a history that has,

> no place, neither in the past, in which it was not fully experienced, nor in the present, in which its precise images and enactments are not fully understood. In its repeated imposition as both image and amnesia, the trauma thus seems to evoke the difficult truth of a history that is constituted by the very incomprehensibility of its occurrence.[102]

Therefore Caruth argues that the accessing of traumatic history is through the individual or through the community. The use of the flash-back to denote trauma and indicate the passage of time is another filmic technique that is frequently used in the films chosen. The visual filmic cues for this technique include voice-overs, inter-titles, colour changes and commonly the image of the present dissolving into an image of the past. According to Maureen Turim the flashback embodies the concept of "memory in its psychoanalytic and philosophical dimensions" and gives images to personal memories, thus merging two levels of remembrance: large-scale socio-political history and the individual's remembered experience.[103] *Aimée und Jaguar* and *The Reader* employ the flashback as a narrative device.

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[99] The term object is used to designate something that functions as a means, but this is not necessarily an object i.e. an "objective object". Laplanche, Jean. *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*. Trans. Jeffrey Mehlam. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976. Print. Here 12.
[100] Ibid: 133-134.
[101] Caruth, Cathy. "Recapturing the Past: Introduction." *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Ed Cathy Caruth. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1995: 151-157. Print. Here 152.
[102] Ibid: 153.
[103] Turim, Maureen. "Flashbacks in Film: Memory and History." *The History on Film Reader*. Ed. Marnie Hughes-Warrington. 2009: 85-99. Print. Here 85—86.

As Turim states, films that focus on the individual's personal history turn their experiences into an emotional (sense-meaning) experience, thus it can be asserted that they employ techniques familiar with melodramatic films as a way to engage with the past. Turim proposes that once the audience is made aware of the past they are free to forget it once again. She also suggests that the flashback offers an explanation from the past to the audience for the situation in the present.[104] The flashback symbolism, Turim argues, occurs subconsciously as the audience is familiar with the function of the flashback and its use as a tool to represent memory. From the films analysed in this thesis, the flashback and its employment appears to corroborate Turim's argument and will be explored in greater depth in the analysis of the films. [105]

5.1 Fidelity and Adaptation

George Bluestone argued in the seminal work *Novels into Film* that between the "percept [sic] of the visual image and the concept of the mental image lies the root difference between the two media" (i.e. novel and film).[106] Bluestone understands that changes from original literary material to film were inevitable as a story shifts at several levels in the process from novel to film. The film versions can thus be quite different from the literary events that they are meant to represent.[107] While words are translated by the novel reader themselves into images and feelings, film is instead a form of visual language.[108] Bluestone also argues that there was "no such thing as *the* novel" as the

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[104] Ibid: 92-7.

[105] Since the inception of this research, Axel Bangert has published a volume which is contrasting and complementary to this thesis. For Bangert, the trauma of the Holocaust reflects the centrality and "memory of the Nazi past in reunified Germany". Using films, including ones mentioned in this thesis such as *Schindler's List*, *The Pianist* and *The Reader*, Bangert broadly covers the transnational dynamic of memory, but does not adopt a psychoanalytical approach in regard to these films. The methodology of Bangert's work focuses on the broader themes of victimhood and personal and collective shame and thus gives less emphasis to the mechanisms and complexity of processes that facilitate analysis of how victimhood comes about. His focus is less nuanced and appropriately argues, for example, that there has been a negative appropriation by the ordinary German of suffering and victimhood.[105] In contrast to this thesis, however, when referring to *The Reader* in particular the importance of detailed analysis that incorporates contextual theory and/or historical debates are neglected by Bangert. It is thus not surprising that the micro shifts and distinctions which have been exposed herein, and how these have brought about *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, could not be discussed by Bangert in any depth. By adopting an approach with a narrow focus on German victimhood, Bangert has excluded other personal stories that relate to complicity such as the ordinary German. Bangert, Axel. *The Nazi Past in Contemporary German Film: Viewing Experiences of Intimacy and Immersion.* New York: Camden House, 2014. Print. Here 39.

[106] Bluestone, George. *Novels into Film.* London: University of California Press, 1957. Print. Here 1.

[107] Ibid: 5.

[108] Ibid: 20.

meaning of the novel is varied because it has absorbed other types of writing.[109] The films chosen have also been adapted from a variety of styles of writing. Bluestone also recognises that different pressures were placed on the film in comparison to the novel. Film is a product of a commercial society and therefore must make a profit. It is due to this striving for mass consumption that Bluestone argues that where a novel can sell several thousand volumes to be successful, a film must reach millions to make a substantial profit.[110]

Fidelity to the source of a film, usually literature, has been commonly studied academically in regard to adaptation. Although the source of the film is taken into account in the course of analysis undertaken in this thesis, this analysis is not done in order to place a hierarchy between the film and its original source. Rather, such analysis is intended to reveal the development in characterisations and other shifts that occur during the processes that facilitate adaptation. Adaptation is considered to be automatically different from the original due to the change of medium; thus fidelity is not strictly be possible[111] It is understandable that the adapted novels have been condensed and that the filmmaker does not have to be faithful to the plot in great detail. Such shifts can provide, however, the means to explore how different nations interpret and come to understand the same past. As Imelda Whelehan explains, cinema audiences are largely comprised of individuals who have not read the text (or seen the original film), on which the film is based, consequently the question of fidelity is largely not applicable to how the audience receive the film.[112] If the film is successful, the question of fidelity becomes less of an issue in popular criticism. *Aimée und Jaguar*, for instance, is generally categorised as a historical melodrama and focuses solely on the relationship between the two women, whereas the book is comprised of a series of diary entries, testimony and historical context. Critics of this film do not point to the fidelity of the film to the text or its lack of fidelity. The critical framework that adaptation studies offers as a useful approach to the films is recognised and applied in this thesis, but both media are taken to have equal value.

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[109] Ibid: 7-8.
[110] Ibid: 30-34.
[111] Stam, Robert. "Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation." *Film Adaptation.* Ed James Naremore. London: The Athlone Press, 2000: 54-78. Print. Here 55.
[112] Whelehan, Imelda. "Adaptations: The Contemporary Dilemmas." *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text.* Ed. Deborah Carmell and Imelda Whelehan. London: Routledge, 1999: 3-22. Print. Here 4.

Rentschler describes the adaptation process by looking at how adaptation "is the appropriation of meaning from a prior text."[113] Expanding the field of adaptation study beyond the issues of fidelity to include sociology, intertextuality, and theoretical and historical dimensions provides, according to Rentschler, a way to reveal how filmmakers have engaged with history and literary history.[114] Although Rentschler is focusing on German literature and German film, adaptations are not solely created nationally. The engagement with history as Rentschler argues still applies but the national dynamic is less applicable because the history had been appropriated.

Unlike James Naremore, this thesis does not contend that Hollywood adaptations "do not and probably could not achieve the importance of their literary forebears."[115] For example, it argues that *Schindler's List* prompted renewed interest in the book *Schindler's Ark* after the film became a block buster success. The film also went on to become recognised as one of the most important American films ever made and sparked public debate in Germany on how to remember Holocaust heroes, something the book, although popular, did not achieve.

The above methods begin to expose various underlying assumptions and processes that facilitate revisionism and appropriation of memory and historical narratives via the medium of film. The adoption of character tropes as a methodological approach to the selection and analysis of films has not been specifically used as a way to make explicit the nuances that have changed and influenced the way in which the past is remembered. This analysis is key to revealing the micro-shifts that can lead to a paradigm shift in perceptions about the past.

5.2 Changing Master Narratives

Contemporary German film-makers have striven to match their Hollywood peers by attempting to create their own epic film about their own history. This has resulted in German films such as *Sophie Scholl – Die letzten Tage* (Dir. Marc Rothemund. 2005) and *Red Baron* (Dir. Nikolai Müllerschön. 2008), which focus on a single heroic

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[113] Rentschler 1986: 3.
[114] Ibid: 5.
[115] Naremore, James. "Introduction: Film and the Reign of Adaptation." *Film Adaptation* Ed. James Naremore. London: The Athlone Press, 2000: 1-18. Print. Here 7.

character. The term hero is unifying as they are commonly an ordinary person with greatness thrust upon them. The heroic figure is the moral compass and point of identification for the audience; however, these figures are not simplistically presented but are instead ambiguous and humanist heroes. This analytic approach will be used in this thesis as a way to make explicit the nuances that have changed and influenced the way history and the past is perceived and remembered.

5.2.1 Mythic Past

Winter identifies the creation of myths that were established in the 1940s and 50s, which were stories and memories based on heroism and resistance to the Nazis. Winter argues that the focus on these types of memories is more useful to the revival of identity.[116] Heroic figures thus took on fantastical qualities; however, their acceptability has not resulted in an archetype. This belief in the mythic hero is also asserted by Pól Ó Dochartaigh and Christiane Schönfeld. They argue that in West Germany the mythic archetype or heroic figure that they call the good German "was not viewed as part of the narrative regarding the Third Reich as it was preferred that [...] the authority of the Nazi state was all encompassing."[117] Instead, they argue that the good German figures were only prominent in films outside of Germany, and that they also reinforced the "myth that Nazi crimes were only perpetrated by Nazi, Gestapo and SS members."[118] They cite the example of Rommel in *The Desert Fox* (Dir. Henry Hathaway. 1951).

This thesis will analyse the complex journey that the heroic German character trope has taken inside and outside of Germany. This is important to exemplify in order to reveal the paradigm shift, or change in perception and acceptability of German heroes as part of the international prosthetic memory of the Holocaust.

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[116] Ibid Winter 2006: 60.
[117] Ó Dochartaigh, Pól and Schönfeld, Christiane. "Finding the 'Good German'". *Representing the 'Good German' in Literature and Culture after 1945: Altruism and Moral Ambiguity*. Ed. Pól Ó Dochartaigh and Christiane Schönfeld. Rochester New York: Camden House, 2013: 1-15. Print. Here 4.
[118] Ibid: 5.

5.2.2 The First Good German Figure

Initially, the good German figures, Ó Dochartaigh and Schönfeld argue, were real persons who had resisted National Socialism, rather than persons who had assisted in the survival of Jews. This tends to be the case as West Germany used Stauffenberg as part of their national narrative and he historically did not engage with the Holocaust.[119] Although this commonly was the case, there was an exception. East Germany focused on communist resistance and established itself as the anti-fascist state. Their heroic German was primarily a communist, such as the aforementioned communist character Höfel who also rescues a Jew, the famed Buchenwald child in the film *Nackt unter Wölfen* (1963). However, the focus is more on the communist concentration camp inmates than the Jewish victims.

5.2.3 The Anti-hero and the Ambiguous Hero

The anti-hero or ambiguous hero is a common figure in literature and film, from Herakles in Homer's *Odyssey* to Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment* (1866) to Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone with the Wind* (novel 1936, film 1939). The figure of the flawed hero has existed for a substantial period of time and is not limited to post World War Two. What is different in this thesis is being able to distinguish and then analyse the figure of the flawed hero in films that engage with fascism in World War Two or National Socialist Germany. Anti-heroes have controversially been labelled 'good Germans' and 'good Nazis', which is not only a patronising label but one that arguably also encourages a revisionist reading of German participation in the Holocaust. Alexandra Ludewig argues that heroic Germans or heroic Nazis reveal themselves to be a means of coming to terms with the past within second and third generations born since the end of National Socialism. This is because they offer the audience an identifiable character and often a happy ending. [120] This happy ending is often considered to be a typical Hollywood theme, but the films that have been chosen in this thesis often do not present a Hollywood(esque) ending.

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[119] Ibid: 8.
[120] Ludewig, Alexandra. "'The Banality of Good?' Good Nazis in Contemporary German Films". Ed. Pól Ó Dochartaigh and Christiane Schönfeld. Rochester New York: Camden House, 2013: 138-150. Print. Here 143.

Cooke argues that films about the Third Reich divide the population into good and bad Germans, thus a binary relationship is constructed whereby ordinary Germans are victims of Nazi leadership.[121] This thesis argues that although the good German is obvious in these films as a form of opposition to Nazi leadership, the people portrayed are anything but ordinary. Instead the good German is a flawed figure who is amplified frequently to mythic proportions. Ludewig's argument that these figures act as a way to mediate the past supports Fierke and Winter's argument on mythic archetypes. Rather than a patronising good German, the heroic German can be considered to be part of the mythic archetype: as a consequence of its heroism the archetype would naturally, to a certain extent, be good. This archetype provides scope for ambiguity because this figure is heroic and thus it also includes the presentation of the anti-hero. This ambiguity allows itself to encompass the heroic Nazi, which is a figure that understandably appears ambiguous due to its ties to National Socialism and thus assumed National Socialist values. Historically, Holocaust rescuers are considered to be different from other altruistic people due to the context which they were in. This was because these figures would not receive approval for their actions and as a result would not have disclosed it.[122] Irrespective of this disapproval, Berlin alone served as a hiding place for 5,000 Jews, 1,000 of whom survived until the end of the war.[123] Each of these Jews relied on gentile Germans for their survival. These have been commemorated in the Silent Heroes Memorial Centre in Berlin which recognises that resistance extends beyond the massive acts of heroism, such as Schindler who saved over 1,000 Jews, but also includes those who saved one Jew or provided other means to enable Jewish survival, these include hiding places, food, documents and networks.[124] Thus the term hero has been extended in Germany with the centre's opening in 2008. It contrasts starkly with the Memorial to the German Resistance, which opened in 1980, in the *Bendlerblock*, which substantially focused on the actions of the heroic July Plotters.

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[121] Cooke2007: 253.
[122] Oliner 1992: 6.
[123] Ibid: 24.
[124] The museum is based in Rosenthaler Straße and shares a courtyard with the Otto Weidt Museum and the Anne Frank Zentrum. It was formed after public interest into stories, such as *Schindler's List*, and was inspired by the association "Against Forgetting". The museum has compiled an extensive database of biographical details of rescuers, the rescued and of their stories. This information can only be accessed on site and includes details of both Oskar Schindler and Lilly Wust.

5.3 New Master Narrative based on Heroic Figure

These mythic figures support Konrad Jarausch's contention that German identity would be formed primarily through a "cultural project" where a political Germany would disappear and a cultural Germany would emerge. [125] This builds on the eighteenth-century idea of a *Kulturnation*, as it is considered that cultural unity would bond East and West after their division.[126] Therefore, a "new master narrative" would unite Germany; Jarausch does not state if this has been achieved. The question of whether this new narrative would and could incorporate the Holocaust and the trauma surrounding it is considered with the tentative conclusion that the new master narrative also includes the mythic resistance figure. In contrast, German audiences are not as readily accepting of them as their American counterparts. Thus it suggests that these mythic figures will not prompt the national unity or narrative that is required in Germany.

As well as attention to the geographically differing audiences chosen for this thesis, the changing nature of these individual audiences is also considered. Jarausch presents an interesting argument that the nature of the population in the West changed dramatically between the 1960s and the 1990s. The level of university educated people in 1990 in Germany is eight times higher than in 1960 and in the U.S. five times. This, he argues, led to a demand for cultural products by these members of the public because they have the disposable income to pay for them.[127] The primary audience for film, however, is between the ages of 15-30. While this age range does cover university students, it ignores the other demographics that cinema as a cultural product is aimed towards. This demographic awareness does account for the stipulation of German funded films that they need to be culturally valuable and therefore have been created with this university educated demographic in mind. The youngest members of this demographic can now include the fourth generation removed from fascism and the first generation removed from the division of Germany. Thus it has to be understood that these audiences have different expectations and memories. This audience has less of a personal affiliation with these memories than their forbearers as they would have been educated in school as well as inundated through popular culture about fascism, the

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[125] Jarausch, Konrad H. et al. "The Presence of the Past: Culture, Opinion, and Identity in Germany." *After Unity: Reconfiguring German Identities*. Ed. Konrad H Jarausch. Oxford: Berghan Books, 1997: 25-60. Print. Here 27-28.
[126] Ibid: 58.
[127] Ibid: 67 – 68.

Holocaust and arguably unification. While the level of university educated people has had an impact on the demand for cultural products, it also has to be acknowledged that the consumers of these products have also changed dramatically since unification.

If we are to consider heroic myths as important in making the past accessible because they form collective bonds and identity, then the proliferation of these texts would appear to be also a natural consequence of the unification of Germany and the identity issues that have ensued. [128]

The mythic is more akin to the heroic but this thesis argues that the assumptions underlying the latter character trope are flawed. Therefore the hero is a flawed person as well as being ambiguous, a complicit hero. The meaning and symbolism of the hero, and thus of the past, is therefore less mythic and for that reason audiences can relate more to him or her. The next chapter explores these distinctions and nuances through a comparative analysis of the films *Schindler's List* and *The Pianist*. It is argued that the micro shifts in the acceptability of representations and perceptions of the heroic German are indicators of a larger Kuhnian paradigm shift, which is facilitated specifically through film.

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[128] Zehfuss: 217.

Chapter Two

Flawed and Ambiguous Holocaust Heroes: Oskar Schindler and Wilm Hosenfeld

This chapter explores the mechanisms that lead to paradigm shifts in how the Holocaust and fascist memory is portrayed in film. To evidence this, analysis of the development of the character trope the heroic German is undertaken. This chapter also explores the shifting dynamic between the U.S. and Germany by way of comparative analysis of the assumptions underlying the trope the heroic German in two historical films: the Hollywood *Schindler's List*, and the European co-production *The Pianist*.

The presence of the Fascist era in American filmic representations in the post-war period continues to be part of the structuring of the historical consciousness of generations, which continues to provoke national identity issues, including in Germany. What the examples of personal or individual narratives in *Schindler's List* and *The Pianist* reveal is that popular and commercial (not only art house) films have the ability to provoke cultural engagement and criticism.

The shift to present individual memories has become more prevalent since reunification. *Schindler's List* was the first Hollywood film of its kind, one which brought the idea of the heroic German, in the form of a rescuer of Jews during the Holocaust, to a mainstream audience. Without *Schindler's List* leading the way, as *Holocaust* had previously, subsequent films which present an ambiguous German hero, such as *The Pianist*, would not have been made. Looking at this characterisation encourages a new understanding of the dynamic between cinemas in an international (between nations) and transnational (beyond nations) setting and uncovers paradigm shifts in the representation of memory. Unlike the traditional Hollywood hero, the central character in *Schindler's List* is morally ambiguous and, as a result, a complex three-dimensional character that is the template for future representations of Holocaust heroes, such as Wilm Hosenfeld, the German officer who assisted Władysław Szpilman's evasion from capture as portrayed in *The Pianist*. The term "heroic

German" in this chapter is thus applied rather than the term "heroic Nazi" which is used in Chapter Four. This distinction is important to make as it is related to how Holocaust figures are remembered. Although both Schindler and Hosenfeld were affiliated with Nazi institutions, they have always been popularly categorised as Germans. The change in memory from heroic German to heroic Nazi in the 2000s is an indicator of the broader paradigm shift surrounding Holocaust and fascist memory and how film has reflected this change in perceptions which was initiated with the release of *Schindler's List*.

1. The Shift from Perpetrator to the German Hero

Schindler's List Hollywoodised a period of history that is considered to be unique and European. That this subject was tackled by a Jewish-American director could have easily resulted in animosity that was already prevalent from European and German directors and filmmakers towards Hollywood, as had been the case with the made-for-TV historical drama *Holocaust*. Instead *Schindler's List* opened up discussion of German resistance in Germany, and worldwide.[1]

1.1 Transnational – v –Hollywood Versions of German Heroes

Where *Schindler's List* presents a Hollywood(esque) hero, *The Pianist* degrades the efforts of the ambiguous German hero to favour Jewish survival and resistance. This has occurred in other European films such as *Die Fälscher* (*The Counterfeiters*. Dir. Stefan Ruzowitzky. 2007) and *Europa, Europa*. For example, *Die Fälscher* changed the historical German overseer Sturmbannführer Bernhard Krüger into the fictional Sturmbannführer Herzog while retaining the names of two of the counterfeiters. With this change, Krüger is no longer the historical ambiguous hero who was acquitted of Nazi crimes after evidence from his former inmates at Sachsenhausen provided statements in his defence.[2] Instead Herzog is explicitly presented as complicit in Nazi

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[1] *Der Spiegel*. "Der gute Deutsche." *Der Spiegel*. 1994. (Archive) N.p. Web. <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-21114016.html>. 18 Apr. 2013.

[2] Nachtstern, Moritz and Ragnar, Arntzen. *Counterfeiter: How a Norwegian Jew Survived the Holocaust*. Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2008. Print. Here 29.

crimes and only survives due to sympathy from the lead protagonist, Salomon Sorrowitsch. This also occurred in *Europa, Europa* as Robert Kellerman, the German soldier who acted as a protector to the Jewish-German Perel, also receives little screen time and his acts of resistance are entangled with his concealment of his sexuality. There are other examples that could have been used in this chapter to uncover the different approaches to portraying Holocaust heroes, but *Schindler's List* and *The Pianist* are chosen as case studies due to their on-going popularity as well as the similar status of the director and their continued comparison in popular media.

Both Spielberg and Polanski were part of the influential New Hollywood cinema and were influenced by European Art Cinema and French New Wave films.[3] *Schindler's List* and *The Pianist* were the first films from these directors that tackled their Holocaust history. Spielberg and Polanski are Jewish, they lost family members during the Holocaust; however, the main difference is that Spielberg was born in 1946 in the U.S., while Polanski was born in 1933 in Poland and lived through the Holocaust as a small child. Although both directors were affected by the trauma resulting from the Holocaust, Spielberg through post-memory and Polanski through first-hand experience, they both used in their Holocaust films the figure of the ambiguous heroic German.

Both Spielberg and Polanski also use adaptations to explore their own Holocaust history. Due to Spielberg's ability to create blockbuster film productions, he secured financial backing. This became a commercial, critical and award winning success, which attracted a range of audiences and is still acclaimed as one of the top ten American films ever made.[4] It also secured for Spielberg the Oscar for Best Director. Unlike Spielberg, Polanski's career stalled as he fled the U.S. in 1978 and released only five films before making *The Pianist*. Even without the same audience appeal as Spielberg, Polanski still made a critically successful film as he won the Oscar for Best Director, although *The Pianist* did not attain the same box office success as *Schindler's List*. *The Pianist* is a transnational European art-house film production, with German

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[3] *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls*. Dir. Kenneth Browser. Perf. William H. Macy. Shout Factory Theatre, 2003. DVD.

[4] American Film Institute. "AFI Announces 100 Greatest American Movies of All Time." *AFI*. N.p. 2013. Web.< http://www.afi.com/100years/movies.aspx>.18 Apr. 2013.

financial backing[5] and, as with *Schindler's List*, it is made in English with international audiences and distribution in mind.

Schindler's List is identified by Doneson as "the most valid Hollywood interpretation to date of Holocaust history."[6] She details how this film's impact equalled that of *Holocaust* as it received critical acclaim and had mass appeal. Critics such as Steve Crawshaw agree in observing that *Schindler's List* marked a shift in the public commemoration and therefore a shift in public perception and memory of the Holocaust in Germany, as well as provoking Germany to ask itself why Schindler and other resistors were so little recognised in their own country.[7] As noted by Liliane Weissberg, the lack of recognition was present at the film première as Frankfurt city officials, when speaking of Schindler's post-war fate, admitted that "most Germans still remained ignorant of Schindler's wartime actions".[8] While it is arguable that Schindler's war time actions were ignored in Germany, Hosenfeld's most definitely were. While the above looked at the context of the film, the thesis will now consider the next two of Geisler's three steps, content and consequence.

2. From Schindler to *Schindler's Ark*

Schindler's List was adapted from the Australian Thomas Keneally's Man Booker prize winning novel *Schindler's Ark* (1982). Mark Rawlinson proposes that Keneally's hero has changed in Spielberg's adaptation as a consequence of film techniques such as the narrative condensation of other characters.[9] The shift displayed results in the simplistic presentation of the Holocaust through the eyes of the hero, a German hero. Although Rawlinson goes into detail regarding the academic criticism of this film and how it has influenced subsequent Holocaust films, he does not enter the debate the film sparked in Germany regarding how to represent the Holocaust or remember Holocaust heroes, nor

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[5] It is as a result of German backing that this film is called a German co-production or shortened to a 'German film'.
[6] Doneson 2002: 10.
[7] Crawshaw, Steve. "Schindler helps new generation to understand; Out of Germany." *The Independent European News*. N.p. 12 Mar. 1994. Web. 16 Jan. 2013.
[8] Weissberg, Liliane. "The Tale of a Good German, Reflections on the German Reception of *Schindler's List*." *Spielberg's Holocaust Critical Perspectives on Schindler's List*. Ed Yosefa Loshitzky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997:171 – 192. Print. Here 180.
[9] Rawlinson, Mark. "Adapting the Holocaust: *Schindler's List*, intellectuals and public knowledge." Ed. Deborah Carmell and Imelda Whelehan. 1999. Here 113-116

does he tell how well known Schindler's story was before the film. This thesis shows that Schindler's story was known before the film, however its relative lack of exposure before the film is important to explore in order to reveal the layers of complexity surrounding this character and reveal what Geisler would consider to be the content, context and consequence of the film.

The idea for *Schindler's Ark* was born in 1980 while Keneally shopped for a briefcase in Los Angeles. There he met one of the *Schindlerjuden* (as they called themselves), Leopold Page, who introduced Keneally to the Schindler story, recounting:

> I know a wonderful story. It is not a story for Jews but for everyone. A story of humanity man to man [...] it's a story for you, Thomas. It's a story for you, I swear. [...] I was saved, and my wife was saved, by a Nazi. [...] Although he's a Nazi, to me he's Jesus Christ. Not that he was a saint. He was all-drinking, all-black-marketeering, all-screwing, okay? But he got Misia out of Auschwitz, so to me he is God.[10]

In his previous work Keneally was fascinated by relations between races and peoples, especially those on the margins of society. *Schindler's Ark* is a humanist representation of the Holocaust. It evinces a popular approach to Holocaust fiction.[11] Receiving the Booker Prize generated some controversy regarding the book's status as a novel or as a historical document which led to the use of the term "faction", which was all good for publicity.

2.1 From *Schindler's Ark* to *Schindler's List*

The American publishers decided to name and market the book as *Schindler's List* and as a non-fiction novel, in comparison the British publishers felt that it would be appropriate to describe *Schindler's Ark* (its British title), as fiction but include in the text an "Author's Note".[12] Keneally had originally suggested both titles, indicating that he liked *Ark* better than *List* because he saw it as a metaphor for the Ark of the Covenant, a symbol of the contract between Yahweh and the tribe of Israel.[13] The head

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[10] Keneally, Thomas. "Searching for Schindler." *The New York Times*. N.p. 31 Oct. 2008. Web. 2 Nov. 2011.
[11] Vice, Sue. *Holocaust Fiction.* London: Routledge, 2000. Print. Here 116.
[12] Keneally 1982: 91.
[13] Keneally, Thomas. *Searching for Schindler a Memoir.* London: Sceptre, 2008. Print. Here 188 – 212.

of the U.S. publication, Dan Green, said that it was impossible to have *Ark* because it was believed that American Jewry would view it as an accusation that the Jews had been passive indicating that the prisoners entered the gas chambers willingly two by two. The British publishers had no problem with the original title, so it remained.

The book became an international best-seller and, within a few days of its publication, two production houses contacted Keneally, including Amblin, Spielberg's production company at Universal. Spielberg was attracted to the same aspects of the Schindler story that had interested Keneally, which was the ambiguity surrounding Schindler. Spielberg bought the rights to the film and commissioned Keneally to write the screenplay. However, Keneally found it difficult to separate himself from his own material and after three years working on the screenplay, in 1985 Spielberg decided to try another screenwriter.[14] It took Spielberg's film to make the Schindler story into an international phenomenon. *Schindler's List* won seven Oscars, including Best Film and Best Director, grossing $321 million worldwide.[15] Spielberg retained the American name for the film rather than *Ark* because he wanted to use "lists" throughout: lists are visible whereas the metaphor of the *Ark* is symbolic.[16]

These deliberate changes are of interest as they provide the means to explore how different nations perceive and then explore the same past. Neither film nor novel were faithful adaptations of the Schindler story. Both media sensationalised and simplified the Schindler story, the complexity and reality of which is detailed in the next sub-section.

2.2 Oskar Schindler: Unknown Hero?

Not only was Oskar Schindler (1908–1974) a witness to varying socio-political events surrounding World War Two and the Holocaust, his pre- and post-war roles are also worth noting as they reveal the complex and moral ambiguity surrounding his life. Unlike the Jewish rescuer role he would later be remembered for, his ambiguous pre-

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[14] Ibid: 219-225.
[15] Crowe, David. *Oskar Schindler, The Untold Account of His Life, Wartime Activities, and the True Story Behind The List.* New York: Basic Books, 2004. Print. Here 603.
[16] Keneally 2008: 241.

war years are challenging to reconcile with his heroic statues. For example, in 1935 Schindler became a member of the Patriotic Front of Sudeten Germans, which was the fascist leaning party in Czechoslovakia, and he joined the NSDAP in 1938.[17] His willingness to join the fascist parties can lead to the assumption that he is a complicit Nazi. However, it could also be argued that he was not an anti-Semite but rather a nationalist. This would account for his joining in 1935 the counter-intelligence agency, the *Abwehr*, where Schindler's role consisted in locating and persecuting allied spies in Poland.[18] By 1938, Schindler was second-in-command of a group of twenty-five agents operating on the Czechoslovak-Polish border that planned the invasion of Poland.[19] Schindler had obtained a Polish Army uniform, which he sent to Germany to serve as the pattern for manufacturing forged uniforms. These were then worn by German *Abwehr* and SS forces as they faked a Polish attack on the German radio station known as the *Gleiwitz Incident* on 31 August 1939.[20] This incident was the premise created by Hitler to invade Poland, thus starting World War Two. However, these actions show Schindler to be at the centre of history but they appear to be the result of nationalist rather than racist inclinations.

It was thus during the Holocaust and through his *Abwehr* contacts, that Schindler obtained his position in occupied Krakow as the owner of a requisitioned Jewish enamelware factory called Rekord. He staffed Rekord with Polish and Jewish workers and maintained it as a relatively safe haven due to the lack of beatings, provision of nutritious soups and the lack of arbitrary executions. It can be argued that he used the Jewish workers as they were cheaper labour; however his later actions imply otherwise. After the announcement that the Krakow ghetto would be cleared and the remaining Jews shipped to Płaszów labour camp, under the command of Amon Goeth, Schindler established his own sub-camp attached to the factory to protect the lives of his workers. Later as the war continued and his sub-camp came under threat, Schindler set up a new factory and moved of all his Jewish workers and their families to Brinnlitz. It was then that Schindler's now famous List was constructed with the help of Schindler's office

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[17] Crowe 2004: 16.
[18] Schindler, Emilie. *Where Light and Shadow Meet, a Memoir*. Trans. D Koch. New York: W. W. Nortan and Company Inc, 1996. Print. Here 30.
[19] Crowe 2004: 19.
[20] Schindler 1996: 32.

manager, the Jewish Abraham Bankier. Schindler repeatedly bribed officials to secure his workers' safety until liberated at the end of the war by the Soviet Army. In 1949, Schindler moved with his wife Emilie to Argentina where he established a fur business which failed. He left Emilie in Argentina and went back to Germany in 1957.

From the end of the war, the *Schindlerjuden* repeatedly attempted to spread the word about Schindler and his wartime actions. As a result, stories about Schindler appeared sporadically in the media (print, radio and television). This recognition is mainly attributed to the *Schindlerjude* Leopold 'Poldek' Page (né Pfefferberg) and Itzhak Stern's efforts.

Schindler also received many awards and with each one his recognition as a saviour character grew. In 1968 Pope Paul VI made him a Knight of the Order of Saint Sylvester. A year later, the Oskar Schindler Survivor's Fund was established. But the same year, MGM decided not to make the film as the company was undergoing financial difficulties. As a result, it was decided to create the Oskar Schindler Humanities Foundation that would award an annual prize from 1971 to honour individuals in the world who best symbolize the true meaning of Man's Humanity to Man.[21] In 1974, the first recipient of the Oskar Schindler Scholarship was Yossi Windzberg, a graduate student at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem's Institute of Communications. After Schindler's death, a special corner was devoted to Schindler at the Truman Institute for International Peace at the Hebrew University.

Prior to Spielberg's film, several earlier attempts were made prompted by Page to popularise Schindler's story. German émigré filmmaker Fritz Lang wanted to direct the film and went on to become the driving force behind Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's (MGM) decision to produce a film of Schindler's story in the 1960s. Lang was from Jewish descent on his mother's side and was drawn by the Jewish aspect of the story, and he wanted to base the film on Schindler and Page's memories. However, the film never came to be as Lang was in one of his long career's lowest points. The key point here is that this period became the start of a series of serious attempts to bring Schindler's story to the world via film. The closest attempt to make this film which was to be called *To The Last Hour* was in 1964 and set to star Gregory Peck as Schindler

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[21] All biographical details are taken from Crowe: 511-12, 574-5, and 582.

and Jewish American actor Danny Kaye who would play an Auschwitz prisoner. Both actors stated that they would donate their earnings to the newly formed Schindler Foundation, established to give awards for "outstanding humanitarian acts".[22] The German film producer Artur Brauner claims he twice attempted and abandoned filming Schindler's story. After a meeting in 1973 he discovered that German backers did not believe there would be a large enough audience to ensure box-office returns.[23] It would appear that although the efforts of the *Schindlerjuden* to make Schindler a household name were more successful than commonly thought, it was not until the 1960s that Germany fully began to engage with the Schindler story. Each attempt to tell Schindler's story in film, however, was rocked with controversy and failed to materialise until Spielberg's film in 1993.

Until 1993, the West German heroic Germans had to be people that presented a clear moral choice or were primarily resistance figures.[24] Those figures that did save, or assist, Jews during the Third Reich were not yet being celebrated or memorialised in Germany.[25] With Schindler's death in 1974, Page became the proprietor of Schindler's story rather than his wife, Emilie. Page had full legal rights to commission Keneally's novel and then to sell on these rights to film producer, Irving Glovin. The issue of ownership has become a point of controversy because of the success of the novel (outside Germany) and subsequently Spielberg's film, as well as the later charges and lawsuits by Emilie and her heir, Erika Rosenberg.[26] However, it was not until Keneally's Booker prize winning adaptation of the Schindler story that it was brought to a commercial mass market audience. The book, in contrast, although popular in the Anglo-American world, made little popular impact in Germany.[27] *Schindler's Ark* was re-printed several times in the U.S.[28] but only twice in Germany before the film was

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[22] Crowe 2004: 553-4.
[23] Kallenbach, Michael. "Germans in tears over Spielberg's Holocaust." *The Sunday Times Features.* N.p. 27 Feb. 1994. Web. 16 Jan. 2013.
[24] Boyes, Rodger. "Haunted by a new kind of hero." *The Times Features*. N.p. 14 Feb. 1994. Web. 14 Apr. 2009.
[25] Ó Dochartaigh and Schönfeld. 2013: 8.
[26] Ibid: 600.
[27] Boyes 1994.
[28] *Schindler's Ark* London: Hodder and Stoughton, and London, Third Impression 1982; London: Cornet, 1983; London: Cornet, 1985; London: Sceptre, 2011, and *Schindler's List* NY: Simon and Schuster, 1982; NY: Penguin Books, 1983 NY: Touchstone, 1993; London: Sceptre, 1994; London: Pearson education Ltd, 2008; and London: Sceptre, 2009.

released, after which seven editions were published.[29] Although Avisar considers *Schindler's List* to be based on a marginal text, and therefore a marginal story, which was elevated to "canonical status", this simplistic analysis is actually not the case.[30]

2.2.1 Controversies and Official Recognition of Heroic Status

In 1962 Schindler was nominated as one of the Righteous Among the Nations (Righteous Gentile) at Yad Vashem. Since its conception in 1953 by the *Knesset*, Yad Vashem with the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority have commemorated over 24,000 Righteous Among the Nations. Its principal duty is to convey the gratitude of the State of Israel to those non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. It is a unique attempt by Holocaust victims and survivors to pay tribute to their rescuers. These few are considered by Yad Vashem as the minority that regarded the Jews as "fellow human beings" that:

> in a world of total moral collapse [...] mustered extraordinary courage to uphold human values. These were the Righteous Among the Nations. They stand in stark contrast to the mainstream of indifference and hostility that prevailed during the Holocaust.[31]

To be considered for the award, several criteria have to be met besides being a non-Jew. For instance, that the gentile had to have assisted in the rescue of Jews during the Holocaust without any gain (financial or otherwise) and at great risk to him- or herself.[32] The majority of rescuers can be considered to be ordinary people, with few exceptions, such as the Princess Andrew of Greece and Denmark, mother of the Duke of Edinburgh, and their courage to become rescuers serves as an example and reminder to the world that it was possible to make a difference and save lives during the Third Reich. Out of the 24,355 Righteous Gentiles, 510 are from Germany compared to the 6,339 from Poland where harsher penalties were imposed on those who assisted Jews,

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[29] *Schindlers Liste* [Trans. Günter, Danehl]. München: Bertelsmann, 1983; München: Goldmann, 1985; München: Bertelsmann,1994; Oslo: Hjemmets Bokforl, 1995, München: Omnibus, 1996; München: Omnibus, 2002; and Lahn: Brunnen, 2004.
[30] Avisar. 1997: 49.
[31] Yad Vashem. "Righteous Among the Nations Honoured by Yad Vashem." *Yad Vashem*. N.p. 01 Jan. 2011. Web. <http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/about.asp>. 17 Apr. 2012.
[32] Novick, Peter. *The Holocaust and Collective Memory*. London: Bloomsbury, 1999. Print. Here 179.

thus making their numbers even more extraordinary and also revealing how comparatively unheroic Germans were according to this measure.

Focusing on the tale of rescue by one gentile German potentially brought an unwanted (or biased) perception to the public, which was that there were more official rescuers of Jews from Germany than there actually were. Schindler's nomination was already a contentious issue among Yad Vashem's committee members.[33] This was due to the charges of Julius Weiner, one of the *Schindlerjuden*, who claimed that Schindler had physically abused him and stolen his property. Yad Vashem also had an issue over honouring Schindler due to his lifestyle. Originally they were looking for heroes with no flaws and a virtuous lifestyle who saved Jews but, upon the appointment of Dr Bejski as chair, the criteria changed, in part due to his close relationship to Schindler, and the search began for ordinary flawed ambiguous people.[34] Finally, in 1963 the Righteous Designation Commission concluded that Schindler would not formally be a Righteous Gentile and did not certificate him.[35]

When the *Schindlerjuden* failed to have Schindler recognised as one of the Righteous Among Nations, attitudes in West Germany in the 1960s were determined by the big Holocaust Trails, such as the Adolf Eichmann Trial (in Israel, 1961), the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trials (1963-5) and the Sobibor Trial (1965-6). Amongst this heightened awareness during this period, the FRG began to acknowledge Schindler's wartime contribution. Beginning in 1965, Gosch put pressure on the government to honour Schindler through a pension or a contribution to the Oskar Schindler Humanities Foundation.[36] This also coincided with a confidential letter dated 17 February 1965 by the West German consul in Los Angeles to Karl Carstens, the then State Secretary for Foreign Affairs (who became President of the FRG in 1979). Gosch later contacted Georg August Zinn, the Minister President of the state of Hesse to inform him of the rumour that the MGM studios were planning a movie about Schindler.[37] Although the film did not go ahead, they deemed it necessary to put in place preventative measures to

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[33] Crowe 2004: 511-526 and 534.
[34] Grunwald-Spier, Agnes. *The Other Schindlers: Why some people chose to save Jews in the Holocaust.* Stroud: The History Press, 2010. Print. Here 239-40.
[35] Crowe 2004: 535-6.
[36] Ibid: 555.
[37] Weissberg 1997: 179.

avoid criticism for lack of acknowledgement of Schindler in Germany. Dr. Weinrowsky of the German Legation in Los Angeles also sent a detailed report on Schindler and the film's development to the Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*) in Bonn, which recommended that the Federal President, Dr. Heinrich Lübke, award the *Bundesverdienstkreuz* (Cross of Merit) to Schindler.[38] In January 1966, Schindler received the *Bundesverdienskreuz* and in 1967 a pension of DM 500 a month from the state of Hesse.[39] Schindler supplemented this modest pension with hand-outs from the Jewish Joint Distribution Company (JDC) and his *Schindlerjuden* until his death in 1974. His remains were laid to rest in Israel.

After considering the efforts of the *Schindlerjuden*, it is difficult to agree with Avisar who argues that *Schindler's List* is based on a marginal text, and therefore is a marginal story, which was elevated to "canonical status".[40] Fuchs and Cosgrove's arguments on how international forces influence public debate surrounding *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* are useful to consider here as they view memory contests as a competition between "the personal and historical" and "the private and the public". They argue that this can lead to historical revisionism. Although memory and history may have become a bottom-up experience, which has been reflected in the proliferation of films and literature that are based on personal memories, Fuch and Cosgrove's use of the term historical revisionism implies historical denial. Denying the personal memories that conflict with official historical narratives is, too, a form of suppressing or denying history and, in turn, revises it. The initial lack of interest in Schindler's story is a form of revisionism. The shift in interest in the Schindler story also marks a shift in interest to personal stories and finally in moviegoers' perceptions. It was not until 1991, after years of owning the rights to *Schindler's List* and years of attempts to adapt it for a film with several screenwriters, that Steven Zaillian completed the screenplay that would be used in filming.

As discussed in this chapter's introduction, *Schindler's List* had a similar impact on Germany as *Holocaust*. In the early 1990's Germany was reinventing and rediscovering its history after reunification. Film-makers had previously seen

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[38] Crowe 2004: 565-6.
[39] Weissberg 1997: 179.
[40] Avisar. 1997: 49.

Germany's National Socialist past as taboo and would have received criticism for their portrayal, especially depending on its East or West perspective. With audiences familiar with seeing the German Nazi as the caricature villain from Hollywood films, the new depiction of the heroic German resistance hero from the U.S. created a precedent and new possibilities for the film industry and to Germany as a whole. As the film shook Germany it brought from right-wing and conservative critics negative criticism because of the supposed educative function from Hollywood.[41] This can be seen in the newspaper *Die Zeit*, which asked why was it that "Hollywood has to teach Germans their own history?"[42] It concluded that the U.S. was negatively appropriating their history as *Schindler's List* was reasoned to be part of the Americanisation of the Holocaust.[43] This can be viewed as a continuation of the discussion surrounding the 'educative' function of the American mini-series *Holocaust*. What Hollywood did in the form of *Holocaust* and then *Schindler's List* for a new generation was to create identification for the victims and with it shifted audiences' perceptions. Every German adult was taught at least the facts about the Holocaust but it was these films that assisted in making audiences emotionally relate to the past.

Schindler's List opened in Germany on 1 March 1994, as a gala event.[44] At the première, 700 prominent Germans led by German President Richard von Weizsäcker attended along with the surviving *Schindlerjuden*.[45] However, neither Chancellor Helmut Kohl nor any member of his cabinet attended because, according to one critic, Kohl believed that "his generation is absolved of any collective guilt for Nazi crimes".[46] The significance of the event can be seen as many papers criticised the chancellor for not attending, which led to the Chancellor's office releasing Kohl's schedule of that day in an attempt to defuse claims concerning Kohl's insensitivity.[47]

The political context in which *Schindler's List* was made and then presented to audiences nationally, in Germany, internationally and transnationally cannot be ignored.

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[41] Landy 1996: 251.
[42] Boyes 1994.
[43] Landy 1996: 251.
[44] Weissberg 1997: 171.
[45] Gow, David. "Schindler's List taxes Germans; Steven Spielberg's Holocaust film was shown in Frankfurt and Tel Aviv last night, eliciting praise and stirring up old emotions." *The Guardian*. 02 Mar. 1994: 24. Print.
[46] Kallenbach 1994.
[47] Weissberg 1997: 172-3.

News of the Bosnian genocide was rife and for the first time since World War Two the term 'ethnic cleansing' was being used.[48] The film for this reason was directly applicable to the time of its release. It showed that the German hero, Schindler, ultimately won over the Nazi villain, Goeth, and was used as an example that fascism would never prevail en masse again. It was also a lesson from the past about genocide and the persecution and murder of different ethnic groups, which has been used as a comparison rightly or wrongly to this day. It is therefore not a surprise that the film could have been popular both because of the socio-political context in which it was released, but also because of the cinematic techniques employed in the film to provoke a response from the audience.

3. From Novel to Film: 'Hollywoodising' the Schindler Story

What the film adaptation has done is significantly change the character of Schindler from its source novel, *Schindler's Ark*, and from Schindler's history. This thesis is not placing the film in a hierarchy; it is instead revealing the changes that occurred as it was adapted to film. With it, this thesis will contend that although the time was right for the presentation of a German hero, it is ultimately a Hollywoodised version of this hero. Ezra and Rowden view Hollywood as a short-hand for dominant cinema or global cinema that produces films that are "mainstream" through the adoption of "familiar genres, narratives or themes".[49] This includes the adoption of Hollywood narratives that are discussed further in this chapter.

This thesis argues that the film adaptation has changed the main character from the heroic to morally ambiguous; the Jewish characters move from active to passive survivors; Emilie Schindler changes from a nurturing heroine to a passive non-entity; and the Jewish women's stories, which were given emphasis in the book were given little attention on screen.

Schindler's List, along with Spielberg's other films, focuses on male protagonists and male centred history.[50] The lack of strong female characters is not only

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[48] Keneally 2008: 271.
[49] Ezra and Rowden. 2006: 6.
[50] Spielberg traditionally has male protagonists with one notable exception: *The Color Purple* (1985).

typical of his films but typical of films surrounding the Holocaust. This will be in direct contrast to the presentation of women in *The Pianist* and the films discussed in Chapter Three. The lack of female history and consequently a lack of female memory in this male-centred melodrama can be drawn from the attitude held by the male characters in the film towards the women, and how Spielberg presents women in the film. This furthers the ambiguous heroic nature of the lead characters in this film. Schindler demeans the women in the film as they actively seek approval from him like the stereotypical love-struck school girl. This is first seen in his girlfriend Ingrid at a dance who is watching Schindler with his wife Emilie. Ingrid seeks reassurance from Schindler that their liaisons will continue through flirtatious looks and forlorn gazes. The second example is from his wife who repeatedly allows him to have affairs and always takes him back, appearing to be a weak secondary character to the strong Schindler. The women are also viewed by the audience as secondary sexual objects as they too share Schindler and Goeth's gaze as the women are not privileged with the point of view shots and thus not able to prompt audience identification with their actions.

The women viewed by the *Schindlerjuden* are also not full human beings. This is epitomised by the women returning from Auschwitz. Instead of a tearful uniting between the men and women, Stern sees them arriving and turns his back to them, which can be viewed as the film symbolically turning its back from women's history and their part in it. The women's history, and subsequently memory, appears to have not achieved the same importance as their male counterparts. Instead they retain a passive 'victim' status.

Miriam Bratu Hansen argues that the film uses recycled images to increase the reality and authenticity in the film, such as the Jewish selection, cattle cars and scenes of Auschwitz. Controversially, Spielberg's Auschwitz sequence dramatically takes the audience into a potential gas chamber, leading to charges that he is breaching the boundaries of respectability and not only trivializing but sensationalising the Holocaust.[51] In this sequence the women have 'accidentally' been sent to Auschwitz

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[51] Hansen, Miriam Bratu. "*Schindler's List* is not *Shoah*: The Second Commandment, Popular Modernism and Public Memory." Ed. Marcia Landy. *The Historical Film History and Memory in Media.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000: 201 – 207. Print. Here 207.

and the audience follows the impersonal and precision processing of the women. The women have their hair cut and their clothes removed and with each stage audience tension increases as the process leads the women closer to the showers. Spielberg takes this tension further as the audience follows the women into a chamber; the relief of the women as water instead of gas rains down upon them. Michael Rothberg explains that knowing the escape the women have made, as they leave the chambers, the audience follows the women's gaze and watch families entering the gas chambers and the billowing smokestack.[52] The audience and the women know their survival is a result of Schindler rather than their own actions and it emphasises Schindler's divine protection towards the female *Schindlerjuden.* The men's accidental mass deportation to Gross-Rosen is not depicted in the film. Therefore, the film reinforces the idea that Schindler can save masses of un-named women and also save individual men such as Stern, which again removes the importance of women's testimony from the film.

The cover of the film and movie posters portray Schindler's 'list' imposed on a strong hand holding that of a small child. Doneson interprets these posters as the feminising of the Jews in the film as they appear weak and need to be saved by the strong, masculine gentile German.[53] However, to the audience it appears as a reminder of Genia (the young Jewish girl in red) and the conversion point of Schindler. Women have a strong impact on Schindler in the film, but they often remain nameless like Genia, who is named in the novel but not in the film. Emilie is presented as someone who is absent from Schindler's efforts until his move to Brinnlitz where she offers to help. Her actual personal assistance in saving the Jews is not shown in the film. Thus, she remains to the viewer a weak victim of Schindler's as she is the wife of a serial adulterer who is fixated on staying with this man of dubious character.

Where Emilie in the film is presented as a weak character, Emilie's real actions during this period were not. As a result, Emilie became more critical of her late husband as his popularity increased with the success of the film.[54] There are a few reasons as to why her efforts have been ignored in the book and film and that includes financial

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[52] Rothberg, Michael. *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000. Print. Here 238.
[53] Doneson 2002: 212.
[54] Crowe 2004: 494-540.

motivations. Universal Studios sent Emilie's lawyers a balance sheet showing a 13 million dollar loss[55] although the film made $321 million ($96 million of which from the U.S.).[56] As a result, Emilie and her biographer Rosenberg claim that Keneally and Spielberg owe Emilie profits from the book and film and have travelled widely to criticise the film and Spielberg as a consequence.[57] Keneally claims that he "always felt affronted by the case with which the claim was made that Emilie had been unjustly treated".[58] Keneally reasons that he had already approached Emilie when researching his novel through a solicitor Juan Caro who had already told Keneally that Mrs Schindler was too ill for a visit by him, "But she would send me answers if I forwarded questions, and I should also forward an appropriate fee at the same time. So I sent off a list of questions, and the substantial fee, to her".[59] Thus, Emilie is presented as a money-grabber rather than a participant in the rescue of the *Schindlerjuden* and as such has become relatively forgotten in the Schindler phenomenon. This is despite the fact that in on the 24 June 1993 the Yad Vashem Commission, upon learning that Emilie was visiting Israel for the final filming of *Schindler's List*, declared her and (finally) Schindler to be Righteous Gentiles and awarded them a single medal and certificate.

With few exceptions, everything in the film is based in some form on the novel and it follows the traditional chronology of the Holocaust thus making it an isolated event.[60] It starts with the proclamation of the Nuremberg laws, continues with the gas chambers of Auschwitz, and ends with liberation of the handful of surviving Jews.[61] *Schindler's List* also employs intertitles to highlight important chronological points in the film, so that a viewer without prior knowledge of the Holocaust could place the events on screen within the history, which assists in providing authenticity to the film. The condensation of history also led to the condensing of Schindler's life, giving prominence to his wartime actions. It was decided that the film should not show

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[55] Rosenberg 2007.
[56] Nash Information Services. "*Schindler's List.*" *The Numbers*. N.p. 1997-2013. Web. <http://www.the-numbers.com/movies/1993/0SCHN.php>. 11 Sep. 2014.
[57] Crowe 2004: 600.
[58] Keneally 2008: 306.
[59] Ibid: 65.
[60] Wall, Ian. "The Holocaust, film and education." Ed. Tony Haggith and Joanna Newman. London: Wallflower Press, 2005. 203 – 210. Print. Here 207.
[61] Shandler, Jeffery. "Schindler's Discourse America Discusses the Holocaust and its Mediation, from NBC's Miniseries to Spielberg's Film." Ed. Yosefa Loshitzky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997. 153 – 170. Print. Here 159.

Schindler's pre- or post- war years as that would create more ambiguity for Schindler, although that is what had attracted Spielberg to the story. The period was condensed further in post-production so that original scenes, such as the conflict which had placed doubt on Schindler's Righteous Among the Nations award, were also removed. Although Spielberg's film is based on the historical novel, and is an attempt at making a serious but popular mainstream film about the Holocaust, Spielberg was constrained by the traditional narrative of the Hollywood film, which has been achieved by choosing a Holocaust story with an inspiring ending. By omitting ambiguities behind Schindler's motivations and actions, Schindler becomes more of a traditional Hollywood character, which is the typical transformative hero.

3.1 Villain

Omar Bartov argues that a typical feature of the Hollywood film is to juxtapose the hero with a villain.[62] Whereas there is some emphasis given to him and his back-story, Goeth the Płaszów camp commandant takes on a more influential and prominent role in Spielberg's film than has been seen before as he is used to enhance the hero's image, becoming Schindler's evil twin. As Spielberg filmed *Schindler's List* from a German rather than Jewish perspective, this complicated the portrayal of the Nazi the audience is familiar with. This has been established predominantly through the use of sound to authorise scenes that bring out similar themes. This can be seen in the sound bridge between Schindler and Goeth as Schindler watches a beautiful singer and is captivated by her, the scene then changes to Goeth beating the Jewish prisoner Helen Hirsch. This emphasises to the audience that the two men could have been brothers separated at birth with similar stature, physique, choice of clothing, and Catholic upbringing. The major difference of course is that one is a saviour and the other a perpetrator; however, the film invites ambiguous readings of both. This re-emphasises that anyone could have been a perpetrator or saviour, and that there was no pre-requisite for either to the audience. Keeping Goeth as a mirror to Schindler forces the audience to identify with the Nazi's privileged vantage point and power rather merely register their cruelty.

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[62] Bartov, Omer. "Germany as Victim." *New German Critique*. 80 (2000): 29 – 40. Print. Here 48-9.

Schindler holds a privileged position throughout the film as events are mainly presented to the audience through Schindler's gaze. The people surrounding him, such as Stern, witness Schindler, which provides a greater prominence to Schindler's role and authenticity to his actions: the use of the gaze of others establishes the focus on him. He is revealed to the audience in a fashion reminiscent of a movie star clouded by cigarette smoke and we can follow his gaze to the men he soon will seduce with his charisma. Schindler is thus presented to the audience as complicit with the regime as he ingeniously squirms his way to the side of the local Nazi elite.

It is obvious to the audience that his rise is tied with increased Jewish persecution. This is clearly seen as a Jewish couple are evicted from their home under armed guard and the audience watches their empty middle class apartment being possessed by a satisfied Schindler. He is also shown to be immoral and a serial adulterer as he ignores the sanctity of the church to make black market transactions and the sanctity of his marriage to Emilie to indulge in affairs. The continued use of viewing Schindler enhances his powerful attraction to women and power over the *Schindlerjuden*. At the end of the film, his power extends to the German soldiers as Schindler gives his final speech in his Brinnlitz camp. Schindler is viewed not only as a saviour by the *Schindlerjuden* who gaze up at him as a Christ-like figure, but also by the German soldiers who see him as an equal member of the Aryan race as their gaze is on the same level as his, but they too are seduced by his charisma and speech and as a result disobeying their final orders to kill the remaining Jews. To assist in the transformation, Spielberg uses a traditional Hollywood technique of providing a mentor-like figure to guide Schindler.[63] This is because a traditional film narrative requires recognisable and consistent characterisation as well as an audience connection between characters' behaviour and their fate.[64] Stern is crucial in the evolution of Schindler to being the heroic German with his role as the conventional helper and smaller but cleverer man and the effect of these men embodied in this one character becomes more obvious for the story. The film deliberately does not have any major stars in its lead roles, Schindler and Goeth, so that the audience does not bring with it any

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[63] This is the Jewish character Itzhak Stern who is an amalgamation of several of Schindler's Jewish friends including his office manager Abraham Bankier and the policeman Marcel Goldberg.
[64] Rothberg 2000: 229.

prior knowledge or assumptions to the film's characters. Both Liam Neeson (Schindler) and Ralph Fiennes (Goeth) became stars as a result of this film.

As well as being lauded for its various depictions, Spielberg's film has also been criticised as being racist for using Jewish stereotypes, which include the argument that the Jews look different and substantially shorter than both Goeth and Schindler, making them appear like children that need to be saved from or by the physically larger adult. They are all educated and some have substantial amounts of money, also adhering to stereotypes. However, considering the survivors were educated and once rich, it would be unauthentic of the film to change their professions and would have led to criticism of inaccuracy. As to the physicality of the Jewish characters in the film: in the film's final scenes the descendants of the original *Schindlerjuden* walk and place a stone on Schindler's grave in Israel with their cinematic counterparts, the majority of them are shorter again than the actors. Spielberg is Jewish; therefore what would he have to gain by portraying a Jewish stereotype? With the revealing of the original *Schindlerjuden* the audience is aware of choices Spielberg made in regards to casting and representation to create an authentic and accurate experience. This adds legitimacy to Spielberg's claims of authenticity, and is furthered in the film as the camera reveals the Christian cemetery, the resting place of Schindler's remains, and the screen states "In memory of the more than six million Jews murdered" ambiguously critiquing those who did not help the Jews while honouring those who did, like Schindler.[65] Schindler saved 1,100 Jews and in the film's final scenes, 6,000 descendants featured on screen.[66]

Jonathan Rosenbaum argues that Spielberg omitted Schindler's past and future to exemplify Schindler as a member of a moral elite and transformed hero, and the script purposefully removes any other potential German heroes, which has led to the diminishing of Schindler's wife, Emilie, and her efforts in also helping the *Schindlerjuden* "as Spielberg recounts the story, this is Schindler's show all the way." Thus, Schindler has now become a generic term for non-Jewish rescuers in the Holocaust.[67]

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[65] Doneson 2002: 212.
[66] Grunwald-Spier. 2010: 17.
[67] Rosenbaum, Jonathan. *Movies as Politics.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997. Print. Here 102.

3.2 A Transformative Moment

As previously discussed, memory is formed through the use of a usable past and according to Megill is meant to be valorised. The underlying complex memory represented in *Schindler's List* shows that the character trope, the good German has been manipulated to establish a usable and valorised past. The process of the hero's transformation drives the narrative of the film. Although it is not necessarily a physical transformation it is instead an emotional / spiritual or psychological change that occurs over the course of the narrative, which has since been popularised in franchises such as the *Batman* trilogy (Dir. Christopher Nolan. 2005, 2008 and 2012) or action thrillers such as *Unknown* (Dir. Jaume Collet-Serra. 2011).

Spielberg transformed Schindler's story to fit the traditional and typical Hollywood melodrama making it not just a heritage film, but also a melodrama and consensus film. The melodramatic style has been considered as an effective way to re-animate the past to the audience when images of the National Socialist past and the Holocaust have been recycled to the extent of being "devoid of meaning."[68] Landy argues that it is only through melodrama that history can be accessed by means of this larger than life representation as the reality it creates produces a moral universe,[69] which is explored predominantly through the moral compass, in this instance the heroic German.

Unlike other melodramas that typically focus on the female who undergoes suffering and redemption. Schindler suffers in his determination to save the Jews to the detriment of his finances and lifestyle as he becomes complicit in the regime to save the Jews under his protection. At the end of the film, Schindler breaks down in front of his Jews (who are representative of the numerous lives lost in the Holocaust) as he cries when everyone else is numb. Surrounded by the *Schindlerjuden*, it semiotically shows Schindler's ultimate transformation into a saviour figure. It is symbolic that he is no longer in a position of control or can negotiate the grey zone in which he was so successful.

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[68] Landy 2009: 49-50.
[69] Ibid: 50-1.

This transformation of Schindler from complicit racketeer to saviour is also presented at a symbolic point in the film as it breaks from its black and white colour to focus on a red coat. The liquidation of the Krakow Ghetto has been condensed for narrative reasons from three Aktionen to one large scene that the audience views predominantly through Schindler's gaze. As with *Heimat*, *Schindler's List* was filmed in black and white to confer the film a documentary-like realism as traditional footage of the Holocaust is in the form of black and white news reals and photographs. Also like *Heimat*, the film breaks the black and white narrative with the use of colour to emphasise the realism and significance of the events on screen. Breaking the palate to show the red coat emphasises the importance of what is occurring on screen to Schindler. Here he sees the three year old Jewish girl, Genia, in her red coat wandering through the streets as the brutality of the National Socialist regime bears down on its inhabitants with characteristic violence. The clearing of the Krakow Ghetto is a mixture of documentary and fiction to present the nature of the National Socialist regime, which is created by the use of hand held camera shots to present to the audience Schindler's point of view, thus emphasising the panic and confusion of what Schindler is witnessing. It creates the personalisation of Schindler and in turn presents the impersonal regime, re-emphasising to the audience that this is the point of Schindler's conversion from a self-controlled money-maker to an avid saviour. It is only when Schindler turns away and the little girl hides that the girl's coat slowly turns from red back to black and white in a symbolic indicator that Genia has turned back into one of the mass unwatched victims. The soundtrack also emphasises the German destruction of not just the Jewish people but of the systematic destruction of their culture. Using the Yiddish children's song Oyfn Pripetshik ("On the cooking stove" by M.M. Warshawsky) over the clearing of the ghetto and of Genia's journey implies innocence and culture lost as the popular song tells of history of tears of the Jewish people. This is reinforced as the final chorus of "Zet zhe kinderlekh, gedenkt zhe, tayere, Vos ir lernt do; Zogt zhe nokh a mol un take nokh a mol: Komets-alef: o!" (Look children, remember my dear ones, what you are learning now, Repeat again and again: Komets-alef: o!).[70]

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[70] Neuman, Issac. *The Narrow Bridge: Beyond the Holocaust.* Illinois: University of Illinois, 2002. Print. Here 6-7.

Again, the use of sound through the piano is used as a backdrop in the film. This can be to break the noise and destruction in the Aktion of the ghetto as a member of the SS stops to play music, the English suite no. 2 prelude, from the German composer Johann Sebastian Bach. This particular action presents the SS as more than two dimensional characters, i.e. not caricature one dimensional villains. It also provides them with a back-story and challenges the assumption and argument that music and culture mean that one was less likely to be an active perpetrator. This presents the dilemma that people could be both perpetrator and saviour not just depending on the environment and gives legitimacy to Schindler's character and transformation as he too was a Nazi party member transformed into a saviour. The juxtaposition between culture, education and violence causes a cognitive and emotional dissonance. This meaning-production is produced as emotional sense-meaning and affect-meaning. The Oyfn Pripetshik replaced by Bach adds meaning to the scene as it implies that German culture is eradicating Jewish culture as well as the people.

It can be argued that the narrative of the film presents the *Schindlerjuden* as survivors in their own right until Schindler converts into their saviour. The audience witnesses Danke and Mrs Dresner's escape, Leopold Pfefferberg outwitting Goeth, and characters either hiding or moving into the right selection lines. Norris considers the criticism that has been made of the film for showing the *Schindlerjuden* eating jewels in bread "instead of praying or comforting their children". This is because the critics ignore testimonial evidence by Nuisa Horowitz, the little girl Schindler kissed on his birthday, who recalls this scene and the importance placed on "portable wealth for survival". As the *Schindlerjuden* eat the diamonds they are therefore actively ensuring a better chance of survival by eating the wealth that can later be used for bribes.[71] From this point in the film, Schindler is on a quest to save as many Jewish lives as possible. He also returns to his wife who is praying in church and renews their marriage bonds by promising that she will never be mistaken for his mistress again. By the end of the film Schindler becomes a complete person, the absolute Jewish rescuer.

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[71] Norris 2000: 112.

4. A History of *The Pianist*

The Pianist – based on the memoirs of Władysław Szpilman (1911 – 2000) - is considered by Jay Rayner to be an unusual Holocaust memoir as it was written directly after the events it describes. This aligns it, however, with Primo Levi's *If this is a Man* and *Anonyma: Eine Frau von Berlin* which were written too in the immediate aftermath but which only emerged years later, often with an educative function as a means to teach about the past. Rayner believed that because of that immediacy, Szpilman's style is remarkably objective as he had no time to "ponder and embroider" and was instead dissociative and journalistic.[72] In 1945, Szpilman's life experiences under the National Socialist regime were originally written as a form of coping mechanism and by 1946 were published in Polish as *Śmieré Miasta* (*Death of a City*).[73] Szpilman's memoir begins with his life after leaving the Berlin Academy of Arts in 1933, his return to his homeland of Poland and finally resuming his role of pianist for Polish Radio based in Warsaw. By 1939, Szpilman was already well-known for composing film scores. From 1939 – 1945 he, along with his family and other Jews in Poland, lived with daily persecution resulting in the death of his family, and the remarkable story of his own survival. His experiences in the Warsaw ghetto, his escape, and his witnessing the final days of the National Socialist regime in Poland became the main body of his memoir. In 1945, he resumed his work for Polish Radio and continued performing as a concert pianist. His career advanced with his appointment as the head of the music department of Polish Radio which role continued until 1963. Szpilman retired from concert performances in 1986. His musical compositions and story were relatively unknown to Western audiences due to the political and cultural divisions in Europe and Poland.

Szpilman's story came at a time when Poland was becoming a satellite of Russia, a period in history when neither Poland nor Russia could face a German military hero. Adaptations or revisions to characters were made. In its original form Szpilman changed the nationality of his rescuer from German to Austrian and thus politically censored his own story. Eventually, the authorities removed it from circulation entirely because the account did not describe every Pole, Lithuanian, Ukrainian, and Jew as

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[72] Rayner, Jay. "Through the past darkly." *The Observer*. N.p. 03 Nov. 2002. Web. 2 Feb. 2012.
[73] Szpilman, Władysław *Śmieré Miasta.* Spółdzielnia Warszawa: Wydawnicza"Wiedza", 1946. Print.

heroic.[74] The memoir was also made into a film, *Unvanquished City* (*Robison Warszawski.* Dir. Zarzycki. 1950) that was submitted to the 1951 Cannes Film Festival; however, no original cut of the film has survived.[75] It was hoped by Szpilman that the original / non-revised memoir would again be republished in the 1960s during the Khrushchev Thaw; however, it was again suppressed due to the content of bystander and perpetrator Poles, not to mention a heroic German.[76] Polish and Russian characters were not heroic in Szpilman's memoir, and an Austrian hero was still deemed to be too close to a German hero.

It was not until the fall of communism and the transition to democracy in Poland that the memoir was republished in 1998 through the efforts of Andrzej Szpilman, Władysław Szpilman's son. The memoir included extracts from the diaries of Wilm Hosenfeld (1895– 1952) and a forward by Szpilman's son Andrzej, and was re-titled *The Pianist.*[77] In 1999, the memoir was translated into English and German and went on to be translated into over 35 other languages. The author and his son pressed Yad Vashem for recognition of Hosenfeld's rescuer status and in 2009 Hosenfeld was posthumously awarded the title of Righteous Among the Nations. Denying the personal memories that conflict with official historical narratives as seen with the suppressing of Hosenfeld and Szpilman's story is a form of revisionism.

Polanski's *The Pianist* was a response to *Schindler's List.* Critics are tempted to see films about the Holocaust as "Oscar bait"; however, as it is a part of Polanski's personal history as a Holocaust survivor criticism of his achievement was muted.[78] *The Pianist* won Oscars for Best Actor, for Adrien Brody, Best Adapted Screenplay, and Best Director for Polanski out of a total of seven nominations, including that of Best Picture in 2003. It is a European or German co-production, rather than a Hollywood film, as it was filmed in Europe, with a predominantly European cast and crew as well as German funding, although filmed in English.

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[74] Marti, Octavi. "Memories of the Ghetto." *Roman Polanski Interviews.* Ed. Paul Cronin. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005: 195 – 201. Print. Here 198.
[75] Portuges, Catherine. "Roman Polanski, Robert Benmussa, Alain Sarde, and Ronald Harwood *The Pianist* Review." *The American Historical Review.* 108. 2 (2003): 622 – 623. Print. Here 622.
[76] Meikle, Denis. *Roman Polanski Odd Man Out.* London: Reynolds & Hearn Ltd, 2006. Print. Here 302-3.
[77] Szpilman, Władysław. *The Pianist: The extraordinary story of one man's survival* in *Warsaw, 1939-45.* Trans. Anthea Bell, London: Phoenix, 2002. Print.
[78] Meikle 2006: 318-9.

The film was well received in the Anglo-American, Polish and German spheres.[79] However, commercially *Schindler's List* still outstripped *The Pianist*[80] by $201,233,728. *The Pianist* also did not have the same lasting impact. In contrast, critics frequently use *Schindler's List* as a point of comparison for *The Pianist* and claim that *Schindler's List* failed:

> Attempting to create a masterwork out of the experience of the death camps, it ended up reducing European Jewish experience to archetypes of suffering [...] *The Pianist* in creating an account of Polish Jewish experience in World War II manages to be both illuminating, historically faithful, and definitive.[81]

It is interesting to note that Spielberg had tried to turn Schindler's story over to Polanski, who rejected it as he felt the story was too close to home;[82] instead embarking on his own project a decade later.[83] Polanski obtained the rights in 2000 to *The Pianist* and was able to raise $41 million, thus making it one of the largest European productions to date.[84] *Schindler's List* had a budget of $22 million in 1993, which (taking into account the rate of inflation of 25.22% from 1993 to 2002[85] would have resulted in 2002 a budget of $27,548,400, indicating the scale of production and finances at Polanski's disposal.

There was substantial criticism and debate, particularly in German magazines, regarding whether or not Polanski should be allowed to enter the U.S. to receive the Oscar nominations for *The Pianist* which overshadowed the film itself.[86] The lack of attention the film received in the German papers, despite its Oscar winning performance, may well be a result of Caroline Link's German film, that also engages

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[79] *The Pianist* box office gross by country: Germany at 12.5 per cent ($4,721,707), UK 8 per cent ($3,998,172) and the U.S. at 27.1 per cent ($32,572,577) and *Schindler's List* box office gross by country Germany 18 per cent ($38,500,174), UK 9.3 per cent ($21,170,107) and the U.S. 29.8 per cent ($96,065,768).

[80] *Schindler's List* $321,306,305 and *The Pianist* $120,072,577.

[81] Tsiolkas, Christos. "The Atheist's Shoah – Roman Polanski's *The Pianist.*" *Senses of Cinema.* N.p. 61. 22 May. 2003. Last updated 15 Dec. 2010. Web. <http://sensesofcinema.com/2003/feature-articles/pianist/>. 3 Feb. 2012.

[82] Meikle 2006: 302.

[83] Mazierska, Ewa. "Double memory: the Holocaust in Polish film." Ed. Tony Haggith and Joanna Newman. London: Wallflower Press, 2005. 225 – 235. Print. Here 253.

[84] Rayner 2002.

[85] Browning, Richard. "Historic inflation calculator: how the value of money has changed since 1990." This is money. N.p. N.d. Web. <http://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/bills/article-1633409/Historic-inflation-calculator-value-money-changed-1900.html>. 28 Sep. 2013.

[86] *Der Spiegel.* "Nach dem Oscar-Gewinn: Roman Polanski ist "tief berührt"." *Der Spiegel.* N.p. 25 Mar. 2003. Web. <http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/kino/nach-dem-oscar-gewinn-roman-polanski-ist-tief-beruehrt-a-242013.html>. 18 Feb. 2013.

with the National Socialist past, *Nirgendwo in Afrika* (2001), winning the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film, the first German film to win the prize in 22 years[87] as well as it being obscured by the controversy surrounding Polanski rather than the film itself. Literary reviewer and survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto Marcel Reich-Ranicki considers in a review for *Der Spiegel* how the film presents what is bearable for the audience. He argues that Polanski had managed to present what could not or should not be displayed, and what was displayed was so carefully reconstructed as to be seen as a documentary "he did it masterfully."[88] This was because of the lack of a Hollywoodised approach, Asaravala explains, in regards to the portrayal of violence. Compared to *Schindler's List*, it was met with approval, because "when an SS guard runs out of bullets, we pray that the old man he's about to execute will be spared. In *Schindler*, he is. In *The Pianist*, the guard takes his time reloading and then fires again."[89] However, the film does end with survival, which has been seen as a positive representation of the Holocaust.[90] The reviewer Shelia Skaff approves of the physical and emotional distance created between Szpilman and the camps in which his family perish as it avoids creating a formulaic connection by the audience between one's morality and one's fate[91] and thus breaks the usual Hollywood moral parables that can be set in the background of the Holocaust. Polanski's film is not a definitive statement about the Holocaust but the amalgamation of Polanski and Szpilman's personal experiences. The re-publishing of the memoir in 1998 and now the film version reflect the changes that have taken place in Poland and Europe as history that was once buried by the Cold War came to the fore. The same can be said with the release of the film *Katyń* (Dir. Andrzej Wajda. 2007)[92] as the silence surrounding the Katyń Forest Massacre (1940) was finally broken.

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[87] *Nirgendwo in Afrika* won the 2002 OSCARS; previously it was won by *Die Blechtrommel/ The Tin Drum* (Dir. Volker Schlöndorff. 1979. West Germany).
[88] Reich-Ranicki, Marcel. "He did it masterfully." *Der Spiegel*. 22 Oct. 2002. Web.<http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/kino/reich-ranicki-ueber-polanskis-pianist-er-hat-es-meisterhaft-gemacht-a-219327.html>. 10 Feb. 2012.
[89] Asaravala, Amit. "The Pianist." *Film Critic*. N.p. 22 Dec. 2002. Web. <http://movies.amctv.com/movie-guide//misc/emporium.nsf/reviews/The-Pianist>. 4 Feb. 2012.
[90] Geras, Norman. "Redemptive and Other Meanings: Roman Polanski's *The Pianist*." *Imprints, a Journal of Analytical Socialism*. 7.1 (2003). N.p. Web. <http://eis.bris.ac.uk/~plcdib/imprints/gerasonpolanski.html>. 3 Feb. 2012.
[91] Skaff, Shelia. "The birdcage is empty." *Kinoeye*. 3. 2. (03 Feb. 2003). N.p. Web. <http://www.kinoeye.org/03/02/skaff02.php>. 10 Feb. 2012.
[92] *Katyń*. Dir. Andrzej Mularczyk. Perf. Maja Ostaszewska. ITI Cinema, 2007. DVD.

4.1 The Spielberg Model: Hollywoodising *The Pianist*

The Pianist is similar to *Schindler's List* in that it employs a linear narrative; includes a transformative moment; the heroic German becomes more ambiguous and the film is directed by an auteur director. As a young man in the 1950s, Roman Polanski studied film in the Leon Schiller National Higher School of Film, Television and Theatre in Łódź before moving to America, via the UK, where he made Hollywood classics such as *Chinatown* (1974) and *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) before settling in France in 1978. Although his films feature the macabre and a fascination with isolation and victimisation, he did not make a film directly about his experiences in the Holocaust. In 1998, Polanski was introduced to Szpilman's memoir by a lawyer friend. As a Polish Holocaust survivor himself, Polanski found in *The Pianist* the story he wanted to tell about his own wartime experiences as Szpilman's story allowed him to make use of what he went through in Krakow without him having to make it directly autobiographical.

Polanski's inclusion of personal experiences as part of the adaptation of Szpilman's story means that fidelity to Szpilman is not possible. Instead the adaptation process can be viewed, Rentschler describes, as "the appropriation of meaning from a prior text." Therefore, this thesis also analyses the appropriation of meaning from text to film. Stevenson explains intertextuality within Holocaust narrative films that share common elements, such as the inclusion of particular scenes that are considered necessary in the creation of an authentic experience, which include deportation in cattle cars, Seders (a Passover Seder is a Jewish feast that marks the beginning of Passover), and ultimately survival, which were also used in films such as *The Devil's Arithmetic* (Dir. Donna Deitch. 1999) and *The Courageous Heart of Irena Sendler* (Dir. John Kent Harrison. 2009).[93]

Alternatively, unlike *Schindler's List* and the rest of the Holocaust film canon, Polanski has ensured that without Szpilman's presence nothing else is presented. After Szpilman becomes separated from his family and friends, they are no longer presented on film. The witness element is the driving factor as Szpilman's presence authorises

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[93] Stevenson, Michael. "The Pianist and its Contexts: Polanski's Narration of Holocaust Evasion and Survival." *The Cinema of Roman Polanski dark spaces of the world.* Ed. John Orr and Elżbieta Osrrowska. London: Wallflower Press, 2006. 146 – 157. Print. Here 156.

what is shown on film. Both the memoir and the film are told in a linear chronological order that progresses from day to day, then week to week.

This linear story telling in *The Pianist* is again typical of classic Hollywood conventions. Polanski has traced the Holocaust narrative through film by focusing on the process of one man's survival rather than the fate of the many Jews in the Holocaust, or like in *Schindler's List*, focusing on a tale of rescue. The film begins in September of 1939 with the bombing of Warsaw during the German invasion of Poland. The film then follows the increased level of persecution inflicted on the protagonist's family: from their wearing the Star of David, their move to the Warsaw Ghetto and deportation to Treblinka. As the family are being deported, Szpilman is pulled out of the crowd by a friend who is a member of the Jewish Ghetto Police. Distraught, Szpilman is left to fend for himself in the ghetto and later, after his escape, in the ruins of Warsaw with the assistance of sympathetic Poles. He is finally reunited with friends at the end of the war and resumes his occupation as a pianist for the Warsaw radio station.

Polanski was attracted to this memoir as he believed that there were no saviour figures. However, this is not the case; there are clearly saviour figures in the memoir. Szpilman goes into great detail about those that helped him on the Aryan side of Warsaw. [94] They included his friends that were involved with the anti-Nazi Polish resistance movement; Janina Godlewska (an actress), Andrezej Bogucki (an actor and Janina's husband), Czeslaw Lewicki (an orchestra conductor who does not feature in the film) and they were all were recognised by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations as early as 1978. He then describes that about 15 November 1944, Captain Wilm Hosenfeld from Thalau found him at Aleje Niepodleglosci 221. Hosenfeld supported him by finding a safe hiding place in the attic of the German general command of Warsaw as well as providing warmth, food and moral support until mid-December 1944. After the war, Szpilman learned that Hosenfeld had also rescued Leon Warm, members of the families of Cieciora and small Jewish children from as early as September 1939. Warm had escaped from a train to Treblinka in 1942 and Hosenfeld employed him as well as gave him a false identity, which led to Warm surviving to see

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[94] Szpilman, Władysław. "From the letter of Wladyslaw Szpilman to Yad Vashem." *Yad Vashem*. N.p. 1998. Web. <http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/stories/related/szpilman_letter.asp>. 3 Feb. 2012.

the end of the war. Szpilman states that "Captain Hosenfeld proved to be a heroic person and opponent of Fascism, and deserves to be awarded." The consistent downplaying of the rescuers has been seen with approval by critics as they argue that it creates a more rounded view of the Holocaust. However, the change of intent and motivation of the rescuer to an opportunist completely undermines the authentic Holocaust narrative.

The film version of *The Pianist* follows the life of Szpilman from 1939 to 1945, beginning and ending with him playing the piano. He is introduced to the audience as an assured character who does not let the ensuing chaos of the fall of Warsaw interrupt his recital until a shell hits the radio station where he is playing. The soundtrack predominately features the works of the Polish national icon Frederick Chopin, as a reminder of the destruction of Polish culture in the hands of the occupying Germans as well as a constant reminder of Szpilman's profession and high culture status.[95] As the shell debris hits Szpilman playing Chopin, it becomes symbolic of the beginning of the destruction of Polish culture by the Nazis. At the end of the war, Szpilman returns to Polish Radio and plays the piece he had been interrupted playing at the beginning of the occupation and thus symbolically restores Polish culture with him. Hosenfeld meanwhile is imprisoned by the Soviet Army. The final scene was shot in the Warsaw Philharmonic Hall with Szpilman accompanying on the piano in front of a full orchestra in a scene that celebrates the success of Szpilman and ultimately the culture that mentally and physically saved him.

The linear narrative and uplifting ending has seen this German co-production employ traditional Hollywood techniques to positive acclaim. The film serves to reinforce the ambiguous nature of the supposed rescuers and more importantly the depths that Szpilman went to in order to survive. Thus, the film's focus is not on a tale of German rescue, but a tale of Jewish-Polish survival. The critics such as Christos Tsiolkas fall into the assumption that Władysław Szpilman, the central protagonist, was only saved because it is "Szpilman's ability to play wonderful music that moves the Officer,"[96] the officer being Wilm Hosenfeld.

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[95] Portuges 2003: 623.
[96] Tsiolkas 2010.

4.2 A Transformative Moment

Wilm Hosenfeld was born into a Catholic family in Hessen, Germany. He served as a soldier in World War One and then became a teacher until drafted into the *Wehrmacht* at 43 in August 1939. He spent the majority of the war as a sports and culture officer, rising to captain by 1944. Joining the National Socialist party in 1935, Hosenfeld's diaries reveal his disillusionment with the regime and disgust at the war crimes committed against Poles, Jews and the clergy:

> These animals. With horrible mass murder of the Jews we have lost this war. We have brought an eternal curse on ourselves and will be forever covered with shame. We have no right for compassion or mercy; we all have a share in the guilt. I am ashamed to walk in the city.[97]

Hosenfeld was taken prisoner by the Soviet Army in January 1945. On 7 May 1950, a military tribunal sentenced him to 25 years in prison for his personal interrogation of prisoners during the Warsaw Uprising. As his claim to saving Jews was not believed by the Russians, he was also repeatedly tortured and died two years later. Casting Thomas Kretschmann as Hosenfeld also adds a greater depth to *The Pianist* as he had escaped from the GDR in 1983. At nineteen, he ran over the border from Hungary to Yugoslavia, and then went on to Austria. It also created a greater affinity between Polanski and Kretschmann as they both were compelled to leave their home countries because of the regime they were living under. Hosenfeld's character has changed dramatically from the memoir. In the memoir, the reader understands Hosenfeld to be a sympathetic character that did not only feed and shelter Szpilman, he also did the same for other Jewish families. In the film, however, he has become more cool and calculating as an opportunist who only assisted Szpilman as a result of his position to see that the war was lost and he would potentially need a character reference to survive the Soviet takeover and perhaps gain a *persilschein.*[98] This can be assumed by the audience at the end of the film as he is detained as a prisoner of war and asks a former Jewish camp inmate to find Szpilman and for his help. Szpilman is too late and the

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[97] Yad Vashem 2012.
[98] A *persilschein* is the colloquial term given to the de-Nazification papers that were issued after the war.

intertitle before the credits informs the audience that Hosenfeld died in a Soviet prisoner of war camp.

It has been considered that the reference to Hosenfeld's death under Stalin "does not raise questions of moral equivalency between Hitler's and Stalin's regimes so much as it insists we remember that large-scale inhumanity did not end with the Third Reich."[99] In addition, it can also be interpreted as a tribute to the officer who assisted Szpilman in his survival as Hosenfeld was only officially recognised for his efforts seven years after the film's release by Yad Vashem. The film portrays a perceived short period of time between Hosenfeld's internment and Szpilman going to where the Soviet camp was located, and with it presents a sense of immediacy to the audience that Szpilman must have just missed him before Hosenfeld had been absorbed into the Soviet prison camp network. In reality Szpilman only learned of Hosenfeld's situation in 1950 from another of Hosenfeld's rescued Jews, Leon Warm, who wrote to Szpilman after being informed by a priest about Hosenfeld's situation as he had been in a POW camp with Hosenfeld. Both Warm and Szpilman were unable to get him released. If Warm was to be in the film, it would have changed the character of Hosenfeld from a man changed by Szpilman introducing him to Polish culture through music, to a classic rescuer figure, like Schindler, thus negating the story. It also would have changed who notified Szpilman of Hosenfeld's fate from that of a Jewish cultured musician, and thus negate the presentation of high culture creating a good or heroic person.

Hosenfeld in the memoir is presented in the chapter entitled *Nocturne in C sharp minor*, named after the piece that Szpilman played to Hosenfeld when they met, thus emphasising the importance of music to Szpilman and Hosenfeld. Szpilman was discovered by Hosenfeld while rummaging for food in an abandoned flat in Warsaw. Hosenfeld, upon meeting him, asked what his profession was, to which Szpilman replied that he was a pianist.[100] Being suspicious of Szpilman, Hosenfeld asked him to play the piano. Once it was confirmed to Hosenfeld that Szpilman was indeed a pianist, he was immediately prepared to assist him. Once he realised that he was also Jewish he helped him find a more secure hiding spot in the attic of the building and proceeded to give him food and news about Soviet advances over the course of the month that

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[99] Morrison, James. *Roman Polanski.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007. Print. Here 105.
[100] Szpilman 2002: 177.

Hosenfeld and his troop were stationed in that house.[101] Hosenfeld is presented as having a quiet and shy demeanour. The use of language in this passage such as "ashamed," "flushed" and "usual smile, half deprecating, half shy and embarrassed" to describe Hosenfeld reveals that he was an ordinary person lacking in confidence and charisma and thus makes his efforts to help Szpilman evade capture and feed him appear even more extraordinary. His character as presented in the memoir, however, changes for the film.

Hosenfeld is shown to be a source of fear for Szpilman before he is even presented on screen. Szpilman is rummaging around an abandoned house and music is heard. It is the German composer Ludwig van Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata (Piano Sonata No. 14 in C# Minor, Opus 27 No. 2). Upon hearing this music Szpilman flees to hide in the attic. When it is quiet, Szpilman resumes his quest for food, targeting a can of gherkins which loosens from his grasp and rolls to the feet of Hosenfeld. The camera makes a slow pan from the gherkins, then lingers on the gun holster, and ends on Hosenfeld's face. The mixture of the previous sound of the music with the subtle camera work creates a sense of menace and provides the impression that the Germans have invaded. The script which only describes Hosenfeld as "The German Officer" is characterised as "stern", "expressionless" and "a handsome, elegant man."[102]

Hosenfeld's original response of "I've no intention of doing anything to you" to Szpilman's invitation "Do what you like to me. I'm not moving from here"[103] has changed to Hosenfeld beckoning Szpilman into another room. There lies a piano with Hosenfeld's hat and coat on it, insinuating that it was Hosenfeld that played the sonata. Hosenfeld orders Szpilman to play the piano and as Szpilman moves to the piano the camera again lingers on Hosenfeld's holster. The affect-meaning that this imagery produces is that the quiet man that is in the memoir has become a man with a threatening demeanour and a dark charisma. Using the formal 'Sie' rather than 'du' form in the film presents respect to Szpilman by Hosenfeld as calling a stranger 'du' would be insulting. However, it also presents the authority that Hosenfeld has over

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[101] Ibid: 178-181.
[102] Harwood, Ronald. "*The Pianist* Final Draft, 1998." *Dailyscript.com*. N.p. 29 Jan. 2012. Web. <http://www.dailyscript.com/scripts/ThePianist.pdf>. 26 Sep. 2014. Here 83-84.
[103] Ibid: 177.

Szpilman's future as Hosenfeld becomes reminiscent of portrayals of concentration camp guards as they wield their authority over their victims. Hosenfeld also calls Szpilman *Jude* until he asks during their final meeting what Szpilman's name is, significantly changing their relationship as illustrated in the memoir. Szpilman is so grateful to Hosenfeld in the memoir for hiding and feeding him for weeks that he volunteers his name to him so that if there is any way he can repay him in the future he could find him. In the film, however, it appears that Hosenfeld wants Szpilman's name so he can use him to provide future testimony about his conduct during the war. It is implied as he tells Szpilman, "Don't thank me. Thank God. It's his will that we should survive. Well. That's what we have to believe." Hosenfeld is later seen in the film in Soviet captivity while streams of Holocaust camp survivors go past him, stopping occasionally to heckle the German prisoners. It would appear that Hosenfeld would have been complicit in the camp system as there is no other logical reason for him, and his troops, to be captured so close to a liberated camp. As he stops to ask a passing Jewish musician to find Szpilman to help him, it reinforces the idea that he had only assisted Szpilman for his own gains and his own survival.

Besides the opportunistic nature now presented in the film, there a revelatory or transformative scene has also been added. Although it is based on the memoir that does describe Hosenfeld upon meeting Szpilman asking him to play the piano, with the removal of Hosenfeld's intention, the audience now experiences more ambiguity surrounding Hosenfeld's actions. Polanski changes the point-of-view from Szpilman to Hosenfeld in this scene, thus giving the audience an opportunity to identify with someone other than Szpilman. In it, the audience can see Szpilman has retained the ability to perform life-changing music. The change of perspective to that of a perpetrator is similar to the technique in *Schindler's List* where the perspective is often from the German (perpetrator and complicit) character's point of view, forcing identification of the power these characters had over the Jews. The same is done here but with a different result; instead of gaining empathy with the heroic German, like Schindler, where his motivation is a desire to do good, the film presents Hosenfeld's desire to exploit Szpilman, thus forcing the audience to consider whether they too would potentially be exploitative, thus his character has changed from a heroic German to an ambiguous hero.

In this scene, the camera slowly pans and stops focused on Hosenfeld's face as he visibly becomes transformed into a rescuer rather than a perpetrator as a result of the educative nature of Szpilman's recital. However, the body language is confusing as Hosenfeld sits leaning forward while swallowing hard thus displaying his interest as well as discomfort of the situation. The film has changed the piece by Chopin from the Nocturne to the ballade No.1 in G minor. This is a piece that is considered to be Chopin's most iconic as well as the most difficult to play. The actual Nocturne that Szpilman played to Hosenfeld, that arguably saved his life, was also played by Natalia Karp, a Holocaust survivor where, in reality, she played it to Amon Goeth; he was so impressed with her recital that he spared her life.[104] The fact that Hosenfeld was already a designated heroic German by Szpilman is explicit in the memoir rather than the transformed character that Polanski has presented in film.

This transformation could be seen first as opportunistic, or as with Dorota, Szpilman's fictional love interest, that education and culture can transform the character from the potential perpetrator into that of a saviour. This, however, is a stereotype about Holocaust perpetrators, bystanders and rescuers as there has not been anything to prove the assumption that education and exposure to culture would have prevented the Holocaust. This scene can also be contrasted with *Schindler's List* where the SS are performing an Aktion in the Krakow Ghetto where an officer stops to play classical music on an abandoned Jewish piano much to the approval of his fellow SS men. It has been a common misconception that classical music or high culture could have a positive influence on perpetrators. For example, it is known that Hans Frank, the governor-general of the Eastern territories, was a classical music aficionado. This, however, did not prevent him from committing crimes against humanity.[105] In other words, the broader issue or popular belief that high culture would act as a motivator not to commit crimes persists, and was extended in the creation in *The Pianist* of a fictional Polish rescuer character trope, Szpilman's love interest Dorota. For example, Dorota risks a great deal in being part of the underground network in Poland due to the severe

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[104] Charters, David. "Natalia Karp." *Liverpool Daily Post*. N.p. 2008. Web. <https://archive.is/xEzCR>. 4 Mar. 2011.

[105] Hartman, Geoffrey. "Is an Aesthetic Ethos Possible? Night Thoughts after Auschwitz." *Cardozo Studies in Law and Literature*. 6.2 (1994): 135 – 155. Print. Here: 149.

consequences such as the death penalty to her and her family if caught. It is her education and exposure to culture that resonates with the audience as the reasons for her willingness to help those being persecuted. This connection of Dorota to music and high culture as a motivation for her resistance actions was also achieved in *Rosenstraße* with the lead character Lena Fischer, a gentile German, a Prussian aristocrat and concert pianist who relentlessly protests to get her husband back, while also harbouring a young Jewish girl. It is her association with high culture that is presented as part of her anti-Nazi status. This dubious theme and underlying assumption emphasised the idea of culture creating a sense of education and morally good characters (this has persisted and continues to be used in character development, for example the righteousness of the character of Schultz in *Django Unchained*) and will be explored further in Chapter Two.

As to other aspects of *The Pianist*'s authenticity, omitting Szpilman's efforts to have Hosenfeld recognised by Yad Vashem in the 1990s in the narrative of the film also changes Hosenfeld's character into an opportunist and ambiguous rescuer rather than a righteous gentile like Schindler. The film's last intertitles state that Szpilman continued to live in Warsaw until his death and finally that "The name of the German officer was Captain Wilm Hosenfeld. All that is known is that he died in a Soviet prisoner – of – war camp in 1952." The film does not present the fact that it was known from the book that Hosenfeld rescued more Jewish people than just Szpilman or that he was recognised as a rescuer figure; consequently by choosing to reflect on his death in a Soviet camp means the film only partially expresses his motivation. Thus he too remains an ambiguous German hero.

This chapter has started to expose the mechanisms underlying a paradigm shift: the broaching of the acceptability to discuss German heroes in both an American and European setting, and thus a change in perception. This paradigm shift is not instantaneous but is developmental. It has been uncovered by tracing the details between adaptations that emergence from *Schindler's Ark* to *The Pianist*. The heroic German has been primarily a male figure who has been discussed and represented solely in relation to the rescue of Jews during the fascist period and the Holocaust. This figure is still, at this point in the historiography, represented ambiguously and is complicit with the National Socialist regime. However, these character constraints have not prevented this trope from being accepted internationally.

While Holocaust films in general, as defined by Doneson, included Jewish persecution from 1933 to the last of the concentration camps, which were liberated in 1945,[106] the next chapter is an extension of this definition as it argues that any film that engages with the Holocaust or the memory of the Holocaust is a Holocaust film. This means that the film *The Reader*, which is based in the post-Holocaust period that engages with Holocaust survivor testimony and post-war trials is defined as part of the filmic Holocaust canon. Chapter Three will develop the argument that the filmic adaptation process also necessarily manifests through a-typical narrative shifts, for example in the character trope the German heroine. This female historical character is rarely presented in film and when it is, it is to the detriment of the complexity of such characters. This is shown through an analysis of the characters in *Aimée & Jaguar* and *The Reader*.

[106] Doneson 2002: 6.

Chapter Three

A-typical narratives and the Turn of the Women: Lilly Wust and Hanna Schmitz from Page to Screen

In the previous chapter, first instances of the good German character based on a German rescuer of Jews were discussed in order to show that without *Schindler's List* the subsequent and shifting representations of the heroic German could not have been made. This chapter reveals the beginnings of a tentative exploration of female history and ambiguous German heroines. When first selecting film case studies for this thesis, it became apparent that male-centric history was receiving widespread critical acclaim, success and focused academic study. The films chosen for this chapter were also required to be critical successes like their male-centric counterparts. However, it is generally the case that popular films about the past and the Holocaust in particular remain in the realms of male history. From 1990 to 2011, out of a total of 59 German and 80 American war films, including co-productions, Germany released 21 concentrating on the Holocaust and America 40. Only six German and five American films directly engage with this history from a woman's perspective.[1] The films in this chapter were chosen and categorised as a-typical not just because they feature a German hero, which in itself is an a-typical narrative, but because women are at the core of the story.

The narrative developments analysed in this chapter relate to two characters: the real person Lilly Wust and the fictional character Hanna Schmitz. The presentation of these characters in print has changed through filmic adaptations, from: Erica Fischer's biography about Wust entitled *Aimée & Jaguar: Eine Liebesgeschichte, Berlin 1943* to Max Färberböck's film *Aimée & Jaguar*; and from Bernard Schlink's novel *Der*

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[1] The German films include *Nirgendwo in Afrika*, *Rosenstraße*, *Sophie Scholl – Die letzten Tage*, and *Anonyma – Eine Frau in Berlin* (Dir. Max Färberböck. 2008). The American films include *The Devil's Arithmetic* (Dir. Donna Deitch. 1999), *Anne Frank the Whole Story* (Dir. Robert Dornhelm. 2001), *Out of the Ashes* (Dir. Joseph Sargent. 2003), and *The Courageous Heart of Irena Sendler* (Dir. John Harrison. 2009). The lists have been taken from "List of Holocaust films" and "List of World War II films" available on Wikipedia.

Vorleser to Stephen Daldry's film, *The Reader*.[2]

Focusing on these a-typical narratives reveals whether denial or negative revisionism is indeed occurring or whether instead, as argued by Zehfuss, these original interpretations of the Holocaust are encouraging debate and memorialisation of the past. This chapter provides further evidence that there appears to be ongoing development or a paradigm shift in the way that the Holocaust and fascism are being remembered in film. Thus far, the films discussed range from 1933-1945; *The Reader* differs as it engages with post-war responses to this period through Holocaust survivor testimony and post-war trials. *Aimée and Jaguar* is also framed in and by contemporary Germany.

This chapter also continues to build on previous studies of the cinematic representations of the past in both the U.S. and Germany as it investigates various transnational adaptation processes between the two cultures. For example, Horton and Magretta contend that Hollywood has made adaptation a commercial process, a kind of industrial recycling which turns literary best-sellers into another form of best-seller, while European directors use adaptation for essentially artistic and personal motivations.[3] It could be argued that the former motivations are the case as far as Daldry's film *The Reader* is concerned. However, both Schlink's novel in its original form and Janeway's translation have remained more popular than Daldry's film. While Schlink's novel provoked much academic criticism, newspaper reviews can provide a more general indication of reader reception. *The New York Times*, for example, saw *The Reader* as "an arresting, philosophically elegant, morally complex book" and "a tale that seems to bear with it the weight of truth".[4] It is generally regarded that Janeway's English translation of Schlink's original novel would not have come to popular attention or have become a best-seller in the U.S., had it not been featured on the Oprah Winfrey show, which legitimatised its widespread appeal.[5] Schlink's novel made its commercial

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[2] Fischer, Erica. *Aimée & Jaguar: Eine Liebesgeschichte, Berlin 1943/Aimée and Jaguar: A Love Story, Berlin 1943*. Trans. Edna McCown. London: Bloomsbury, 1996. Print.; *Aimée und Jaguar/Aimée and Jaguar* Dir. Max Färberböck. Perf. Johanna Wokalek, Juliane Köhler and Maria Schrader. Senator Film, 1999. DVD.; Schlink, Bernhard. *The Reader*. Trans. Carol Brown Janeway. London: Orion Books Ltd, 1997. Print.; and *The Reader*. Dir. Stephen Daldry. Perf. Kate Winslet, Ralph Fiennes. Weinstein Company, 2008. DVD.

[3] Horton and Magretta 1981: 4.

[4] Bernstein, Richard. "'Once Loving, Once Cruel, What's Her Secret?' Rev. of *The Reader*, by Bernhard Schlink." *New York Times*. N.p.20 Aug. 1997. Web. <http://www.nytimes.com/1997/08/20/books/once-loving-once-cruel-what-s-her-secret.html>. 16 Jan. 2013.

[5] I refer to Schlink's novel, which I quote in Janeway's translation, as *Der Vorleser*, in order to distinguish it from Daldry's film, which was released as *The Reader*.

breakthrough as *The Reader* rather than in the original German as *Der Vorleser.*[6] Conversely, while Fischer's biography *Aimée & Jaguar: Eine Liebesgeschichte, Berlin 1943* received acclaim by critics and was widely read, Färberböck's film *Aimée & Jaguar* became an international cult classic at an artistic and commercial level that significantly outstrips the status of the English translation of the biography.

Unlike Spielberg and Polanski, however, Färberböck and Daldry did not explore their own personal issues with the Holocaust. It could be argued, instead, that they were motivated by commercial interests to make these films rather than it being their intention to explore issues relating to women's history and memory of the Holocaust. These issues were introduced by Spielberg with *Schindler's List* where the portrayal of women was relegated to faceless victimhood or mise-en-scène parts in the cinematic depiction of the Holocaust. As this chapter endeavours to argue, woman's narrative is frequently subsidiary to male stories and that women were also heroes or perpetrators is ignored. *Aimée & Jaguar* and *The Reader* are thus able to present to a mainstream audience hitherto unknown aspects of women's history that can potentially counter the popular mainstream focus on male-centric history. More specifically, *Aimée & Jaguar* and *The Reader* explore not only the notions of the woman as resistor, bystander and perpetrator but also sexuality.

The portrayal of a sense of remoteness from the Holocaust and the diminishing of the realities of the Holocaust as represented in *Heimat* (1984) (discussed in the Introductory chapter), also form the basis of two common themes in this chapter. Specifically, German and in part European films like *Aimée & Jaguar* present this remoteness or distance from the Holocaust, while the Anglo-American (more Hollywood(esque)) productions such as *The Reader* continue to engage with the Holocaust in a similar manner to *Holocaust* (1978). Remoteness (and the diminishing of the Holocaust) has been caused by emphasis being placed on the persecution of a lesbian rather than lesbian-Jewish persecution in *Aimée & Jaguar.* In contrast *The Reader,* does not disengage but "confronts the perspective of the perpetrators of the Holocaust with its victims".[7] As with the heroic gentile resistors in *Schindler's List* and *John Rabe* (see Chapter Four), the gentile resistor (in this chapter female) shifts from

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[6] Wroe, Nicholas. "Reader's Guide to a Moral Maze". *The Guardian.* N.p. 9 Feb. 2002. Web. <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/feb/09/fiction.books>. 3 Feb. 2012.
[7] Holtschneider 2001: 63.

the foreground to place emphasis on the other protagonists: in *Aimée & Jaguar* the shift is from Jewish to gentile lesbian victims, and in *The Reader* the shift is to a gentile German young adult.

Aimée & Jaguar and *The Reader* set precedents for a woman's engagement not only with the Holocaust but also with sexuality and the past through a factual and fictional perspective, respectively. This a-typical woman character is usually marketed as the joint lead protagonist in the films and thus offers a different perspective and role to the male hero (as considered in the previous and following chapters). Victim and, debatably, survivor character tropes are also used in the narrative of *Aimée & Jaguar* and *The Reader* to authorise flashbacks to the past from contemporary Germany. Unlike the male-centred films analysed in this thesis, *Aimée & Jaguar* and *The Reader* do not adhere to the traditional Hollywood narrative by providing Elisabeth 'Lilly' Wust or Hanna Schmitz with either a buddy character or a villain to be pitted against. Instead, at various levels they are vying against their lovers. In the case of Wust, there is a further memory contest over the trope of the German heroine as portrayed by the character Ilse.[8]

Unlike the other films in this thesis, *Aimée & Jaguar* and *The Reader* depict women's "melodrama", through which cinematic device Landy considers history can be accessed as the larger than life representation on film which produces a "moral universe" to the audience.[9] Melodramatic images of the National Socialist past and the Holocaust are, however, recycled often to the point of being "devoid of meaning".[10] Analysis of the complex character trope of the German heroine is thus a way to explore the moral compass by which audiences are guided through the complexities of a shifting moral universe. Helmut Schmitz argues that an increasingly melodramatic and individualised approach to history corresponds with "a renunciation of historical master narratives. This narrative shift facilitates globalisation of Holocaust memory, which inscribes the Holocaust as universal victim narrative into a (Western) transnational collective memory."[11] Schmitz proposes that the shift towards a German victim memory culture, as portrayed in the films in this chapter, is not specifically German but instead

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[8] Rothberg 2000: 229 and Bartov 1997: 48-9.
[9] Ibid: 50-1.
[10] Landy 2009: 49-50.
[11] Schmitz 2007: 6.

part of an ongoing trend towards an international victim culture. While it can be argued that there is a trend towards presenting the average German as a victim of the National Socialist regime, by focusing on the a-typical a critically analytical way to access a useable memory of this period is offered in this chapter.

Using the comparative methodology of Halle as well as Geisler's three step approach to analyse the selection of female focused films, it is possible to reveal the complex roles of female perpetrators and sites of queer resistance.[12] In particular, *Aimée & Jaguar* in its various adaptations provides a way in which to reveal possible ignorance on the part of adapters of the extent of suffering and the ways in which to memorialise or remember the past.

To expose and analyse the complexity of these adaption processes, including the diminishing of the women's narratives and thus roles, this chapter will first focus on Lilly Wust, the nominal Nazi. It will then move on to analyse how representations of this particular character changed, through the process of adaptation in order to create a more usable and valorised past. Specific details and decisions surrounding the adaptation of Fischer's *Aimée & Jaguar Eine Liebesgeschichte, Berlin 1943* to Färberböck's *Aimée & Jaguar* will then be analysed in order to uncover the degradation in the history and memory of Wust. Discussion can then focus on Hanna Schmitz as the fictional perpetrator, which will include analysis of the multiple readings of Schlink's *Der Vorleser* and finally reveal the perpetrator in Daldry's *The Reader.* Comparative analysis of Schlink and Daldry's characters shows that the ambiguity allows itself to encompass the anti-heroine character trope which, in turn, can be perceived as the sympathetic perpetrator. Through analysis of the various levels of character adaptation previously unexplored evidence of a shift in the representations of women in film is revealed. It also uncovers the complex route to acceptance of the perception as well as the portrayal of the heroic German.

1. Lilly Wust: the 'nominal Nazi'

Central to the arguments explored in this chapter is the portrayal of Elisabeth 'Lilly' Wust (1913–2006), whose character and historical story it will be shown were manipulated in the adaptation from print to screen. Although Wust's story presents new

[12] Halle 2008: 89-96 and Geisler 1985: 64-5.

insights and thus a broader understanding about the complex relations between Germans and Jews, it does it in a way that does not "attempt to unsettle [...] audiences or jar them",[13] making the past easily accessible (and therefore usable) to a wide mainstream audience. To achieve this accessibility, Wust's efforts to resist the Third Reich were diminished and her post-war history ignored completely.

The reality is more complex and ambiguous than the film. For example, during the Third Reich Wust was a nominal Nazi and initially complicit in the Nazi regime. She was in her 20s, married to a soldier, Günther, and won the Mutterkreuz (Mother's Cross) in bronze as she produced four male children. Günther's absence on the Eastern Front provided Wust with the opportunity to conduct affairs including with the Jewish woman, Felice Schragenheim (1922-1935), with whom she fell in love. Wust was able to harbour Schragenheim as her neighbours assumed from appearances that Wust was a true Nazi, and as a result Schragenheim and Wust thought they would be safe.

Schragenheim was a "U-boat", a term used to describe a Jewish person hiding as a non-Jewish person.[14] It can be argued that Wust and Schragenheim's relationship served as a catalyst for Schragenheim to be an active member of the resistance as Wust offered Schragenheim protection so that she could be an active member of the Jewish group. Wust was thus not only aware that Schragenheim was Jewish but also assisted with the resistance activities Schragenheim was undertaking.[15] Wust's status as a good Nazi mother and her mimicry of normative sexual relations made her and Schragenheim's oppositional activity and activism remain undetected before Wust's divorce.[16] After the divorce, Wust's family were made aware by her that she was a lesbian, however, her neighbours still did not know. Much of this history is either excluded or ignored in the film version.

During the last purge of Jews from Berlin (1943-1944), Schragenheim was eventually captured and Wust was interrogated for many hours by the Gestapo for harbouring a Jewess, the consequences of which included the threat of having her children taken from her. During the interrogation, Wust did not give away any of

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[13] Brockman, Stephan. *A Critical History of German Film*. New York: Camden House, 2010. Print. Here 421.
[14] A 'U-Boat' is a metaphorical term as the Jews were submerged and hid by walking the streets and stayed in friends or helper's houses.
[15] Fischer 1996: 107-111.
[16] Erhart, Julia. "From Nazi Whore to Good German Mother: Revisiting Resistance in the Holocaust Film." *Screen* 41.4 (2000): 389 – 403. Print. Here 392-3 and 397.

Schragenheim's Jewish friends or underground contacts and signed a document stating that she deserved to be in a concentration camp herself. It was because her four children were dependent on her that Wust was allowed to remain free. This was on the condition that, if there was to be any further impropriety (be it her sexuality, her challenge to hausfrau gender norms, and her sympathising with the Jewish cause), Wust would be imprisoned.[17] It is extraordinary that, given the threat to her and her children's safety, Wust went on to harbour three more Jewish lesbians (Dr. Katja Laserstein, Dr. Rose Ollendorf and Lucie Friedlaender). While the resistance Wust engaged in by harbouring Schragenheim was solely motivated by love, the successful harbouring of three more Jewish women after Schragenheim's capture was not thus motivated, but was undertaken at even more risk to herself and her family. As the film focuses primarily on the love as a motivating factor, Wust's safe harbouring of other women is ignored and the film director's revisionist and diminished history amplifies the women's melodramatic love story.

After Schragenheim was caught by the Gestapo, starting on 21 August 1944, Wust visited every day and brought her food and clothing to ensure Schragenheim's survival. Wust even went so far as to obtain a visitor's permit from the Gestapo headquarters in order to keep delivering Schragenheim food. On 7 September 1944, Wust managed to obtain a final half hour in private with Schragenheim before she was deported the following day on the last transport from Berlin to Theresienstadt.[18]

As Wust had repeatedly visited Schragenheim before her deportation she resolved to see her also in Theresienstadt. On the 27 September 1944 Wust obtained a travel permit and undertook the lengthy journey to Theresienstadt with food and clothes. She got as far as Theresienstadt headquarters by presenting her Mutterkreuz certificate to every guard while demanding to see the *Oberscharführer* and Schragenheim.[19] She was eventually turned back without seeing Schragenheim. This was a brave and desperate attempt to prolong the life of her lover by providing her with goods which she needed. Schragenheim's friends condemned Wust's actions, reasoning that the visits may have brought Schragenheim unwanted attention, although there is nothing to substantiate their concerns. Schragenheim was deported to Auschwitz with the closure

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[17] Fischer 1996: 225-6.
[18] Ibid: 179-84.
[19] Ibid: 194.

of Theresienstadt and then sent to Gross-Rosen. In February 1948, Schragenheim was declared legally dead.[20] It is unclear when or what was the exact cause of Schragenheim's death, with speculation ranging from tuberculosis to death on a forced march from Gross-Rosen to Bergen-Belsen. While none of Wust's efforts could have resulted in Schragenheim's death, Wust still led a lifetime of guilt for not being able to save her lover.

Life for Wust after the war continued to be difficult, as she faced years of accusations from Schragenheim's friends. Wust also became alienated from her German neighbours and friends for sheltering Jewish women. Wust suffered depression, an excessive guilt being a core symptom of this illness, thus she was unable to support herself and lived in relative poverty. Wust's actual post-war life has been excluded from Färberböck's film, including her conversion to Judaism, which decisions on the filmmaker's part again serve to diminish the personal and socio-sexual-political impact of the relationship with Schragenheim upon her life. These omissions and revisions provide further evidence of how a paradigm shift, from the heroic German to German heroine character tropes, comes about through development of several micro-shifts in the portrayal of women.

The reality is: it was not until 1981, after Wust's son, Bernd, had contacted the Government about his mother's efforts that Wust was awarded with the Federal Order of Merit (*Bundesverdienstkreuz*)[21] for sheltering the Jewish women. Unwilling to draw attention to herself Wust did not tell friends that she was receiving the award. Instead, and although media interest was rife, she continued to refuse to discuss the events. The response to this award from her neighbours was to distance themselves even further from Wust, and the response of Neo-Nazis was to urinate and smear her door with faeces.[22] In 1995, Wust was recognised by Yad Vashem, as one of the Righteous Among the Nations.[23] Officially recognised as an active resistor to National Socialism,

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[20] Goldenberg, Myrna. "Review '*From a World Beyond': Women in the Holocaust Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust* by Carol Rittner; John K. Roth; *Auschwitz and after* by Charlotte Delbo; Rosette C. Lamont; *Outwitting the Gestapo* by Lucie Aubrac; Konrad Bieber; Betsy Wing; *Aimée and Jaguar: A Love Story, Berlin 1943* by Erica Fisher; Edna McCown; *To Paint Her Life: Charlotte Salomon in the Nazi Era* by Mary Lowenthal *Felstiner; A Scrap of Time and Other Stories* by Ida Fink." *Feminist Studies* 22.3 (1996): 667 – 687. Print. Here 679.

[21] Association of Jewish Refugees in Great Britain 1982: 10.

[22] Connolly, Kate. "The doomed affair that inspired a touching film." *The Guardian*. N.p. 30 Jun. 2001. Web. <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2001/jun/30/books.guardianreview>. 3 Feb. 2012.

[23] Yad Vashem 2011.

Wust's individual actions after her life with Schragenheim continued to be ignored by Schragenheim's friends who denied Wust's suffering and any of her good efforts.[24]

Wust and Schragenheim's relationship and lives were made more widely known to a transnational audience as a result of Färberböck's film *Aimée & Jaguar*. The book by Austrian feminist writer and journalist, Erica Fischer, has been translated into eleven languages. It had undergone several reprints in German by the time of Färberböck's film's release in 1998.[25] The film is thus evidence of interest in the story, which it further stimulated. The biography itself is composed of a series of interviews, poems and correspondence between Wust and Schragenheim with historical information supplied by Fischer to place their love story in a historical context. Fischer herself is highly critical of Wust, which created serious tensions between the two of them. Fischer denied that Wust had suffered years of torment, as a result of which Wust had turned to the Jewish community as she viewed herself as a victim. Fischer is descended from Jewish Holocaust victims on her mother's side, which meant that she identifies herself with Schragenheim and saw Wust as stealing or appropriating her identity as a victim. This victimhood is a status that Fischer actively did not grant Wust especially because Wust converted to Judaism after the war. [26] Fischer challenged Wust to acknowledge her *Mitläufer* identity and thus her complicity with other gentile German perpetrators.[27]

Wust's identity appropriation can and does manifest itself at various levels, and how this appears in filmic character tropes is considered in depth when analysing the adaptation of Fischer's biography to screen. For example, one of the central features of Fischer's biography is that the reader is constantly reminded that the memory of Schragenheim is vulnerable to Wust's narcissism and ego. To balance what she sees as Wust's projections, Fischer repeatedly keeps readers mindful that Wust's account is not the only memory of Schragenheim and consults the differing memories of Schragenheim's friends to create a fuller picture. Through the use of other witnesses' memories of Schragenheim, Wust's account of the love affair was thus not allowed by Fischer to be turned into the instrument of Wust's self-redemption.

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[24] Cormican, Muriel. ""*Aimée und Jaguar*" and the Banality of Evil." *German Studies Review* 26.1 (2003): 105 – 119. Print. Here 177.
[25] Ten editions in German from 1994-2005 and in English six from 1996-2011. Editions in English have included two since the film's release and two also in German in the wake of the popularity of the film.
[26] Sieg, Katrin. "Dis/Identification: Sexual Desire and Social Transformation in *Aimée & Jaguar*." *Signs* 28.1 (2002): 303 – 331. Print. Here 307.
[27] Fischer 1996: 271.

Färberböck relies on Fischer's biography for his filmic adaptation *Aimée & Jaguar*, and Fischer's criticism has filtered into Färberböck's construction of a diminished representation of Wust. This portrayal limitation is despite the fact that Fräberböck contacted Wust and used information supplied by her in the making of the film. The film portrayal of Wust as an eighty-year old is still not accurate, nor are her resistance actions after Schragenheim's death.

Notwithstanding these limitations in Wust's portrayal, Färberböck's film and Fischer's biography are regarded as part of the increased German interest in Jewish culture, and the desire by Germans for a normalised identity. To achieve this more usable and valorised past, the film industry as a whole returned to the Holocaust and Third Reich to explore a symbolic reunion between the German and the Jew. This was also a feature of the German film *Operation Walküre*, as the German hero and resistor Stauffenberg had to be seen to engage and actively acknowledge the Holocaust (discussed in depth in Chapter Four).

This process of shifting and appropriation of identity has been made possible by focussing on individuals in the Reich and their relationships. In Wust's case, the identity, and thus memory, shift is to the perspective of a lesbian love story the representation of which is at the expense of the complexity of the lives and loves and thus pasts of the two individual women. The focus on these women's sexual desires not only displays an accessible romantic story, but can also be viewed as part of the working through of on-going relations between past victims and perpetrators. To this end, love is pushed to the forefront and is established as the primary motivation behind an individual's participation or resistance to the regime, as well as part of the struggle to come to terms with the National Socialist past in contemporary Germany. Färberböck's film thus celebrates love as an "expression of cross-cultural understanding and social harmony".[28] The origins and processes that led to the Third Reich and the anti-Semitic values promoted in wartime German society are, however, diminished and made remote as these realities are pushed to the background of Wust's story.

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[28] Hake, Sabine. *German National Cinema*. London: Routledge, 2002. Print. Here 183.

1.1 Adaptation Decisions: from Fischer to Färberböck

Opening in 1999 at the Berlin Film Festival, Färberböck's *Aimée & Jaguar* includes elements of the traditional heritage film; its lavish budget indicates its ambitions of becoming a mainstream film. *Aimée & Jaguar* is also a contribution to the cinematic discourse and debate surrounding the representation of the Holocaust as part of the heritage film wave in 1990s Germany. The German heritage film, which is based on the British heritage film model, is a film with high production values, well-known German actors, a traditional narrative and historically accurate costumes.[29] The film achieved limited success both domestically and internationally, but has remained a classic film for study, as a result of the remarkable true story.[30] While *Aimée & Jaguar* only achieved a U.S. box office gross of $927,107[31] and 980,177 admissions in Germany it still won two Silver Bears at the Berlin Film Festival for the lead actresses Juliane Köhler (as Wust) and Maria Schrader (as Schragenheim). The appeal of both Färberböck's film and Fischer's original story has been the lesbian relationship between these two women. Focus is commonly placed by academics and reviewers on the a-typical love story between the two women that features not only a lesbian relationship during the Third Reich but a relationship further complicated by the fact that one of the lovers is a Nazi and the other a Jewish resistance fighter.

Along with exploring German-Jewish relations, *Aimée & Jaguar* thus presents the problems surrounding femininity and sexuality. Following in the discourse of lesbian films since 1990, Sabine Hake argues that *Aimée & Jaguar* presents new lifestyle choices which, by framing them in a historical setting, are not only contemporary issues. Alternative lifestyle choices include the portrayals of hedonism, narcissism and luxury, as the characters are relieved of the dominant ideology and politics that surrounds them and respond by presenting an obsessive optimism.[32] For example, adaptation decisions made by Färberböck mean that conflicts are reduced to being predominantly revealed through personal relationships as the protagonists both

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[29] Winkle, Sally. "Margarethe von Trotta's *Rosenstraße*: "Feminist Re-Visions" of a Historical Controversy". *A Companion to German Cinema.* Ed. Terri Ginsberg and Andrea Mensch. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2012: 429-461. Print. Here 437. The most popular German heritage film is the award winning film *Nirgendwo in Afrika.*

[30] Brockman 2010: 419.

[31] Box Office Mojo. "*Aimee and Jaguar.*" *Box Office Mojo.* N.p. N.d. Web. <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=aimeeandjaguar.htm>. 23 Apr. 2012.

[32] Hake 2002: 184.

strive for independence; yet also create the sense of belonging in a threatening environment.[33]

Färberböck's film is taught in both German and Anglo-American schools and universities as an example of lesbian relationships during the Third Reich. Katrin Sieg details that the women's sexual roles have been used as means of showing how relationships between lesbians have changed from the 1930s to 1990s. Specifically, the development of socially acceptable portrayals of the "femme" and the "butch"; or Wust and Schragenheim's relationship has been used as support for feminist, Marxist or queer theories and studies; as well as an example of German-Jewish relations during the Third Reich.[34] Although their relationship as lovers is important, the individual resistance and actions of the women and how they have been presented has not been explored in depth. The women's individual acts of resistance were triggered by personal attacks: for Schragenheim an attack on her Jewishness not her lesbian lifestyle; and for Wust it was a reaction against her efforts to protect Schragenheim and other Jewish women.

Färberböck's film reflects the narrowness of existing critical analysis. His decision to focus primarily on the lesbian love story means that the narrative is set predominantly from 1942-44, which is the period of Wust and Schragenheim's love affair. This filmic adaptation begins with Wust photographing Schragenheim playing with her children, and the film ends with Wust capturing on camera the spirit of Schragenheim with their friends. Färberböck's film also focuses on the character of Ilse,[35] Schragenheim's former lover, through whom Schragenheim and Wust meet. Ilse is the voice-over who is privy to more knowledge of Schragenheim than Wust, and this voice-over device (as well as flashbacks) is used to fill in the gaps in Wust's memory of Schragenheim's history. The use of Ilse as narrator has, however, confused critics who argue that the film places too much emphasis on a peripheral character whose sole purpose is to thread plot-hole gaps together in the post production editing.[36] This critique shows that there is misunderstanding as to the role of Ilse who also tells the audience an alternative narrative about Schragenheim, through her own memories

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[33] Ibid: 186.
[34] Sieg 2002: 321-27.
[35] The character of Ilse is an amalgamation of two characters, Elenai Pollack and Ilse Wolf. The role of this character as potentially the extraordinary German is discussed in detail later in this chapter.
[36] (n.n), Nancy. "*Aimée & jaguar.*" *Kissingfingertips lesbian film reviews.* N.p. (1999). Web.<http://www.kissingfingertips.com/jaguar.html>.23 Apr. 2012.

which can be characterised as "contextual memory" (which contextualising was originally provided by Fischer in her biography). Ilse thus provides a challenging alternative to Wust's personal memories.

Färberböck primarily presents Wust's story to the audience through a long flashback, which narrative was authorised (and portrayed in the film) by an elderly Wust. Turim argues that the flashback embodies the concept of "memory in its psychoanalytic and philosophical dimensions" and gives images to personal memories, thus merging two levels of remembrance: the large-scale socio-political history; and the individual's remembered experience.[37] Turim states that films in general tend to focus on the individual's personal history and their emotional experiences, thus employing techniques familiar to melodramatic films. Turim argues that the flashback offers an explanation from the past to the audience for the situation in the present and is a tool to represent memory to the audience. In *Rosenstraße*, for example, flashbacks are authorised by the elderly German woman Lena Fischer and are used to present what happened to the Jewish victim, Ruth Weinstein. Unlike *Aimée & Jaguar*, *Rosenstraße* also employs flashbacks through the victim, Weinstein, which are her traumatic recollections of the Holocaust. This is a method also used in *Sophie's Choice* (1982), as Zofia "Sophie" Zawistowski recalls her traumatic choices in Auschwitz. That Wust is the only person who can authorise the flashbacks is a reminder to the audience of the death of Schragenheim.

Other academic criticism of Färberböck's filmic decisions focuses on matters pertaining to queer studies, melancholia and German suffering. Seeing Wust as a metaphor for German suffering as well as Wust's authority in the creation and presentation of Schragenheim are considered to be examples of German-Jewish symbiosis whereby the reanimation of the victim, Schragenheim, is a form of asymmetrical heritage transfer.[38] This means that Wust becomes the survivor to tell of Schragenheim's past, which ignores the fact that, without Wust, Schragenheim could not be represented, and that in itself is a reminder that because of Jewish persecution under National Socialism, Schragenheim cannot tell her own story. The authorisation to

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[37] Turim 2009: 85-86.
[38] Koepnick, Lutz.1. "Reframing the Past: Heritage Cinema and Holocaust in the 1990s." *New German Critique.* 87 (2002): 47 – 82. Print. Here 50.

be able to tell of Schragenheim's story does not make Wust into a heroine but instead a figure of authenticity that gives credibility to the film.

There are few instances in Färberböck's film that present Jewish suffering, such as the rounding up of Jewish families in Berlin and the questioning of Schragenheim for not wearing her Star of David. Schragenheim and her friends' Jewish identity is displaced, as Schragenheim and her friends are often shown together participating in parties where their lesbian identities are brought to the fore rather than showing the audiences stereotypical image of Jews in hiding. Consequently, Schragenheim's Jewish identity is arguably lost in the adaptation to film and her persecution appears to be a consequence of her lesbianism rather than her Jewish heritage. Similar character shifts or revisionism happens to Wust, who appears to be more of a *Mitläufer*, or fellow traveller, rather than the heroine she historically was. Wust appears to be portrayed as being ignorant of the persecution of Jews and instead appears to be concerned about Schragenheim and her friends, as lesbians rather than Jews for the majority of the film.

Lutz Koepnick also argues that Wust and Schragenheim's love story is a form of German-Jewish solidarity.[39] However, with the focus on Schragenheim as a lesbian first and foremost, it would be accurate to call the story an example of German-lesbian solidarity. The film does engage with German-Jewish relations but it forces the audience to focus and identify with Wust, which can be argued to detract from the (Jewish) victim of the story, Schragenheim.[40] Muriel Cormican's evidence for this kind of belittling of Schragenheim and the consequent exaltation of Wust and other *Mitläufer* Germans, include what Cormican perceives to be acts of collaboration rather than acts of exploitation. For example, a bathroom scene in the Hotel Adlon shows a German woman approach Schragenheim to coerce her into buying her food ration coupons, as she has already rightly guessed that Schragenheim and her friends are Jewish. Viewing it as an act of collaboration, rather than exploitation, the scene is used to exemplify the acts of the average German who did not actively denounce Jewish U-boats.

This supposed diminishing of Schragenheim and Jewish persecution to bring Wust to the forefront of the story is a natural consequence of Färberböck's decision to use Wust's testimony in the creation of the film. On the other hand, if Wust has become the point of identification, then why is Wust portrayed on screen and through Ilse's

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[39] Koepnick 2002: 48.
[40] Cormican 2003:107.

voice-overs as a woman without substance, capricious, naïve, obtuse and unlikable? This chapter's exploration of the dominant discourse serves as an acknowledgment that this love story is a worthy example of lesbian resistance, which facilitates the development of arguments that contradict the dominant view that Schragenheim's story is diminished to the benefit of Wust. It can be thus argued that it is Färberböck's directorial (rather than the production group) decision to diminish and revise Wust's story that has led to the consequence of elevating Schragenheim's story and memory.

With Färberböck's decision to place Wust as the first point of entry into the film, the audience observes the day-to-day lives within the Third Reich from the perspective of what is originally thought of as a traditional Nazi mother. Women are traditionally stereotyped (in film) as gullible and weak, and in Färberböck's film they are also identifiable as victims who can diffuse questions regarding their roles in the Third Reich as well as reduce their guilt and responsibility. The presentation of Wust as a cinematically recognisable submissive woman supports the idea that she was not a traditional Nazi figure, as she has not invested in the regime like her husband Günther or many of the hypermasculine male figures in the film. With the film's emphasis on Wust's feminine naiveté as an excuse for her Nazi sympathies, when the audience is presented by Ilse conveying two anti-Semitic comments that Wust has supposedly made, the viewers are quick to dismiss them and consider them to be the result of Ilse's critical stance towards Wust, as a jealous former lover of Schragenheim.[41] In this way Färberböck endeavours to invite the audience to identify with Schragenheim. Wust's supposed anti-Semitic remarks are further tested when Färberböck makes the audience complicit in ridiculing Wust in order to expose her real lack of Nazi beliefs and allegiance to any Nazi racial and ideological theories in general. Having heard from Ilse that Wust claims to be able to "smell Jews", Schragenheim, at their first meeting, holds her wrist out towards Wust and asks if she can identify the smell. Of course, Wust cannot smell that Schragenheim is Jewish and can only smell French perfume. Wust's supposed anti-Semitism is seen to be ridiculous by the audience and the on-screen characters, for whom the Nazi ideology is seen to be meaningless. Ilse's comments about Wust also reveal a jealous fantasy on Ilse's part. Therefore, Wust's racist convictions are essentially erased in the film, suggesting that they were never really

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[41] Cormican 2003: 110.

serious to begin with, that she simply had no opinion. Even Schragenheim defends Wust and in shots shown from Schragenheim's perspective, Wust can be seen as the naïve, innocent, attractive, and coy hausfrau.

The dramatic presentation of Wust in Färberböck's film establishes the motivation for her rescue being for love rather than a political or moral act (as was the case for Schindler and later Rabe and Gerstein). This thesis argues that such portrayal diminishes Wust's rescue and resistance efforts to save Schragenheim and the other Jewish women in her care. This limited and thus devalued portrayal has led to critics and academics not being able to see the extent to which Wust is the heroine of the story as there is ambiguity surrounding her motivations. Wust's story has thus been revised to create a different type of usable past, one which, like Hosenfeld (see Chapter Two), has given emphasis to the victim Schragenheim over the rescuer figure Wust.

1.2 Choose Your Victim: Lesbian or Jew?

Where Wust was punished and suffered torment for not saving Schragenheim, and where Ilse is portrayed an ambiguous source of resistance, Schragenheim has been exalted. Cormican explains that Schragenheim has been adopted as a role model by gay rights and feminist groups due to her portrayal as an empowered liberated woman, a feminist who actively flaunted her homosexuality and an active resistor in a threatening and persecuting environment.[42] Yet these groups, Julia Erhart argues, view Schragenheim's resistance to National Socialism as based not on her Jewish background, but on her successful apprehension and flaunting of the codes of normative femininity.[43] Therefore lesbianism is historicised in relation to fascism, and Schragenheim's story has been conceptualised as a site of lesbian rather than Jewish anti-fascist resistance.[44] If lesbianism can be considered to be a site of anti-fascist resistance, then Wust too can automatically be viewed as a source of resistance and subversion and thus her sexuality could be part of her heroism.

Lesbians were vulnerable to being considered "asocial", for which status they could be incarcerated during the Third Reich, which meant that they had to adapt and

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[42] Cormican 2003: 112.
[43] Erhart 2000: 392.
[44] Sieg 2002: 314.

outwardly conform to the approved feminine norms in society. A woman's political, social and economic vulnerability increased, she could lose her job and was particularly at risk if she was involved in any resistance activities.[45] Heterosexual women, as well as lesbians, were also at risk if their clothing showed features that blurred the distinctions between the sexes; they were to be assumed to be signs that they were from a foreign race. In the book, film as well as real life, Schragenheim successfully presents herself as a feminine heterosexual apart from in the private sphere with Wust, where she adopts masculine clothing while still wearing full makeup, thus indicating that she is a soft butch.[46] Sieg argues that Schragenheim also presents a socially acceptable gender role within the contemporary lesbian community by being thus portrayed. She argues that the butch has been presented as a genuine homosexual and, as a result, her actions can be considered to be a form of gender resistance. Wust in contrast is considered to be a stereotype femme; she is viewed as fickle, unambitious and less intelligent.[47] For that reason, Wust is not portrayed as having the requisite characteristics of what is considered to be a socially acceptable lesbian.

Unlike male homosexuals, lesbians were not generally regarded as a social or political threat in the Third Reich.[48] This was because it was believed that women were inferior and dependent on men in all sectors of society. Not only that, a lesbian could still carry out a Nazi woman's primary role, which was to be the mother of as many Aryan babies as possible.[49]

Schragenheim's resistance is not a result of her lesbianism, however, but of her Jewishness. Rather, it is Wust who could be considered to be the site of lesbian resistance. Through her lesbian relationship with Schragenheim, Wust engaged in anti-fascist resistance as a reaction to her lover being a persecuted Jew, she could therefore be interpreted as the extraordinary German heroine. The decisions surrounding these adaptations of Fischer's *Aimée & Jaguar: Eine Liebesgeschichte, Berlin 1943* to Färberböck's *Aimée & Jaguar* are now analysed more fully below.

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[45] Horsley, Joey. "Review *Third Sex, Third Reich Days of Masquerade: Life Stories of Lesbians during the Third Reich by Claudia Schoppmann; Allison Brown; Aimée and Jaguar: A Love Story, Berlin 1943 by Erica Fischer; Edna McCown.*" *The Women's Review of Books.* 14.2 (1996): 9 – 11. Print. Here 10.
[46] Sieg 2002: 313. A soft butch is a woman who exhibits some of the stereotypical lesbian traits without adhering to the dominant masculine stereotype of a lesbian.
[47] Ibid: 319. She considers the work of Martin, Biddy. 1996. *Femininity Played Straight: The Significance of Being Lesbian.* New York: Routledge as part of her discussion on the femme and butch.
[48] Sieg 2002: 316.
[49] Goldenberg 1996: 678.

1.2.1 Ilse: The Gentile Heroine or Jewish Victim?

Unlike the male-centred films under discussion in this thesis, *Aimée & Jaguar* does not adhere to the traditional Hollywood narrative. Wust is observed and constantly challenged by Schragenheim's former lover, Ilse. The Ilse character trope represents that of a rival lover, not a Hollywood(esque) villain or buddy character. Her character is an amalgamation of other real characters and acts as a witness to the lovers' story. She exists in Fischer's account as "Inge Wolf". Katrin Sieg views *Aimée & Jaguar* as a melodrama that portrays the "'exceptional German" who, despite her best efforts, cannot save the persecuted friend she loves. This exceptional German is personified according to Sieg not by Wust, but by the fictional character, Ilse. [50] But, is Ilse really the German (gentile) heroine of the film and is Inge Wolf the heroine of the biography?

It is difficult to tell whether Wolf is a gentile German heroine or another Jewish U-boat like Schragenheim, but she must be one or the other. Wolf introduces the reader to Wust and Schragenheim through the perspective of an anti-fascist. The reader knows that she is 21 years of age and fulfilling her obligatory family service, has dark hair and eyes, her father had been a member of the German Communist Party, and she did not wear the Star of David (Schragenheim does not wear it either). A month before working for Wust, Schragenheim stayed for six months at Ilse's parent's house before moving in with Wust.[51] One could assume that Wolf was not a Jew but instead a gentile German, friend and former lover of Schragenheim.

So who is Ilse in Färberböck's film? Ilse is less clearly based on Wolf than one would first assume. His film is ambiguous in its portrayal of Ilse's Jewish or non-Jewish status. She can be viewed as a Jew also in hiding, as she takes part in the same underground work as Schragenheim, such as the semi-nude photographs to be sold to soldiers at the front, and she also appears to flee Germany along with the rest of Schragenheim's friends. It is more likely, however, that Ilse is based on the character Elenai Pollack, a Jewish U-boat who was also close to both Wolf and Schragenheim. Pollack was also with Schragenheim when her grandparents were deported to

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[50] Sieg 2002: 326.
[51] Fischer 1996: 1-2, 12, 84, 85 and 103.

Theresienstadt, and Pollack sheltered Schragenheim at her stepfather's house. It was also Pollack not Wolf that took part in the photograph session.[52]

Johanna Wokalek, who plays Ilse in Färberböck's film, may also be thought by the audience to be made up with stereotypical Jewish features, in particular, her dark hair and prominent nose. The audience are left unsure if she is also supposed to be leaving Germany because she is Jewish or lesbian. Although the audience is aware that Ilse is employed to complete her domestic year at Wust's home, it could be viewed as part of her cover if she were also a U-boat like Schragenheim. Färberböck's decision relating to the lack of certainty surrounding Ilse's character in the film also means there is uncertainty surrounding the motivation behind judgements she makes on the two lovers and, in particular, the criticism she directs at Wust.

If the audience perceives Ilse as a Jew, Sieg's argument cannot be sustained with respect to the film. More specifically, Sieg argues that Ilse, who she believes is based solely on Wolf, could be the "extraordinary German" and therefore the heroic German, both of which character tropes are in stark contrast to Cooke's ordinary German. Nor would Ilse, as Sieg argues, have been necessarily more objective as she knew Wust (her ex-employer) and Schragenheim (an ex-lover). Färberböck makes the decision to portray Ilse as being jealous of Wust because Schragenheim left her for Wust. Sieg argues that Ilse's acting as the voice-over for the film further reminds the audience that the events as they are portrayed on screen are the result of the testimony of those who survived Schragenheim. By necessity, Ilse's survivor's testimony eclipses Schragenheim's viewpoint, according to Sieg. Sieg further argues that Färberböck's film continues to present, and judge the lovers' actions fairly, as well as showing that Ilse's actions to defy the National Socialist state were out of the "goodness of her heart".

This thesis argues that Ilse cannot be the moral compass and thus the German heroine of the film. Not only is it unclear if she is Jewish or gentile, and therefore it is ambiguous if she could be the German heroine and/or the exceptional German, Ilse is also presented as the perpetually jealous girlfriend. The decisions made by Färberböck thus weave ambiguity throughout the film.

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[52] See Fischer 1996. 95, 99, 100, and 107.

There is no ambiguity about Wust being the wife of a Nazi officer, which status Ilse tries to highlight to the audience by referring to anti-Semitic comments which she says, objectively or not, were made by Wust.[53] To add complexity, Färberböck reunites Ilse with Wust when they talk about what happened to Schragenheim. Wust asks if Ilse continued her relationship with Schragenheim while Wust was with her. It is unclear if this conversation is taking place during or just after the war. At this point, Ilse does not answer her question but instead condemns Wust outright for visiting Schragenheim in Theresienstadt, believing that it would have brought her unwanted attention by the guards. Färberböck continues this lover's grudge into the film's post-reunification present day scenes, where Ilse still does not entirely forgive Wust for her wartime actions. When the elderly Wust asks "was it all my fault Ilse?", the equally elderly Ilse responds by pacifying her: "I used to be so sure Lilly but now I no longer know". With these words it appears that Ilse still does not regard Wust as a victim nor does Ilse allow Wust to believe herself to be a victim. Ilse reminds Wust that she is deceiving herself fifty years later, as she did during the war.

If Ilse is Jewish then there can be seen to be some reconciliation between the two women. This would mean that Wust, who Färberböck endeavours to portray as the heroine in his film, would also be recognised as a de facto German victim of anti-Semitism as a result of the loss of her Jewish lover. This portrayal decision could result in the audience identifying with a German victim (Wust) as well as a Jewish victim (Ilse). However, if Ilse is a gentile, using her to do the voiceover with condemnatory tones directed at Wust in order to diminish Wust's actions serves, perhaps subconsciously, as a subscript, to relay the message that German suffering does not equate with Jewish suffering. As a result, Färberböck's filmic decisions appear to be punishing Wust for her failure to save Schragenheim. In addition, the memory of the women's relationship is not viewed as providing the basis for German – Jewish reconciliation. The ending of the film, however, does provide a place and space for reflection. By using the contemporary elderly, who originally were complicit in the regime, Färberböck has made the decision to bridge a generational gap and generational silence, both of which are considered later in this chapter when analysing *Der Vorleser / The Reader*, in particular, Berg and his daughter's relationship.

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[53] Cormican 2003: 110.

The next section argues that Fischer's narrative decisions gave a much fuller portrait of Wust, who emerged as a more principled woman than her character's portrayal in Färberböck's film.

1.2.2 The Degradation of Wust

Although Fischer is highly critical of Wust, her biography contains 50 pages out of 274 that detail Wust's life after Schragenheim. These pages include Wust's interrogation by the Gestapo for sheltering Schragenheim; her sheltering three more Jewish women until the end of the war; her repeated rape by soldiers from the Soviet Army; her conversion to Judaism; her life in poverty; and finally the recognition for her efforts by the German government. These events and honours have all been excluded from Färberböck's film. The exclusion (and extent) of Wust's wartime resistance activities with Schragenheim which were prompted by her affair with Schragenheim also did not make it into the film. It is thus argued that the German heroine's personality, her actions and memory have been degraded and revised in Färberböck's film to the point that Wust has been accused of being a lowly Nazi "Stepford hausfrau".[54] This has meant that Schragenheim, whose character trope in the film is limited to her being the soft-butch lesbian and/or Jewish victim, is exalted to the detriment of Wust who is positioned as the trope the "complicit femme". A similar degradation has also occurred with respect to Hosenfeld in *The Pianist*, whose role and memory and actions are equally downplayed.

More specifically, in Färberböck's film, Schragenheim, the Jaguar of the title, has decided that Wust will be her prey and lusts after her. She is introduced to the audience as a beautiful and seductive lesbian Jew who lives bravely in Berlin by assuming a false identity as an Aryan, thus hiding her Jewish origins. She is accurately portrayed as a risk taker who works for the underground and is loyal to her friends and family. The embellished aspect of her character relates to her job as a typist for the *National-Zeitung* whereby Schragenheim comes into contact with various high-ranking officials with information useful to her resistance cause. Schragenheim is unshakable in the belief that she has the right to be free in spirit and in body and this includes her

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[54] Covert, Colin. "Lesbians in love in wartime: review of '*Aimee and Jaguar*'." *StarTribune*. N.p. 7 Dec. 2000. Web. <http://www.startribune.com/entertainment/movies/11523731.html>. 20 May 2012.

choosing of a lover. It is apt here to clarify that in reality Schragenheim first met Wust at the Café Berlin where they were introduced through Schragenheim's then girlfriend Wolf. In the film, Schragenheim leaves her then girlfriend Ilse, in order to assist Wust in finding her spectacles at a theatre. They then meet again at a café near the zoo. The book presents the meeting from Wust's point of view and her observations of Schragenheim, "long legs wrapped in shiny silk stockings [...] what she said wasn't so important, but how she said it was enchanting. She smiled constantly at Elisabeth, a big smile that revealed perfect teeth."[55] The film changes the meeting's perspective to Schragenheim observing Wust from a distance with her girlfriend Inge, thus provoking a jealous response in her lover but also making Schragenheim appear more assertive in her desires and her attempts to live a free life.

Schragenheim is portrayed (fictitiously) as a member of the underground resistance before she meets Wust and engages in resistance work without Wust's knowledge until Schragenheim reveals herself to be Jewish. The work that we see Schragenheim undertaking includes a brief encounter to exchange information and a semi-nude photo-shoot with other Jewish resistors in exchange for forged documents. Although this is based on the information supplied by Fischer, the film does not acknowledge Wust's contribution to Schragenheim's resistance activities. Färberböck instead initially makes Wust ignorant of her lover's resistance work.

The film also does not convey that, without Wust, Schragenheim, who adopted "Frau Wust" as her own alias, could not have worked for the resistance. In reality, the protection that Wust offered Schragenheim extended beyond letting her stay at her home. Without Wust she would not have held her job at the *National-Zeitung*. Wust would accompany Schragenheim as she obtained identification papers by searching through clothing left by swimmers on the banks of the Wannsee or when on covert information exchanges.

There is also a lack of clear explanation in Färberböck's film as to why Schragenheim has given them the pet names Aimée (for Wust) and Jaguar (for herself). Wust is presented not just as a *Mitläufer* but also as the passive member in the couple. Schragenheim called Wust 'Aimée' after a character in a contemporary play by Heinz Coubier, *Aimée oder Der gesunde Menschenverstand* (1938), a copy of which

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[55] Fischer 1996: 18.

Schragenheim was presented with by the actress Olga Chekhova in January 1940. It was a costume comedy set in post-Revolutionary France and the character Aimée is a young woman "whose irrationality hides a good deal of intelligence.[56] The affectionate nick-name is appropriate to Wust's personality as, in Fischer's biography, she repeatedly shows what can be considered to be irrational behaviour. In Färberböck's film the origins of their eponymous names are never accurately explained and simply appear to be a name given by Schragenheim during the couple's first love-making in order to calm Wust.

The melodramatic overtones of the film thus suggest that Jaguar has caught her prey, Aimée, rather than portraying the level of reciprocal affection that the women felt for each other. Thus Wust becomes a passive participant in their relationship. Fischer's biography details that Schragenheim's pet name, Jaguar, does not appear until later in the real relationship when they grew closer as a couple and Schragenheim decided that she was safer remaining in Berlin. Jaguar was also a metaphor for the situation in which Schragenheim found herself, caged in. This is in a similar vein to Rainer Maria Rilke's famous poem *Der Panther* (1902) where the hunter is caged and the jaguar, the same genus as the panthera, is pacing and wanting to be released. That Fischer's text and Färberböck's film use these pet names rather than the protagonists' real ones in their titles further shifts these women away from being individuals by placing focus solely on their relationship as a couple.

It is particularly remarkable that the three main characters in the film are all played by older women.[57] If the character Ilse is based on Fischer's rendition of Wolf, then Ilse is 21 years old, but is played by Wokalek who was 24 at the time of the film release. Schragenheim is only 19 but is played by Schrader who was 34. Wust was 28 but played by Köhler who was six years older. The potential power inequality of the age gaps between Schragenheim and Wust thus became an insignificant factor in their relationship. Their commitment to the resistance may thus be construed as a result of an older woman's mature reasoning. On the other hand it is the characters' actual youth that provides them with the bravado to undertake their activities.

Another method of diminishing Wust comes about through making Schragenheim the same age as Wust which removes the ambiguity of potential

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[56] Ibid: 122.
[57] Sieg 2002: 326.

exploitation. Analysing this typical aspect is important because a-typical distinctions need to be made between shifting dynamics and perhaps coercive relationships. For example, while there is ambiguity about exploitation in the biography, the director cast the women to be the same age in the film and thus would not lead the audience to question the women's roles in the sexual relationship or give room for the audience to question the individual women's motivation for engaging in their relationship. This motivation could include the potential exploitation by Schragenheim to secure shelter by seducing Wust. Or, Wust, potentially, could be exploiting a vulnerable Schragenheim. Removing the ambiguity thus ensures that the character's motivations are solely the result of love.

The extent of changes in the portrayal of Wust in Färberböck's film reveal not only that there was a fascination in the 1990s regarding German-Jewish relationships under the Third Reich, but that the idea of a German heroine (or the exceptional German) was still not a socially acceptable figure in German filmmaking. Färberböck's film introduces Schragenheim as a resistor when she meets Wust, which is a travesty of the historical sequence since without Wust, Schragenheim would never have joined the resistance. This major revision has led to film critics, such as Merle Bertrand, writing that there is no rationale for Schragenheim risking her life for the straight, racist mother of four, or that the relationship between the "spy and the clueless Nazi Stepford housewife" was unbelievable.[58] The film's downplaying of Wust at various levels and the impact of the relationship on the women's resistance activity well serves Färberböck's purposes of portraying Schragenheim to be the stronger woman and thus lessens Wust's true status as a German heroine. The problem is that it is also a falsification of the real history. Denying the personal memories that conflict with official historical narratives is a form of suppressing or denying history too, and thus revises it.[59]

Stuart Taberner was the first academic to view Wust as the character trope of the ordinary German, along with the rest of the majority of German characters in the film, who have supposedly not invested in the Third Reich due to their performance of "small

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[58] Bertrand, Merle. "*Aimée and Jaguar*." *Film Threat*. N.p. 28 Sep. 2000. Web. <http://www.filmthreat.com/reviews/1273/>. 13 Mar 2012.
[59] Fuchs and Cosgrove 2006: 6.

acts of kindness".[60] The shift from Wust's extraordinary historical actions to an interpretation that views her as ordinary is an extraordinary example of revisionism relating to Wust's personal history as this approach demeans and ignores Wust's true life resistance against the Third Reich and her actions after the war. Wust's resistance was pragmatic and unglorified as it was not based on traditional, conscious, intellectual or ideological effort, which motivation is usually expected in resistors with political convictions, as was the case with Schindler and Hosenfeld. Wust's motivations were a result of simple moral instinct for what is right. In the film her motivations are portrayed as a simple action of love, which reasoning ignores Wust's efforts to save three other Jewish women besides Schragenheim as well as their collaborative efforts to help the resistance. The omissions undermine Wust's heroic actions and revise her story by shifting her from the heroic to the ordinary. Cooke's argument, about the population being divided into good or bad Germans, can thus be extended to include the extraordinary i.e. the heroic as well as the good, ordinary and bad.

Whereas all the narratives surrounding *Aimée & Jaguar* can be viewed to be part of the post-unification efforts to present a Jewish-German relationship, it has been to the detriment of women's individual and active resistance against the National Socialist regime, and to the detriment of the memory of Wust herself. It is thus argued that the biggest taboo in German cinema, the lesbian German resistance hero, is still not socially acceptable in the 1990s, whereas the female hero began to gain ground with the release of *Sophie Scholl – Die letzten Tage* (Dir. Marc Rothmund. 2005). Where Hollywood film has gradually increased its leading roles for women as heroes, predominantly in the form of action heroes, it is far less common to find portrayals of complex perpetrator or villainous characters.[61]

For example, one of the most famous portrayals of women relating to the Holocaust is the fictional character Hanna Schmitz. On first reading of this story, it is difficult to tell if this character is a heroine and therefore can be used to valorise the

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[60] Taberner, Stuart. "Philo-Semitism in Recent German Film: *Aimée und Jaguar*, *Rosenstraße* and *Das Wunder von Bern*." *German Life and Letters*. 58:5 (2006): 357 – 372. Print. Here 363.

[61] The few include Aileen Wuornos in *Monster* (Dir. Patty Jenkins. 2003), Talia al Ghul in *The Dark Knight* Rises and Nurse Ratched in *One That Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Dir. Miloš Forman. 1975). Typically, female villains can either be caricature villains which is typified by Disney productions (for example, Cruella De Vil (*One Hundred and One Dalmations*. Dir. Stephen Herek. 1996), Ursula (*The Little Mermaid*. Dir. Ron Clements. 1989) or are labelled as the 'sexy villain' (for example Catwoman (*Batman Returns*. Dir. Tim Burton. 1992) and O-Ren Ishii and Elle Driver, (*Kill Bill: Vol. 1*. Dir. Quentin Tarantino. 2003).

past, or if she is a perpetrator. Schmitz's narrative will be considered in depth in Section 2 below, and it will further develop one of the key arguments of this chapter, that is: in order for the female history in film to engage with fascism, the presentation of the female changes from binary roles i.e. victim/perpetrator, to ambiguous hero, that is either the complicit female resistor (Wust in *Aimée & Jaguar*) or heroic female perpetrator (Schmitz in *The Reader*).

Resistance during the National Socialist period traditionally ranges from aiding Jewish survival to protest. Historians previously used a narrow range of what defines resistance, which typically focused on the exceptional active idealised resistance rather than passive opposition and subversion.[62] Women's stories, such as *Aimée & Jaguar*, have come to light as part of the emerging discourse in the late 1990s of exploring the greyer areas of everyday German history.[63]

Färberböck's film creates his revisionist version of the story in collaboration with Wust. Her redemption and personal exploration of her guilt are thus present in the film as she questions her actions as an elderly woman. The filmic adaptation first introduces Wust to the audience as an 83-year-old in 1997 Berlin moving to an opulent retirement home, rather than where she actually resided, a small one-room apartment in a working-class neighbourhood.[64] The social and physical effects on Wust as a result of her relationship have also been changed. Färberböck's decision to not portray the real woman's poverty and to replace it with luxury has revised Wust's history. The film also focuses on Wust's continual torment by the loss of Schragenheim and the guilt for her death, which can only be viewed in Wust's isolation in her old age, as well as her apparent narcissistic behaviour. Färberböck's film calls for reflection and is easy to comprehend along with the wider implications of Wust and Schragenheim's relationship for the surrounding discourse of Jewish-German relations.

There are other small but highly significant ways in which the film revises Wust's real story. For example, in the film, Wust fleetingly mentions to Schragenheim

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[62] Broszat, Martin. "A Social and Historical Typology of the German Opposition to Hitler." *Contending with Hitler: Varieties of German Resistance in the Third Reich*. Ed. David Large. Cambridge: Press Syndicate of University of the University of Cambridge, 1991: 25 – 33. Print. Here 25.

[63] The1990s also saw what has been colloquially termed the 'Butler boom' which was the emergence of gendered readings of history and women's studies in academia in the wake of the publishing of the internationally influential book by Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge, 1990. Print.

[64] Cormican 2003: 106-7 and Sieg 2002: 310.

to leave Berlin while she can. This differs from the biography where she contemplated leaving Berlin to go with Schragenheim and leaving her children behind with her parents.[65] It was finally Schragenheim who decided it would be safer to stay with the protection that Wust offered with her mimicry of Nazi norms rather than attempt the dangerous escape. Furthermore, Wust's regretful nostalgic yearning for the past and her true love relationship in the film appears to differ from the history that is presented in Fischer's work, as Fischer speculates that Schragenheim would have eventually left Wust and suggests that because Schragenheim's Jaguar did not have the opportunity to leave her, Wust had sentenced herself to a lifetime of penance to the eternal glorification of Schragenheim.[66] The film has continued in the glorification of their relationship and also, accordingly, of Schragenheim to the detriment of Wust who appears as the weak partner in the relationship.

Wust, in short, does not come away unscathed in Färberböck's film.[67] Although the audience may see Wust as a victim, Ilse and Wust do not give themselves that victim status. The residual feeling for the audience is, as a direct consequence of Färberböck's revisionist decisions that Schragenheim is someone to be admired while Wust is the weaker party and arguably also an unwitting perpetrator because she is a Ggentile German. By ignoring Wust's wartime activities Färberböck has made Wust the weaker partner, however his total disregard for the rest of Wust's life from Schragenheim's capture in 1944 to 1997 when Wust is reunited with Ilse, in the rest of the film truly ignores the brave and resourceful woman that Wust was.

Through micro-analysis of the representation of Wust it can indeed be seen that shifts in the portrayal of her character is revisionist. This could indicate a paradigm shift, whereby it becomes possible to present a Holocaust German rescuer figure as a hero. This shift was first apparent in Schindler in *Schindler's List*. However, Wust's representation is more similar to that of Hosenfeld in *The Pianist* as both their stories were diminished to place focus on the Jewish (rather than heroic / extraordinary German gentile) stories.

The revision of Wust's personal history extends to the exclusion of Wust's narcissism, which was noted in academic criticism of Fischer's work. The narcissist

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[65] Fischer 1996: 131.
[66] Ibid: 271-2.
[67] Cormican 2003: 108.

loves an object of a person to the point that the "'I' and 'you' are not perceived as having hard edges."[68] One of the common approaches when dealing with mourning within narcissism is to identify with the victim, which becomes a defence against feelings of guilt.[69] The historical Wust converted to Judaism to feel closer to Schragenheim. In Färberböck film and Fischer's biography, the absorption of Schragenheim and the adoption of her traits by Wust is a persistent motif, as a way for the audience to realise the lasting effect the relationship had on Wust. In Fischer's work, Wust's adoption of Schragenheim's writing style is indicative of this form of narcissism, when Schragenheim's friends ask Wust why she is imitating Schragenheim, Wust responds with "That's love."[70] In Färberböck's film the narcissistic behaviour has been revealed by changing the display from writing to the motif of smoking. As Wust is introduced to the audience for the first time as an elderly woman, she is smoking (which she did not do before meeting Schragenheim). Leaving her apartment, she appears to openly be a lesbian as she appreciates the sight of her new carer bending into a car with her skirt lifted. Wust is assuming Schragenheim's traits, in a similar way to which Schragenheim is first introduced to the audience as a dominant female, a smoker, who openly appreciates other women.

In Färberböck's film, Wust first attempts to smoke dressed as a male with Schragenheim dressed in Wust's clothes. Wust coughs and splutters as her body appears to physically reject the reversal of roles, as Schragenheim too rejects her new role as her skirt simultaneously falls down. Schragenheim and Wust frequently exchange clothes in the film. It is noticeable when Wust changes into Schragenheim's clothes as they are exotic compared to Wust's plain house dresses. Similarly, Schragenheim wears Wust's cardigan as she decides to leave the country with her esistance group and then changes her mind and in turn also clearly shows to the audience that she loves Wust and she is also adopting her roles, which include looking after the children, doing the housework and cooking. Wust begins to displace Schragenheim in the film as she uncomfortably lights a cigarette after informing Ilse that Schragenheim has been sent to Theresienstadt and that she has tried to visit her there. Already, this motif indicates to the audience that

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[68] Santner, Eric. *Stranded Objects Mourning, Memory, and Film in Postwar Germany*. London: Cornell University Press, 1990. Print. Here 3.
[69] Ibid: 6.
[70] Fischer 1996: 131.

Schragenheim will not be coming back and Wust has effectively been transformed into her. As well as being a filmic method of representing Wust's narcissism, the motif of smoking is indicative of Wust's lasting memory of Schragenheim, and the emotional impact their relationship has had on Wust.

A more interesting narcissistic trope is the exploration of Wust's conversion to Judaism and her adoption (or assimilation) of Schragenheim's Jewish identity, all of which is ignored in Färberböck film adaptation. It is known from Fischer's works that Wust first adopted Schragenheim's identity in an attempt to protect herself and her children from the Soviet Army. She used Schragenheim's yellow star and told the Soviets that they were Jewish and with it obtained beds in a basement of a post office.[71] This did not stop her from being repeatedly raped by Soviet soldiers along with the rest of the remaining women in Berlin. It is interesting to note that although this has been omitted from the film, in all likelihood as a result of the taboo nature of the post-war rapes in Germany, Färberböck in his next film (released in 2008) adapted the wartime diary, *Eine Frau in Berlin* (2003).[72] Released almost a decade after *Aimée & Jaguar*, it is indicative of the shift in discourse surrounding the acceptability of presenting Germans as victims in film, as a woman was the lead protagonist and ambiguous heroine. This shift over time in part explains why the full extent of Wust's victimhood, as above outlined, is not explored, as this taboo had not yet been broken. The consequences of Schragenheim's capture on Wust, including the threat of having her children taken from her, the hours of interrogation by the Gestapo for harbouring a Jewess were also not portrayed to create a simplified story.

Laurel Coen-Pfister argues that "precisely because the rape of German women in 1945 defies essentialist definitions of victim and perpetrator, it serves as a marker for evaluating the changing perception of Germans' historical roles in the Second World War."[73] Coen-Pfister considers that "the rape of German women by the advancing Red Army in 1945 is arguably the most problematic [...] The taboo originated not only in political suppression of the topic, [...] but also in the social censure of rape as a crime

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[71] Ibid: 241.
[72] Anonymous. *Eine Frau in Berlin /A Woman in Berlin.* Trans. Philip Boehm. New York: Virago Press, 2006. Print.
[73] Coen-Pfister, Laurel. "Rape, War and Outrage: Changing Perceptions on German Victimhood in the Period of Post-unification". *Victims and Perpetrators: 1933-1945: (Re) Presenting the Past in Post-Unification Culture.* Ed. Laural Cohen-Pfister and Dagmar Wienroeder-Skinner. Berlin: Hubert & Co, 2006: 316-336. Print. Here 317.

of gender."[74] Thus she argues that the change in reception of Färberböck's *Anonyma-Eine Frau in Berlin* "substantiates not only a shift in discourse on the German past that emphasizes suffering over guilt, but also the increasingly prominent role that the wartime rape of German women plays in the contemporary rendering of German history and of national self-understanding."[75] It can be argued that there is a paradigm shift in the portrayal of victimhood in Germany but also a move away from male-centric history. Who Fischer and Färberböck chose as victims is therefore important as such decisions have led to ambiguity and revisionism, for example characters in *Aimée & Jaguar* reveal ambiguities about whether or not they are a gentile heroines or Jewish victims. The ambiguity which surrounds these characters has to be considered in regards to the presentation of a German as a victim, which has changed from being marginally acceptable in Färberböck's 1999 *Aimée & Jaguar*, as long as they were presented as weak figures. In the 2008 *Anonyma-Eine Frau in Berlin* the German woman is strong, even heroic, although she collaborates and is portrayed really as a classic survivor.

It was not until Wust's death in 2006 that her individual activities were remembered accurately and publically through the Jewish Museum in Berlin. Wust bequeathed the Jewish Museum more than 500 documents chronicling her and Schragenheim's life, which included Wust's "book of tears" diary, photographs, and articles, which have become part of the exhibition at the museum entitled "Two Millennia of German Jewish History". The women's story is displayed in the segments titled "Persecution - Resistance – Annihilation." "Persecution," as one would expect, relates to Schragenheim's life as a persecuted Jew in Berlin, as well as her unsuccessful attempts to flee and her eventual betrayal.[76] "Resistance" not only presents Schragenheim's resistance activities but also focuses on Wust's efforts on Schragenheim's behalf. This includes sheltering Schragenheim and bringing or sending food and clothing to the various prisons in which she was incarcerated. It also records that Wust sheltered three other Jewish lesbians until the end of the war, supporting them by even swapping Schragenheim's stockings for supplies of coal and bread.

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[74] Coen-Pfister 2006: 316.
[75] Ibid: 317.
[76] Haruriunyan, Ruzan. "*Aimée and Jaguar* at Jewish Museum Berlin." *HULIQ*. N.p 19 Jan. 2007. Web. <http://www.huliq.com/7027/quotaimee-amp-jaguarquot-jewish-museum-berlin>. 13 Mar. 2012. And Dawson, Leanne. "Aimée, Jaguar and gender melancholia." *Studies in European Cinema*. 9.3 (2012): 35 – 52. Print. Here 36.

"Annihilation" reveals the death of Schragenheim during a forced march from Gross-Rosen to Bergen-Belsen without the speculation about how she died being memorialised.[77]

Finally, Wust's efforts are memorialised in the Silent Heroes Memorial Centre (Gedenkstätte Stille Helden) in Berlin. At this memorial centre, her story is stored as part on an interactive database where not only can you find their personal stories and pictures of Wust and Schragenheim but also the three other women Wust rescued: Laserstein, Ollendorf and Friedlaender. These memorials reiterate that Wust along with Schindler and Hosenfeld extend Cooke's definition of the good German as these figures are anything but ordinary and are instead heroic extraordinary Germans.[78]

It is apt to reiterate here that the films selected for analysis in this thesis as a whole concentrate predominantly on survival and resistance to the Third Reich, with one exception, *The Reader*, which focuses on the (fictional) perpetrator and her wartime victims and post-war victim. Conversely, the novel on which this film was based differs as it presents the fictional protagonist as an ambiguous heroine. How these shifts in character tropes occur are analysed below in order to show other ways in which the revised valorised past of a fictional perpetrator creates a usable and thus more acceptable heroine.

2. Hanna Schmitz: the Fictional Perpetrator

Written by German law professor Bernhard Schlink, the original novel's title, *Der Vorleser*, means the male person who reads aloud. The novel is thus about the character Michael Berg who read aloud stories to Hanna Schmitz. However, this perspective is lost in Stephen Daldry's 2008 film *The Reader* which is based on the translation of Schlink's *Der Vorleser* by Janeway. If one was to understand it – in either Schlink's *Der Vorleser* or the film – as the person who reads, then it can now apply either to Berg or Schmitz, whose journey is from ignorance as a result of illiteracy to knowledge from learning to read. Schmitz can be thus interpreted as an ambiguous hero.

Written from the perspective of re-unified Germany during the 1990s, Schlink's

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[77] Horsley 1996: 11. Currently the museum contains a small permanent exhibition which displays Wust's diary and a picture of Wust and Schragenheim with a famous image of the women stood together in bathing suits that has featured on the front cover of Fischer's work.
[78] Cooke 2007: 253.

novel is organised in three parts and narrated from the point of view of Berg. Berg writes that he put his recollection of the past events on to paper in an attempt to reconcile his lifelong struggle to come to grips with a passionate love affair he had as a teenage boy with an older woman, Hanna Schmitz: "soon after her death, I decided to write the story of me and Hanna. [...] At first I wanted to write our story in order to be free of it [...] Maybe I did write our story to be free of it, even if I never can be".[79] The first part sees Berg and Schmitz in 1950s West Germany engaging in their sexual relationship until she abruptly leaves him. The second part of the novel is set in the 1960s by which time Berg is an undergraduate observing a criminal law trial for his law degree. There he discovers that Schmitz is an ex-concentration camp guard who is directly complicit in the murder of 300 Jews. The final part is set in the 1980s, as Berg and Schmitz meet again for the final time and, after Schmitz's suicide on the eve of her release from prison, Berg meets Schmitz's sole surviving Jewish victim, Ilana Mather, in New York.

Daldry's film *The Reader* is a remarkably faithful adaptation of Janeway's translation of Schlink's novel, though ultimately it offers a different interpretation of key aspects of the novel. The same material is presented differently in the German and international contexts and the ending is arguably Hollywood(esque). The film has a redemptive ending, which is not in the novel as Berg passes on a lesson to his daughter and is reconciled with her. The film is an Anglo-American-German co-production which draws from a pool of German and British actors, with a British director and screen writer and using American and German funding. The two British stars, Kate Winslet (as Hanna Schmitz) and Ralph Fiennes (as the grown-up Michael Berg), both made their international names in Hollywood. With reference to Bell and Megill's contention that memory is established through the use of a valorised or usable past, we must ask how can the memory of Schmitz be used in 1995 in Germany or 2008 in the rest of the world if it is unclear whether she is a perpetrator, a heroine or a victim of circumstance? Analysis of adaptation changes or shifts away from the original novel in the English translation, and subsequently in the film version will help to reach an understanding of the wider significance of these changes in character tropes.

Ludewig argues that these fictional figures act as a way to mediate the past

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[79] Schlink 1997: 214-16.

whilst providing scope for ambiguity.[80] This ambiguity allows itself to encompass the anti-heroine character trope, which in turn can be perceived as the sympathetic perpetrator, who, in turn, can be transformed into the heroic Nazi, as considered in Chapter Four. This complexity is often ignored and the roles of women and their characterisation are often simplistically fashioned. This is partly explained by Mulvey's theory of the objectifying role of the male gaze, as women are often reduced in film to being solely the object of male desire. Schmitz can thus be defined as a woman through the male gaze of Berg. Unlike other Holocaust films that focus on women, the film adaptation of *The Reader* does not adhere to traditional tales of romance.[81] The challenges that *The Reader*, both the original and translated novel as well as the film, present are that the typical tale of romance is subverted into one that can also be viewed as abusive where the traditionally innocent female has turned into a perpetrator.

Der Vorleser provoked much controversy and enjoyed success with German readers on its publication in 1995.[82] By 1999, over 500,000 copies had been sold in Germany and 750,000 of Janeway's English translation (*The Reader*) in America.[83] Less than ten years later Daldry's *The Reader* (2008) won Oscars for Best Actress (Kate Winslet) and Best Picture. Despite this critical success, international audiences were less enthusiastic as Daldry's film averaged a gross of $1,409,577 in each of the 53 countries it was distributed.[84] In contrast, in Germany the film was highly successful grossing $20,544,884 (compared with $8,469,233 in the UK).[85] In the U.S. the film grossed $34,194,407, just $13,649,523 more than in Germany, thus highlighting the film's relatively greater success and popularity in Germany, which could be the result of the popularity of Schlink's original novel and arguably the depiction of Schmitz in Daldry's film.

It is apt to reflect on the specific complexity of the transnationalism as well as

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[80] Ludewig 2013: 143.
[81] These include films such as *Sophie's Choice*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *The Courageous Heart of Irena Sendler*, *Rosenstraße* and *Nirgendwo in Afrika*. However, these characters are not comparable with Schmitz which is why she is defined not just as an anti-heroine but as a 'sympathetic perpetrator'.
[82] McGothlin, Erin. *Second-Generation Holocaust Literature: Legacies of Survival and Perpetration.* Rochester New York: Camden House, 2006. Print. Here 203.
[83] Taberner, Stuart. *German Literature of the 1990s and Beyond: Normaliszation and the Berlin Republic.* Rochester New York: Camden House, 2005. Print. Here 145-6.
[84] The total gross of the film was $108,901,967 which comprised of $74,707,560 in the foreign market with $34,194,407 on the domestic market.
[85] Box Office Mojo. "The Reader." *Box Office Mojo*. N.p. N.d. Web. <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=reader.htm>. 3 Aug. 2012.

the character shifts. *The Reader* is adapted into an Anglo-American production by a British director and a screenplay author duo from a German novel. *Aimée & Jaguar* is also a Jewish-German story, which was made into a biography by a Jewish-Austrian author and adapted for the screen by a German director. These two films show how in the process of adaptation the complex character tropes in this Chapter, portrayed in print and film differ in comparison to other chapters in this thesis. These shifts serve to extend the filmic roles of women from traditional victims to the German heroine. This key shift in perception and thus presentation further facilitates development of women into a more ambiguous German anti-heroine which in turn then it is argued appears to evolve into what can be described as the sympathetic perpetrator. The anti-heroines, as portrayed in the films discussed, particularly in this chapter, appear to have paid a disservice to the historical women. Through the processes of adaptation, taking into account the fine detail that has been revised in personal histories and narratives, micro-mechanisms can reveal and appear to provide evidence to show the subtle ways in which a paradigm shift develops: from a male heroic German to a German heroine to the anti-heroine or sympathetic perpetrator. On closer analysis, however, it is argued that this paradigm shift is rather from: the portrayal of women as victims to women as complicit with the Nazi regime. A detailed analysis can thus reveal important but often subtle distinctions as considered at various levels below.

2.1 Multiple Readings of Schlink's *Der Vorleser*

Daldry's *The Reader* was a case of international appropriation of the German past. *The Reader* has universalised a German story by making it less of a German story which was endorsed and described to a mass American audience as a "parable of German guilt and atonement."[86] Ward explains that there was already a development in how the Holocaust was being presented in film as it moved towards universalisation and thus a globally applicable memory.[87] The Holocaust has been appropriated, Ward argues, by any nation or group that wished to act or assume the "role of memory witnesses." This can be argued to have been the impact and the motivation for the adoption by America

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[86] Oprah's Book Club. "*The Reader.*" *Oprah's Book Club*. N.p. N.d. Web. <http://www.oprah.com/oprahsbookclub/The-Reader-by-Bernhard-Schlink_1/1>. 28 May 2011.
[87] Ward 2004: 34.

of Daldry's *The Reader*. How a perpetrator, even a fictional one in the form of Hanna Schmitz, is revised into a more heroic and sympathetic character is analysed below.

As narrator of Schlink's *Der Vorleser*, Berg encourages a sympathetic reading of Schmitz and is quick to provide answers for Schmitz's murderous actions, thus encouraging the reader not to critically engage either with his own assertions or Schmitz's actions. Finding it difficult to reconcile his knowledge of Schmitz the perpetrator with his memory of Schmitz the lover, Berg decides that Schmitz's illiteracy propelled her into the role of camp guard and this bears directly on the degree of her culpability.[88] The sympathetic perpetrator in the form of a camp guard character trope is also explored in the British film *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (Dir. Mark Herman. 2008), as the camp commandant is presented as a loving family man. Unlike Schmitz, the commandant is clearly shown to approve of brutal methods, whereas in *Der Vorleser* this is only implied of Schmitz. The reader of the book therefore can understand Schmitz as a good character from the way in which she is introduced by Berg via a good deed. Schmitz comes to Berg's aid as he is sick, she cares for him and ensures his safety as she takes him home. At these early stages of *Der Vorleser*, the reader is already predisposed to consider Schmitz's character in a positive light for the rest of the novel.

The interpretation adopted in this thesis of Schmitz and Berg's relationship differs from other scholars' interpretations. Rather than viewing the novel and Daldry's film as an allegory, which is typical of scholarly interpretations as outlined below, this thesis argues that, through adaptations and revisions, a perpetrator has been revealed in Daldry's filmic interpretation. This comes about because the novel is filtered through Berg's interpretation and responses to Schmitz and thus the reader too views her as a sympathetic perpetrator or a victim of circumstance. With the removal of Berg's rationale from the filmic adaptation, the residual effect is that Schmitz is simply a perpetrator. More specifically, Schmitz and Berg's love story is often considered to be an allegorical representation of the second generation Germans' inherited guilt about their parents' actions. Joseph Metz explores this allegory in detail, specifically the paedophilic sadomasochist nature of Berg and Schmitz's sexual relationship, and how it

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[88] McGothlin 2006: 204.

can be argued to be an allegory for Germany's relationship to its past as a whole.[89] Metz quotes the following disturbing passage: "The worst were the dreams in which a hard, imperious, cruel Schmitz aroused me sexually; I woke from them full of longing and shame and rage. And full of fear about who I really was."[90] He argues it is a "possible second-generation response to the Nazi past: identity-formation through the pain / pleasure soul searching".[91]

While Metz looks at the relationship as an allegory, Bartov differs as he considers both Schmitz and Berg to be victims: Berg is a victim of Schmitz and his irreconcilable love for her; and Schmitz is a victim of circumstance, ignorance and post-war justice.[92] Bartov argues that Schmitz's uninhibited sexuality is indicative of the aestheticisation of violence and sadism, which is popular in explorations of National Socialism. Adam Brown begins to challenge this traditional interpretation and considers the problematic portrayal of female perpetrators in Holocaust films as placing undue attention on their sexuality. Brown similarly provides the example of the overly sexual representation of Ilse Koch in *Seven Beauties* (Dir. Lina Wertmüller. 1975).[93]

It can also be argued that the inappropriate nature of Schmitz and Berg's love affair is not explored as part of this sexual aestheticisation. Instead, as the story is recounted from Berg's perspective, it is more indicative of the powerful link between the generations. Berg does not agree with the rhetoric of the 68ers regarding their parents' Auschwitz generation but still, when writing from hindsight, he places his story with Schmitz as part of the generational discourse. This is a result of Berg believing that he chooses Schmitz rather than the 68ers who condemn their parents.[94]

Alternative arguments have focused on the metaphor of Schmitz's illiteracy to be representative of a lack of moral understanding, which has also led to varying conclusions. For example, Niven regards the illiteracy metaphor, as does Schlink, as being representative of those being unable to spell out the basis of a moral language and

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[89] Metz, Joseph. "Truth is a Woman": Post-Holocaust Narrative, Postmodernism, and the Gender of Fascism in Bernhard Schlink's "*Der Vorleser.*" *The German Quarterly*. 77. 3 (2004): 300-323. Print. Here 305.
[90] Schlink 1997: 146.
[91] Metz 1997: 312-3.
[92] Bartov 2000: 30.
[93] Brown, Adam. "Screening Women's Complicity in the Holocaust: The Problems of Judgement and Representation." *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History*. 17.2-3 (2011): 75-98. Print. Here 83.
[94] Bartov 2000: 33.

"symptomatic of those who had 'forgotten their moral alphabet during the war'".[95] As part of the moral reasoning argument, Berg and Schmitz's sexual relationship is an allegorical representation of the deep dependency of the second generation on their parents. In *Der Vorleser*, for example, focus on Schmitz and Berg's relationship takes the form of ritualised cleaning and reading; their relationship is highly sexual and often troubled by miscommunication, which the reader and Berg later understand to be a consequence of her illiteracy. There is some truth to how Niven sees Schmitz's violence towards Berg as triggered by a "mixture of vulnerability, helplessness, fear of exposure, and resentment".[96] Although confessing that she loves Berg, her illiteracy is a major factor in her leaving him. Guided by shame, Schmitz had repeatedly left her job, this time fearing a promotion to office work, she leaves her job as a tram conductor and thus leaves Berg rather than revealing her perceived shameful illiteracy. It is Schmitz's shame that brought her to lead a strategic life; she prioritises avoidance over confronting and confessing her illiteracy. Niven claims that this interpretation, which can also be argued to be Berg's own reading, of Schmitz, can only occur if the reader separates her/himself from Berg, who is quick to apologise for Schmitz's behaviour. It is also Schmitz's shame that causes her moral insensitivity, and her guilt is subconsciously apparent through her need to wash and clean. Her later physical degeneration that parallels her increased literacy is suggestive of her conscious and unconscious guilt.[97]

In *Der Vorleser*, Berg's guilt is also portrayed, as well as the fact that he is unfulfilled as an adult and cannot reconcile his knowledge of Schmitz as a perpetrator with his persistent sexual desire for Schmitz and consequently his dependence on her. Berg's desire to see Schmitz as a victim causes him less shame about their relationship and his dependency on her.[98] In the passage quoted below Berg considers that revealing the guilty ones released the burden of shame on the subsequent generations, however he still cannot do this with Schmitz as it instead transfers the shame of loving a guilty person on to himself:

> Pointing at the guilty parties did not free us from shame, but at least it overcame the suffering we went through on account of it [...] I had no one to point at [...] I had to point at Hanna. But the finger I pointed at her turned back to me. I had

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[95] Niven, Bill. "Bernhard Schlink's *Der Vorleser* and the Problem of Shame." *The Modern Language Review*. 98: 2 (2003): 383 – 384. Print. Here 383-4.
[96] Niven 2003: 386.
[97] Ibid: 388-392.
[98] Ibid: 390.

> loved her. Not only had I loved her, I had chosen her.[99]

William Collins Donahue argues that the novel's erotic plot serves as a narrative ploy to present Berg as a point of sympathetic identification and to ignore Berg's inaction and dubious reasoning.[100] For example, upon the revelation that Schmitz was an Auschwitz guard and was involved in selections and transportations, Berg feels at first numb.[101] His reaction to the discovery of her illiteracy is intense. He uses it as the deciding factor in Schmitz's behaviour both during their relationship and for the crimes that she committed. Berg re-enacts his dubious reasoning to the reader:

> How often I had asked myself these same questions, both then and since. [...] Both then and since, I have rejected this. No, Hanna had not decided in favour of crime. She [...] had fallen into a job as a guard. And no, she had not dispatched the delicate and the weak on transports to Auschwitz because they had read to her; she had chosen them to read to her because she wanted to make their last months bearable before their inevitable dispatch to Auschwitz.[102]

Berg thus portrays Schmitz as a victim of circumstance and thus a victim of National Socialism and the post-war justice system. She may have been involved in crimes against humanity but her humanity he believes shone through as he reasons that she had rebelled against the camp system by making those "last few months bearable" for the camp prisoners. Rather than viewing Schmitz as being empowered by the National Socialist regime, Berg views her as a victim. However, Michael Mann counters this argument by stating that women formed only 10% of concentration camp staff as women held subordinate roles and were excluded from full SS membership.[103] This implies that Schmitz formed part of the minority or the exception by being a camp guard. As Schmitz is part of the minority, Berg is too quick to exonerate her actions. As a result of Berg's line of reasoning, the reader acknowledges that a prison guard, or in this case a camp guard, is not necessarily a person naturally predisposed to murder or commit criminal acts.

Schmitz admits that she was recruited as a guard for a labour camp not a death

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[99] Schlink 1997: 168.
[100] Donahue, William Collins. "Illusions of Subtlety: Bernhard Schlink's *Der Vorleser* and the Moral Limits of Holocaust Fiction." *German Life and Letters*. 54: 1 (2001): 60 – 81. Print. Here 61.
[101] Schlink 1997: 93 and 103-4.
[102] Ibid: 132.
[103] Mann, Michael. "Were the perpetrators of Genocide 'Ordinary Men' or 'Real Nazis'? Results from Fifteen Hundred Biographies". *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*. 14.3 (2000): 331-366. Print. Here 340.

camp, and was not aware that she would also be involved with criminal acts.[104] Her criminality is thus assumed to be a result of the environment she was exposed to. Her lack of full comprehension that her selections of inmates would lead to their deaths is exposed as she maintains that it was a routine in the job.[105] Schmitz's functionality within the regime is viewed, subsequently, as part of Schmitz's ordinary nature.[106] There are cases of camp guards retaining their humanity. Berg chooses to believe that she was a camp guard like Anna Fest, a real life camp guard who aged 19 was conscripted into the SS and trained in Ravensbrück to work in satellite camps. It resulted in her also being involved in the forced marches where instead of assisting in the prisoners' deaths, she actively attempted to protect them from banal executions and give them extra food and clothing. Although arrested and imprisoned for two years after the war, she was eventually tried and released as innocent and later financially compensated for being wrongfully imprisoned.[107] No matter how hard Berg wanted Schmitz to be a victim, her behaviour cannot however, be compared with this historical case.

To further encourage reader identification with Berg's reasoning of Schmitz as a victim of circumstances, a counterpoint or anti-Schmitz or villain, is also presented to the reader in the form of a man who was presumably part of the execution squads, who gave Berg a lift to an ex-concentration camp (Struthof in Alsace) during Schmitz's trial when the court visited Israel.[108] This character is repulsive to the reader as he describes the banality of the work of an executioner:

> there was no war, and no reason for hatred. But executioners don't hate the people they execute, and they execute them all the same. Because they're ordered to? [...] An executioner is not under orders. He's doing his work, he doesn't hate the people he executes, he's not taking revenge on them, he's not killing them because they're in his way or threatening him or attacking him. They're a matter of indifference to him that he can kill them as easily as not.[109]

Berg's outrage at this man's actions shows that Berg can identify inhumane opinions when he hears them and can tell that this individual's actions should be condemned. However, when it comes to Schmitz, whose moral sensibility is not more fully

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[104] Schlink 1997: 94-5.
[105] Ibid: 110.
[106] Niven 2003: 385-6.
[107] Ownings, Alison. "Frau Anna Fest, A Job in its Own Category." *Frauen German Women Recall the Third Reich.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press (1993): 313 – 341. Print. Here 313-41.
[108] Schlink 1997: the trip to Israel: 144 and the trip to Struthof: 150.
[109] Ibid: 150.

developed than this man's is, Berg is blinded because of their shared history.

Much speculation has been made into the characterisation of Schmitz such as who her real life counterpart could be. This includes the suggestion that Schmitz could be based on Ilse Koch, "the bitch of Buchenwald" and wife of camp commandant Karl Koch. This identity was concluded because Schmitz, like Koch who killed herself while in prison and used riding crops to strike her victims, similarly used a belt to perpetrate violence against others as well as killing herself.[110] Less well-known than Koch, Hermine Braunsteiner has also been identified as a potential Schmitz due to the nature of Braunsteiner's trial. From 1975 to 1981, Braunsteiner was tried along with 15 other defendants accused of murder at Majdanek Concentration Camp, where she was known as "the stomping mare".[111] In Schlink's novel, Schmitz is also recognised by Berg as potentially being the guard nicknamed mare who was described by Schmitz's survivor who was known to be "beautiful, diligent, but cruel".[112] There is some evidence that Schlink may have been influenced by Braunsteiner's trial as it was conducted while he was studying for his doctorate at the University of Freiburg.[113] There is also one case of an illiterate female guard who also worked on the forced marches, Herta Bothe.[114]

It would thus be safe to assume that Schlink created the character of Schmitz as an amalgamation of known guards. However, to make comparisons between actual known camp guards misses the key feature of the novel, which is that you would not necessarily recognise a Nazi perpetrator if you met one. *Der Vorleser* itself is deliberately ambiguous and suggests that Schmitz should not be recognised as a real perpetrator. Berg cannot recognise her in the survivor Mather's novel.

Multiple levels of ambiguity have been translated into Daldry's film *The Reader*; however, Schmitz is portrayed in both Schlink's novel and Daldry's film as the only defendant at the trial who admits her actions without resistance to the court. Her shame of illiteracy again leads her to taking the wrong path, in Berg's eyes, as she admits to

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[110] Syal, Rajeev. "Nazi behind Winslet film role is revealed." *The Observer*. N.p. 18 Jan. 2009. Web. <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2009/jan/18/winslet-reader>. 6 Sep. 2010.
[111] Bower, Tom. "My clash with death-camp Hanna." *The Sunday Times*. N.p. 15 Feb. 2009. Web. <http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/culture/film_and_tv/film/article150273.ece>. 16 Jan. 2012.
[112] Schlink 1997: 118.
[113] Cengage, Gale. "Bernhard Schlink Contemporary Literary Criticism." *eNotes*. N.p. 2011. Web. 2 Aug. 2012.
[114] Harvey, Oliver. "A 'kind, sweet' granny hiding an evil secret." *The Sun*. N.p. 21 Feb. 2009. Web. <http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/showbiz/film/2259283/Kate-Winslet-plays-an-evil-Nazi-guard-in-her-Oscar-nominated-film-The-Sun-reveals-the-real-life-story-behind-the-character-she-plays.html>. 16 Jan. 2013.

writing a report about the deaths of the 300 Jews under her care that burned to death in a bombed church, thus taking responsibility as a leader of the other defendants. This results in her receiving a longer prison sentence.

At this point, it could be argued that Schmitz becomes an anti-heroine or a sympathetic perpetrator and a redemptive character as she unambiguously takes responsibility for her actions. Berg views the trial as a cynical game where Schmitz does not know the rules and her innocence and ignorance of the other defendants' motives is emphasised by him. Thus, her naiveté makes it easy for the other defendants' lawyer to deceive her into accepting more responsibility. The rest of the defendants appear similar to Schmitz: blonde hair, similar age, blue eyed. The difference being that they appear indifferent to their past and actively deny it by heckling Schmitz and physically appear more knowledgeable, wealthier and presentable (they wear more fashionable clothes and makeup). By admitting to having written the report Schmitz becomes a victim of the court's desire to find somebody guilty and a victim of her circumstances for Berg, and correspondingly also in the reader's mind.[115] Sympathy for Schmitz as an honest and misguided perpetrator is thus established for the reader through Berg, not because she took responsibility for her actions, but because she accepts greater punishment rather than disclose the secret of her illiteracy, just as she previously accepted transfer to Auschwitz rather than reveal her illiteracy.

This sympathetic presentation continues in *Der Vorleser* with Schmitz's experience in prison. Through Berg's attempt to deal with the effect Schmitz had on his present life, almost a decade after Schmitz's imprisonment began, he records himself reading the books he previously read to Schmitz and then sends the tapes to her in prison. With Berg's tapes, she overcomes her fears and learns to read, after which she engages with the new canon of Holocaust literature. This enlightening reading is then followed by her gradual physical decline, which may be a result of her growing moral understanding of previous actions. Without the reconciliation that she required with Berg upon her release, Schmitz kills herself, which act shifts the blame for the situation back on to him, just as she blamed him for their rows when he was her fifteen-year-old-lover.

In a misguided attempt at atonement, Schmitz leaves her life savings to her

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[115] Taberner 2005: 146-7.

surviving victim, Mather. Berg's numbness to Schmitz's victims extends to his meeting with Mather. On his way to seeing her, Berg still fantasises and longs for Schmitz. While he vividly remembers Schmitz, Berg quickly forgets her victim: "I tried and failed to remember her face as it had been during the trial" [116] and thus he can be accused of changing the victims of National Socialism from Jewish people to German. Berg and Mather's conversation reveals again that he is quick to rationalise Schmitz's actions even to her victims. His failure to acknowledge Schmitz's victims and his quick disregard implies that he also wanted to see Schmitz forgiven by her Jewish victims. Soon after visiting Mather, Berg goes further by donating, in Schmitz's name, Mather's rejected inheritance money to the Jewish League Against Illiteracy, thus completing, in part, her wishes.

Although Berg throughout *Der Vorleser* attempts to justify Schmitz's actions, he fails to understand her. This is revealed through the reprimanding of Berg by Schmitz's prison governor for failing to write or understand Schmitz. The governor's empathetic understanding of Schmitz thus reiterates to the reader Schmitz's earlier questioning of the judge, "what would you have done?"[117] The governor's appraisal of Schmitz also reinforces the perception of Schmitz being a person doing a job at a different time rather than a criminal. The strong sympathetic memory of Schmitz lives on through Berg as she becomes an ambiguous hero or sympathetic perpetrator and this is the final image of Schlink's novel. The novel attempts to present the idea to the reader that, if you were to meet a Nazi perpetrator then you would be unlikely to recognise one in the person that you met. The perpetrators, therefore, were ordinary people who often appeared good to their friends and family.

This sympathetic presentation of the perpetrator and controversial subject matter led to Schlink's novel's commercial success. His novel is also the subject of many academic publications and critical reviews with the sympathetic portrayal of Schmitz receiving the most criticism in Germany. This, perhaps, makes it surprising that the Hollywood film adaptation of Janeway's English translation of *Der Vorleser* (screen-play by the British playwright David Hare) became such a box office success in Germany but did less well in the U.S. and UK. This can be attributed to Daldry's film's new representation of Schmitz. She is now no longer the misguided sympathetic and

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[116] Schlink 1997: 210.
[117] Ibid: 127

potentially even ambiguous heroic German, but instead is presented as a criminal. Although in essence a Hollywood film, it shied away from Hollywood convention by changing the narrative from that of a heroine coming to self-understanding, which is how Schlink's novel can be interpreted, to one where neither of the main characters learns anything. The biggest adaptation is the redemptive ending between Berg and his daughter. More specifically, in the film's screenplay, Hare has attempted to show the Holocaust from the point of view of the perpetrator. Schmitz does not reach understanding of what she has done, and is presented without redemptive qualities to the audience. In Schlink's German novel, however, there is sympathy for Schmitz, while in Hare and Daldry's Hollywood interpretation her character shifts from a sympathetic perpetrator and an ambiguous heroine to a complicit perpetrator. The details of how this are achieved are important to explore.

2.2 Revealing the Perpetrator in Daldry's *The Reader*

This Hollywood co-production was considered by cynics to be a vehicle to attract acclaim during Oscar season.[118] It worked as Kate Winslet playing Schmitz won an Oscar for Best Actress. Winslet is known for playing sympathetic roles such as the typical "English rose" in films like *Titanic* (Dir. James Cameron. 1997).[119] By casting Winslet to play Schmitz, Daldry presents the protagonist to the audience as an ordinary woman, which adds to the shock to the audience when it is revealed that she is a camp guard.[120]

The film has other resonances. The likening of *The Reader* on account of its sexual content to an exploitation film was pushed by Mike McCahill, for whom: "the central relationship suggests 1970s Nazi-sploitation fare as rethought by prestige film-makers: regular bunk-ups and bare bottoms are interspersed with whole paragraphs from *The Odyssey*."[121] By predominantly focusing on the sexual nature of the film,

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[118] Dargis, Manohla. "Movie Review *The Reader*." *The New York Times*. N.p. 20 Dec. 2008. Web. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/10/movies/10read.html?_r=0>. 28 May 2011.
[119] Thomson, David. "The new first lady of Hollywood." *The Guardian*. N.p. 31 Jan. 2009. Web. <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2009/jan/31/kate-winslet-reader-david-thomson>. 4 Mar. 2011.
[120] Riding, Alan. "The New Season/Film: Hollywood; For Kate Winslet, Being a Movie Star is 'a Bit Daft'." *New York Times*. N.p. 12 Sep. 1999. <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/09/12/movies/the-new-season-film-hollywood-for-kate-winslet-being-a-movie-star-iis-a-bit-daft.html>. Web. 4 Sep. 2009.
[121] McCahill, Mike. "*The Reader*, review." *The Telegraph*. N.p. 31 Dec. 2008. Web. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/filmreviews/4030041/The-Reader-review.html>. 15 Nov. 2012.

these critics do not engage with other aspects, which the intensity of the film demands such as the nature of complicity and guilt. The sexual relationship as an allegory for intergenerational relationships, as conveyed in *Der Vorleser*, has thus not been successfully transferred over to the film version of *The Reader.* Critics instead viewed the film as part of the current exploration of the National Socialist rather than the intergenerational German past but with a character that is not "destined to endear" herself to cinema audiences.[122]

The mixed message of the film is the source of much criticism. For example, the Hollywood film reviewer, Todd McCarthy, saw the film as a "cerebral experience [which] will appeal to upscale specialized auds and the bookish set but pic will have trouble crossing over to the general public Stateside. Offshore prospects look stronger."[123] It would appear that the film, although a Hollywood(esque) heritage film, was critically considered to be high culture which was believed to have been the reason for its lack of appeal to American audiences.

Adaptation as a process, as described by Rentschler, "is the appropriation of meaning from a prior text."[124] He considers adaptation from German literature into German film; adaptations are not solely created nationally, however. This is seen in the adaptation of Schlink's *Der Vorleser*, which is transcreated across boundaries of language, culture and politics. The adaptation from Schlink's novel to Janeway's English translation to Daldry and Hare's film resulted in the removal of the sympathetic narrator, Berg, and led to a bare-bones portrayal of the events depicted in Schlink's novel along with a series of omissions of scenes that originally led to a sympathetic reading of Schmitz. *The New York Times* quotes Hare who believed that using a voice over in the film was the "wimp's way out" and attempted to show through his screen scripts Berg's internal workings instead by subtle acting.[125] The result, which may or may not have been intended, is that a less sympathetic Schmitz is presented to the audience and therefore she is no longer a sympathetic perpetrator figure. The story still

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[122] Ide, Wendy. "*The Reader.*" *The Times.* N.p. 01 Jan. 2009. Web. <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/arts/film/reviews/article1864341.ece>. 16 Jan. 2013.
[123] McCarthy, Todd. "The Reader." *Variety*. N.p. 30 Nov. 2008. Web. <https://login.variety.com/index.asp?layout=awardcentral&jump=contenders&id=stephen_daldry_the_reader&reviewid=VE1117939125>. 7 Sep. 2013.
[124] Rentschler 1986: 3.
[125] Kaminer, Ariel. "Translating Love and the Unspeakable." *The New York Times*. N.p. 05 Dec. 2008. Web. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/07/movies/07kami.html?pagewanted=all>. 16 Jan. 2013.

unravels from the point of view of Berg, who reflects from the present day on his past with Schmitz through the use of flashbacks. As the flashbacks increase so does the coming to terms with the past by Berg. Like *The Odyssey*, which is repeatedly referenced in Daldry's *The Reader*, the filmic adaptation is less about the destination than the journey. Berg's journey negotiates his past with Schmitz, which is essential to his coming to terms with her. However, it is Schmitz's odyssey we are seeing through Berg's perspective and her destination is not atonement or an uplifting ending, in contrast, arguably, to his.

The film begins with a middle-aged Berg excusing what the audience presumes to be a one-night stand from his modern, light and sparse apartment. With the bare functional space devoid of personality reflecting the lack of relationships he has in his life, the audience knows from the beginning of the film that Berg is alone and unable to commit to a long-term relationship, and that he is living a controlled and ordered, self-assured life. Thus, when Schmitz and their relationship is later revealed to the audience, the audience realises that there has been a long-term effect on his life as a result of his relationship with Schmitz. Hence from the beginning of the film the audience are more susceptible to see the negative in their relationship.

Schmitz is introduced in the film as controlling rather than sensitive to the vulnerable and ill Berg. Rather than instinctively caring for Berg while sick, she forcefully commands Berg to move so she can clean his vomit away and then physically drags him back to his home. Rather than appearing to be an instinctive nurturing act to help Berg, which is the portrayal that can be read from Schlink's novel, it appears to be a reaction that is due to her compulsion to keep clean. The dominance Schmitz exerts over Berg in the rest of the film has begun as Schmitz quickly turns the dominant relationship into one of a sexual nature. The original music composed specifically for the film[126] also reflects the dangerous nature of Schmitz; initially, Berg is seen bathing while the music reflects his innocence as he plays with the stream of water. It peaks into a crescendo as Schmitz is revealed to be naked standing behind him ready to initiate their first sexual liaison and thus their relationship begins.

More information is revealed about Schmitz through Berg's flashbacks and the audience begin to put the pieces together about Berg the victim and the replication of

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[126] The music is by the American composer Nico Muhly entitled "The First Bath".

Schmitz's relationships with her concentration camp victims. It has been argued by Hughes-Warrington that films communicate history through flashbacks and can be used to supply a happy or hopeful ending to the history presented on screen.[127] This appears not to be the case with *The Reader* as it serves to show Berg's traumatic link with the past.

Like in Schlink's novel, their relationship revolves around the act of Berg reading aloud to Schmitz and mainly takes place in her apartment. Here, there is an obvious class difference between Berg and Schmitz as Berg's family home is bright and luxuriously furnished while Schmitz's is sparse. The lighting in the different apartments is suggestive of Schmitz's dark past and is indicative of her holding a secret. Schmitz changes, along with the lighting, as she travels with Berg on their bike trip. She appears happier and less withdrawn. This mood changes during the trip the one time she goes indoors. Inside a church listening to children singing she appears vulnerable as she proceeds to cry. As seen with Goeth and Schindler in Chapter Two, the use of sound has authorised scenes that bring out similar themes. The music creates a sound-bridge to the future Berg, again the middle-aged adult, in an expensive car on his way to work. Schmitz showing her vulnerability in a church implies that she is hiding a secret from Berg that he discovers when he is older: the symbolism of the music bridges the two characters' vulnerability at different parts of their lives. Later in the film, the audience discovers the reason for Schmitz's vulnerability along with Berg, that she is haunted by the screams of women and children burning to death in a church i.e. the time where the 300 Jews under her supervision burned to death in a bombed church. The novel does not have Berg and Schmitz visit a church on their trip, instead they become closer after a misunderstanding which results in Berg being struck with a leather belt by Schmitz. Berg as the narrator reflects on this incident and considers that it made their relationship more intimate as a consequence of seeing Schmitz cry.[128] Upon reflection, the reader of the novel could view parallels of the striking of Berg and the Jewish victims of Schmitz. However, as this incident is early into the novel it is instead a comment on the violent nature of Schmitz and Berg's relationship. Thus the film can be viewed to be more explicit in its foreshadowing of events.

The routine of washing put in place by Schmitz could be considered to be a

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[127] Hughes-Warrington. 2009: 5.
[128] Schlink 1997: 54-55.

tender, loving and motherly act, but it is instead symbolic of the nature of their relationship. In Schlink's novel Schmitz is aware that her and Berg's relationship is unconventional and is guilty about her past, this is only one possible interpretation. By washing Berg and herself, Schmitz can thus cleanse her guilt. This is lost in Daldry's film and the washing of Berg refers to the hygiene measures used during the Third Reich and thus acts as a form of parallel between Berg and the rest of Schmitz's victims.[129]

Unlike in Schlink's novel, in the film adaptation Schmitz does not physically strike Berg and they have fewer arguments. Her brutality is not displayed in order to make the unveiling of Schmitz the perpetrator even more shocking to the audience. Instead costume and appearance are used to be suggestive of Schmitz's past. For example, Schmitz appears comfortable in a tram uniform with her blonde hair and blue eyes, thus appearing as a stereotype Aryan figure. The tram uniform is already reminiscent of an SS camp guard's uniform. Schmitz is sentenced wearing a black and white suit, which is also suggestive of an SS uniform. By donning these uniforms, Schmitz physically transforms in front of the audience into the Nazi with the ability to carry out the crimes with which she has been charged.

Rather than appearing to have stumbled into working for the SS (which was Berg's interpretation in *Der Vorleser*), it appears in the film as if Schmitz chose to work for them. Daldry and Hare deliberately wanted Schmitz to look arrogant, including during her trial at which Schmitz recollects the night where 300 Jews under her supervision burned to death in a bombed church. This court room scene in Daldry's *The Reader* endeavours to reveal Schmitz's self-belief because she holds that she was not to blame for their deaths as the screenplay states: "The judge waits. HANNA seems arrogant, defiant."[130] Schmitz is portrayed as being visibly distressed when reminded of the prisoners' screams, and the bombing of the prisoners which appeared distance at various levels. For example, Schmitz believed that she was only responsible for keeping the doors locked, but not for the allied bombing that led to the church burning, therefore, preferring to believe that the responsibility should shift from her onto a higher authority, to which she was accountable. What is different in the novel is that Schmitz's

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[129] Wischmann, Antje. "Flirt with a Holocaust Crime." *Baltic Worlds*. II. 2 (2009): 22 – 25. Print. Here 24.

[130] Hare, David. *The Reader*. New York: Weinstein Books, 2009. Print. Here 60.

actions are filtered and interpreted through Berg, which casts a more sympathetic light on her actions, thus making them appear to be a misguided rather than malicious and a complicit act.

Schmitz's distancing beliefs extend to her selections of prisoners to be sent back to Auschwitz. Schmitz believed that she was just performing her job by selecting the women to go back to Auschwitz, not that she was sending the women back to be killed. This disconnection comes about because she believed she was not the person who directly killed them. Hence, she can infer that she was not responsible for their deaths. These beliefs do not convey a sympathetic character in the film or convey an ordinariness that the novel presented. As Schmitz during the trial in the film strikes the table in her frustration to explain that she was responsible for looking after the prisoners, her superficiality and thus ignorance of the ultimate consequence and impact of her actions is physically hammered home to the audience. Thus, her potentially violent nature is also exposed to the audience. This is a climactic moment in the film as the realisation of her actions and violence in the camps is fully revealed. Schmitz's illiteracy, at various levels not only inability to read and write, has not resulted in sympathy for her or for her actions as the audience can see it is not just ignorance that has led Schmitz to this fate but a series of personal decisions. At the end of the film, the sole survivor of Schmitz's actions, Mather, reaffirms this view by telling Berg that illiteracy was not a justification for Schmitz's behaviour.

The characterisation of Berg has also changed significantly from Schlink's novel. In Daldry's film, Berg now has a dual or multifaceted character that is more obvious to the audience. For example, in the film Schmitz comments that he is "good at reading" and Berg responds with "I didn't think I was good at anything." The film then cuts to Berg winning a school sports game and celebrating. Berg thus does not appear to be transformed with a new imbued confidence, as suggested in Schlink's novel, but instead is also capable of deception, secrecy and the capacity to lie.

Berg is reaffirmed as Schmitz's victim as he becomes her proxy concentration camp victim, as he too read to her like her camp victims. The misè-en-scene of Berg moving continuously by train or tram is also a symbolic association that Berg is likened to a camp victim as a youth. It is only as an adult that he travels independently by car, symbolic that he has broken his dependency as Schmitz's victim. Berg's continued and repeated visits to his past through flashbacks and then engaging with Schmitz as an

adult is not only part of his titillation and fascination with Schmitz but is symbolic of the contemporary society's desire to revisit its past in an attempt to explain its present. It is also an indication that unlike Schmitz, whose anti-Semitism is never explored, Berg can be potentially viewed as an anti-Semite by proxy and with it addresses concerns that anti-Semitism has never really gone away. This is inferred, for example, when the young Berg is introduced to the audience on the tram, he is first viewed by another character, a young boy who watches him, much to Berg's discomfort. [131] The young boy has the characteristic stereotyped features of a Jew. Berg then runs off the tram and proceeds to vomit outside of Schmitz's home. In Allan's psychoanalytic terms, affect-meaning (the vomit being expelled or rejected) creates sense-meaning or emotion (unease and discomfort). This symbolism leads the audience to an expectation of what is to follow: the revelation of the need for the second generation to come to terms with what the previous generation did during the Holocaust. This symbolism, *pace* Landy, can be said to be melodramatic in order to produce a moral universe to the audience. In the above example this melodrama also brings about shifts that begin to indicate "a renunciation of historical master narratives".[132]

Berg's refusal to tell anyone that Schmitz is illiterate in the film has led to an original conclusion by one reviewer. For Cosmo Landesman Berg is not just a traumatised victim, but is instead inadvertently an SS collaborator by allowing the other defendants to receive a lesser sentence.[133] This coincides with the audience's anger at the post-war justice system for letting the rest of the defendants have lesser sentences. As Landesman argues "the film never shows us what is lovable about Schmitz, so we cannot share Berg's ambiguity about her and thus care about her fate." The audience, already unsympathetic to Schmitz, does not want to see her sentence lessened as they might in Schlink's novel, but want the other defendants to receive an equally high sentence and are consequently also angry with the continued injustice in post-war Germany, as Professor Röhl in the film says: "we have learned nothing."

Berg and Schmitz's actions are mirrored, as Schindler and Goeth's are in *Schindler's List*. In both *The Reader* and *Schindler's List* the sound connects the

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[131] Allan 1998: 132.
[132] Schmitz 2007: 6.
[133] Landesman, Cosmo. "The Reader" *The Sunday Times*. N.p. 04 Jan. 2009. Web. http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/culture/film_and_tv/film/article77929.ece>. 15. Nov. 2012.

protagonists as they physically prepare themselves for the verdict, getting dressed and each of them viewing themselves in a mirror. Berg is the same age as Schmitz would have been when she started working in the camps. He like Schmitz turns his back on his moral duty and has failed to learn anything from Schmitz's generation. The same striped shirt and tie are put on and Berg could be transformed into Schmitz as a potential perpetrator. With Berg continuing Schmitz's disregard for the Jewish victims, through him it appears that anti-Semitism has continued.

A decade later, by contacting Schmitz in the unusual form - tape recordings which Berg has made of certain books - Berg begins to come to terms with his past in the only form that he can. The remoteness of the tape recording trope means that Berg does not talk directly to Schmitz or communicate in any other way, thus showing the hold she still has over him. Berg begins his indirect communication with Schmitz with *The Odyssey*. He begins this communication, in part, as a result of his failed marriage and the hold Schmitz still has over his life. While Berg records these works he is in a dark study, in a similar lighting to Schmitz's old apartment, surrounded by clutter and books, which is in stark contrast to the Berg who was introduced at the beginning of the film living in a bare apartment. It would appear that this is a visual indicator of the change in Berg's life as he initiates his own coming to terms with the past. This is a process which leads him to having an ordered and controlled life.

Schmitz begins to learn to read with *The Lady with a Little Dog* (Anton Chekhov, 1899), the last book Berg began to read and record for her before she left him and her job as a tram conductor. By starting where Berg left off, Schmitz's engagement with the past through her relationship with Berg is shown. Schmitz before the audiences' eyes begins to change. Her originally functional, bare, clean and tidy cell starts to become more elaborately decorated in the style of a child's bedroom with clippings of pictures, poems and a photo of Berg winning an award in school. This is the symbolic growth in Schmitz from functionality, bare clean cell, to literate and engaged citizen. She still remains childlike and thus is disappointed when seeing Berg as an adult for the first time.

Schmitz, in her final scene with Berg, appears without remorse for her prior actions as a camp guard. Berg wonders if Schmitz ever thought of the past. When asked if he means with him, rather than hear her explanation for the past that they shared together, Berg prefers to hear about her experience in the National Socialist period. It

could be read that Berg wants to hear about her remorse for her National Socialist past and then to transpose her remorse onto their relationship; or that her remorse will lessen Berg's shame of loving her. Instead her devastating response in the eyes of Berg was that all she had learned was how to read. Berg remains unfulfilled and remains without inner peace. That Berg asked the wrong questions of Schmitz consequently created a lack of fulfilment on both sides. Schmitz's dismissal of her own thoughts and feelings and belief that grieving for the dead would be a waste of time – "the dead are still dead" – leaves a chill through the audience.

This is not considered to be an admission of her previous lack of understanding, which is better conveyed in Schlink's novel as the reader discovers that the books Schmitz has been reading are from Holocaust survivors, thus broadening her knowledge of what was going on around her and what she was participating in. The film does not convey her broadened understanding of the past through the Holocaust canon, thus making her answer that she had "learned to read" an abrupt dismissal of Berg. After a Q&A with Daldry and Hare, this removal was discussed and it was said that Daldry and Hare had an argument with Schlink about the removal of canonical Holocaust writers such as Primo Levi from the film:

> Daldry said he and Hare eliminated the Holocaust education aspect of the novel (over the strong objections of Schlink) because he didn't want the film to seem to be about redemption; [...] The elimination of the Primo Levi reading list in the novel—however meretricious a gambit it is—deprives the literacy she achieves of any relationship to the Holocaust, which eliminates the fraudulent moral redemptiveness but also makes the film incoherent as a response to the Holocaust.[134]

This, along with Berg's continued anti-Semitism, has revealed that there is no atonement for the Holocaust.

Throughout these final scenes with Schmitz and Berg, Schmitz is still dominating Berg and thus does not provoke viewer sympathy. It also appears that instead of an act of atonement, Schmitz's suicide appears to be a result of Berg's rejection of her and the loss of power that came with it. The film juxtaposes Schmitz's suicide with Berg decorating Schmitz's apartment thus reinforcing Schmitz's hold over Berg and his continued status as a victim. The act of decorating and personalising

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[134] Rosenbaum, Ron. "Don't Give an Oscar to *The Reader* We don't need another "redemptive" Holocaust movie." *Slate*. N.p. 09 Feb. 2009. Web. <http://www.slate.com/articles/life/the_spectator/2009/02/dont_give_an_oscar_to_the_reader.html>. 4 Sep. 2009.

Schmitz's apartment for her, putting her in order and simultaneously doing the same for himself is a visual indicator to the audience that he as an adult, is gradually coming to terms with his past.

As with Schlink's novel, Berg is tasked in Schmitz's will to give Schmitz's money to Mather for her to do as she sees fit. Mather, although a victim of Schmitz's, has refused to remain one, and instead is presented as a confident survivor and moral person. In the film, Berg in a cringeworthy attempt to explain Schmitz's illiteracy can be viewed as making a display of ignorance to the audience. Mather briskly dismisses Schmitz's illiteracy, asking if it was an explanation or an excuse for Schmitz's behaviour. At this point the audience can sympathise with both characters, but feel sorry for Berg and his lack of understanding of the events Mather went through (at Schmitz's hands). Berg as a consequence still feels the need to defend Schmitz's actions, believing that Schmitz joined the SS to avoid exposing her illiteracy. Berg requires justification from Mather for his feelings towards Schmitz but refuses to see that he too is a victim of Schmitz:

> ILANA: did Hanna Schmitz acknowledge the effect she'd had on your life?
> MICHAEL stares back, understood for the first time.
> MICHAEL: She'd done much worse to other people.[135]

Mather in Schlink's novel reveals that she knew Schmitz more than Berg by saying that Schmitz was "a brutal woman"; however, Mather's character assessment of Schmitz has been removed from the film. With this omission, Berg, and the audience, loses one of the "real" character assessments of Schmitz.

The reoccurring theme of a loss of complexity of the onscreen character trope creates the final impression and memory of Berg as Schmitz's victim, as Mather is transformed on screen to a survivor rather than victim.[136] Mather, unlike Berg, understands that nothing can come out of the camps whereas Berg pushes for forgiveness for Schmitz and thus for himself. Mather reaffirms Schmitz's complicity by not accepting Schmitz's money in fear that it would exonerate the perpetrator through financial means, in a context that would remind the German audiences, if not the American audiences, of the continued reparations made by Germany to Israel in an attempt to make amends for their wartime past. Mather takes Schmitz's tea caddy and

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[135] Hare 2009: 105.
[136] This is a similar technique, which will be discussed in the interpretation of John Rabe in *City of Life and Death* (Dir. Lu Chaun. 2009).

places it next to a photo of her dead relations, thus reaffirming that Berg is also an acknowledged victim of Schmitz's, in a gesture also of memorialising the dead.

The film appears to portray the contemporary debates and concerns regarding memorialisation of Holocaust victims in Germany with the construction of the *Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas* in the centre of Berlin. The construction of the Memorial was debated since its initial conception in the 1980s and how it would act as a centralised memorial that could present and pay tribute to those murdered. Debate was further stimulated in Germany with the first round of competitions launched in 1994. The competition for the new Holocaust memorial resulted in the acre wide memorial placed at a prominent position in the city and formed out of a labyrinth of concrete columns. The debates surrounding memory and memorialisation has been included in *The Reader* in the form of a tea caddy sentimentally placed in a prominent place in Mather's home, by the picture of her murdered loved ones. The tea caddy as a form of memorial and what it symbolised to Mather, the victim, has been transposed directly from Schlink's novel to film, again indicative of why the film was so successful in Germany. Coincidentally the shape of a tea caddy as a long block visually looks like one of the columns that form part of the memorial in Berlin. The audience can see that Berg is guilty of not caring about the real victims of the Holocaust in his pressing of Mather and instead continues with his sympathising with the perpetrator. This is similar to *Der Vorleser's* ending; however, Daldry and Hare's audience is left unaware of what Berg does with Schmitz's money and if he sends it to any organisation in her name as part of her atonement, although it is implied.

The final scenes of the film have changed significantly from Schlink's novel. The novel sees Berg coming to terms with his past by relating it to the generational discourse between family members, specifically between the first and second generation.[137] Berg in the film though begins to come to terms with the effect Schmitz had on his life by telling his story to his daughter Julia, the third generation. With this Berg symbolically breaks the generational guilt of having loved a perpetrator along with his shame and silence that came with being her victim. Unsurprisingly this is set in the 1990s, about a decade after Schmitz's death. It appears that only in a united Germany can Berg come to terms with his past as the Holocaust is openly discussed and

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[137] Schlink 1997: 169.

remembered in society as well as in film.

The victim character trope has shifted in both novel and film: from the Jewish person to a gentile German, in this instance a young adult. Detailed comparative analysis of Schlink and Daldry's shifting character tropes shows how levels of ambiguity and complexity have facilitated the anti-heroine character trope which, in turn, comes to be perceived in the novel as the sympathetic perpetrator. Daldry's film, although award winning, has not conveyed the same messages as *Der Vorleser*. Rather than the sympathetic anti-heroine that won over readers of Schlink's novel *Der Vorleser*, Schmitz remains simply a perpetrator for the audiences of Daldry and Hare's film *The Reader*.

3. The A-typical Rescuer and Sympathetic Perpetrator

The detailed analysis undertaken of the films *Aimée & Jaguar* and *The Reader* illustrates that a less sympathetic portrayal of a perpetrator was popular in Germany in the 2000s, whereas an anti-hero sympathetic perpetrator figure was popular a decade earlier in the 1990s. This anti-heroine figure can be seen in the representation of Wust in *Aimée & Jaguar*. In both films, the a-typical portrayal of the leading female figures is nuanced rather than black and white. There is no scenic transformation of the characters into heroines as there was with their male counterparts such as Schindler and Hosenfeld in Chapter Two, be it through watching a clearing of a ghetto or a piece of music respectively. This chapter has instead uncovered that, in order for the female history in film to engage with fascism, the presentation of women in film changes from the victim in the films in Chapter Two, to the negatively portrayed resistor and rescuer (Wust) and the sympathetic perpetrator (Schmitz). Woman's engagement with the Holocaust has also changed from portrayals of victimhood to complexity, including relating to sexuality and the past.

The process of adaptation to the heroic German is not a uniform process as the focus on a-typical narratives has turned the women from heroines to ambiguous figures. This indicates that the valorised heroine that engaged with the Holocaust is still not acceptable in film. It can thus be argued that the shifts in portrayal of these complex women causes a change in perceptions in the way that the Holocaust and fascism are being remembered through film, as well as smaller but no less important shifts in the

portrayal of gendered history.

The next chapter argues that the complex memory of the past is negotiated in a much broader transnational setting. Also developed is the argument that memorialisation of the hero has been extended from the heroic German in Chapter Two to include the character trope the heroic Nazi. While this character trope appears to be gaining ground and acceptability as a choice of protagonist (Kurt Gerstein for example in the next chapter), it has also been used primarily for ideological purposes according to the country which creates these representations (for example John Rabe's multiple representations). It will be argued that traditionally heroic character stories have shifted to engage with the Holocaust (for example Claus von Stauffenberg whose story has significantly changed to acknowledgment and indirect commentary and engagement with the Holocaust).

Chapter Four

'The Heroic Nazi': Transnational Memory Contests in *Amen.*, *John Rabe* and *Valkyrie*

In the previous chapter, the a-typical narratives and aspects of a valorisation process (i.e. the developing, as proposed by Megill of a valorised and usable past) in regard to the character of the German heroine and sympathetic perpetrator was discussed. The chapter argued that the filmic representations of these characters removed the nuance and complexity surrounding the women concerned. This chapter refocuses on historical figures who were part of the resistance that originated within the SS, the *Wehrmacht* and National Socialist Party (NSDAP). As these institutions are viewed as complicit in war crimes and crimes against humanity, the heroic German trope now becomes the heroic Nazi for the characters in the three films discussed, i.e. the transnational *Amen.* (Dir. Costa-Gavras. 2002), the German *John Rabe* (Dir. Florian Gallenberger. 2009) and the American *Valkyrie* (Dir. Bryan Singer. 2009).

According to Schmitz, the increasingly melodramatic, and individualised, approach to history corresponds with "a renunciation of historical 'master narratives' – and a globalisation of Holocaust memory which inscribes the Holocaust as universal victim narrative into a (Western) transnational collective memory."[1] He argues that the shift towards German victim memory is not specifically German but instead part of an ongoing trend towards an international "victim culture". This victim culture is explored in this chapter in regards to the universalisation of Holocaust memory which has allowed not just Germany but also China to reinterpret and revise its past. Cooke considers that film generally presents an easy-to-explain image of the Third Reich where the population is divided into good and bad Germans.[2] This, he argues, forms a binary opposition where "ordinary Germans" are constructed as victims of Nazi leadership. This thesis argues that, although the good German is obviously in the films discussed a form of opposition to the Nazi leadership, these characters are anything but

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[1] Schmitz 2007: 6.
[2] Cooke 2007: 253.

ordinary. Instead the heroic German in film is a figure who is exemplified frequently and assumes mythic proportions. In *Amen. John Rabe* and *Valkyrie*, the melodramatic style that was seen in *Schindler's List* and *The Pianist* has been reduced to portray a more subtle story; however these characters are, in Landy's terms, still larger than life.[3] This larger than life representation is particularly seen in *Valkyrie* which is a drama and thriller. As is shown in previous chapters, history is more accessible through this melodramatic representation which creates a black and white moral universe.

The moral compass in this chapter is explored through the heroic Nazi character trope. This device enables memory contests to be revealed between Germany and the rest of the world surrounding the perception of the heroic Nazi as a complex and thus ambiguous heroic figure. Ludewig argues that the heroic Nazi acts as a way to mediate the past.[4] Ambiguity allows for nuance as this figure appears to be oxymoronic since Nazis are intrinsically bad. The three ambiguous Nazis discussed in this chapter are: Kurt Gerstein (1905 – 1945) in *Amen.*, which film adapts Rolf Hochhuth's controversial 1963 play, *Der Stellvertreter*; Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg (1907 – 1944) in *Valkyrie*, adapted from a made-for-TV German production *Operation Walküre* directed by Jo Baier and based on the story of one of Hitler's most celebrated opponents; and John Rabe (1882 – 1950) who over this period has been depicted in a spate of films each with very different ideological portrayals made by Chinese, American and German filmmakers, respectively: *Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre* (Dir. Tun Fei Mou. 1995), *Nanking* (Dir. Bill Guttentag. 2007), *City of Life and Death* (Dir. Lu Chaun. 2009) and, finally, Gallenberger's German production, *John Rabe* (2009). While the heroic Nazi character trope appears to be gaining ground and acceptability transnationally as a choice of protagonist, this thesis argues that it has been used primarily for ideological purposes according to the country of production. Commemorations of these men, in both film and resistance memorials,[5] have also been directed by contextualised needs. In this regard it is beneficial to reflect on Fuchs and Cosgrove's arguments surrounding how international forces influence public debate surrounding

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[3] Landy 2009: 50-51.
[4] This character is further developed as it meets its unlikely parallel in the good Japanese soldier and heroic Chinese, which are seen in *John Rabe* and *City of Life and Death.*
[5] John Rabe is memorialised in the International Safety Zone Memorial Hall which is on the site of Rabe's former home and Rabe's tombstone in Nanking. Gerstein is memorialised in the German Resistance Memorial Centre in the *Bendlerblock* in Berlin alongside Stauffenberg.

V*ergangenheitsbewältigung.* In this chapter it will be shown how memory contests are viewed as a competition between "the personal and historical" and "the private and the public", which processes lead to historical revisionism. The denying and suppressing of personal memories which conflict with official historical narratives is a form of suppressing or denying history and, in turn, revises it.

Amen. and *John Rabe* are adaptations of texts and do not present a Hollywood(esque) or happy ending. *Valkyrie* is an adaptation of a popular story from history which has been the subject of more than one film and which also does not present a happy ending. Unlike the commercial versus artistic adaptations of Hollywood and European directors respectively it is Hollywood and European as well as Chinese film's impact upon and relation to each other, both thematically and formally, which are considered, in particular with respect to the Rabe story.

Halle proposes that comparing Hollywood with other film industries places them in a different position of hierarchy where national cinemas are marginalised. He argues that it is through comparison and transnationalism that national specificity can be revealed.[6] According to Halle, transnationalism is not just about "economic changes but changes in representational strategies".[7] Halle emphasises the importance to recognise the new complexity of funding, which changes film itself. For example, he says "something is happening to characters, actors, and crew, language, setting, location, the film script, the camerawork and editing, in short to what we see and the way we see it". Halle thus distinguishes between the "material economic processes that belong to the dynamic of globalisation" and "the socio-political ideational processes or to put it more simply the dynamic of culture".[8] Film, he argues, proves to be the most significant marker of simultaneous economic and cultural transformations, a marker of globalisation and transnationalism. Halle believes that Germany is a suitable place to study the transformations in film production because of its complex relationship with history. He thus argues that the historical film genre can be used to explore the complexities of European transnationalism. The relationship to transnational filmmaking reveals changes in production and funding mechanisms: "From Hollywood film distributed by European mechanisms, to joint ventures intended to circulate across

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[6] Halle 2008: 27-28.
[7] Ibid: 5.
[8] Ibid: 6.

the Atlantic, to solely made European coproductions supported by EU money, specifically nationally funded films seeking access to transnational distribution networks".[9] Halle's core argument is that film can be used to imagine a common past, which in the case of the European Union is also a fractured past. The Holocaust is therefore examined critically to aid the present. By condemning the past, the present is unified. Halle views this criticism to be a continuation of West German policy surrounding its engagement with the past, which is absent in films from other countries.[10] This thesis extends Halle's position by including the American and Chinese productions that desire to engage with the abhorrent past to assist in their present. This inclusion facilitates an alternative, more specific argument that transnational representations challenge the abhorrent past firstly through the trope the heroic German, which character trope shifts are exposed in this chapter to reveal acceptance of the heroic Nazi as well as the development of the good Japanese soldier in Chinese and German films based during the Nanking Massacre.

Other dynamics also need to be taken into account. For instance, previous chapters provide some evidence relating to the development of appropriation of history and memory. More specifically, the diminishing of the realities of the Holocaust are starkly represented in *Heimat.* In contrast to this particular national specificity, American and Chinese productions continue to fully engage with the Holocaust in a manner similar to the original TV serial *Holocaust.* Rosenfeld's comments on the remoteness of *Heimat* can also be applied to *Amen. John Rabe* and *Valkyrie.* These three films portray remoteness by focusing on, in *John Rabe*, an assimilated rather than orthodox Jewish person in the form of Dr. Rosen, whereas in *Amen.* the persecution of Jewish people is removed entirely from being on screen and in *Valkyrie* they are barely mentioned at all. In the Chinese films Jewish people do not feature either, yet they could not have been made without a history of the Holocaust on film. The films discussed in this chapter instead actively remind the viewer of the German persecution of Jews, including by relying on audiences' prior knowledge of fascism and the Holocaust.[11] The complexities of ways in which remoteness or distancing of historical events from the Holocaust can be viewed are a challenge to the national narrative of Germans as

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[9] Ibid: 96.
[10] Ibid: 99, 100, and 113.
[11] As previously considered by Geisler.

perpetrators. Any subsequent representations can therefore distort national and transnational memory.

More generally, following Stam, this thesis will thus argue that adaptation is predictably different from the original due to the change of medium.[12] The source of the film is necessarily taken into account, although this is not done in order to place a hierarchy between the film and its original source the differences between the literary source and the film case studies, in particular *Amen.* and *John Rabe*, rather than fidelity to the source, are considered by analysing the characterisation of the victims and of the Germans. By focusing on this characterisation, this thesis presents a new understanding of the dynamic between cinemas in an international and transnational setting. While the German film *John Rabe* diminishes the realities of the Holocaust by focusing on the crimes of the Japanese army and *Amen.* focuses on the heroic efforts of Gerstein to save the life of a priest rather than a Jew, the Nanking narratives place the story of Rabe amongst German fascism and the Holocaust. Stauffenberg's story in *Operation Walküre* (Dir. Jo Baier. 2007) has also been deliberately changed to engage with the Holocaust. Therefore, the heroic Nazi figure has extended from the black-and-white portrayal of the gentile German, i.e. Chapter Two's Schindler who was exclusively a Jewish rescuer, through to the nuanced portrayal of ambiguous heroines in the previous chapter, to those who have performed other heroic acts not only relating to the rescue of Jews during the National Socialist period. This chapter, by including Chinese films that portray the Nanking Massacre, also extends the parameters of the character trope the heroic Nazi as well as the extent to which it is depicted and accepted.

More specifically, the Nanking Massacre is analysed because this event occurred during the Nazi period and German anti-Semitism is frequently referenced in this film. This is also the case in the three other films depicting the massacre. This thesis thus endeavours to clarify and extend Doneson's definition of a Holocaust film. [13] Because of different levels of acknowledgement of the Holocaust, all of these films can be termed Holocaust films. So, where this thesis assumes that the interplay between Germany and the U.S. was exposed in the controversy surrounding *Holocaust* and *Heimat,* and that this continued in the post-unification cinema industries, this chapter in particular serves to expand upon this pivotal dynamic in more detail, as well as incorporating the role of

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[12] Stam 2000: 55.
[13] Doneson 2002: 6.

international and transnational memory contests and how these too revised and appropriated past informs the present.

As to the shift to resistor character trope in *Valkyrie*, Zehfuss argues that by focusing on the resistor or the a-typical German during Nazism, this puts focus on the minority and their mythic qualities. The underlying complex memory contests represented in *Amen.*, *John Rabe* and *Valkyrie* reveal that the character trope of the heroic Nazi has been manipulated to establish a usable and valorised past as discussed by Megill.[14] For example, Gerstein was believed to be a traitor in post-war Germany but this did not stop his written testimony being used as evidence in the Nuremberg Trials. Schindler was brought to the fore under the label "the good German" by an American; Rabe was labelled a good Nazi. He too lived a relatively unknown life and after his death it took an American to bring his story to an international audience.[15] Like Gerstein and Rabe, Schindler was a Nazi party member, but he is not known in the publicity surrounding him as a good Nazi which is why, in this thesis, he is referred to as a heroic German. Stauffenberg too was initially considered to be a traitor in the immediate post-war period.

Denazification directives were established by the Allied Control Council in January 1946 with the aim of removing symbols of the Nazi regime as well as penalising those who were identified as a supporter of the Nazi state. The prominence placed on Gerstein, Rabe and Stauffenberg's associations with these National Socialist institutions differentiates them from the other German characters and their film representations analysed in this thesis. This chapter thus continues to reveal the focus given to men and male-centred history.

This chapter has been separated into sections with the specific intention of accentuating key themes that run throughout this thesis. The first theme uses the many faces of Gerstein's character – religious and resistor - to draw out the ways in which revisionism at various levels can come about. The many faces of Rabe's character – from ordinary patriotic German to rescuer of Chinese civilians – serve to extend the process of revisionism to a transnational setting and start to show how appropriation of history and memory contests can begin. The final process of appropriation is conveyed well through shifts in Stauffenberg's character – from German to all-American hero.

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[14] In Bell 2006: 6.
[15] Chang, Iris. *The Rape of Nanking*. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1997. Print.

Underlying each of these three characters is the complex process of adaptation.

1. The Many Faces of Kurt Gerstein

Kurt Gerstein was a Waffen-Schutzstaffel (Waffen-SS) officer whose story has been used as a positive example of resistance. Gerstein was a devout Christian (Lutheran), came from a traditionally conservative family, and ended up being within the higher echelons of the National Socialist regime. He was not de-Nazified until 20 years after his death, after several appeals launched by his widow, Elfriede.[16] Gerstein is thus an ambiguous figure and his motivations for resistance have led to controversy and debate.

According to his own report, Gerstein was a religious man who spent his spare time on church-related activities, such as being a leading member of Bible circles and the German Evangelical youth movement. [17] He graduated as an engineer in 1931 and became involved with the *Höherer Preußischer Bergdienst* mining company, joining the NSDAP on 2 May 1933. He eventually became an officer in the Waffen-SS and was a key witness of the concentration and death camps who claimed to be an unwilling participant in the Final Solution from 1942-45.[18] He professed beliefs and principles that were fundamentally at odds with Nazism. There are many examples that can be drawn on to present Gerstein's lack of Nazi beliefs, for example, on 30 January 1935 in the town of Hägen in Schleswig-Holstein, a performance of *Wittekind*, an anti-Christian play by Edmund Kiss, organised by the Hitler Youth, was disrupted by 30 Roman Catholics. They were all escorted from the theatre. The second performance was disrupted by Gerstein, who was by himself in the first row, and for this he was publically beaten by Nazi party members who were also in attendance.[19]

Gerstein was arrested several times for his subversive behaviour, for example, on 27 September 1936 for sending 8,500 subversive, i.e. anti-Nazi, pamphlets. He remained in prison until the end of October 1936. After his release, Gerstein went on to

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[16] Hébert, Valerie. "Disguised Resistance? The Story of Kurt Gerstein." *University of Toronto Holocaust and Genocide Studies.* 20.1 (2006): 1 – 33. Print. Here 21.
[17] Holocaust Education & Archive Research Team. "Gerstein Report." *Aktion Reinhard Camps*. N.p. 2006. Web. <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/ar/gersteinreport.html>. 6 Dec. 2012.
[18] From 1925 until its dissolution in 1934, Gerstein was an active member of organised Protestant Youth (Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), *CVJM-Weltbund (Christlicher Verein Junger Menschen/* World Alliance of YMCAs) and the Federation of German Bible Circles at secondary schools. Friedländer, Saul. *Counterfeit Nazi: The Ambiguity of Good.* Trans. C Fullman., New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1969. Print. Here 36-37.
[19] Ibid: 36-7.

study medicine in Tübingen and continued his religious activities. He spent one third of his income on the printing and distributing of 230,000 religious and anti-Nazi pamphlets. This was considered by the Gestapo as "a concentrated, systematic, and organised mass literary attack against the National Socialist State."[20] As a consequence of his activities, he was released from employment with the Miners' Association and stripped of his membership of the NSDAP.

Gerstein was arrested again on the 14 July 1938 along with six other persons because, according to the order for his imprisonment on 23 July 1938, it was decided that Gerstein had behaved in a "manner prejudicial to the interests of the people and of the state."[21] Gerstein and the other six plotters were accused of wanting to restore the monarchy. He was transferred to Konzentrationslager Welzheim where he spent six-and-half weeks; he called the time "the most terrible period of my entire life."[22]

It is apparent from early in his career that Gerstein was openly and actively opposed to Nazism, so it is a wonder, which makes for a compelling story, that he remained a member of the SS and was directly involved and arguably complicit in the implementation of the Final Solution.

In his report composed in April 1945 about why he joined the SS, Gerstein defends his actions. He claims that after the Nazis initiated their euthanasia programme, which resulted in the death of his sister–in–law, Bertha Ebeling, he joined the SS on 10 March 1941. He was soon appointed to the sanitation and hygiene department due to his qualifications in both engineering and medicine. There he constructed mobile and stationary disinfection facilities for both German troops and concentration camps. After his success controlling a typhus epidemic in 1941 he was promoted to *Obersturmführer*.[23]

He was recognised as an expert in his field so that by 8 June 1942, he was in a position to see the future site of the extermination camp of Belzec in eastern Poland. There he witnessed the gassing of Jews by diesel engine trucks and was made to understand that this was to be replaced by Zyklon B as it was considered to be more effective. By 19 August 1942, he personally witnessed the gas chambers in use in

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[20] Hébert 2006: 5.
[21] Friedländer 1969: 52.
[22] Ibid: 61.
[23] Klein, Julia M. "Costa-Gavras's Moral Journeys, from Z to A." *The Chronicle of Higher Education.* 49.23 (2003): 1 – 4. Print. Here 8.

Belzec and Treblinka. He was also made aware of the establishment of the Sobibor and Majdanek camps. Gerstein recorded the details about the camps' capacity for extermination and strove to reveal the crimes being committed to the world. For example, on the same day that he went to Belzec, aboard the overnight Warsaw to Berlin train, Gerstein discussed what he had seen at length with the secretary to the Swedish legation, Baron Göran von Otter. Once back in Berlin, Gerstein also visited the Papal Nuncio in an attempt to pass on information to the Vatican, which was the beginning of his lengthy attempts to spread his information. This included approaching a variety of anti-Nazis, like Dr. Paul Hochstrasser (the press attaché of the Swiss legation), Peter Buchholz (the chaplain of Plötzensee prison), Dr. Otto Dibelius (the Lutheran bishop of Berlin) and forwarding detailed reports to the Dutch resistance.[24] All claims that Gerstein contacted the above people with evidence about the mass extermination of the Jews have been verified and compiled by his biographer, Saul Friedländer, who uses interviews conducted with Otter and gathered testimony in the 1940s to build support for Gerstein's motivations and resistance efforts. In Friedländer's interview with Otter, he records that not only did Gerstein approach Otter several times to discuss the extermination of the Jews but also that Gerstein's mental health was gradually deteriorating as a consequence of bearing witness to the atrocities.[25]

From August 1942 until his surrender to the French Allies in April 1945, not only did Gerstein attempt to raise international awareness of the plight of the Jews, he repeatedly took the practical measure of diverting many Zyklon B orders that were destined to the extermination camps by either reporting that they were contaminated so that they would be destroyed and could not be used, or diverting them for actual decontamination purposes. In April 1945, Gerstein handed himself over to the French authorities with the intention to act as a witness for the criminal prosecution. Although Gerstein claimed that he stayed within the National Socialist system to act as a witness for when the system collapsed, and so that he could also divert the shipments of Zyklon B, he came under attack for his complicity with the National Socialist regime. Gerstein was found dead in his cell within 12 days of arriving in Paris in the Cherche-Midi military prison on the afternoon of 25 July 1945. The causes of his death have remained unexplained. However it is generally accepted by his biographers that it was suicide.

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[24] Ibid: 10.
[25] Friedländer 1969: 123-4.

For instance, Friedländer considered Gerstein's death as being a result of his mental degeneration.[26] There has also been some suspicion that it was murder as a result of the accusations Gerstein made against his fellow SS inmates.[27] On 3 August, Gerstein was buried in the French Thiais cemetery under the name Gastein. It was not until 1948 that his family were informed of his death.[28] Later, in 1956, Gerstein's grave was levelled along with a segment of the cemetery. This has unfortunately meant that no further identification of his body could be possible.[29]

Gerstein's lasting legacy is contained in three reports he composed while in French captivity, which are nearly identical to each other and composed in French and German.[30] Dated 26 April 1945, they included a short autobiography of Gerstein's subversive behaviour and resistance efforts and include invoices from the Degesch Company concerning deliveries of Zyklon B to the Oranienburg and Auschwitz camps. The three texts were examined by Professor Hans Rothfels and other specialists who verified their authenticity. The existence of these three reports has led to Holocaust deniers claiming that the reports were falsified by the Allies, specifically for the war crimes trials[31] where they were used as evidence. Gerstein's accounts have proved to be among the most detailed regarding the processing of prisoners in the death camps from the point of view of a member of the German SS.[32] Gerstein's judgment as a witness has been taken to be accurate, but his voluntary membership of the SS remained an issue for any future assessments of his actions.

For several years following his death, his wife sought to have Gerstein de-Nazified to remove the ambiguity surrounding his name and to secure his pension. First, in the summer of 1954, she sought to have him recognised as a persecuted opponent of National Socialism and granted a posthumous pardon. The Clemency Committee of the Baden-Württemberg Justice Ministry investigated Gerstein's case and concluded that Gerstein's motives for joining the SS displayed his cooperation in the killing of Jews and that he should have done everything in his power to stop himself from being

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[26] Ibid: 224.
[27] Klein 2003: 12.
[28] Friedländer 1969: viii.
[29] Ibid: x.
[30] Ibid: xii - xiii.
[31] The reports were used in evidence for the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, the Nuremberg Doctors' Trial, the IG Farben case, the Eichmann trial and the German Belzec trial.
[32] Klein 2003: 1-2.

involved in Nazi crimes. It was then recommended by the same officials that Elfriede could apply for a war widow's pension, a *Kriegshinterbliebenenrente*. The war widow's pension should not be subject to the same denazification decisions that had hindered her previous applications as pensions were also provided for former prisoners of war. For this reason, Elfriede applied for state support on the grounds that her husband died while in French custody. This too was rejected. Despite several appeals, Gerstein was not de-Nazified and Elfriede remained without aid. It was not until January 1965 with the intervention of Otter that Elfriede obtained posthumous pardon for Gerstein.[33]

In 1963 Gerstein first came to public attention as the leading protagonist of Hochhuth's controversial play *Der Stellvertreter* (*The Deputy*) where he was brought to the fore as an example of a German hero. [34] However this play does not detail the controversy surrounding Gerstein or his acceptance as a heroic German. It does, however, provide evidence as to paradigm shift or revisionism in the portrayal of history and culpability for the Holocaust.

1.1 Hochhuth's *Der Stellvertreter*

The basic premise of *Der Stellvertreter* is that Gerstein tells a fictional heroic priest (Riccardo Fontana) about the mass extermination of the Jews. They are both thwarted in their efforts to persuade the Church and the Pope to take action. These two saintly characters are also mirrored inversely by the Doctor, a character that is the embodiment of evil who is based on Dr Josef Mengele, the infamous Auschwitz doctor who experimented on Jewish prisoners. [35]

This play directly attacked Pope Pius XII for his inactivity during the Holocaust. It has been translated into 20 languages and played in over 10 countries with a published version of the play selling over 200,000 copies in Germany within its first year.[36] When *Der Stellvertreter* was premièred, political and cultural awareness of the

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[33] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Kurt Gerstein. *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. N.p. 20 Jun. 2014. Web. <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005840>. 4 Oct. 2014.

[34] Hochhuth, Rolf. *The Deputy*. Trans. C Winston. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1964. Print.

[35] This is the same technique which was employed in *Schindler's List* as the heroic Schindler is pitted against the villainous Goeth.

[36] Whitehead, Kenneth D. "The Pope Pius XII Controversy A Review." *The Political Science Reviewer*. XXXI (2002). 283 – 387. Print.

inactivity of the Church during the Holocaust was low. The enormous controversy that this play instigated, along with the investigations into Gerstein's life, have been interpreted as a desire to "bring out into the open the events of this obscure era and to begin the process of understanding them."[37]

According to Hochhuth in the appendix, "Sidelights on History," the responsibility for what happened in the Holocaust rested not on the ordinary German people but firmly on the inaction of Pope Pius XII. As already discussed by Kundnani, in the early 1960s Germans were still inclined to believe they were victims of National Socialism;[38] therefore, by claiming that the Vatican and the Pope could have prevented the Holocaust if they had spoken out, Hochhuth further diverts attention from ordinary Germans and from their culpability and reinforces the idea of the ordinary German being a victim of National Socialism. Gerstein, however, does not appear to be the primary source of controversy despite being a heroic character, which happens to be one of the first public representations of a heroic SS officer.

The publicity of *Der Stellvertreter* led to Issy Wygoda, a Jewish businessman and former concentration camp inmate, pressuring German authorities to review Gerstein's case. Writing in the spring of 1964, he asked the Justice Department in Stuttgart to "now take a completely different decision [...] justice."[39] He also requested that Elfriede and her children be recognised under the Federal Law for the Compensation of the Victims of National Socialist Persecution (*Bundesentschädigungsgesetz*). In particular, Wygoda argued that Gerstein's heirs should be compensated after his dismissal from his state mining position in 1936 as a result of his resistance activities. Gerstein's case, as a result of Wygoda's actions, was brought to the attention of the Central Council of Jews in Germany who declared that Gerstein's informing about the Nazi war crimes towards the Jews could be viewed as a true act of resistance. On 20 January 1965, the Minister-President of Baden-Württemberg and future Federal Chancellor, Kurt Georg Kiesinger, declared that Gerstein was officially exonerated. Elfriede received her widow's pension on 13 June 1969. If it had not been for Hochhuth's play this would not have occurred.

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[37] Barasch-Rubinstein, Emanuela. *The Devil, the Saints, and the Church: Reading Hochhuth's The Deputy*. New York: Peter Lang, 2004. Print. Here 113.
[38] Kundnani 2011: 272-3.
[39] *Der Spiegel*. "Figur im Drama." *Der Spiegel*. 24. N.p. 1964 Archive. Web. <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-46173863.html>. 1 Dec. 2012.

1.1.1 Gerstein the Heroic Nazi

Gerstein is presented in Hochhuth's play as a Christian nationalist who refuses to leave his country with the rise of National Socialism and instead strives to save it. Although he decided to act as a resistor, Gerstein does not expect or condemn the German people for not doing the same. As his character in the play explains to the Priest, Fontana, "Are we to castigate a man who does not want to die for others?"[40] Gerstein implies that if ordinary German people spoke out against the regime it would be fatal for them. Therefore, according to the thrust of Hochhuth's play, the masses were without blame. Gerstein's Christian faith is presented as key to his motivation to save innocent lives. Christian imagery and Christian motivations have been used repeatedly in German films as the reason for why people resisted the National Socialist regime. The most popular recent films have included *Sophie Scholl – Die letzten Tage*, which repeatedly presents Sophie's motivations for resistance as being tied to her Christianity and her religious faith turns her into a martyr for Germany.

The substantial revision of Gerstein's real actions in *Der Stellvertreter* is that he directly assists the Jews. This difference is in the form of the inclusion of the fictional Jewish character Jacobson, who Gerstein personally hides in his home. This character is assumed by the audience to die at the end of the play. The play is also not clear in regard to what happens to Gerstein as the stage goes dark and the narrator closes the play by saying that the camp crematorium remained active for another year and that Auschwitz prisoners were freed by the Russians. The play's ambiguity regarding the fate of Gerstein leads to the assumption that he was punished for his involvement in his attempt to save Jacobson. If so, then it serves to reinforce Gerstein's position as a heroic resistor.[41]

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[40] Hochhuth 1964: 80.

[41] The imprisonment of Gerstein, it is expected, would be similar to that of Father Jean Bernard, whose autobiography *Pfarrerblock 25487* was filmed by director Volker Schlöndorff as *Der neunte Tag* (2004), where the fictional Abbé Henri Kremer is imprisoned for actively voicing opposition to Nazi racial laws and aiding the French resistance. Unlike Gerstein, Kremer is released from Dachau back to his home of Luxembourg, where he discovers that he has nine days to convince the Bishop of Luxembourg to collaborate with the occupying Nazis. The premise of this film is that Kremer has to decide whether to give up his own religious beliefs, flee, which would risk the safety of his family and other imprisoned priests, or to stand firm and risk dying in the camp. Being the hero, Kremer chose to stand by his beliefs, which was the same decision as Bernard, who later went on to become the Bishop of Luxembourg in 1955.

A form of historical revisionism also needs to be considered which exposes assumptions relating to the myth of the ordinary blameless German which was perpetuated during the Allied war crimes trials, where the complicity of the SS was encouraged. It has been argued by Reitlinger that the importance of the SS in committing atrocities was exaggerated by German defendants as a basis for their defence and as such the SS has provided the "German nation with a convenient scapegoat."[42] Showing a member of the SS to be an active resistor runs counter to this historical revisionist narrative. If the SS was to blame as the bad guys for the entire nation, then consequently the good, heroic or average person became the exception. Therefore, it is natural that Gerstein and his story would not be popularised as his story can instigate the idea that the German nation as a whole is guilty.[43]

Hochhuth believed that "in the age of conscription it is not necessarily to anyone's credit or blame, or even a question of character, which uniform one wears or whether one stands on the side of the victims or the executioners".[44] This rationale serves to reinforce the idea that the average German could be responsible and that blame again falls on not just the organisers of the regime but rather the ordinary person. Accordingly, Hochhuth designed that other actors in his play should play more than one character part, one good character and one bad character, with the purpose of exploring the duality of man. For example, the corresponding character part for Pope Pius XII is Baron Rutta (head of the Reich Armament Cartel). Hochhuth's play is also rife with contradictions such as the character of the Doctor and the Pope. The Doctor, his profession being one that invokes ideas of caring, is paradoxical as he conducts evil actions and experiments. This is comparable to the doublespeak of the Pope who claims to care about all of God's children but remains inactive in the face of evil.

With the grey area established with the presentation of the charismatic Doctor / Devil and the detestable Pope / God, Hochhuth has eluded the basic dichotomy of good versus evil and thus differs from the traditional binary representation of the Devil and

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[42] Reitlinger, Gerald. *The SS: Alibi of a Nation 1922-1945*. London: Heinemann, 1956. Print. Here 452.

[43] Although Germans during this period would not be interested in exploring Gerstein or the complicity of the German nation, it does not answer why French academics took an active interest in Gerstein after the release of the play. It would appear that France was already exploring complicity and resistance as a consequence of their occupation by Germany during World War Two. The investigation into complicity in occupied France culminated in Marcel Ophüls' film *The Sorrow and the Pity/ Le chagrin et la pitié* (1969). It was so controversial when it was initially released in France that it was banned until 1981.

[44] Hochhuth 1964: 12.

God having ultimate power over mankind and its actions. As a consequence, the play makes possible the character of the heroic SS officer, Gerstein. Use of these character tropes differs from other plays such as *Good* by C. P. Taylor (later made into a film with the same title Dir. Vincente Amorim. 2008) which instead of presenting the duality of man depicts a man's descent from a morally good character to a complicit Nazi. While various aspects as above have clearly revised Gerstein's history, Hochhuth's play also remains to some extent historically accurate, with few deviations from its sources; the most significant being the creation of the character Fontana. Centring on Gerstein as a heroic SS-officer who ultimately meets his demise for attempting to resist the regime while the Doctor survives reinforces the idea that, as an average German, you could not do anything to help anyone without risking your life. Therefore the average German was not to blame for acting as a bystander. The blame, Hochhuth suggests, rests instead at institutional levels, i.e. with the Catholic Church, in the figure of Pope Pius XII, for not directly speaking out against the mass execution of the Jews. Hence, it can be argued that Hochhuth has used Gerstein to emphasise that German society as a whole was not just complicit but also a victim of the National Socialist regime.

Since the publication of *Der Stellvertreter*, Gerstein has appeared in scholarly works as an enigmatic resistance figure. There have been four biographies.[45] As two of these biographies were translated into English, it would appear that there was a substantial interest in Gerstein's story in English-speaking countries during the 1960s in the wake of productions of Hochhuth's play.[46] The most recent work published in 2002[47] has not been translated into English, which suggests that there was little call from English-speaking countries for more information regarding Gerstein.[48] *Der*

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[45] Franz, Helmut. *Kurt Gerstein: Aussenseiter des Widerstandes der Kirche gegen Hitler.* Zürich: Bruchsal, 1964. Print. Friedländer, Saul. *Kurt Gerstein ou l'Ambiguïté du bien: Postface par Léon Poliakov*. Paris: Casterman, 1967 Print., Joffroy, Pierre. *L'espion de Dieu: la passion de Kurt Gerstein.* Paris: Grasset, 1969. Print., and Schäfer, Jürgen. *Kurt Gerstein.* Bielefeld: Luther-Verlag, 2002. Print.

[46] The play was first published in English in the UK the day after it was performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) at Aldwych Theatre, London in September 1963. It only ran for less than ten days before the RSC moved back to their base in Stratford-upon-Avon.

[47] Schäfer, Jürgen. *Kurt Gerstein.* Bielefeld: Luther-Verlag, 2002. Print.

[48] Several editions of Friedländer and Joffroy's biographies have been published in the original French as well as translated into English and German. Friedländer's was published in French (Friedländer, Saul. *Kurt Gerstein ou l'Ambiguïté du bien: Postface par Léon Poliakov*. Paris: Casterman, 1967 Print and Tournai: Casterman, 1967. Print), English (*Counterfeit Nazi: the Ambiguity of Good.* Trans. Charles Fullman. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson. 1969. Print., New York, Knopf. 1983. Print.), German (*Kurt Gerstein oder die Zwiespältigkeit des Guten.* Trans. Theodor A Knust. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Sachbuchverlag. 1968. Print.), Italian (*L'ambiguità del bene: il caso del nazista pentito Kurt Gerstein.*

Stellvertreter though has not been forgotten; it has been on the London stage in recent years.[49] Both Friedländer and Joffroy's biographies were re-published in Germany after the release of *Amen.*, which displays the renewed interest in Gerstein's story in Germany as a result of the film.

Gerstein has, like Stauffenberg, been displayed in the German Resistance Memorial Centre in the section *Widerstand aus christlichem Glauben nach 1939*, since its opening in 1989. Here, Gerstein's photograph is placed with a letter to his wife dated 26 May 1945 along with information regarding his resistance efforts.[50] As ambiguity continues to surround his actions and complicity during the Third Reich, Gerstein has not been awarded the title of Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem or internationally recognised as a resistor such as the other heroic Germans in this thesis. Although memorialised in an exhibition dedicated to resistance by Germans, not much was said or written about Gerstein after the 1970s. It was not until the Greek born French director Constantinos 'Costa'-Gavras that a film version of his actions was made. The changes in character tropes in not just the portrayal of Gerstein but of the other Holocaust witnesses are examined in detail below.

1.2 Kurt Gerstein on Film: *Amen.*

In 2002, nearly 40 years after the release of Hochhuth's play, it was adapted into a film by the critically acclaimed director Costa-Gavras. Entitled *Amen.* the film is loosely based on the play but instead of being solely condemnatory of Pope Pius XII it also focused its criticism on America. [51] Unlike Hochhuth's play, *Amen.* did not bring Gerstein's actions to a wider audience and make him into a transnational household name that was equated with resistance.

Costa-Gavras conceived the idea of adapting *Der Stellvertreter* in 1998, the same year that the Vatican issued its official apology for its inactivity and for not

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Trans. Gabriele Nissim. Milano: ESBMO, 2002. Print.) and in Japan (*Kurt Gerstein teikô no autosaidâ.* Tokyo: Sangyô kôdô kenkyûjo, 1971. Print.). Joffroy's works have been published in French (*L'espion de Dieu: la passion de Kurt Gerstein.* Paris: Grasset, 1969. Print), translated into English (*A Spy for God: the ordeal of Kurt Gerstein.* Trans. Norman Denny. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971. Print., London: Fontana, 1972., London & Glasgow: Collins, 1972., New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1972.) and German (*Der Spion Gottes: die Passion des Kurt Gerstein.* Stuttgart: K. F. Koehler Verlag. 1972. Print).

[49] Finborough Theatre London, August 2006.

[50] Taken from an email sent by Prof Dr J Tuchel the head of the German Resistance Memorial Center, 12 Dec. 2012.

[51] *Amen.*. Dir. Costa-Gavras. Perf. Ulrich Tukur. Kino International. 2002. DVD.

speaking out against the Holocaust.[52] *Amen.* released four years after its original conception, was ill-timed and ultimately too late to be part of the discussion that was initiated by the Vatican apology. The new title, (it had at one point been decided to be called *Eyewitness* but it was rejected for being too obvious),[53] means that audiences are not reminded of the original popular albeit controversial play. Consequently, the film could not rely on attracting audiences who were fans of *Der Stellvertreter* going to view the filmic adaptation.

In addition, and rather than presenting the historically ambiguous hero, Gerstein and Fontana have been portrayed as virtuous heroes with little attention to the various shades of grey which are typical of Costa-Gavras' films.[54] Like the other figures discussed in this thesis, Gerstein in the film has a transformative moment that turns him from complicit into a resistor, however the audience is not shown what Gerstein sees (which was symbolised in the film *Schindler's List*). Instead the transformation is assumed by the audience to be the consequence of seeing the deaths of Jewish people in a gas chamber. The change to the death of Jews as Gerstein's motivation in the film, rather than the euthanized death of his niece in the play and Gerstein's records, thus pushes him to become more of a mythical, melodramatic, stereotyped resistance figure like Schindler and Hosenfeld. The figure of Gerstein can be considered as part of Fierke and Winter's argument on mythic archetypes which provides scope for ambiguity as it incorporates the heroic Nazi, whose heroic deeds are also tied to National Socialism.

Instead of being led away which leaves Gerstein's fate unknown, as in Hochhuth's play, Gerstein's story in Costa-Gavras's film adaptation is extended to his supposed suicide in a French prison. Gerstein has given himself over to the French Allies and is seen writing his famous reports about the operation of the death camps. Despite providing information about his resistance efforts, Gerstein in prison is given a report from his French captors that states that as a Christian he did not do enough to stop the mass extermination of the Jews and that he was wrong in his attempts to stop the regime from within. This leads ultimately to his suspected suicide that goes barely

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[52] BBC News. "Vatican apologises over Holocaust" *BBC News*. N.p. 16 Mar. 1998. Web. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/65889.stm>. 8 Sep. 2013.
[53] Lewis, Malcolm. "Amen (Eyewitness)". *New Internationalist Magazine*. N.p. 1 Jul. 2012. Web. <http://newint.org/columns/media/film/2002/07/01/amen-eyewitness/>. 4 Aug. 2014.
[54] Peterson, Arthur. "History and the Cinema: A Guide for the Movie-Going History Student." *The History Teacher*. 7.1 (1973): 79 – 88. Print. Here 87.

noticed by his captors. This latter scenario adds a conspiracy nature to the film as it reaffirms that his death has historically been considered suspicious as some are inclined to presume that he was murdered to keep his silence about the war crimes committed by the other inmates. Similar to Costa-Gavras's other films, the hero has been consumed by the state and the system has won. The hero is thus too a victim.

With various adaptations and shifts, *Amen.* offered a new (revisionist) slant to the National Socialist past, including focusing on American inactivity while maintaining a traditional, but not sensationalised, Hollywood linear narrative and aesthetic. Although this is an English-language film, the main stars are European. As a result, it lacks the transnational star figure, which has resulted in the film receiving less mainstream attention. Hollywood actors have successfully been used to attract attention to European co-productions such as Polanski's *The Pianist* and as a result they have been far more successful than *Amen.*. Although *The Pianist* received far more commercial attention, it received similar critical acclaim as *Amen.* as both the directors are considered to be exemplary, had first-hand experience of World War Two, and they both began their careers with films that had underlying socio-political themes.[55] Frequently, connections between *The Pianist* and *Amen.* are made as both are based on real people; both are adapted from literary texts; and both include a heroic German officer,[56] the main difference being that the German officer is the lead protagonist in *Amen.* but a subsidiary character to the Jewish lead in *The Pianist*. While the above are the factual protagonists in *Amen.* there is also a fictional protagonist, Fontana, and shifts in other minor factual characters that change the levels of complicity.

1.2.1. Complicity: fact or fiction?

As with Hochhuth's play, interwoven with Gerstein's personal story is that of the fictional priest Fontana. The two men repeatedly attempt to prompt Pope Pius XII to openly condemn the atrocities, but without success. Simplistically, in the play Pope Pius XII is condemned for his inaction and Gerstein and Fontana are raised to heroes for their attempts to prevent the mass extermination of the Jews. As a result, in Costa-Gavras's filmic adaptation the audiences' judgement of Gerstein is based on Gerstein's intentions, which are to be a resistor and a witness, a similar conclusion that can be

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[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.

drawn from the play. However and unlike the play, Gerstein does not directly assist in the rescue of Jews, and the Jewish character Jacobson has also been removed from the film. As the risks Gerstein takes, although serious, have been minimised, his actions appear to have little consequence for himself and his family thus making his actions appear less heroic.

Costa-Gavras uses his characters to expose Costa-Gavras's own belief that indifference was the same as complicity, which he believes are consistent in human history and not exclusive to the Holocaust: "Our passivity is a crime in itself."[57] Consequently, Costa-Gavras has his characterisation of Gerstein angrily blame his friends for their inaction after he tells them of the extermination of the Jews and his resistance efforts. Hence blame is placed on the average German for their inaction, which is equated to complicity, which is the substantial difference between Gerstein's attitudes in the film compared to the play.

The lack of uplifting Hollywood endings in *Amen.* is typical of Costa-Gavras's other films as the individual is ultimately destroyed by the master narrative of a regime. In *Amen.* Gerstein is not just destroyed by the National Socialist regime as he is also driven to suicide by the Allies for not de-Nazifying him. What links *Amen.* to Costa-Gavras's previous films is the blame Costa-Gavras pins on the Americans, thereby extending the remit of blame for the Holocaust not just to the ordinary or average German but to include the Americans. To achieve this, Costa-Gavras puts emphasis on unsympathetic American characters, one of the most unsympathetic being the American diplomat Ambassador Taylor. Although this character has a small role in the film, it is based on the actual diplomat Myron Charles Taylor, who was the personal representative of President Truman to Pope Pius XII from 1942 – 1944, when he was a resident in the Vatican, along with the ambassadors from the Allied nations.[58] Taylor is historically accredited with bringing the first documented proof of the Holocaust to the Pope.[59] This actual representation is in contrast to adapted filmic character, where

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[57] Insdorf, Annette. "From Polanski and Costa-Gavras: A Reckoning With the Holocaust." *Forward.com.* N.p. 3 Jan. 2003. Web. <http://forward.com/articles/9033/from-polanski-and-costa-gavras-a-reckoning-with-t/>. 21 Feb. 2013.

[58] *Catholic Herald.* "General Post for Vatican Diplomats." *Catholic Herald.co.uk.* N.p. 7 Jul. 1944. (Archive). Web.<http://archive.catholicherald.co.uk/article/7th-july-1944/6/general-post-for-vatican-diplomats>. 2 Dec. 2012. Here 6.

[59] Stewart, C. "The Man Nobody Knew." *New York Archives.* N.p. Summer 2009. Web. <http://www.archives.nysed.gov/apt/magazine/archivesmag_summer09.pdf.>. 2 Dec. 2012. Here 10.

Taylor is shown to fail to act on evidence from Gerstein (as does the Pope) that there was mass extermination of the Jewish people.

More specifically, in the film adaptation, Taylor is also joined by another American diplomat, based on the real life diplomat Harold J. Tittmann Jr. who wrote a memoir about his own experiences as a diplomat and time in Rome. These men's characters repeatedly state in *Amen.* that they are keen to have proof of the extermination of the Jews but do little apart from criticise the Pope for not being more openly condemnatory of the National Socialist regime.

When Fontana does eventually meet these American ambassadors they are gorging themselves on a rich meal of sea food, using their hands as utensils, which distances them further from the average person who was on rations, or the victims who were being starved. The diplomats glance at a map that Fontana gives them, which details the location of each of the camps and their capacity for the daily extermination of Jews. They have barely glimpsed at the map before announcing that they cannot do anything about the extermination camps until the Nazis are defeated, and state that the U.S. and other democratic countries will not take the Jews into their own countries as their presence will slow down the war effort. No explanation as to how the Jews would slow down the war effort is made. This prompts the audience to condemn the inactivity of the Americans and the Church towards the Jews and for what they see as lies and their moral failings.

As a consequence of this filmic adaptation, the sympathy of the audience towards Fontana and Gerstein increases while its anger is now projected towards the U.S. as well as the Church. While this film, like the play, is a criticism of the Church, the move by Costa-Gavras to overt criticism of the U.S. and its involvement in other countries is not only a common feature of his films but appears to be an attempt to reveal a hitherto lesser discussed aspect of history. However, it is publicly acknowledged that various countries were fed information regarding the Holocaust, failed to act upon it or minimised its importance due to contemporary economic and cultural pressures.[60] Thus, it can be argued that Costa-Gavras's film is a provocative

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[60] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "The United States and the Holocaust." *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. N.p. 11 May 2012. Web. <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005182>. 4 Apr. 2013.

revision or interpretation of history as it is more about anti-Americanism than it is anti-fascist or anti-Nazi.[61]

Typical of a conspiracy theory approach, Costa-Gavras pushes the extent of Pope Pius XII and the church's complicity further than in Hochhuth's *Der Stellvertreter* by showing the charismatic Devil Doctor's escape being planned between himself and the same cardinal (who is one of God's representatives) who criticised Fontana for attempting to save the Jews, which thus reinforces the duality and ambiguity of man that Hochhuth presented in *Der Stellvertreter*. It is assumed that this cardinal facilitates his escape through the *Organisation der ehemaligen SS-Angehörigen* / Organization of Former SS Members (ODESSA), known as the infamous ratline used to get SS members and war criminals out of Europe and thus escape justice popularised in the novel by Frederick Forsyth, adapted as *The ODESSA File* (Dir. Ronald Neame. 1974). The existence of ODESSA has been debated by historians and it has generally been concluded that several small groups worked to aid Nazis rather than a widespread organisation. Its existence has repeatedly been used as a plot narrative in thrillers, fictional films and novels. These ratlines aided infamous war criminals like Dr Josef Mengele and Adolf Eichmann in their initial escape from justice. The use of the cardinal as part of a conspiracy network to aid in the Doctor's escape finally reinforces the complicity of the Church. The bias of the director, Costa-Gavras, in his portrayal of Gerstein and the various levels of complicity which resulted are considered in depth below.

1.2.1 Nationalistic Biases: Their Role in Revisionism

Costa-Gavras, in an interview in 2003 for *Forward*, agreed that motion pictures continue to shape and as this thesis argues, revises historical memory, which is something he attempts to perpetuate in his films. [62] Although Costa-Gavras survived the German occupation of Greece, it was only when he saw Alain Resnais's *Nuit et brouillard* (*Night and Fog*. 1955) as a film student in Paris that something "concrete" about the Holocaust was imprinted in him. Focusing on acts of resistance had led to

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[61] This anti-American sentiment is also apparent in Bryan Singer's *Valkyrie* as Singer uses the film to protest against totalitarian governments.
[62] Insdorf 2003.

filmic adaptation of characters simplified into the binary good-versus-evil dichotomy, which dichotomy is later explored in French cinema where an exploration of complicity and collaboration was exposed. For example in Marcel Ophüls's 1969 *Le chagrin et la pitié* (*The Sorrow and the Pity*). This two-part documentary film goes into detail that a feature film could not lay claim to within its traditional conventions. In 2002, the history of complicity and resistance was brought to *Amen.* through Costa-Gavras' personal history and film experience. *Amen.* also brought French ideas of complicity and resistance to a transnational film and audience.

Amen. is a Franco-German co-production and it is thus constrained as it needs to fulfil the expectations of the audiences of these countries. As with German and Hollywood films, French cinema has been exploring its World War Two past by producing films based on resistance and the Holocaust. For example: *Laissez-passer* (*Safe Conduct*. Dir. Bertrand Tavernier. 2002) and *Bon Voyage* (Dir. Jean-Paul Rappeneau. 2003) and later films directly tackling France's complicity in the Holocaust *La Rafle* (*The Round Up.* Dir. Roselyne Bosch. 2010) and *Elle s'appelait Sarah* (*Sarah's Key*. Dir. Gilles Paquet-Brenner. 2010). However, in France, unlike in Germany, there is the distinct issue to take into account when representing World War Two: the depiction of the nation's divided loyalties during the occupation.

It is relevant to note at this point that Costa-Gavras is recognised internationally as a French rather than Greek director due to his involvement in many French productions and his French citizenship. Costa-Gavras is also heavily influenced by his family history, such as his father's left-wing resistance during World War Two, which led to his father's subsequent blacklisting from the U.S. during the 1950s at the height of McCarthyism. This background as well as the rejection of a visa to Costa-Gavras for a U.S. based film school appears to have resulted in a persistent anti-American sentiment frequently displayed in Costa-Gavras' films.[63]

The style of filming in Costa-Gavras's films changes - from the political conspiracy thriller to family melodrama - with the release of *Music Box* (1989). This earlier film in comparison to *Amen.* (2002) was based loosely on the John Demjanjuk

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[63] Jaggi, Maya. "French Resistance: Costa Gavras." *The Guardian*. N.p. 4 Apr. 2009. Web. <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2009/apr/04/costa-gavras>. 17 Jan. 2012.

case and is the first film in which Costa-Gavras tackles Nazism.[64] *Amen.* not only uses Costa-Gavras's preferred conspiracy theory genre but also retains Anti-American sentiment as he blames their inactivity in the face of the Holocaust.

Critics have considered this film to be an "unwelcome, step backward" when compared to other films brought out previously and in the same year such as *The Pianist* and *The Grey Zone* (Dir. Tim Blake Nelson. 2001). These two films have Jewish protagonists and as a consequence they also portray Jewish persecution. Costa-Gavras, however, decided that he did not want to reproduce the atrocities, which indirectness has led to the lack of melodramatic style and characterisation of on-screen victims. Instead, the audience is limited to seeing the physical reaction of the SS characters on screen and are left to assume the fate of the victims. According to Stam, film is reliant on the audiences' understanding of intertextual pictorial symbolism, and in this instance explicit background knowledge of the Holocaust, in its efforts to invoke sympathy for the characters.[65] The repetitive image of a train, with its cattle wagons moving across the screen, acts as a reminder of the mass of victims and the battle that Gerstein and Fontana fought to save them. Instead of Jewish victims, however, like the character Jacobson in Hochhuth's play, it is solely Fontana and Gerstein in Costa-Gavras's film who remain victims in the minds of the audience.

Although the existence of Gerstein and his actions have been overshadowed by sensationalism in the form of anti-Christian and anti-American attacks, it would appear that the character trope of a sympathetic SS *Obersturmführer* is accepted as part of the German historical and cultural discourse as it was not the cause of sensationalism itself. However, the precedent of having a heroic German as the lead protagonist who is not a natural outsider to the regime, in a German (albeit co-production) film since reunification was set by *Amen.*

It is argued that Gerstein's adaptations show how nationalistic bias affects the processes of appropriation and revisionism. John Rabe extends this to a transnational setting: from ordinary but patriotic Nazi living in China during the Nanking Massacre,

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[64] This case set the precedent in German legal history as it was the first time that a man was convicted and charged on the basis of being a concentration camp guard, not directly for committing murder. Demjanjuk repeatedly claimed to have been a case of mistaken identity and that evidence against him was forged by the KGB (BBC News. "Obituary: John Demjanjuk." *BBC News*. N.p. 17 Mar. 2012. Web. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-13345166>. 4 Apr. 2013).

[65] Stam 2005: 7.

which coincided with World War Two, to a German rescuer character, who is then diminished to a less than ordinary foreigner persona.

2. The Many Faces of John Rabe

Like Gerstein, John Rabe committed heroic acts in order to save thousands of people, and he was also, initially, not de-Nazified and was largely forgotten. Rabe, a NSDAP party member too, was a businessman employed by Siemens China Co. in Nanking and had been a resident of China for 30 years before the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese war in 1937. Rabe decided to return to Nanking, from a visit in Peitaiho, to prevent damage to Siemens interests. His wife, Dora, remained in Peitaiho for her own safety.[66] Rabe accepted nomination to chair the temporary 'International Committee of the Nanking Safety Zone' and remained in Nanking with fifteen other westerners (including Americans, Germans and an Austrian) who are also credited with saving the lives of the Nanking civilians and preventing further atrocities. Rabe maintained the belief, until his eventual return to Germany, that one word from Hitler via diplomatic means would stop the atrocities being committed as a result of Germany's pact with Japan.[67] This was not the case, and upon returning to Germany on the 15 April 1938, Rabe gave lectures to his colleagues and wrote letters to Hitler about the Nanking Massacre. This resulted in his arrest by the Gestapo in June 1938. After three days of interrogation he was honourably released but told he was to no longer to lecture or publicise the Japanese atrocities lest it aggravate the Anti-Comintern Pact between Japan and Germany. He spent the remainder of his life under the Third Reich but working for Siemens in Afghanistan, only returning in 1945 to see Berlin being invaded by the Soviet Army.

Unlike Gerstein, Rabe was initially a proud Nazi. Throughout his diaries, Rabe presents himself as a well-educated, middle-aged man who had high esteem for Hitler, and a deep regard for the Chinese people and for China. Humorous, and also at times despairing, his account of the Nanking Massacre presents an authentic honesty as he was not writing for anyone except himself and he did not expect these diaries to be

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[66] Rabe, John. *The Good German of Nanking: The Diaries of John Rabe*. Trans. John Woods. Ed. Erwin Wickert. London: Abacus, 2000. Print. Here 5. Published in German as *John Rabe : der gute Deutsche von Nanking*. Stuttgart: Dt. Verl.-Anst, 1997. Print.

[67] "I continue to hope that Hitler will help us."(Ibid: 53).

published posthumously. His personal view and actions are fully on display, such as his firm beliefs and loyalty to Hitler. Although Rabe presented himself in this frank way, the interpretation of Rabe is varied in film as filmmakers attempt to reconcile the knowledge that Rabe was a firm believer in Hitler whilst also presenting a humanist saviour. This chapter will explore not only Rabe's character and motivation, but how he presents himself in his diaries, then subsequently how Rabe and his story have been adapted to film.

Rabe's account of the Nanking Massacre as recorded in his personal diaries was edited by Erwin Wickert (1915 – 2008) and published many years after Rabe's death under the title of *Der gute Deutsche von Nanking*. This edited diary collection is one of the first instances of the trope the good German directly being used in the German representation of a historical German figure. Rabe's diaries provide a semi-daily account of the occupation of Nanking and the events that followed from 2 September 1937 to 15 April 1938. Excerpts are also included of his Berlin diaries from 24 April 1945 to the 7 June 1946. The appendices include minutes of their committee meetings and copies of letters composed by Rabe to Hitler, foreign diplomats and to Japanese officials.

In 1937, Rabe found himself in a difficult position. He wanted to save the lives of Chinese civilians who were left in Nanking during the start of the second Sino–Japanese War from the marauding Japanese soldiers who had ruthlessly invaded and conquered the city. Rabe established a safety zone for non-combatants. As a member of the NSDAP and with his awareness of the political relationship between Germany and Japan, he hoped that Hitler would come to his aid and prevent the atrocities committed to the Chinese people. Unlike Schindler, Hosenfeld and Gerstein, Rabe was brought to posthumous fame for successfully saving Chinese civilian lives, not Jewish lives. It is historically recorded and considered in China that Rabe saved approximately 200,000 Chinese civilians, over 166 times more that Schindler's 1,200 Jews.

It is one of the biggest rescue efforts undertaken by any German citizen of the Third Reich. Other estimates of the number of people saved by Rabe range from the conservative 200,000 up to 250,000 and it is usually considered that 300,000 people in Nanking died. Iris Chang records that 20,000 women were raped within the first month

of the war.[68] Rabe recorded the mass rapes that occurred in Nanking, although his exact number is disputed.[69] Again, this is used by deniers of the Massacre, who believe that the Chinese official figure of 20,000 rape victims is an exaggeration and evidence of anti-Japanese Chinese propaganda.

Although a firm believer in Hitler, Rabe remained in China not just out of a sense of duty and loyalty to the Nazi party but from his desire to save the lives of his workers and the city's civilians. Rabe also risked his own life by harbouring Chinese soldiers and airmen in his own house during the Japanese occupation. He went as far as to smuggle the airman Captain Huang Kaunghan out of Nanking when he left the city on the 23 February 1938 on the gunboat *Bee*. Rabe's diaries reveal the levels of atrocity committed and the actions of the westerners in the zone to prevent them. As a German, however, he received more respect from the Japanese soldiers than the Americans and often had to use his party badge to stop arbitrary killings or hostile acts.

Rabe's diaries are the primary source material for many historians of the Massacre or Rape of Nanking 1937. His vantage point was privileged, not just because of his position as chair of the Safety Zone but because he is German and for that reason is considered to be a neutral witness. Although the numbers killed in the atrocities are often a point of dispute and Rabe's recordings are a part of this dispute, it needs to be recognised that Rabe was not omniscient, and was relying on his own experience as well as the reports delivered to him in the Safety Zone.

Erwin Wickert wrote in his edited version of Rabe's diaries, that in 1946 "the German De-Nazification Panel would not de-Nazify him. As an intelligent man, he (1) should not have joined the party and (2) upon returning home in 1938, should have seen National Socialism for what it was and resigned at once. Rabe was finally de-Nazified, however, on appeal," and Siemens rehired him but he never again held a position of real responsibility.[70] He wrote about this decision as the last entry in his diary. In 1950, Rabe died in poverty and obscurity in Berlin. Not only has the story of Rabe been of interest but the debate surrounding who discovered Rabe has uncovered varying levels of appropriation.

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[68] Chang 1997: 106.
[69] Ibid: 102.
[70] Rabe 2000: 336. Siemens is still a company which does not discuss its wartime activities and use of slave labour.

2.1. The Discovery of Rabe

In 1997, Iris Chang (1968 – 2004), an American journalist, credited herself with uncovering Rabe's story and bringing it to the Western world in her book *The Rape of Nanking*. Chang states that:

> [in] 1996 I began an investigation into the life of John Rabe and eventually unearthed thousands of pages of diaries that he and other Nazis kept during the Rape. These diaries led me to conclude that John Rabe was the Oskar Schindler of China.[71]

Chang likens her efforts to discover Rabe's diaries to a detective story.[72] Chang speculates that the family did not advertise the contents of the diaries because of "Rabe's previous status as a Nazi."

The eventful account by Chang surrounding the discovery of the diaries does not, however, take into any account previous publications or images of Rabe, let alone how sensationally the Japanese would be able to destroy diaries in Germany of which they were unaware. *The New York Times* covered the event crediting Chang with the discovery of the diaries but also speculating on Rabe's Nazi activities: "It is not clear whether Mr. Rabe embraced the oppression of Jews and other groups in Nazi Germany [...] there is no record of the extent of his activities in the Nazi Party after he returned to Germany in 1938, according to Ms. Chang,"[73] thus leaving ambiguity surrounding Rabe.

In Japan it was speculated that Chang's work and her discovery of Rabe's diaries was an invention:

> Rabe's wartime diary was reportedly discovered by Iris Chang, a 29-year-old American journalist of Chinese extraction. I say "reportedly" because according to a senior member of the Alliance in Memory of Victims of the Nanjing Massacre [...], somebody else actually found it.[74]

The author, it appears, has also uncovered the same discrepancy in dates and the origins of Rabe's story that are also considered in this thesis. The editor of Rabe's diaries,

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[71] Chang 1997: 109.
[72] "I possessed one important clue about Rabe [...] The Rabe mystery". Ibid: 188-9.
[73] Chen, David. "At the Rape of Nanking: A Nazi who saves Lives." *The New York Times*. N.p. 12 Dec. 1998. Web. <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/12/12/world/at-the-rape-of-nanking-a-nazi-who-saved-lives.html?src=pm>. 16 Mar. 2011.
[74] Hata, Ikuhiko. "The Nanking Atrocities: Fact and Fable." *Japan Echo*. 25:4. 1998. Web. <https://sites.google.com/a/wellesley.edu/china-politics-links/a-japanese-perspective>. 16 Apr. 2011.

Wickert, wrote:

> In my autobiography *Mut und Übermut* (1991),[75] I devoted a small chapter to John Rabe. His granddaughter Ursula in Berlin read it and got in contact with me. I learned from her that John Rabe's diaries had not vanished [...] At my request, however, his granddaughter had the diaries sent to her in Berlin, and she provided me with the photocopies of all the volumes, about which I was then to write an article. I was so impressed by the diaries, however, that upon completing my article for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, I decided to publish them as a book."[76]

Wickert had also met Rabe when travelling as a student in China before the Massacre, later he followed the news surrounding Rabe's arrest in Germany. Wickert himself led an eventful life as a minister in the German Embassy in London during the time of protests in 1968 and later as an ambassador for Germany to Romania and China. Wickert thus has a serious claim to being the first western person, not Chang, to have written about Rabe. At 85 years old, Wickert published *Der gute Deutsche von Nanking*, and later, before his death, Wickert encouraged Rabe's family to donate the diaries to the German Federal Archives in Berlin.

Having two authors claim that they were the true discoverer of Rabe highlights the struggle between the German and American claims on and appropriation of German National Socialist history. This is reflected in the change in titles between the diaries' publication in Germany and America. Chang repeatedly labelled Rabe as a good Nazi, much to the discomfort of Rabe's surviving family living in Germany.[77] Wickert published an edited version of Rabe's diaries in 1997 in Germany under the title *Der gute Deutsche von Nanking*, The publication in the U.S. as the "good man" rather than the "good German", which was the UK title, can be seen to be a consequence of Chang's repeated labelling of Rabe as a Nazi rather than as a German. [78] Wickert and Rabe's family, on the other hand, appear to have rebuked these constant references by Chang to Rabe's Nazi party membership. Thus the publishers have Rabe appear under the trope the good German or the good man but avoid the more arresting and apparently

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[75] Wickert, Erwin. *Courage and Arrogance/ Mut und Übermut : Geschichten aus meinem Leben* München: Heyne, 1993. Print.
[76] Wickert in Rabe 2000 [1997]: 299-80.
[77] Krebs, Gerhard. "Nanking 1937/38." University of Hamburg. 2000-2001. Web. <http://www.uni-hamburg.de/Japanologie/noag/noag2001_12.pdf.>. 16 Apr. 2011.
[78] Rabe, John. *Der gute Deutsche von Nanking*.Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1997. Print; Rabe, John. [Trans. John E. Woods]. *The Good German of Nanking*. Little Brown & Co, 1998. Print; and Rabe, John. [Trans. John E. Woods]. *The Good Man of Nanking*. Random House USA Inc, 1998. Print.

oxymoronic, "good Nazi".

As well as shifts in the labelling Rabe's diaries have undergone several re-prints: three editions in the UK, and three in the U.S. and three in the original German.[79] It would appear that the edited versions of Rabe's diaries, in the UK and in the U.S., and their apparent popularity, are part of the wave of interest in the period of history that was initiated with the publishing of Chang's book in 1997. However, this level of interest in the period did not extend to Germany as it did not publish any new editions until leading up to the release of the film *John Rabe* in 2009. The attention paid to Rabe's story in the U.S. appears to be demonstrative not only of interest in Germany's National Socialist history but also because of the American involvement in the Pacific theatre of war and their traditional demonising of the Japanese forces involved in World War Two.

The lack of interest displayed by Germany until the lead-up to the release of Gallenberger's *John Rabe* in 2009 also reveals the issues faced by Germany when presented with the controversial idea surrounding the trope the good German and more so the good Nazi as a heroic figure. With the release of the biographical film, *John Rabe*, the good German was dropped from the title. Reviewers, however, in the U.S. and the UK still harken back to Chang's 1997 description of Rabe as the good Nazi when evaluating the film.[80] This character trope shift also added to the shock value of the story where a person labelled or characterised as a Nazi could also act as a saviour and hero.

Rabe's story and the Nanking Massacre are regularly commemorated in China. Therefore, the film and other adaptations of Rabe's life are useful methods to adopt in order to study revisionist history and how contemporary interpretation of events vary depending on political affiliation of those who are tasked with its presention. It will be argued that, as the representation of the Massacre changes, so does the character of Rabe in the films' interpretation of history. It is through the evolution of the heroic

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[79] Published in UK *The Good German of Nanking*.1998; London: Little, Brown, 1999; and London: Abacus, 2000; published in the U.S. *The Good Man of Nanking*. NY: Knopf, 1998; NY: Little, Brown & Company, 1999; and NY: Vintage, 2000; and; and published in Germany *Der gute Deutsche von Nanking*. Stuttgart: Dt. Verl.-Anst., 1997; München: Pantheon, 2008; and München: Goldmann, 2009.

[80] Holden, Stephen. "John Rabe: A Nazi Businessman Risks His Life to Do the Right Thing? It's True." *New York Times*. N.p. 21 May 2010. Web. <http://movies.nytimes.com/2010/05/21/movies/21john.html>. 3 Feb. 2012. and Quinn, Anthony. "City of War: The Story of John Rabe (15)." *The Independent*. N.p. 02. Mar. 2010. Web.<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/reviews/city-of-war-the-story-of-john-rabe-15-1933715.html>. 3 Feb. 2012.

character trope of Rabe that we can explore the revision and re-writing of history and the universalising of Holocaust memories and various memory contests that ensue there from.

2.2 The Shifting Character of John Rabe in Film

Like post-war Germany, the Communist Party of China struggled since it established power in 1949 to sustain control over what they deemed to be acceptable national memories and narratives. As previously discussed, Ward explains that the Holocaust was presented in film as a form of universal or global memory. The universalising of the Holocaust was appropriated, Ward argues, by any nation or group that wished to act or assume the "role of memory witnesses." While it can be argued this universalising and transnationalism could be specific to the Holocaust memory, this thesis extends this by arguing that universalising in a certain form (i.e. the end result being appropriation of the Holocaust as a template of memorialising) can occur to other symbolic events, such as the Nanking Massacre. The Nanking Massacre initially was too controversial to be a national memory as it did not promote a strong narrative of Chinese resistance against the Japanese Army. It was believed that too much attention on the atrocity would demoralise the Chinese.[81] Therefore, the history and memory of the Massacre was initially confined to personal memory and oral history.[82]

Since the 1980s, protests began as a result of the lack of public apology from the Japanese for the Massacre, which led to a group of campaigners who demanded not only compensation for Chinese wartime victims but also to have official memorials for wartime anniversaries, such as the Massacre.[83] As a result the Massacre has moved into the centre of the national war memory of the Second Sino-Japanese War, which has led to the establishment of museums, memorials and films to commemorate the war.[84] All the films chosen for this thesis that depict the Massacre portray John Rabe as an ambiguous hero.

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[81] Coble, Parks M. "Remembering China's War with Japan: The Wartime Generation in Post-war China and East Asia Writing about Atrocity: Wartime Accounts and their Contemporary Uses." *Modern Asian Studies*. 45.2 (2011): 379 – 398. Print. Here 390.
[82] Reilly, James. "Remember History, Not Hatred: Collective Remembrance of China's War of Resistance to Japan." *Modern Asian Studies*. 45.2 (2011) 463 – 490. Print. Here 467.
[83] Ibid: 472.
[84] Coble 2011: 380.

Rabe's character changed from its first appearance in the 1995 Chinese film *Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre* to its most recent interpretation in 2009 in *City of Life and Death*. The evolution of this figure reveals that a German in the National Socialist regime can be a hero for one nation as well as a source of propaganda for another, maybe even both. An analysis of his evolving characterisation also reveals the complex dynamics of international relations and international memory politics and contests.

The 2007 U.S. film *Nanking* presents Rabe, as does Chang, as a heroic Nazi, which contrasts with the 2009 German film *John Rabe*, which portrays him as a heroic German. This latter film relies on Wickert's edited version of Rabe's diaries, often quoting from them at length, rather than solely relying on Chang's research. However, there are two films that do not rely solely on Rabe's diaries or Chang's research as they have at their disposal first-hand accounts of the Massacre in the form of oral history. These are the Chinese films, *Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre* and *City of Life and Death*. These films present Rabe in a variety of ways, which correspond to the socio-political relationship between China and the west at the time of their production. Throughout all these films, the depiction of Rabe and his associations with National Socialism have tended to portray him as an ambiguous hero. These many faces and contested memories of Rabe and how and why they evolved through shifting filmic character tropes is now considered in some depth.

2.2.1 Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre (Dir. Tun Fei Mou. 1995)

Made in China to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Nanking Massacre, *Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre* uses black-and-white documentary footage along with colour story sequences, which are often interrupted in order for a narrator to account for the footage thus giving it a semi-documentary feel. *Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre* is the first film solely about the Massacre. It uses features typical of a shocksploitation film to convey horror and disgust at the actions of the Japanese on the Chinese populace. The shocksploitation sub-genre relies heavily on graphic violence, rape, and gore. These films are, therefore, considered to be non-mainstream and the genre is often interchangeable with B-movies. Since its origins, this style of film has been replicated worldwide. As part of this genre, *Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre* was released by

Tartan Films (a British/American company founded 1984) under the category Tartan Grindhouse but is often placed in the umbrella term Asia Extreme. This is a group of World Cinema films known for their horror, terror and often graphic violence, including internationally popular films such as *The Ring Trilogy* (Dir. Hideo Nakata. Japan. 1998 – 2000) and *Battle Royale* (Dir. Kinji Fukasaku. Japan. 1999). The originally American style has found its niche in Asia since the 1990s and the films made there have, in turn, become popular in the west. It appears that *Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre* used this style with the aim of appealing to a mass audience in Asia with potential for release in the west.

Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre does not have a central plot but focuses on people with the unifying theme of the Massacre unfolding behind them. The film focuses on five groups of people: the first is a family unit comprised of a mother, father, uncle, grandmother and two young children, John and Jean; the second is a group of monks; the third group comprises westerners, including John Rabe; the fourth is a father and son; and the last grouping that of the Japanese soldiers and their generals. Their stories sometimes intersect, but for the majority of the film remain separate entities. Apart from Jean and John, no Chinese people are given names in this film. This anonymising of identity is the same for the Japanese soldiers; only the generals are provided with names as *Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre* places their actions within the known history of the Massacre. In contrast, all the westerners are named in the film. This lack of identification creates an observational stance for the viewers and for the westerners featured. The anonymous effect also reinforces to the viewer the numbers of un-named people who were killed and raped in the first two months in Nanking. Jean and John's story reinforces again the terror as even children were a target for abuse by the Japanese soldiers and they are the only named victims. It is poignant that it is the oral history and memory of these children that was used in the making of this film.

The westerners include George Fitch, Ms Bates, unnamed missionaries and Rabe. Rabe is shown to be directly related to the Safety Zone and the relative peace within it. As the narrator states that Japanese propaganda used footage of the Safety Zone to show there was peace in Nanking, the camera cuts to Rabe attempting to stop the Japanese soldiers coming into the Zone looking for disarmed Chinese soldiers. Rabe is presented as stocky and middle aged, wearing a hat, glasses with a bushy beard. Fitch looks young in comparison; both not looking remarkably like their real-life

counterparts. Although Rabe and Fitch fail to stop the Japanese Army en masse, they are still portrayed as humanistic and brave to confront the marauding soldiers. Their actions are even more courageous as they provide stark contrast to the soldiers' brutal methods carried out on the Chinese civilians and disarmed soldiers.

Rabe appears one further time in the film when he directly prevens the rape of two Chinese women by Japanese soldiers. In this scene, he finds an American minister attempting to stop the soldiers, but without success. As Rabe noted in his diaries, the Americans did not receive as much recognition from the Japanese as the Germans in the Committee. The incident presented onscreen is also in Rabe's diaries, but the wording has been changed, as below:

> Minister: Let them go. This is the 'safety zone'. I'm an American Protestant Minister. I should sue you.
> Soldier 1: Go
> Rabe: Stop get out of here (points at swastika armband).
> Soldier 2: German?
> Soldier 1: We understand why you Germans treat the Jews that way. I hope you understand us Japanese, too.
> Rabe: Stop this nonsense and get out of here.
> (Soldiers leave, Chinese girls thank them, and minister takes Rabe's arm with the swastika)
> Rabe: I don't like it, either, but it's useful when you're dealing with the Japanese.
> Minister: You're using evil to fight evil. I'm leaving.
> Rabe: Where are you going?
> Minister: I forgot the two kids waiting for me outside (John and Jean).
> Rabe: Be careful.

This exceptional piece of dialogue between the American, German and Japanese sets the Nanking Massacre firmly in the context of World War Two rather than the Second-Sino Japanese War, as it directly compares the atrocities committed in Europe by the National Socialists with those conducted by the Japanese Army. With Rabe distancing himself from the swastika it not only appears to show a resourceful man, but a man who is foremost a heroic German and not a heroic Nazi. The Final Solution began in 1941, which is four years after the time depicted on screen, therefore the Japanese soldier would not have known exactly how the Germans treated the Jews in the Holocaust, although persecution had already begun, of course. To a certain degree the comparison is anachronistic but it serves to highlight to the viewer the severity of the crimes committed. Rather than relativizing the atrocities to diminish the impact of the

Massacre, *Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre* instead compares this atrocity to the Holocaust in order to reveal to the viewers the level of brutality being imposed on the Chinese, as well as the lack of impact the incident was having on the western world.

Another theme development in the film is Rabe's portrayal as a man who uses his swastika to fight for justice rather than using it to perpetuate National Socialist ideology. This shifting character trope presents even more of a disparity between the idea of a heroic Nazi and his heroic actions in comparison to those of the Japanese soldiers. *Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre* successfully conveys its message, which is summarised adequately at the end of the film as:

> After Nanking was occupied by the Japanese Army, massive burning, killing, raping, and plundering continued for 6 weeks. Males, females, old, and young – none were spared. The atrocities were even worse than that shown in this film. This was not a war. It was an intentional, planned, and organized massacre.

Rabe and his place within the Massacre is not the main focus of this film, but more attention is placed on him than any other westerners. He is shown to be a strong-willed, diplomatic man who, although he could not prevent every atrocity, did everything in his personal power to stop the Japanese from committing them. This strong-willed character of Rabe that is initially created is moulded in later films to suit the politics and nationalistic bias at the time of production, as in the American production of *Nanking*, comparative analysis of which is below.

2.2.2 Nanking (Dir. Bill Guttentag. 2007)

Twelve years after the release of *Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre*, in July 2007 the American documentary film, *Nanking*, was released in Beijing. This film highlights not only national memory contests but also contests regarding the hierarchy, or privileging of a character's memory and how this process comes about. In August that year the film was screened in Nanking to commemorate the Japanese surrender of the city and war. [85] The conception of the film is attributed to AOL executive Ted Leonsis (1957-) who, after reading Iris Chang's obituary, decided to read her best-selling book *The Rape of Nanking*. Chang's investigation into the Nanking Massacre had raised debates into the Massacre and its legacy in China, the West and Japan. In 1997, Chang went so far as to

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[85] Lim, Louise. "Hollywood Takes on Japan's 1937 Invasion of China." *National Public Radio*. N.p. Jul. 2007. Web. <http://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=11833494>. 5 Apr. 2011.

publically criticize the lack of a Hollywood mainstream movie or popular representation of the Nanking Massacre, believing the incident to be the "Forgotten Holocaust of World War Two."[86] As a result, Leonsis decided to fund and produce the film *Nanking*.

Nanking became an award-winning documentary film (Sundance 2007 and Peabody 2008). It stars headline actors, such as Woody Harrelson and Stephen Dorff, reading extracts from Rabe's war diaries mixed with the original documentary footage taken by John Magee (which is also featured in *Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre*), Chinese survivors' accounts and Japanese soldiers' testimonies of the 1937 Massacre. Jürgen Prochnow plays Rabe. Prochnow is known for starring in *Das Boot* (1981) as the captain who was critical and cynical of the National Socialist regime. He is also known for playing Ludwig Götten, a suspected terrorist sympathiser and Katharina's love interest in *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum* (Dir. Volker Schlöndorff. 1975). Using a well-known German actor, who has previously played sympathetic characters, would prompt the audience to associate Rabe with his heroic German counterparts. Using actors, one of whom represents Rabe reading extracts from his diaries aloud, to narrate the western witnesses' testimony, interspersed with survivors' testimony, creates more drama to the documentary. However, due to the narration of the actors, the historical characters appear to be removed from the events on screen and the impression given is that they are observers rather than real participants in the historical events that are depicted in the film.

For example, the main focus in *Nanking*, as one would expect from an American production, is placed on the westerners, more specifically Minnie Vautrin, an American missionary, Fitch and Lewis Smythe along with other American historical figures. Apart from Rabe, no other German witnesses' testimonies were used. Although the film ends with the inter-title before the final credits that it was made to honour the memory of the victims of the Massacre and Chang, at the very end of the credits the film also states that it is "in tribute to the westerners of Nanking," which reflects the overriding impression of the film. This impression comes about because, although the film uses Chinese survivor testimony as well as the 1937 historical footage of the atrocities like *Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre*, it does not leave the viewers with the same explicit connection that the film commemorates the victims of the Massacre. This slant thus

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[86] Chang 1997: 200.

conveys instead an active act of tribute to the Safety Zone Committee Members and western activities in Nanking.

The narrator's dialogue is heavily based on extracts from Rabe's diaries although this is not credited. Rabe and his motivations are also not explored in this documentary film and no explanation is offered as to why Rabe was a Nazi or why he stayed in Nanking. It is implied by Vautrin that on 16 November 1937 the westerners united to create a Safety Zone as a result of the Christian motivation to do something beneficial, which would account for the western missionaries in Nanking, but not for Rabe's humanistic response to the invasion. One account of Rabe used in *Nanking*, which is also used in *Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre*, concerns his deterring six Japanese soldiers with his swastika armband. However, no explanation is provided as to why the Japanese soldiers paid any heed to him or his swastika. It appears to the viewer that this particular account was used to show what little physical force was at the westerners' disposal to combat the Japanese soldiers, rather than being an acknowledgement about the nature of relations between Japan and Germany.

The only description of Rabe as a Nazi is made by the westerner Smythe, a sociologist working for Nanking University. However, this is not as a negative comment on Rabe, instead it strengthens the understanding and appreciation of the audience towards the nature of the Safety Zone and to a large extent how it worked in the same vein as the account of Rabe and the use of his swastika. The film further eludes the unlikely composition of the Committee being comprised of American missionaries and German businessman working together in Nanking:

> Smythe: To our surprise, the big hearted German who we elected chairman turned out to be the National Socialist leader here.
> Rabe: I continue to hope that Hitler will help us. He has deep sympathy not only for the distress of his own people, but for the anguish of the Chinese as well.
> Smythe: So now it turns out that the burden of work is to be carried out by a group of American missionaries and a group of German Nazi businessmen.

It appears that the other westerners were well informed about Nazi ideology and felt that Rabe's "big hearted" nature was in conflict with their knowledge of the Nazi party. Rabe's misguided belief in Hitler is also in direct contrast to what is known about Rabe's good nature by the other characters. Rabe, his personality, his party membership and belief in Hitler are presented to the audience as fact by the creators of the documentary but there is no answer offered as to why Rabe believed in Hitler, or why

he believed that Hitler could help the Committee. Rabe's character in *Nanking* as a result remains that of an ambiguous rescuer. He is no longer the strong character and participant in history that was present in *Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre*, instead he has become a remote and passive narrator of his history who, although good natured, does not display the aggressive force that had aided him in his struggle to save Chinese civilians. This characterisation shift is the result of the verbatim nature of this documentary film, rather than a dramatic narrative portrayal shift, which was seen in *Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre*. As a documentary, *Nanking* instead directly quotes Chang and Rabe without providing an explanation for the characters and their part in the Safety Zone.

Not interpreting verbatim narratives and thus memory is a unique characteristic of this film compared to the other non-documentary films discussed in this chapter. Another unique aspect of *Nanking* is that Rabe receives far less screen time than in the other films where he is presented as a leading western character. In *Nanking*, Rabe is one face among several other western faces, a diminished and less than ordinary persona as he is not provided the screen time that would correspond with his importance as Chair of the Safety Zone. Considering the reliance of the film on Chang's research, one would expect more of Rabe and his testimony to be presented. Memory contests at the character level have therefore revised history with a nationalist bias. After *Nanking*, the next representation places Rabe as the protagonist in the titular role of Gallenberger's 2009 German biopic entitled *John Rabe*, as considered below.

2.2.3 John Rabe. (Dir. Florian Gallenberger. 2009)

John Rabe was the German film released to domestic audiences and to the rest of the world as *John Rabe: City of War*. The film was also released with two different posters, the German with Ulrich Tukur solely on the front, the second depicting a dramatic iconic scene from the film showing a large swastika flag being attacked by Japanese aircraft. These notable differences indicate that the transnational distributors presumed that the swastika symbol and thus more sensationalist poster would pip the interest of those unfamiliar with the story and actor.

John Rabe was premiered at the 59th Berlin Film Festival on 7 February 2009 and then released in Beijing on 28 April 2009, the same year as the twentieth

anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, after which it was distributed internationally where it broke the record for a German film abroad as 750,000 copies were distributed internationally to cinemas.[87] Its visibility internationally, which is attributable solely to interest in China, contrasts with its reception in Germany. *John Rabe* acts as a commemoration of Rabe for being a heroic German, a previously unacceptable character trope that has gradually been gaining ground in Germany and as such has gained more credence.[88] *John Rabe* was also critically acclaimed, winning four Lola awards at the 2009 *Deutscher Filmpreis* – including Best Film. Film reviewers in Germany, the U.S. and the UK frequently categorised Rabe as a "good-Nazi,"[89] making comparisons with Schindler,[90] as well as calling him a "good German."[91]

Following Rabe's moral route is made easier for the German audience at least by the casting of Tukur as Rabe. Tukur made his film début playing Willi Graf a member of the resistance group *Die Weiße Rose* (Dir. Michael Verhoeven. Germany. 1982).[92] This casting as the heroic German continued in films such as *Operation Walküre* when Tukur was cast as Henning von Tresckow. Tukur was also cast as a member of the resistance in *Wehrmacht* which character drafts the Valkyrie plan that was exploited by the 20th July plotters against Hitler. Tukur also played Kurt Gerstein in the aforementioned film, *Amen*. As with Prochnow in *Nanking*, Tukur's previous film characters strengthen the audience identification of Rabe as being a heroic German, but, in the biographical film, instead of an obvious figure of resistance Rabe's character is portrayed as a humanist. Tukur also bears an uncanny resemblance to Rabe, which enhances the appearance of authenticity in the biographical film, which likeness aspect was also suggested in the casting of Tom Cruise as Stauffenberg in *Valkyrie* considered later in this chapter. For the UK and the U.S. audiences, however, of key importance is the change of the biographical film's name and poster, which serves to provide a more dramatic reason to see the film for those not familiar with Rabe's story.

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[87] Shen, Qinna. "Revisiting the Wound of a Nation: The 'Good Nazi' John Rabe and the Nanking Massacre." *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies*. 47.5 (2011): 661 – 680. Print. Here 677.
[88] Beier, Lars-Olav. "German Films Delve into Difficult History." *Spiegel Online*. N.p. 04 Mar. 2009. Web. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/the-good-nazi-german-films-delve-into-difficult-history-a-617275.html>. 11 Apr. 2011.
[89] Holden 2010.
[90] Quinn 2010.
[91] French, Philip. "City of War: The Story of John Rabe." *The Observer*. N.p. 04 Apr. 2012. Web. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2010/apr/04/city-of-war-john-rabe>. 3 Feb. 2012.
[92] *Die weiße Rose*. Dir. Michael Verhoeven. Perf. Lena Stolze. Teleculture USA, 1982. DVD.

Conforming to the generic conventions of the biopic, Rabe's life has been condensed to a two-month period from November to December 1937 at which time he is forced to leave the city (two months earlier than he records in his diaries). As a typical biopic, it has chosen elements of Rabe's account of the Massacre as well as changed historical details in favour of dramatizing the plot. More attention has been placed on the plot of this film as it is presenting neither a documentary style nor a completely fictionalised account of a historical event but is negotiating a path between the two.

In Hollywood(esque) fashion the film does include a stereotype Nazi villain in the character Herr Fliess. This trope serves to distance Rabe from the Nazi party as Fliess is a stereotypical Nazi who Rabe considers to be a "cretin". The juxtaposition of their attitudes is first revealed at a NSDAP China party meeting. Rabe, like other NSDAP members, is reprimanded by Fliess for not being a real National Socialist, first because they share their meeting room with the English ex-pats and thus often have the picture of Hitler covered by a picture of King George VI. Secondly, because the swastika flag that the members were sent was still in its packaging and not displayed. Rabe, along with the other party members, disregards Fliess's comments with smirks, which serves to remove them further from Nazism and the events in Europe.

Rabe also does not wear a swastika in the film, either as a pin or as an armband, as he does in his diaries or in his previous portrayals on film. Instead the film portrays him as an average (and thus comparatively ordinary) German businessman. The iconography of this film thus uses the swastika to denote or symbolise German or Germany in a national sense rather than as ideological Nazism to the viewer, which leaves the audience with the lasting idea of Rabe's character being the heroic German rather than the heroic Nazi. This portrayal is in contrast to the film *Valkyrie* where it will be shown later in this chapter that the use of the swastika denotes the bad Nazis rather than the good Germans.

The lasting image of the swastika or bombproof flag being used to save lives is perturbing to the viewer as it contrasts with the popular history surrounding the iconic image of the swastika. Rabe in his diaries refers to the flag as the swastika rather than the German flag. This is in comparison to the biopic where the flag is never called a swastika or party flag, but always a German flag (as the Nazis themselves called it), thus re-emphasising its relationship with Germany. This symbolism again further removes Rabe from National Socialism.

Bearing in mind Fuchs's definition of resistance, this thesis argues that *John Rabe* could thus be placed into part of the German resistance narrative that has emerged since 1990, which has been memorialised in the German Resistance Memorial Centre and the Silent Heroes Memorial Centre, both in Berlin. More specifically, Fuchs considers that "the story of resistance is thus often a story of partial collaboration and conformity with the National Socialist regime."[93] With this as a guide, one can clearly see that Rabe in the biopic also becomes a resister to the regime; the audience perceives this shift in allegiance even if the character does not, thus Rabe becomes a less ambiguous hero to the audience. Outwardly, Rabe is a supporter of the Nazi regime, he is a NASDP party member and conforms to stereotype in his adoration of Hitler. However, Rabe also ignores the opportunities to return to Germany, and uses the pact between the National Socialist regime and Japan to facilitate his attempt to stop Japanese atrocities. This resistance to the Third Reich narrative is designed to instil pride and positive sentiment in the German audience. But the whole characterisation produces a sense of conflicting ambiguity, which facilitates the adaptations or shifts in character tropes, from an ambiguous to a heroic German.

Not only is Rabe pitted against a villainous Nazi in the form of Herr Fliess but he is provided with a buddy figure and a love interest from within the group of westerners. The friendship between Rabe and the Jewish-German diplomat Dr Georg Rosen further removes him from anti-Semitism, and the American Dr. Robert Wilson presents Rabe as a humanist who transforms Wilson's opinion of him from disdain for the Nazi to friendship for the man.[94]

More specifically, the initial hostility between Rabe and Wilson is negotiated through the French Mme. Dupres,[95] where discussions and conversations serve to highlight to the audience that Rabe is a humanist instead of a Nazi. As introduced earlier, Rabe's affiliation to the Third Reich does not result from the iconography but instead is conveyed by the attitude Rabe has towards Hitler as he views him as a potential saviour to the Chinese. This belief is presented to the viewer with scenes of the atrocities in China with a voice-over of Rabe dictating his letter asking Hitler to save the

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[93] Fuchs 2008: 110.
[94] Dr. Robert Wilson (1904 – 1967) was an American physician who was part of the establishing of the Nanking Safety Zone and who later testified before the International Military Tribunal for the Far East.
[95] A fictional character based on the American woman Minnie Vautrin.

Chinese people. It leads the viewer into believing that Rabe is a good man but he has misplaced his faith in Hitler as well as being unaware of the highly charged political events in Europe and the discrimination enacted by the National Socialist regime.

Rabe's ignorance is re-emphasised as Rosen, the Jewish-German diplomat and Safety Zone Committee Member, confides to Rabe that he and his family are no longer welcome in Germany. Rabe's faith in Hitler intervening on their behalf is thus conveyed in a series of gut-wrenching scenes for the viewer. In this way, the audience is made aware that his belief is misguided and Rabe's letter to Hitler, narrated over scenes of the atrocities, can be likened to those in the future that will be committed by Germany to Jewish people. The viewers' association of familiar images of atrocities perpetrated under National Socialism rather than the Sino-Japanese war serves to reinforce the heroic German image of Rabe who was not involved with committing the Chinese atrocities and did not participate in those committed by the Nazis.

The images of atrocities committed against Chinese civilians also serve to remind the viewer of the specific horrors of the Holocaust, thus causing juxtaposition between the Nazi hero on screen and the audience's pre-film visual history and knowledge. The audience is thus led to a position in which it is possible to transfer the images of the Chinese victims to those of victims of the atrocities committed by the German National Socialists. Avisar views the relativisation of Nazi crimes as key to understanding revisionism and the continuous interest in the Holocaust.[96] The atrocities committed during the Nanking Massacre are subconsciously relativized (in comparison to the uniqueness of the atrocities that took place during the Holocaust in the audience but not a diminishing of Nazi crimes).

For example, in the next sub-section, the role of memory witness has fully portrayed the complicity of the Japanese Royal Family, which draws out parallels between culpability including personal responsibility which is negated with the trope "just following orders". Ideas of resistance, by Japanese soldiers as well as Rabe, are thus revealed and analysed more fully below.

2.2.3.1 Shifting Tropes That Shift the Blame: Implicating the Japanese

As Rabe's wife Dora leaves Nanking on a passenger ship, Japanese bombers attack the

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[96] Avisar 1997: 44 – 48.

ship and the audience like Rabe are helpless viewers as it is assumed that Dora has died in the attack. This plot device serves to present the ruthless nature of the Japanese commanders in a manner reminiscent to the Chinese production *Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre*. Unlike the other films depicting the Nanking Massacre, in *John Rabe* the Japanese Royal Family is directly implicated in the atrocities. This is conveyed in the film when Rabe is introduced to Prince Asaka who hides the knowledge that he knows that Dora is alive. Asaka is shown to be the commander of the atrocities much to the dismay of the other Japanese commanders and Embassy. The portrayal of Asaka and his complicity in the Massacre has as a result meant that *John Rabe* has not been released in Japan.[97] However, the motivation of the Japanese soldiers and their reasoning for their repeated entry into the Safety Zone is explained as a consequence of the Committee Members harbouring Chinese soldiers and therefore rationalises the soldiers' deaths and the 'accidental' deaths of civilians under their protection.[98]

Despite nationally differentiated distribution and marketing of *John Rabe*, Rabe is a relatively unknown figure in the western world. It cannot be shown in Japan for the reasons stated. The film is also not directly set in World War Two and this could be a reason for its failure in the box office in western countries. It was also a flop in the box office as Germany does not want to see and accept the shift to the character trope and narrative of the heroic Nazi. However, the film was a great success in China as it is based in well-known history. This is an example of how nationalistic biases occur and why. The end inter-title of the film is worth quoting, as it states that:

> On his return to Germany, John Rabe was arrested as a suspected collaborator of the Chinese. He was forbidden to report on his experiences in Nanking. His evidence and his diaries were confiscated and did not resurface until years later.

Rabe's years of poverty and lack of denazification also provide an interesting story. However, it is argued in this thesis that this part of the story has been omitted in *John Rabe* in order to present an acceptable and appropriately valorised past. A happier Hollywood(esque) ending, which had also occurred with Lilly in *Aimée & Jaguar*, has also helped to construct memory shifts and revisionism.

As the moral compass, Rabe, and by extension all Germans, are shown to be the

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[97] Dowell, Pat. "Shelter Under the Swastika: The John Rabe Story." *NPR*. N.p 14 Jun. 2010. Web. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=127482829>. 14 Apr. 2011.
[98] Shen 2011: 673.

innocent victims and even Nazi party representatives can be portrayed as selfless heroes. For this reason alone, *John Rabe* could be claimed to be a nationalist (German) film. Besides creating a sense of pride in the Western viewer for the Nazi hero with humanist values, Rabe brings with him the pre-war memories of the good Germany before Hitler. This characterisation reinforces the collective idea that before Hitler there was the cultured and better Germany, the Germany that produced Goethe and Beethoven, and was then corrupted by Hitler. This film places the protagonist firmly as part of the good Germany as he is cultured, a good businessman, speaks several languages but is corrupted by the growing sentiment surrounding Hitler, continuing to believe that Hitler will improve the lives and standing of Germans after their defeat in World War One. Rabe thus becomes an allegory for the ordinary German who also is proud of his nation, who became corrupted by the regime even while embodying the humanist Germany which qualities comes from a deep seated cultural background.

Gallenberger assumes and thus hopes that, in the way that Germany has had to face its wartime past, his depiction of Rabe's actions during the Nanking Massacre will encourage dialogue in Japan about these atrociously brutal events "After such a long time, there should be a way of dealing differently with the responsibility they have, rather than trying to avoid it or make it disappear".[99] Given Gallenberger's assumption about Japan, one needs to consider why Gallenberger views this film as a message to Japan rather than to China. China is clearly presented as the victim of Japanese aggression in *John Rabe*; however it appears that, rather than being a message to Japan, the biopic could easily have been a message to China regarding its own current human rights abuse record. In other words, China has suffered from atrocities committed against them by Japan and others in the past and is now creating their own repressive politics.

However and although Rabe's diaries comment on atrocities, he does not write about them in explicit detail. For that reason *John Rabe* remains true, in some respects at least, to its primary source, i.e. Rabe's own diaries. In contract, *Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre* focused solely on the graphic nature of the Massacre, and Guttentag's *Nanking* presented the historical footage. *John Rabe* removed the deaths from close-up to the background or even off-screen so as to focus predominantly on

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[99] BBC News. "'Good Nazi of Nanjing' sparks debate." *BBCNews*. N.p. 19 Mar. 2009. Web. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/7907437.stm>. 13 Feb. 2011.

Rabe. The final John Rabe related film, Chaun's production of *City of Life and Death*, explicitly reveals the rapes and Massacre to the viewers with the psychological horror of how they were committed and how character tropes are developed from intellectual figures to ignorant figures; heroes to bystanders; victims of the Massacre to survivors / resisters / sympathetic perpetrators. What all of these films are adding is diversity of witnessing and thus a multiplicity of memory contests.

2.2.4 City of Life and Death (Dir. Lu Chaun. 2009)

Released the same year as *John Rabe*, the Chinese produced and approved film *City of Life and Death* also represents the Nanking Massacre. As a consequence of the time of its release, critics compared the two films, often favouring *City of Life and Death* for its graphic representation of the Massacre.[100] The official discourse and memory surrounding the Massacre has changed: from the presentation of the Chinese as victims to survivors and heroic resistors.[101]

Released to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the formation of the People's Republic of China (2009), critics believe *City of Life and Death* to be a propaganda film made to stir up nationalist sentiment and an attempt to change the narrative of Chinese as victims.[102] Although this may well be the case it is still an extraordinary art-house film, which brutally depicts the atrocities. The character of Rabe has also been changed. The film is predominantly shot from the perspective of a Japanese soldier, Masao Kadokawa. The sympathetic portrayal of this soldier has resulted in a protracted process as it went through the Chinese censorship board. The other protagonists are the fictional character of Mr Tang as Rabe's secretary, the historical persons Rabe and Vautrin and a variety of minor fictional characters.

Rabe is introduced early in the film as a grey-haired, short, aging man (played by the 71-year old Scot John Paisley), which portrayal is in stark contrast to the actual Rabe of the period who was 55 with cropped hair. The lack of physical similarity between the historical and the fictional Rabe should not, as in *Black Sun: The Nanking*

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[100] French 2010.
[101] Coble 2011: 80.
[102] Vijn, Ard. "City of Life and Death Review." *Twitch film*. N.p. 30 May 2009. Web. <http://twitchfilm.com/reviews/2009/05/city-of-life-and-death-review.php>. 11 Apr. 2011. The change from victim to survivor is similar to the characterisation of Ilana in the film *The Reader*.

Massacre, make a difference to his portrayal; however, in this film it has been used to make Rabe appear to be weak and bumbling. Considering the amount of screen time given to Rabe's character little to no background has been put into his characterisation and throughout the film Rabe appears as a one-dimensional figure. This bumbling nature trope is enhanced by the relationship between Rabe and his secretary, Tang. Tang is not a sympathetic character but he does provide an opportunity for viewers to contemplate how far anyone would go to ensure their own and their family's survival.

Rabe, true to own diary accounts, wears a swastika armband in an authoritative attempt to stop Japanese soldiers from entering the Safety Zone. Rabe also attempts to talk to the soldiers, but it is only at this point in *City of Life and Death* that Rabe speaks German. For the rest of the film he speaks in English with what is supposed to be a German accent (this linguistic confusion being a result of casting a Scottish actor). The accent, however, does not serve to present him as an educated man who is bilingual, but conveys that Rabe is ignorant as he does not know Chinese or Japanese like Tang. In addition and unlike the other Rabe-related films discussed earlier in this chapter, the Safety Zone is portrayed in *City of Life and Death* as a desolate place with few people in it. This scene endeavours to depict the Zone's inefficiency. This representation can be interpreted as a direct criticism of the Zone and Rabe who is ineffective at stopping the Japanese from entering and protecting the few Chinese in his sector. Rabe is often saved by Tang as he repeatedly, throughout the film, steps in between Rabe and the Japanese, which reinforces to the audience the lack of power, authority and influence wielded by Rabe. Apart from Rabe wearing a swastika in the earlier stages of the film, no other reference to Rabe as a Nazi is made.

More screen time is placed on Vautrin as she is portrayed as a strong woman who physically and diplomatically prevents the Japanese from committing rape and murder. Rabe's ineffectiveness is often placed in contrast to Vautrin by placing the two together at historical events such as the rapes at the Ginling College, to which Rabe was not historically a witness. As Vautrin physically pulls the men away from the women, Rabe only vocalises his disdain. Rabe is also presented as abandoning the Chinese under his care. Rabe tells Tang that he has been told by Hitler that he has to leave the city (a historical factual inaccuracy); again Rabe is portrayed as helpless and "sorry." A cautious sense of worry about Rabe's chairing of the Safety Zone, as well as his intelligence and business acumen, are apparent when Tang and his wife talk about him:

> Mrs Tang: Mr Rabe will abandon us? Now can he do that? You've been working for him for over ten years. You literally built his business. He just says bye and walks off. What shall we do?

Rabe's departure from Nanking thus appears to be seen less of an order or a desire to spread the news of the atrocities, but rather as abandonment of the Chinese people and their country. Chinese families rush at his feet and beg and wail at him not to go. Rabe is pushed through the crowd, with Tang and Tang's wife, along with a Chinese soldier dressed as Rabe's fake assistant, by his fellow Committee Members, who cry that he is abandoning them. As a mark of respect and apparent guilt that he is leaving them, Rabe, crying, gets down on his knees and bows to them all. The overwhelming sense by the viewer is bewilderment at why Rabe is forsaking the Chinese, but also that he has done little while living in Nanking. As a result the audience are confused about why the Committee Members or the Chinese refugees are upset that he is leaving.

The last the audience see of Rabe is at the border where the Japanese soldier, Ida, prevents Rabe's fake assistant from crossing so Tang volunteers to take his place. Tang lets his pregnant wife go with the fake assistant, while he himself is led off to be executed. Rabe again helplessly looks on and does not argue for Tang's life. Tang, it must be remembered, is a fictional character and Rabe in reality successfully takes a Chinese soldier out of Nanking with him. Revision to this scene provides yet another opportunity to represent Rabe as a weak ineffectual man.

The especially damming representation of Rabe, which leaves him most open to condemnation, is the announcement that he makes that 100 women are required to become comfort women to the Japanese soldiers. This again shows Rabe as being weak as he allows these women to be taken away to Japanese soldiers' camps. Historically, Rabe was not present and only heard about this incident from Vautrin, who was shocked to discover that women who were volunteering were, apparently, former prostitutes.[103] However, if the audience does not know this historical incident then it is natural that they will presume that Rabe, along with the other Committee Members, did nothing to prevent the rapes of women, prostitute or otherwise.

Chaun's *City of Life and Death* does not explore Rabe's motivations or personal actions as the other films have done. It also does not account for the history between

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[103] It is unknown if these women were or were not prostitutes.

Japan and Germany and Rabe's reason for being in the Zone. If an audience had no prior knowledge of Rabe, the impression left would not be that of a heroic German but instead of Rabe as a weak and less than ordinary man. This distorted portrayal appears in part to be the result of the decline in relations between China and Germany. In 2007, good diplomatic and political relations temporarily broke down as Chancellor Angela Merkel became the first German chancellor to receive the Dalai Lama. Merkel went on to state her support for Tibet's cultural autonomy. This was not well received by China, where was believed this "hurt the feelings of the Chinese people."[104] Their political relationship remained tense as China's human rights record was thrown into the spotlight during the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. Merkel was one of the few world leaders who did not attend the opening ceremony.[105] More recently, in 2014, Merkel refused to show the Chinese President, Xi Jinping, the World War II memorials in Germany as she believed that such an official event would have been used for propaganda to coerce Japan to officially recognise the suffering it inflicted upon China.[106] This being said, China and Germany are still active economic trading partners. Japan has not remained silent at the various portrayals of the Nanking Massacre. There are two schools of thought in Japan about this Massacre: the first is the Illusionist School, which believes that the Massacre did not occur and that it was invented as Chinese propaganda. They tend to ignore Rabe's diary evidence in their argument. However, Rabe had no reason to lie about the Japanese atrocities and, in any event, as a loyal German he was an ally of Japan.

The second school of thought is the relativisation of the Massacre School, which acknowledges that atrocities did occur but places the death toll at around 100,000 instead of the consensus estimates of approximately 300,000.[107] In 2007, Japan released its own documentary film *The Truth of Nanking* (Dir. Satoru Mizushima), which is considered to be a response to the American documentary *Nanking*, because, as Jun

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[104] Lorenz, Andreas. "Hurting Chinese Feelings: Beijing Furious with Berlin over Dalai Lama Visit." *Der Spiegel.* N.p. 25 Sep. 2007. Web. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,507808,00.html>. 15 Feb. 2011.

[105] *Der Spiegel.* "Politics and Games: Was Beijing 2008 a Mistake?" *Der Spiegel.* N.p. 08 Dec. 2008. Web. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,571365,00.html>. 15 Feb. 2011.

[106] *Der Spiegel.* "No Holocaust Memorials for China President Xi on Trip to Berlin". *Der Spiegel.* N.p. 03 Mar. 2014. Web. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/no-holocaust-memorials-for-china-president-xi-on-trip-to-berlin-a-956574.html" \l "ref=nl-international>. 7 Mar. 2014.

[107] Kingston, Jeff. "Different takes on Nanjing: The 'common sense' of a centrist." *Japan Times.* N.p. 03 Jun. 2007. Web. <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/fb20070603a1.html>. 15 Feb. 2011.

Hongo reports,[108] some Japanese politicians, scholars and citizens believed *Nanking* to be Chinese propaganda.[109]

Focusing on the atrocities inflicted upon the Chinese in Nanking has enabled China to shift its national narrative. This was done by commemorating its own heroic resistance figures, such as the Eight Route Army,[110] and the New Fourth Army. Since China has emerged as a global power the focus on nationalism and resistance has become an ideological prop for the Communist Party of China.[111] For example, with the release of the intended to be mainstream movie, *Flowers of War* (Dir. Zhang Yimou, China. 2011), starring the award winning Hollywood actor Christian Bale, the Nanking Massacre is presented as a rallying, symbolic point in history for China. Unlike previous Holocaust films that portray the Nanking Massacre, this film is based outside the Safety Zone. Although Bale's Rabe-esque character, an American called John Miller, is portrayed as a saviour of 12 Chinese school girls, he is not the narrator of the film or sole saviour of these children. The school girls are initially attacked by Japanese soldiers; however, Miller is unable to stop them as a result of being a westerner. Direct intervention by the Chinese commander, Major Li, is required to save the girls by confronting the Japanese Army. This is not a Holocaust film, but its power relates to witnessing an atrocity which in turn adds different levels of interpretation and thus adds to the multiplicity of memory contests.

Flowers of War is shot from the perspective of one of the school girls, Shu, and her eventual escape from the Japanese Army is due to the resourcefulness of Major Li, her own father who is also a Chinese collaborator, a Chinese school boy, George, and a group of prostitutes that sacrifice themselves in exchange for the school girls. Unlike Chaun's *City of Life and Death*, the characters discuss the Safety Zone, which is entwined with the memory of Rabe, and how crowded and unsafe it is for the school children as the Japanese Army regularly enter and take the women. The only option available to the girls and Miller is to escape from Nanking. This film also highlights the

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[108] Hongo, Jun. "Politicians, Writers Back Counter to Chang's 'Rape': Filmmaker to paint Nanjing slaughter as just myth." *Japan Times*. N.p. 25 Jan. 2007. Web. <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20070125a3.html>. 15 Feb. 2011.

[109] Without access to these documentaries this thesis cannot analyse and uncover adaptations and revisions in the Japanese depiction of Rabe. It is hoped that when the final two parts of the documentaries have been made that they will be made available in the west. One would hope that *The Truth of Nanking* will present the truth of Nanking.

[110] Popular representations of this Army's exploits have included the *Axis of War Trilogy* (2010).

[111] Coble 2011: 396.

revision of memory by way of direct criticism of the Zone, and the ineffectiveness of the western witnesses, perpetuates the official memory of Chinese resistance at Nanking and the ineffectiveness of Rabe.

It has been surprising for the author of this thesis to discover that the heroic Nazi figure of Rabe present in the Chinese films *Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre* and *City of Life and Death* was interchangeable with other westerners, such as those with British and American nationalities for the films.[112] In other words, it would appear that a westerner is required by Chinese film-makers to act as a witness to the Nanking Massacre, rather than one who is specifically German. This is because the westerner adds legitimacy to the memory of the Nanking Massacre, which has now, eventually, become part of the Chinese national narrative. This would appear to be the result of few Chinese testimonies of the Massacre, since survivor testimony and history were traditionally orally transmitted rather than stored as written records as was usually the case in the west. Consequently those survivors and their testimonies are dying out because over 70 years has now passed since the Nanking Massacre. The Massacre is still a controversial issue between China and Japan; however, the use of westerners as a form of witness adds legitimacy to the memory of these contested events.

In summary, since 1995, Rabe's character has evolved from a strong humanist heroic anti-Nazi to a passive observer and Nazi. By using Rabe as a guide to the ever changing contested memory of the Nanking Massacre, the changes in memories and policies surrounding important moments in history can be navigated. Rabe throughout has been depicted according to the politics of the nation portraying him. His character's representation has shifted: from the heroic anti-Nazi humanist in *Black Sun: The Nanking Massacre*; one of the many westerners in *Nanking*; to a humanist, strong heroic German leader in *John Rabe*; to a weak well-intentioned ineffectual German in *City of Life and Death*. Despite these character assassinations, throughout the films, Rabe has remained a heroic German who has been motivated like the other westerners by altruism. Rabe has also been recognised by his counterparts for his extraordinary capability of dealing with the great challenges that have been thrust upon him. The next section of this Chapter analyses ongoing shifts in characterisation of German Heroes, in order to understand how the trope Heroic Nazi has come to be accepted nationally and

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[112] *Pavilion of Women* (Dir. Ho Yim. 2001), *The Resistance* (Dir. Peng Zhang. 2001). *Jin ling shí san chai* (Dir. Yimou Zhang. 2011) and *The Children of Huang Shi* (Dir. Roger Spottiswoode. 2008).

transnationally. This exploration is undertaken by analysing aspects of Claus von Stauffenberg's personal and public narratives.

The final step in process, appropriation, is conveyed well through the many faces of Claus von Stauffenberg. First in relation to Baier's 2007 made-for-TV film *Operation Walküre* where the Stauffenberg character is shown to be partially motivated and to engage with the Holocaust. Finally through appropriation in the 2009 America production by Singer, *Valkyrie*, where Stauffenberg has become an all-American German hero.

3. Many Faces of Claus Schenk von Stauffenberg

The conspiracy to eliminate Hitler and overthrow the Nazi regime in a military coup on 20th July 1944 is well known throughout Germany. This narrative has also been included as part of school curriculums in many German and Anglo-American schools as an example of organised resistance against Hitler and the Third Reich. It has been popularised predominantly as a result of its near success. However, the plot to kill Hitler was undermined by miscommunication and with hindsight it was too elaborate a plan. The most recognised member of the group of resistors, naturally, is the man who planted the bomb and directed the coup: Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg. Stauffenberg has been, from as early as the 1950s, used to portray an exemplary heroic German figure in German history. Where Gerstein and Rabe were considered to be heroic Nazis because of their associations with the Nazi Party and the SS, Stauffenberg was a member of the *Wehrmacht* which has received increased criticism since 1995 with the opening of the 'Crimes of the *Wehrmacht*' exhibition where the moral responsibility of the *Wehrmacht* for the atrocities committed during the Holocaust came to the fore.[113] Within the debate that ensued between ideal resistance and Germans as perpetrators, it is unsurprising that it took until the 2000s for a German film to be released for a mainstream audience that depicted the July Plotters and the *Wehrmacht* as victims.

Peter Hoffmann comprehensively explains that the military resistance of which Stauffenberg was a part comprised of army officers, bureaucrats, ministers and individuals from Helmuth James Graf von Moltke's Kreisau circle, which had its origins

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[113] Niven 2002: 71.

in the 1938 Sudeten crisis and contained splinters from the *Abwehr* (military intelligence). The Kreisau circle focused their efforts on creating programmes in preparation for after Hitler's downfall rather than participating directly in the coup. Hoffmann argues that the resistance leaders, Ludwig Beck and Carl Goerdeler, wanted the group to be recognised as a political not just military group.[114] According to Shelly Baranowski, this was doomed to failure as they never succeeded in developing a mass following of their primary political aim, which was to overthrow the regime and establish a new government.[115]

Due to the resistors' membership of the military and in many cases aristocratic elite, Hoffmann deduced that they were conflicted when it came to deciding whether or not to let the war come to its natural end, which they believed would be the defeat and occupation of Germany by the Allies, or by overthrowing Hitler and the Third Reich, preferably with assistance from the Allies. Hoffmann argues that the resistors were threatened by the potential creation of a new stab-in-the-back legend as they would appear to compromise the post-war German nation, and thus render ineffectual the future efforts of any patriots who made the attempt.[116]

Galante argues that it was a result of the resistors, traditional Prussian behaviour that they believed the attempt to assassinate the Führer was to be enacted at any cost, even if it were to fail. This enactment would prove that there were at least some Germans willing to resist the Reich and participate in its downfall.[117] The belief that Prussian aristocrats embody pre-Nazi values was also propagated in the film *Rosenstraße* (Dir. Margarethe von Trotta 2003), as the lead character and her brother, a Baroness and Baron, are presented as unyielding in their attempt to have Jewish prisoners released as a result of their pre-War aristocratic values.

Rodger Friedman, on the other hand, critiques Galante's argument as he demonstrates that the conflict between resistors was, primarily, between their need to resist, the loyalty and patriotism they felt towards their country, their military oath, and the military institution, thus creating a crisis of conscience between what they

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[114] Hoffmann, Peter. "Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg in the German Resistance to Hitler: Between East and West." *The Historical Journal*. 31.3 (1988): 629 – 650. Print. Here 632.
[115] Baranowski, Shelley "Consent and Dissent: The Confessing Church and Conservative Opposition to National Socialism." *The Journal of Modern History*. 59. 1 (1987): 53 – 78. Print. Here 74.
[116] Hoffman 1988: 634.
[117] Galante Pierre. "Operation Valkyrie: The German Generals' Plot against Hitler." *Journal of Contemporary History*. 39.2 (2004): 271 – 283. Print. Here 273.

interpreted as their duty to the military or to their nation: Germany. This has led Friedman to argue that the failed coup was not a form of resistance to Hitler but instead an example of infighting among the enemy.[118] It is the nature of patriotism and how it is embodied in the lead figure, Stauffenberg that is focused on in this thesis chapter.

Hans Rothfels identifies Stauffenberg as a nationalist; a patriot at heart, who had been swept away with the nationalistic frenzy in the early 1930s during the rise of Nazism.[119] This is corroborated by Joachim Kramarz who explains that the rising anti-Semitic actions, such as *Kristallnacht* (9th November 1938), began the slow process of changing Stauffenberg's attitude towards the new regime until he openly criticised his SS division and German policy, which contributed to his move towards resistance after sustaining injuries in Africa.[120] By the summer of 1942, Germany was experiencing multiple military defeats; therefore the resistance believed that the opportune time had come to instigate recruitment and support for their movement, which included creating networks with the Allied forces in preparation for the defeat of Germany. This led to the recruitment of Stauffenberg, who would become one of the resistors most problematic to define: he is remembered as an ambiguous hero.[121] Although Stauffenberg had met many of the resistors prior to 1942, he had not been part of the growing movement since its origins in 1938. However, by the autumn of 1942 he declared himself willing to assassinate Hitler.[122]

Dietrich Bonhoeffer argued that the conflicted loyalty of the resistors, including Stauffenberg, meant that the resistors were considered to be treasonous patriots and the rest of the Army were reinterpreted to be patriotic traitors following a false idol and ideology.[123] Niven expands this argument by stating that the conspirators rationalised that Hitler was violating his oath to serve Germany and hence reasoned that to

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[118] Friedman, Roger. "Is Horrible 'Valkyrie' Tom Cruise's Nazi Apologia?" *FoxNews.* N.p. 26 Dec. 2008. Web. <http://www.foxnews.com/story/2008/12/26/is-horrible-valkyrie-tom-cruise-nazi-apologia/>. 12 Apr. 2009.
[119] Rothfels, Hans. *The German Opposition to Hitler: An Assessment.* Trans. L Wibon. London: Oswald Wolff Ltd, 1961. Print. Here 71.
[120] Kramarz, Joachim. *Stauffenberg, The Life and Death of an Officer 13th November 1907-20th July 1944.* Trans. R Barry. London: Andre Deutsch Ltd, 1967. Print. Here 71, 91-102 and 112-122.
[121] Galante 2004: 279.
[122] Hoffman 1988: 631.
[123] Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer 1906-1945 Martyr, Thinker, Man of Resistance.* Ed. Ferdinand Schlingensiepen. London: T & T Clark International, 2010. Print. Here 240.

overthrow Hitler was a moral deed and a service to the state.[124] The interpretation of their actions in society has differed according to the three periods of memory, as demonstrated by Kundnani, and thus representation in popular media has also acknowledged these differing periods. To explore these different periods a comparison can be made between the historical Stauffenberg, the German film version of Stauffenberg, and the Hollywood depiction of Stauffenberg.

The themes unifying the depictions of Gerstein, Rabe and Stauffenberg are varied. First, their lives have been considered worthy subjects of a variety of transnational film making and books. These stories have been adapted to create commercial films. The films chosen are selective in their depiction of the subject's history. Through a comparative analysis of the subtle differences between not only these adaptations but also shifts in character and other tropes the complexity of issues surrounding appropriation and memory contests can be uncovered. To this end, two films will be compared: the German film *Operation Walküre* (Dir. Jo Baier, 2007) and the America production *Valkyrie* (Dir. Bryan Singer. 2009).

3.1 *Operation Walküre*: A German Stauffenberg for the New Century

Unlike the previous films analysed in this chapter, the story of Stauffenberg is not based on a novel but it is a well-known story in itself, one that has been adapted and made into several films. To mark the 60th anniversary of the July plot, Baier's drama *Operation Walküre: Stauffenberg Der 20. Juli 1944* was broadcast in 2004 on German television. Hoffmann details that Baier's made-for-TV film drew in "22.9% of the viewer market, or 7.58 million viewers" as the film was part of a German television series about military resistance against Hitler.[125] The intent of this TV series, of which Baier's film was a part, was to reach a wide national audience. Schirrmacher argues that the casting of well-known German actors supports the case that the series was meant to achieve a large audience and, to an extent, it did, as Baier's film received the German Television

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[124] Niven, Bill. "The figure of the soldier as resister: German film and the difficult legacy of Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg." *Journal of War and Culture Studies*. 2.2 (2009): 181 – 194. Print. Here 185.
[125] Hoffmann, Peter. "Review of *Stauffenberg*." *H-Net Reviews*. N.p. Mar. 2004. Web. <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=15352>. 10 Sep. 2012.

Award for Best Picture in 2004.[126]

Since re-unification in 1990, the Holocaust has moved into the realms of cultural memory and part of discussions focused around memorialisation, such as the highly debated construction of the Holocaust Memorial in the centre of Berlin. As public engagement surrounding resistance was widening, the connection between resistance and the Holocaust also developed, including in the form of memorial sites to German resistance being opened in Berlin, such as the *Bendlerblock* (the site of the failed coup) in 1980. With these cultural and memory shifts in mind, Baier's Stauffenberg had to conform to the acceptable debates surrounding the past. This meant that, unlike in the 1950s, Stauffenberg's characterisation not only had to engage with Germans as victims but now he had to become the link between resistors and the Holocaust.

This deliberate manipulation of the character of Stauffenberg to resist the Holocaust and meet the needs of contemporary cinema audiences has changed Stauffenberg from a patriotic nationalist to a humanist resistor. Stauffenberg's repeated invocations of religious imagery and calls for God's assistance in the film have also turned him into a religious sacrifice for the greater good of sacred Germany. This led to criticism of Baier's film by Stauffenberg's son Berthold who, in an article for *Der Spiegel*, discusses how he was annoyed with the depiction of his family and the historical inaccuracies in the film.[127]

Niven proposes that Baier's Stauffenberg has to be seen to confront Hitler. Baier depicts him staring out Hitler for a cinematically long time (15 seconds) so that Hitler turns away from Stauffenberg first. Niven interprets this scene as visually showing to the audience the power and controls that Stauffenberg embodied and the moral motivations the audience believes that they would have had if they too would have faced and challenged Hitler.[128] This German desire to see soldiers confront their superiors is seen in films depicting World War One, such as *Der Rote Baron* (*The Red*

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[126] Schirrmacher, Frank. "Stauffenberg – a historical film without history." *Frankfurter Allegmeine.* N.p. 25 Feb. 2004. Web. <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/fernsehen-stauffenberg-ein-geschichtsfilm-ohne-geschichte-1144390.html>. 10 Sep. 2012.

[127] *Der Spiegel.* "Stauffenberg's Son on Tom Cruise Film 'It's Bound to be Rubbish'." *Der Spiegel.* N.p. 22 Jun. 2007. Web. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/stauffenberg-s-son-on-tom-cruise-film-it-s-bound-to-be-rubbish-a-490147.html>. 10 Sep. 2012.

[128] Niven 2009: 191.

Baron Dir. Nikolai Müllerschön. 2009) [129] where the eponymous hero is seen to challenge General Field Marshall Paul von Hindenburg as well as Kaiser Wilhelm II. This latter film, like *Operation Walküre*, was conservative in its approach, but differs from Baier's film in that it was produced for a mass international audience as it was filmed in English as well as a German version and cast English stars (Joseph Fiennes and Lena Headley). Müllerschön's film also engages, to an extent, with the Holocaust as it provides a composite character a Jewish pilot, Friedrich Sternberg (played by Maxim Mehmet), who is shot down and killed, which loss the Red Baron mourns.

It was argued by politicians such as the Green Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer that, as a result of Germany's history, Germany had an obligation to push for military intervention to show that Germany had learnt from its past. As a consequence, the Srebrenica Genocide (part of the Bosnian War 1992-1995) became the backdrop to the moral debate in the late 1990s about German identity and memory in the wake of the Holocaust. This comparatively recent "Auschwitz never again" reaction to war differs substantially from the 1950s films that presented the need to rearm. With these political debates and memory contests in mind the effect Stauffenberg's resistance had on his family after his death in 1945 has been omitted from Baier's film plot and the film instead concentrates solely on the men of the historic period. Thus it can be seen that for German audiences the heroic German now engages with the Holocaust and can be a patriotic hero. This is elaborated upon by Neaman, who proposes that, in the early 2000s, the attacks on 9/11 sparked a dramatic change in U.S. and German relations. In both the US and Germany, though for ultimately different reasons, nationalism, and consequently patriotism, became fashionable again.[130] Therefore Stauffenberg's nationalistic act of conscience in *Operation Walküre* is portrayed as being central to Germany's official memory culture and the tradition of the *Bundeswehr*. Arguably and unlike filmic depictions in the *Holocaust* and *Heimat*, Germany has led the way since reunification, with various shifts in representation of Stauffenberg. However, it can also be argued that "it has taken an American production and Tom Cruise to provide the smooth heroicisation and globalisation of the figure of a German soldier as resistor."[131]

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[129] *Der Rote Baron/The Red Baron*. Dir. Nikolai Müllerschön. Perf. Matthias Schweighöfer. Warner Brothers, 2008. DVD.
[130] Neaman, Elliot. "The War that Took Place in Germany Intellectuals and September 11."*German Politics and Society*. 20. 3 (2002): 56 – 78. Print. Here 76.
[131] Niven 2009: 191.

This globalisation and as such revised heroism and appropriation revealed a change in acceptability of the German resistor in a post-9/11 America.

After 9/11, the political climate in the Western world changed as debates raged over how to deal with the newly formed conceptual War on Terror, with the idea of patriotism divided between loyalty towards a government and loyalty towards a country. Anti-Americanism was widespread as detailed by Neaman who provides the example that Schröder publically spoke out against the Iraq invasion with anti-American rhetoric during his election campaign in 2002, thus making it acceptable to explore the perceived suffering caused by the U.S. during World War Two. During these debates on memory, Germans again perceived themselves as victims, similar to the Iraqis and Afghans who were now the victims of aggressive American policies and the aerial bombings, became comparable with the bombing of Dresden and Hamburg.[132]

Neaman, like Niven, uses an Allensbach Institute survey to quantify the ongoing distrust between Germany and America. For example, the survey revealed that 46 per cent of Germans did not trust the then American President George W. Bush to effectively respond to the 9/11 attacks, with 47 per cent not approving of Bush's framing of the subsequent War on Terror as a moral battle of "good against evil". Thus the issue - initiated by the U.S. which had started to use this rhetoric to frame their wars and interventions - widened towards concerns surrounding a possible change in German policy that could lead to a more active involvement in wars around the world. As a result of these transnational debates, German artists, politicians, union activists, theologians, and writers (such as Rolf Hochhuth) publically spoke out against the Iraq War.[133]

Kabliling qualifies this content of this debate when he outlines that, since American involvement in World War Two, war has been re-defined as being morally good, World War Two has remained an integral part of the 20th Century Americans' collective memory for three reasons:

> the war is benchmarked as the 'good War', the war produced the 'greatest Generation,' and the war continues to serve as a convenient venue for looking back at what is called a 'usable past'. This 'good war' therefore captures

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[132] Neaman 2002: 58.
[133] Ibid: 60-70.

nostalgic memories of simpler and glory times for the U.S.[134]

Along similar lines to Kabliling, Puente extends the argument by proposing that World War Two is traditionally easy to film as it was one of the last known good wars as it was easy to polarise the good or heroic Allies from the bad or villainous Axis powers. Consequently, World War Two is often used as a background for stories that show "America lives in times of uncertainty and economic difficulties and unpopular wars."[135] The trope the heroic Nazi was a conundrum for the makers of *Valkyrie*, Harris argues, as the film-makers were faced with making a World War Two film for an American audience without any American soldiers in it, as well as a film where the conclusion is already known as a forgone failure and the lead would be an ambiguous German hero.[136]

3.2 *Valkyrie*: A Hollywood Stauffenberg

Petra Rau argues that Bryan Singer's *Valkyrie* (2009) is an attempt to present a "pluralistic representation of the World War Two that hopes to eschew the tired clichés of cardboard villains in SS uniforms", by comparing *Valkyrie* to Justin Cartwright's novel *The Song before It Is Sung* (2007)[137] and the 1950s film *Desert Fox* (Dir. Henry Hathaway. 1951). Rau concludes that *Valkyrie* is part of a body of post-unification films that attempts to normalise the German past.[138] By way of contrast, films such as *Desert Fox* do not directly engage with the July Plot. They instead present a character - either an army officer (in *Desert Fox* this is Field Marshall Rommel) or an intellectual (in *The Song before It Is Sung* this is the fictional Axel von Gottberg) – who is at the periphery of the plot rather than in the inner circle of plotters.[139]

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[134] Kabiling, Maria Cristina Ana. B. A. "World War II in popular American visual culture: Film and Video games after 9/11." Diss. (Masters in Liberal Arts). Georgetown University, 22 Apr. 2010. Web. <https://m.repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/553342/kabilingMaria.pdf?sequence=1>. 19 Jan. 2012. Here 8.

[135] Puente, Mary. "World War II rages on at the multiplex." *USA Today*. N.p. 6 Jan. 2009. Web. <http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/life/movies/news/2009-01-06-world-war-2-movies_N.htm>. 26 Jun. 2012.

[136] Harris, Mark. "The Simple Job That Morphed Into '*Valkyrie*'." *New York Times*. N.p. 12 Dec. 2008. Web. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/14/movies/14harr.html?pagewanted=all>. 20 Jun. 2012.

[137] Cartwright, Justin. *The Song Before It Is Sung*, London: Bloomsbury, 2007. Print.

[138] Rau, Petra. *Our Nazis*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013. Print. Here 126.

[139] The character is based on Adam von Trott zu Solz who was executed for his part in the July Plot, who was on the periphery and that was sympathetic to the plotters and would have taken an important role in post-Hitler Germany.

Cartwright's novel uses metaphorical characters as representative of the July Plotters. Cartwright has composed his own version of the friendship between Isaiah Berlin (the political theorist and philosopher) and Adam von Trott (the German lawyer and diplomat), with the fictional characters Elya Mendel and Axel von Gottberg. This constructed relationship is filtered through a modern researcher, Conrad Senior, Mendel's favourite pupil, who obsessively researches their relationship and relies on it to form his own identity. The Mendel–von Trott friendship was destroyed after a letter that Gottberg wrote to the *Manchester Guardian* from Germany in 1934 was published, in which he said that the Jews were not being mistreated in Germany. Berlin naturally reacted angrily.

Cartwright's novel, rather than following the paths that destiny would have had in store for them - Mendel in a concentration camp, and Gottberg as a Nazi functionary – shows Mendel instead to be safe in Oxford where he openly condemns his friend, who finally emerges to be one of the resistors involved in the July Plot. At the end of the novel, using the same method that is presented in the film *Valkyrie*, Conrad Senior views a film of Gottberg's execution: death by hanging by piano wire. Where *Valkyrie* differs is in its focus on the main figure on which the coup rests, the assassin and coup leader, Stauffenberg himself. For Rau *Valkyrie* is "a PR project for Cruise and for Germany."[140] Although her arguments are compelling in her comparison of *Valkyrie* with *Desert Fox* and *The Song Before It Is Sung*, this thesis makes the point that *Valkyrie* is an adaptation of a well-known story, as well as being a film remake. Adaptations to the original real-life story of Stauffenberg are thus analysed in depth in order to reveal the ways in which character trope shifts facilitate changes in memories and appropriation of the past.

In addition, and like Doneson, this thesis argues that Holocaust films, as well as films that deal directly with fascism, can also be read to reveal the period in which they were made,[141] in *Valkyrie's* case, American society post 9/11. *Valkyrie* does not engage with the National Socialist past in the same manner as *Operation Walküre*. In 2002, *Valkyrie's* screen writer Christopher McQuarrie visited Berlin and, while going to see the German Resistance Memorial Centre at the *Bendlerblock*, noticed the memorial to Stauffenberg and the rest of the executed members of the July Plot. Moved to research

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[140] Ibid: 136.
[141] Doneson 2002: 8.

the 20th July Plot, he was fascinated by the conspirators and their failed assassination attempt. McQuarrie eventually showed his script to his high school friend and director Bryan Singer, who wanted to make a small movie. Having dabbled in the lasting impact of Nazism in *Apt Pupil* (1998), as well as in *X-Men* (2000), a small budget movie would be a change of pace from Singer's usual big budget productions, such as the Oscar winning *The Usual Suspects* (1995).

Valkyrie's budget should, in any event, have been limited to an extent like all films post-2008 as a result of the economic crisis and recession that has had a great effect on the film industry. Hollywood in particular reacted by decreasing its production of films and following the example set by the previous recessions, Hollywood studios focused on escapist films with established blockbuster stories or remaking older films.[142] These considerations appear to be applied to the casting of a Hollywood film star, Tom Cruise, whose recent film sequel *Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol* (Dir. Brad Bird. 2011) drew $694,713,380.[143]

Rather than viewing the July Plotters as central to Germany's official memory culture, the Hollywood production of *Valkyrie*'s lack of engagement with German values and collective memory is noticeable as it has glossed over the figure of the German soldier as a figure of German resistance, which characterisation frames how Stauffenberg was traditionally seen. This shift serves to appropriate Stauffenberg and to transform him into the traditional all American hero.

It can also be argued that Singer would expect his audiences to recognise that one of his most popular characters – an anti-hero in the form of Wolverine – has been modelled on the traditional anti-hero made popular by the problematic representation of Vietnam veterans, embodied in the characterisation of John Rambo from the *Rambo* franchise.[144] Like Rambo, Wolverine (and *Valkyrie*'s Stauffenberg) also has loyalty to his country and to its army. It is through this misguided loyalty that Wolverine

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[142] *The Economist*. "Hollywood in the recession: One-dimensional. The downturn forces sweeping changes on a reputedly recession-proof business." *The Economist*. N.p. 09 Jul. 2009. Web. <http://www.economist.com/node/13998640>. 11 Sep. 2012. And Faucheux, Misty. "Is Hollywood in Crisis Mode?" Ed. Rhonda Callow. *Brighthub*. N.p. 02 Sep. 2011. Web. <http://www.brighthub.com/multimedia/video/articles/25294.aspx>. 11 Sep. 2012.

[143] Box Office Mojo. "*Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol.*" *Box Office Mojo*. N.p. N.d. Web. <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=mi4.htm>. 21 Feb. 2013.

[144] The first Rambo film *First Blood.* (Dir. Ted Kotcheff) in 1982 began the franchise and has to date been followed by three sequels, with the most recent Rambo film released in 2008 *Rambo* directed by the lead actor Sylvester Stallone.

volunteered for the medical experimentation on him that enhanced his mutation, with the intention of turning him into an ultimate soldier. The ultimate soldier is also a common theme in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, and was repeated in the comic book film *Captain America: The First Avenger* (Dir. Joe Johnston. 2011) where the lead protagonist Steve Rogers volunteers to be medically enhanced into the super-soldier in a bid to defeat the Nazi war machine. Ultimately, it is the American Government and military that betrays Wolverine, as it had Rambo and later Rogers, as they turn these characters, the heroic soldier, into outcasts, or further, attempt to kill them.

The debates in the U.S. on how to memorialise their nation's returning soldiers was revealed in the choice of monument, the Vietnam War Memorial, which was designed by Maya Lin to look like a slash in the landscape. The open V-shape of the wall is considered to be a space for reflection rather than honouring or glorifying the soldiers' deaths. Similar understanding was employed in regard to the location or place for the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, designed by Peter Eisenman, where the openness of the memorial was to encourage multiple narratives and memories.[145]

Like Rambo and Wolverine, returning veterans of unpopular wars were cinematically depicted as emotionally and physically scarred beings that ultimately transform into superhero-like figures. Therefore, the problematic war veteran has been turned into an anti-hero. Along with the casting of Cruise as Stauffenberg, Singer's particular expertise reinforces that *Valkyrie*'s lead character has not been created primarily for German audiences, or with authenticity in mind, but instead for American audiences that are already familiar with this form of anti-hero characterisation.

The casting of Cruise serves to further reinforce an American association for audiences, especially among the generation of cinemagoers who are familiar with Singer's early films, such as *Born on the Fourth of July* (Dir. Oliver Stone. 1989). Based on the memoirs by Vietnam War veteran Ron Kovic of the same title (published 1976) depicts the destruction the young soldier, the disabling injury he obtained, the prejudice he faced by his fellow Americans, and his continued patriotism. Kovic's journey from being an experienced pro-war sergeant in the U.S. Army to a paralysed anti-war campaigner and lead figure in the Vietnam Veterans against the War resonates with the experiences of Stauffenberg in *Valkyrie*. For example, Stauffenberg, like

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[145] Kattago 2001: 148.

Kovic, voluntarily enters a war as a result of his ideological beliefs, becomes disillusioned after witnessing the deaths of civilians and soldiers, becomes physically and psychologically disabled after sustaining enemy fire and ultimately leads a campaign against a government that he views as murderous while still retaining his sense of patriotism and loyalty to his country. An audience familiar with both Singer's and Cruise's body of work are able to see the parallels between the two characters and their motivations.

Comfortable with exploring the charismatic and sympathetic villain and anti-hero in the form of a patriotic traitor in his previous films, it is unsurprising that Singer went on to direct *Valkyrie* with its leading protagonist as a heroic Nazi portrayed as the all American hero. Viereck suggests that the ultimate hero, traditionally considered to be an all American hero, is a hero without the heroic pose. Such a hero is identified by his refusal to adhere to the superficial conformity of material wealth and selflessly sacrifices himself for the greater good and brotherhood of man.[146] This heroism would include the struggle against all forms of totalitarianism and moral evil.[147]

Valkyrie, although originally meant to be a small budget film production, went on to become a big budget $90 million film. It was also hit with controversies including law suits, disputes over filming rights, changing release dates and choice of star. Niven argues that Cruise, as a Hollywood-style actor, has been considered to be a controversial choice as his ethics and personal life directly influenced the majority of interpretations of the film. As a result of Cruise's membership of the Church of Scientology, in June 2007 the filmmakers were banned from filming in locations such as the *Bendlerblock.*[148] Purvis reports how the controversy surrounding the casting of Cruise also drew criticism from Stauffenberg's son, Berthold, as he feared Cruise would turn the story into something "kitsch" as he was the "epitome of modern American action cinema."[149] Berthold told the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*: "He should keep his hands off my father," and "He should go climb a mountain or go surfing in the Caribbean. I don't care as long as he stays out of this". Notwithstanding such controversies, *Valkyrie* was eventually

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[146] Viereck, Peter. *The Unadjusted Man. A New Hero for Americans: Reflections on the Destruction Between Conformity and Conserving*. Boston: The Beacon Press, 1956. Print. Here 5-10.
[147] Ibid: 109.
[148] Niven 2009: 181.
[149] Purvis, Andrew. "Why Germany Hates Tom Cruise." *Time Magazine*. N.p. 26 Jun. 2007. Web. <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1637564,00.html>. 11 Sep. 2012.

released in the U.S. on Christmas Day 2008, eventually taking in $83,077,833 in America and $11,442,619 in Germany.[150]

Singer's *Valkyrie* presents the July Plot primarily as a thriller and brings military resistance to Hitler that was relatively unknown outside of Europe to the U.S. There is no engagement with the Holocaust, in contrast to Baier's *Operation Walküre*. Unlike Baier's film, Stauffenberg's personal life appears to be not representative of a post-unification Germany. For example, personal aspects of his life are peripheral and thus part of the historical narrative of the film, as Nina is simply presented as the ever loving wife of Stauffenberg, thus conforming to Hollywood stereotype. Although there are hints at Stauffenberg's Christian beliefs, with a barely concealed crucifix along with his wedding ring on a necklace under his shirt, little to no revealing motivation or background to Stauffenberg is presented to the audience.

Valkyrie became a surprise success in America. It remains questionable, however, whether success was a result of the patriotic hero character trope, or because Stauffenberg appeared (and was marketed to be) an all American hero as portrayed by Cruise. Much has been made of the use of American accents and the stars of the film, as according to McQuarrie, "You can't make a World War II movie with no American soldiers in it, let alone one about a conspiracy whose outcome is a foregone conclusion."[151] Sandhu adds to this debate and contends that using a Hollywood star as the good / heroic German with an American accent would make the film appear less German and more traditionally American. To add to the confusion, while *Valkyrie's* Stauffenberg has the only American accent in the film, the rest of the characters have German and British accents, which adheres to the filmic stereotype of British actors playing Nazis.

In response to these critiques of *Valkyrie*, Singer commented in an interview that if all the actors were trying to do German accents then the film could appear false and would make no sense as Germans would not be speaking in pretend German accents. Therefore, Cruise maintains his American accent, in what has been viewed as "tough-guy Americanese as if he views Stauffenberg as a distant relative of Ethan Hunt in the

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[150] Box Office Mojo. "*Valkyrie.*" *Box Office Mojo*. N.p. N.d. Web. <http://boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=valkyrie.htm>. 3 Jul. 2012.
[151] Kabiling 2002: 38.

Mission: Impossible series".[152] Brooks also discusses this similarity and suggests that Stauffenberg "might as well have been dropped in from an Allied plane; a gung-ho Hollywood hero sent in to clean up a very European mess."[153]

As well as the reactions of critics to the melee of accents in the film, criticism has been extended by one notable anti-Cruise reviewer, Roger Friedman, to the lead characters' costumes making them look more like "airline pilots than Nazi soldiers",[154] thus removing them further from Nazism. Uniforms are a device used by organisations or institutions as a way to differentiate between members from non-members and therefore cinematically are used to inform the audience of what behaviour that character should display. It also visibly presents loyalty of that actor to an institution as well as conveying that organisation's belief that the person has the same values and skills as the rest of its members. [155] If a character is part of an institution that wears uniforms, the character has to appear different to the audience, especially if the character does not conform to the institution's expectations. For example, in Vietnam films, the soldiers typically customised their uniforms to present their individuality, such as the narrator, Sgt James T Davies, in *Full Metal Jacket* (Dir. Stanley Kubrick. 1987) who wears a peace sign and has scrawled "Born to Kill" on his helmet to present the "duality of man" but also to differentiate him to the audience. It is a notable feature of World War Two films that the swastika is predominantly used to indicate the location or the identity of the bad guy / Nazi characters.

Stauffenberg's story occurred during a war that appeared to offer the moral absolutes of evil Nazis and good Allies. By revealing that the reality was anything but as simple, these moral preconceptions have been challenged, which shifts assist in enlightening contemporary constructions of collective memory.

From the first depiction of Stauffenberg in the 1950s, this ambiguous heroic figure has gradually been revealed to meet the evolving stages of audience acceptability. Stauffenberg has been used to confront Germany with a deeper engagement with the

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[152] Sandhu, Sukhdev. "*Valkyrie* with Tom Cruise, review." *The Telegraph*. N.p. 22 Jan. 2009. Web.<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/sukhdev-sandhu/4313818/Valkyrie-with-Tom-Cruise-review.html>. 26 Jun. 2012.

[153] Brooks, Xan. "*Valkyrie.*" *The Guardian*. N.p. 20 Jan. 2009. Web. <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2009/jan/20/valkyrie-tom-cruise-film-review>. 20 Jun. 2012.

[154] Friedman 2008.

[155] Rubenstein, Ruth P. *Dress Codes: Meaning and Messages in American Culture*. Oxford: Westview Press, 1995. Print. Here 67.

Holocaust. Comparative analysis of Stauffenberg's story and its many adaptations also reveals that the heroic German can be superimposed onto contemporary debates as in American films his characterisation has been used to confront contemporary American issues and thus is an appropriated character and thus appropriated history.

What an exploration of these films primarily reveals is the following: evolution of public opinion surrounding the acceptability of the German hero transforming into the good Nazi both in Germany and abroad and how military and SS resistance can expose levels of culpability and resistance within famous National Socialist institutions. It will conclude that *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* is an ongoing process which will continue to be explored through the medium of film. Through the detail of the character trope a valorised past can evolve which can become character and thus historical revisionism, which processes lead onto relativisation and consequent appropriation from which nationalistic memory contests can ensue. The conclusion will argue that all these and other factors will lead to a paradigm shift in which a heroic German can become a heroic Nazi.

Conclusion

This thesis has exposed the need for different, and sometimes aspirational or valorised, narratives about painful facets of the Holocaust that have been understandably denied and thus diminished in the process of coming to terms with the past. With continued engagement with this controversial past, the complexity of memories is gradually being untangled as personal memories are weaving into and thus challenging the traditionally polarised master narratives that were formed in the wake of the Holocaust. Through the films selected for analysis in this thesis and their re-definition as Holocaust films, this thesis has shown that questions of complicity and culpability have been made explicit. The broader questions that the film selection helps to illustrate relate to how and why a shift from the narrative of Germans as perpetrators, to Nazis as heroes can come about. Since 1990, the development in portrayal of German victimhood in film has also increased and as a result the victim character trope in films has been subject to much academic criticism. In this thesis, victimhood and the increased portrayal of victim status is acknowledged, but is considered to be part of a broader discourse of portraying personal memories.

There is an academic position which argues that film is an inadequate form of representation and mediation of history due to film's persuasive and sensational style.[1] *Schindler's List* exemplifies this argument as it broke a taboo by melodramatically lifting the characterisation of a German rescuer figure (who would have been previously considered as a complicit Nazi) into the role of the heroic protagonist. As this film was directed by a Jewish-American, it was not seen as a form of diminishing the suffering of the Jews in the Holocaust but rather as a form of universalisation and thus appropriation of what was considered to be Jewish-European history. The power of melodramatic representations in the film resonated throughout the world and caused much debate in Germany. For this reason it can be argued that *Schindler's List* facilitated further memory debates which, in turn, shifted perceptions about the role of German rescuers and culpability not just of Nazis but the ordinary German.

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[1] Palfreyman, Rachel. "The Fourth Generation: Legacies of Violence as Quest for Identity in Post-unification Terrorism Films." Ed. David Clarke. *German Cinema since Unification*. London: Continuum, 2006: 11-42. Print. Here 38.

As well as the lack of normalisation, there has also not been institutionalised forgetting both nationally and transnationally. The concerted effort by Western countries to record testimony from the victims of the Holocaust in recent years has, instead, allowed for the emergence of narratives which continue to challenge the traditional discourse. This thesis has moved towards a narrower focus on private and individual stories.

Adopting a narrower focus enabled this thesis to introduce aspects of relativisation. Relativisation in this sense refers to the process by which crimes specific to the Holocaust are diminished. This thesis argues for finer distinctions to be made, as the Rabe films in particular well illustrate. For instance, the comparison of the Nanking Massacre to the Holocaust has been successfully used as a template to inform understanding of Chinese trauma, as well as to contextualise and portray in film aspects of the Massacre to Western audiences. This combination of processes enables the formation of a temporary community based on a common understanding.

The films selected for analysis herein have thus brought to the fore stories that had frequently been deliberately forgotten because they did not fit the narrative of Germans as perpetrators. At a broader level, rather than viewing the Holocaust films in this thesis as propagating victimhood, a finer distinction is made that these films are a sign of the acceptable investigation into nuanced history rather than easier to accept polarised black and white stories. To depict an individual case challenges cultural memory which maintains an all-encompassing narrative. Personal stories have made it possible to analyse and uncover aspects of the past that were previously considered to be taboo, such as the mass rape of German women depicted in *Anonyma – Eine Frau in Berlin*. Consequently, stories of victimhood as well as complicity and perpetration and heroic deeds have also been told.

Narrower focus on private narratives and acknowledgement of complicity has, in turn, opened up debate surrounding resistance to the Nazi regime and more specifically the Holocaust. Resistance is not just a Jewish action, but is open to gentiles and therefore to heroic Germans. By focusing on the new stories of German resistors to the Holocaust or German heroes, this thesis has uncovered, especially in the case of rescuers of Jewish people, previously unsuccessful attempts to bring German rescuers to the fore. These attempts were initiated by the Jewish people who were saved. Contemporary films that present a German rescuer have often been made by Jewish

directors of various nationalities (Spielberg, Polanski and Singer). The most damning representations on film of German heroes have been made by the German Färberböck and English Daldry. The less successful films were made by one director who had family persecuted by the Nazis (Costa-Gavras), while Rabe was brought to the fore, and flopped, by the German director Gallenberger. It would appear that German heroes in films with Jewish directors have been the most appealing to audiences, particularly as a result of their more sensationally portrayed heroism. This counters the claim by Kundnani that the move since reunification is the collective and self-identified memory of Germans as victims. It is apt to say that memory construction is far more complex, there has been a shift in American and German audiences' sensibilities to the trope of the heroic German developing into the heroic Nazi, both of which characterisations are flawed and ambiguous.

This thesis proposes a new understanding of the dynamic between cinemas in an international and transnational setting. The first instances of the new form of Holocaust hero is popularised in *Schindler's List* and later developed in *The Pianist*. These ambiguous literary heroes became more morally dubious characters when transferred to the screen. The surprising element uncovered, especially in regard to *Schindler's List*, was that the story was already well known and various attempts had been made to turn it into film. Even more surprisingly the novel was written by an Australian and the film directed by an American, thus highlighting that this story and approach to history could not yet be explored by a German due to the cultural and historical sensitivities and arguments surrounding the Holocaust. Without the external interpretation of German history the Schindler story would not have been told and Schindler would never have become short-hand for the heroic German, as he is today.

Shifts in cultural sensitivities continued to be mirrored in *The Pianist* which brought to the fore a heroic German character that was originally deemed too controversial in the country in which the story is based, Poland. It took until the removal of the Soviet controlled government in Poland, as well as the personal coming to terms with the past by the director, before the film could be made. These two films have become the foundation for the investigation and development of the ambiguous hero trope in the subsequent chapters and film texts chosen for this thesis.

Where Chapter Two explored the first instances and use of the heroic German trope, Chapter Three took a more gendered approach and looked at the use of this

characterisation in female-centred history and its presentation in film. The factual and fictional case studies analysed revealed that the depiction of the German heroine, compared to her male counterpart, allowed for a new perspective on history, which moved women from their traditional depiction as victims or as objects or romantic interest for the male hero to more complex and ambiguous characterisations as perpetrators and resistors.

It was expected that the film and textual case studies of *Aimée & Jaguar* and *The Reader* would adhere to the traditional stereotyping of women as victims. Although the women in these films have been presented as victims in the books - their status as victim is not their defining characteristic in the films. Instead, through the process of adaptation, a more nuanced reading of these two women has emerged which also uncovered that there are difficulties in presenting the female as a perpetrator or as a resistor amongst the typically male dominated filmic canon. Where the book *Aimée & Jaguar* presents a more nuanced picture of Wust, the film condemns her to being a sentimental fool. The opposite can be said for *The Reader* where Schmitz is presented as a sympathetic perpetrator in the novel and a perpetrator in the film. Both films, however, punish the woman in different ways by showing her to be either a villain or a sentimental fool. As with the German hero, the German heroine too had been diminished and made into a more morally dubious character.

Where the second and third chapters focused on the resistance, subversion and complicity of German civilians, the aim of Chapter Four was to focus primarily on the heroic Nazi. This is a figure based within National Socialist institutions, such as the SS and the Nazi leadership, and whose members are ordinarily assumed to be complicit in war crimes and crimes against humanity.

While Schmitz in *The Reader* could have been considered initially to be a heroic Nazi figure in the novel, it is not clear whether the female guards in concentration camps were officially members of the SS or were just *SS-Helferinnen.* For that reason, Schmitz's gender excludes her from being considered a heroic Nazi character and thus the trope has been applied only to male figures within Nazi institutions. The men, Gerstein in *Amen.*, Rabe in *John Rabe*, and Stauffenberg in *Valkyrie*, were members of these institutions and were in non-combatant roles when their resistance activities took place, thus differentiating them from the ordinary soldier and civilian.

Amen. has shown that the sympathetic SS characterisation of Gerstein could

have developed into an acceptable figure in German historical and cultural discourse. Although the film *John Rabe* flopped in western box offices, in China it flourished as Rabe was a prominent part of their national narrative. The Rabe films encourage and expose international debates surrounding complicity, guilt and memory within contemporary society. *Operation Walküre* is a conservative German portrayal of Stauffenberg whichhad a limited release. Once again, it took Hollywood to popularise Stauffenberg in *Valkyrie* and bring his story to a mainstream audience and a wider public.

The comparative success (critical of *Amen.*, transnational of *John Rabe* and commercial of *Valkyrie*) of films which all depicted resistance that was not directed towards the personal survival of Jews also displays the nature and level of interest that resistance to the Third Reich still retains for international audiences. However, it still appears to require a Hollywood(esque) version of these specific aspects of history to attain mass audiences.

The ambiguous heroic Nazi as exemplified in the above films has also revealed that not all Germans, even those in leading positions, were fervent believers in Nazi ideology and thus the films assist in breaking down the boundaries between moral absolutes that are traditionally associated with World War Two or challenge the caricature of the evil Nazi which has dominated popular culture and films.[2] Although Rabe has been labelled as a good Nazi due to his official status as a party representative in China, his label internationally, which is interchangeable between the good German and good Nazi, has also revealed that these tropes have now been accepted internationally.

As it stands, Chapter Four uncovered that the character of the German hero has, within a comparatively short period of ten years from 2002 to 2012, reached a level of acceptability transnationally and has allowed for development of this character trope into the heroic Nazi. It was expected that the heroic Nazi representation would have been the source of controversy. The lack of controversy surrounding this trope, compared to the controversy stimulated by either advertising campaigns or casting, compared to the initial controversy and debate that was stimulated by the original heroic German film *Schindler's List*, was minimal and thus displays real shifts in sensitivities

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[2] This character has been prevalent in films such as *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Dir. Steven Spielberg. 1981) and *Marathon Man* (Dir. John Schlesinger. 1976).

in both the film industry and society.

Controversy has emerged from the plot of the film or its casting of an action hero, Tom Cruise, rather than the character trope. *Valkyrie* differs from the films discussed in the previous chapters as it did not engage with the Holocaust or with German audiences' desires to see their heroes engage with the Holocaust. This contrasted with the manipulation of Stauffenberg's character in *Operation Walküre*. Although *Valkyrie* does engage with fascism, it uses it as a backdrop to explore universal all-American values and thus may serve as an allegory for contemporary war for American audiences.

The trope of the ordinary German or more specifically the unintended consequences of this trope are exposed as being complex and its use in the past and in the present has led to relativized suffering which diminishes, wittingly and unwittingly, culpability as well as the reality of the atrocities of the Holocaust. This thesis concludes that equating the trope the ordinary German with the good German is, in reality, the most dangerous trope as far as relativisation is concerned. Historically, ordinary Germans did suffer as they experienced wartime rapes, starvation, aerial bombardment and displacement. With a focus on the heroic German, acknowledgment of the existence of such a figure acts as a form of reproach to the ordinary, complicit German.

Traditionally literature has been thought more complex, while film has been thought polarising. The differences in adaptation from literature to film have highlighted that, not only was there variation in countries' motivations, but also in audience / readers' sensitivities as there has been a shift in what can been viewed as an acceptable (not necessarily valorised) narrative about the past. Overall, the films selected for analysis in this thesis have exposed a change in perceptions about what is deemed acceptable in American and European audiences regarding complex heroic Holocaust figures. The comparative analysis methodology used in this thesis has also facilitated contextualisation which, in turn revealed that contemporary film and texts reflect the ever changing socio-political and cultural climate in which they were made. The climate that encouraged *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* also enabled people to turn to the past to help contextualise and understand the present. This thesis further revealed that Hollywood uses the German hero to promote universal values and thus depicts universal suffering; German filmmakers have used it to explore issues in their National Socialist past in order to form contemporary identity narratives. Reaching the conclusion that

German filmmakers have been copying traditional Hollywood narratives and aesthetics would be too simplistic. Hollywood has clearly been leading the way for Germany. However, the German response has not been the creation of like-for-like films; instead it has been a more nuanced understanding of perpetrators, victims, and heroes during the National Socialist period.

There is merit in exploring and presenting nuanced views of the ever shifting victim and perpetrator dynamic and the way in which this dynamic has been memorialised and contextualised through film. Placing emphasis on the portrayal of the assumed perpetrator, i.e. the heroic German, has allowed for a new understanding of not only history and memorialisation, but also for contemporary socio-political events, such as the rise of right wing groups in Europe and the sensationalising of hate figures. Analysing the shifts in character representations and other aspects of the adaptation process also acts as a challenge to false memories and master narratives.

It is necessary to establish a multi-faceted understanding of characterisation, whereby the morally grey areas of human nature are central in evaluating how audiences, and accordingly society, no longer accept the black-and-white conservative characterisation traditionally associated with films that depict National Socialism and its effects. Audience expectations and cultural sensitivities have evolved to such an extent that a once controversial figure has become accepted as the mainstay of popular film.

Films also facilitate the understanding of moral battles to a mass audience, and this comes about in the form of prosthetic memory. Because living memory is connected to life span, film replaces and becomes and alternative memory. Prosthetic memory necessarily embodies the acceptable collective narratives of the time in which it was made. This thesis has also highlighted that the trend to integrate the National Socialist past into the narrative of Germany as a normal nation was hindered with the multiple memories of the past. As a consequence, the narrative of the FRG now included the communist past of the GDR The newly unified Germany now presents a new form of narrative and cultural memory regarding the National Socialist past.

In the aftermath of National Socialism, the occupying powers and the subsequent newly established German states, the FRG and GDR, used a mythical heroic German figure socio-politically and culturally to legitimise the state and build a new nation. These figures changed from military or Christian based resistance in the FRG and the socialist resistor in the GDR. It is, as a result, unsurprising that in the newly

unified German state the film industries continued in the same vein in an attempt to come to terms with not just the fascist but divided past, the double burden of the past. What is surprising is that America, as well as a plethora of other nations, also actively sought out this figure. It has thus been argued that through the various adaptations of the heroic German from its first manifestation in the novel *Schindler's Ark* to the film *Valkyrie* there has been a shift in perceptions. No longer relegated to being the iconic villain in popular culture, the heroic German has provided an ideal character that can be used to explore universal values and stories in a sensational past.

As public debates surrounding the presentation of the heroic German continue, such heroes have yet to become an uncontested part of the literary, filmic and cultural discourse.[3] As members of the Nazi (or Auschwitz) generation die out and Nazism is learned through second-hand accounts, the role of public debate and memorialisation become even more important. Fierce debates have been conducted in newspapers and on TV. Through controversial discussion, the memory of the past has been kept alive. When the past ceases to be the focus of national public debate then that past has lost its link to the present.[4] The heroic German character trope in all its guises has kept alive contested debate in literature and in film.

Continuous *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in Germany thus remains as the new state and nation struggle to come to terms with, not just the Nazi past, but in the wake of reunification the adoption of the FRG narrative by the former GDR. In other terms, Germany today continues to struggle to come to terms with the double burden of the past.

What the shifts exposed in this thesis underlie is the question: what is and will be normality for Germany as it takes its place in a globalised world? The process of coming to terms with the past is just that, a process, which implies that it shall never be completed as engagement with the past has to continuously update while reflecting contemporary climate and debate.[5] Filmmaking also has to continuously orientate towards answering contemporary questions in public debate, including what impact

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[3] Ó Dochartaigh and Schönfeld 2013: 6.
[4] Ibid: 172.
[5] Davidson 2006: 43.

does the past have on the present?[6]

If Hollywood films are considered to act as a form of "cultural reservoir of collective memory"[7] can the same be said for German cinema? Germany is charged to never forget the past whilst integrating itself in a global society, German film can act as a medium for cultural and collective memory that reflects the universal needs of contemporary society. For as long as there is a fascination with fascism, film and its nuanced adaptations and shifts in perceptions, as well as memory representations will remain a medium that can usefully explore and challenge assumptions about what it entails to come to terms with the past.

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[6] Kapczynski, Jennifer M. and Richardson, Michael D. "The Many Lives of Contemporary German Cinema." Eds. Jennifer M Kapczynski. and Michael D Richardson. *A New History of German Cinema.* New York: Camden House, 2012: 629-636. Print. Here 632.

[7] Ibid: 155.

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