

Prisoners of War: A German-Canadian Post-war Memory Project

by

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the transformation of German-Canadian WWII family legacies as they are passed down through generations and between cultures. From a memory studies perspective, I examine my family's archive of stories and artefacts as a case study, creating a memory project that interprets both autobiographical and co-produced texts created by my grandfather and I that describe his captivity in the American prisoner of war camp at Bad Kreuznach, Germany. In recounting these experiences, my grandfather's texts construct and connect to post-war German discourses of guilt, victimization, and survivorship for his Canadian grandchildren. However, my involvement in mediating and representing his camp experiences reframes his stories to incorporate my third-generation German-Canadian perspective. Examining these texts, their creation, and our various identity positions within that process, I employ the concepts of intersubjective performance (Abrams, 2010) and traumatic representation (Caruth, 1996) in the analysis of my process of postmemory creation (Hirsch, 2008). It is my contention that this process can serve a therapeutic purpose, helping families come to terms with traumatic legacies and difficult knowledge.

Keywords: German-Canadian; Rheinwiesenlager; prisoner of war; postmemory; Enkelliteratur; memory studies

*To my grandfather, Bernhard Schulze,
for diving into the unknown with me.*

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Glossary

Aufrechnung	Literally translated as a calculation or working out of numbers; also used to describe the settling of scores or the process of reckoning. <i>English Translation: Calculation</i> .
Einsatzgruppen	Nazi SS Paramilitary squads generally known for their mass murders of hundreds of thousands of civilians in Poland and the Soviet Union. <i>English Translation: Task Forces</i>
Enkelliteratur	Sub-genre of German literature written by third-generation Nazi-era German descendants, its topics addressing family legacies of German guilt. <i>English Translation: Grandchild Literature</i>
Neue Subjektivität	A reflexive movement in German literature in the 1970s, following the student rebellions in the late 1960s, during which writers argued that literature should be politicized and self-reflexive. <i>English Translation: New Subjectivity</i>
Oberhausen Manifesto	A declaration made in 1962 by a group of German filmmakers at the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, arguing for a “new German feature film” free of industry and commercial controls and associated creative conventions.
PWTE	Prisoner of War Temporary Enclosures. Also known as Rheinwiesenlager, or Rhine Meadow Camps, this term was used to describe approximately 17 transit camps created along the Rhine River in Germany to hold over 1 million German Prisoners of War in the spring of 1945.
Rheinwiesenlager	Also known as Prisoner of War Temporary Enclosures. See above listing for PWTE for definition. <i>English Translation: Rhine Meadow Camps</i>
Väterliteratur	Sub-genre of German literature written by the children of Nazi-era Germans, most frequently written by the children of prominent Nazis. Its topics address family legacies and personal trauma surrounding parents’ wartime criminality, guilt and denial of responsibility. <i>English Translation: Father Literature</i>
Weltliteratur	A concept articulated by famed German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, expressing his belief in a movement of literary exchanges amongst cultures around the world that would surpass national literatures in promoting literary creativity. <i>English Translation: World Literature</i>



Figure 1: **Bernhard and Fritz Schulze – Germany; 1930**

Chapter 1.

Unravelling Wartime (Post)memories

“Never be ashamed because you’re German.”

At the time my grandfather said these words to me, I had never thought of myself as German, and I had no knowledge of why I would be ashamed to be so. I was twelve. I knew little of the Second World War, and even less about the Holocaust and the horrors of the Nazi regime. It wasn’t until I saw our family archive that I began to understand what he meant.

There are disturbing and eerie visuals in some shots: swastika-covered flags along the streets, distinctive haircuts on the two, very blonde, very blue-eyed boys, and eventually, military uniforms to go with the haircuts. My close relatives are just children, but proudly wear their cadet uniforms. One photo shows my grandfather and his brother as small children, holding homemade flags and raising their arms in a suggestive gesture¹. In another, curved cement posts and barbed wire line an enclosure on a quiet, abandoned road; the young family poses, smiling, beside it².

Many of these suggestive images came back years later to haunt me. Like so many children and grandchildren descended from World War II-era Germans, I had to come to terms with the profound realization that my beloved Grandpa was one of the “bad guys,” having supported one of the worst crimes ever committed against humanity. His involvement was brief, largely non-violent and ended in his capture by American forces

¹ Figure 1, p. ix, this document.

² Figure 2, p. 4, this document.

in April 1945. Nevertheless, growing up in Canada, knowing what lay dormant in our family archive, I felt that I couldn't share the fact of my German heritage without briefly explaining my grandfather's past.

His unpublished and incomplete memoir³, written "for his grandchildren" in English, constructed the framework for his – and eventually my – story about our family's past. He described a largely carefree childhood lived alongside political drama from which he felt largely separate and about which he remained quite ignorant. (Schulze, 1994) Nazi brainwashing, when it did enter his life, came first in the form of fun, leisure and athletics. Because of his young age – just 13 years old at the start of the war in September, 1939 – his military participation was largely limited to his cadet training and brief position as a telegrapher, first in the Navy and then in a tank unit. Happening as it did in the midst of Germany's decline, his wartime role seemed mostly innocuous; he had even been a prisoner of war in the spring of 1945, captured by the Americans and held in poor conditions for ten weeks.

Compared to many German wartime stories, his was seemingly easy to digest; to his grandchildren, it seemed he had nothing to hide, and he answered questions freely. The various roles he had filled throughout his life were expressed in each retelling of his story: being a young and seemingly fearless Nazi cadet and telegrapher; becoming a frustrated, starved and demoralized prisoner of war in an Allied camp; later, struggling as a post-war German in the Communist East; then, finally, being an immigrant in the land of his former enemies and becoming a grandfather to Canadian grandchildren. Together with the photographs and documents from his youth, his stories constructed an alternative German-Canadian discourse for his family. He opened the family's archives to me – the eldest and most interested of his three granddaughters – sharing and loaning me photo albums, home movies, documents and artefacts normally safeguarded

³ The memoir ends abruptly in the midst of my grandfather's story about his journalist father's urgent need to flee from East Germany in the face of Communist political oppression and their attempted recruitment of him for propaganda creation. The words "to be continued" appear in hand-writing on the bottom of the page; unfortunately, however, no further sections of his memoir were ever written.

in his wall-safe. Together, they created an intimate, impressionistic account strikingly different than the narratives I was elsewhere learning about the Second World War.

Compared to many Germans, my grandfather's wartime stories weren't rife with explicit violence and horror (Anonymous, 2000; Browning, 2001; MacDonogh, 2007; Snyder, 2010); to my knowledge, he never referred to our family's past as traumatic. Yet, when I viewed his stories together with North American discourse about wartime Germany and the history of the Second World War, haunting signs in our family archive alluded to a darker legacy.

Despite the relative simplicity of my grandfather's accounts of his experience, a conflict seemed to live within him. From his stories and his writings, I understood that he had begun the war a naïve, optimistic and ambitious teenager, and had left it a destabilized and changed young man. He had lost any faith he had once had in God, in government, and in many ways, in humanity. Nevertheless, he had lived, most of his family had survived, and his town had miraculously remained largely unscathed; overall, his experience had been one of survival. He had learned from these events, and as his descendants, so should we. His message was consistently one of warning:

As time went on, politics became more important, they influenced our lives more and more, politics slowly changed to historic events, small, a bit bigger, really important, then swallowing everybody's life, overwhelming, deadly for many, catastrophic for most – but it all started by looking fairly harmless, of no concern to most – “one should not pay too much attention,” until the bombs rained down, starvation hit, plundering, killing, raping hordes became the masters of the lives of many. One in 10 died, the majority lost all they had, hollow-eyed they stared into the world after the nightmare was over... The world can be a terrible place. Watch out – watch your rights and your freedom – watch the beginnings – never allow a dictatorship.

(Schulze, 1994, pp. 26 & 30)

When I first read these disturbing words at 14, their message felt as far removed from my life as a terrible fable. As a young Canadian living in a peaceful community, I had spent my early life far removed from politics, and separated by time and geographical distance from any of the destruction, death, “plundering, killing [and] raping” my grandfather described. All I understood of war and terror was from mass media: from fiction and documentary films, from school textbooks, and from the odd news report that

– as a teenager only passively interested in politics and world events – at first held little weight in my consciousness.



Figure 2: *Bernhard, Erna, Alfred and Fritz Schulze (L to R) – Germany; 1930*

It wasn't until genocide after genocide started to occur in my lifetime that my grandfather's experiences were translated into my own understanding of the world. Rather than believe that the Holocaust was a situated, circumstantial German problem, caused by political and militaristic expressions of imagined flaws in the German character (Goldhagen, 1996; Kracauer, 1966), instead I began to view the Holocaust as an event that revealed new and terrifying human capabilities that can be (and in some ways are being) repeated (Bauer, 2001). For me, the well-worn slogan driven into us as Canadian school children at Remembrance Day ceremonies and in History class – “never again,” supporting remembrance as prevention – became ironic and sad. The lesson I had learned from my grandfather, and from the Rwandan and Bosnian genocides that occurred during my adolescence, was that genocide could happen

anywhere; that the world does little to stop it, and that almost anyone is capable of either being victimized by it or even committing it, under the right circumstances.

Mercifully, owing to his father's anti-Nazi and survivalist strategizing and a lot of luck, my grandfather was never put into a situation in which he had to choose whether or not to commit the crimes his country and his people perpetrated. With the majority of his generation, he had been brainwashed by the regime to buy into the cultural, psychological and social constructions intended to enable him to kill (Waller, 2007); instead, he ended up in a prisoner of war camp as that same regime collapsed.

Many German soldiers like my grandfather went from being a part of the violent Nazi war machine to becoming potential victims of Allied vengeance in a matter of days. With the collapse of the German military, and in the wake of mass encirclements and surrenders, fields of barbed-wire enclosures known as Rhine Meadow Camps ("Rheinwiesenlager") were erected along the Rhine River from February to July 1945. Controversially reclassified as "Disarmed Enemy Forces" by the United States Army to permit the violation of Geneva Convention nutritional requirements in the face of short food supplies (Bayne Jones, 1969), thousands of German soldiers were kept without shelter, sanitary facilities or adequate food in "appalling conditions" (ICRC, 2010). My grandfather, lucky to have been imprisoned in one such camp for only a short, ten-week period, felt that in their treatment, he and his fellow prisoners were probably being punished for German crimes.

It wasn't until after the war that he became aware of the mechanisms of the massive propaganda machine that had enabled German atrocities to occur, and in this awareness, he underwent a transformation. His repeated attempts to explain his story, the Nazi era, and the painlessness of his and his peers' brainwashing suggested to me that he knew well that with a few twists of fate, it could have been him faced with the unimaginable task of unprovoked mass murder.

For our German-Canadian family, my grandfather's experience erased the possibility of pretending that the processes of indoctrination, control and the perpetration of violence would only succeed in people who were already harbouring some sadistic or evil tendency. We had a repentant eyewitness who spent his youth on the side of the perpetrators, supporting the Nazi war machine, now willing to share cautionary tales

about losing himself in that regime. If my own young grandfather could have believed that there was nothing abnormal about sending innocent Jewish people to work camps, or about creating “concentration camps where opponents to the government, traitors and rebels and spies were taken and treated harshly,” could anyone who had been raised under the same circumstances rationalize these injustices? (Schulze, 1994, p. 42) Was it unavoidable that, as a young man raised in the Nazi era in Germany, he could see nothing wrong with these events? I knew from his wartime stories that he had been rebellious and stubborn, frequently resistant to military policy in occasionally childish and often self-interested ways that included his eventual desertion after tiring of his role as a soldier, and realizing that Germany’s war was lost. But, even at war’s end, he hadn’t abandoned his military role for ideological reasons that might have helped to vindicate him from his youthful Nazi participation. If other German youth were disturbed enough to be motivated to resist, were their circumstances different?

After hearing my grandfather’s account of a youth transformed in memory by these realizations, different questions started to emerge for me, focused on the subjective process of my grandfather’s remembering and storytelling. I started asking questions about trauma, memory, collective guilt and intergenerational internalization. Following in the steps of European students in the late 1960s (Niven, 2006), and later the growing number of public and frequently autobiographical examinations of Germans’ wartime guilt undertaken since the 1980s (Frank, 1991; Gauch, 2002; Moeller, 2006; Verhoeven, 1990, 2006), my research about my grandfather’s past became more active. Without knowing it, and despite being Canadian, I informally joined the German “generation of the grandchildren,” whose personal and temporal distance from the events of the Second World War have allowed a direct confrontation with the horrors of the past (Friedländer, 2000, p. 6). In literature (in Germany called *Enkelliteratur*) and film, this generation has moved away from the accusatory position of their parents’ generation to

a more exploratory, yet still frequently critical, approach to their family histories⁴ (Mueller Dembling, 2011). Many within this “generation of the grandchildren” are attempting to therapeutically lift away defences, yet encounter recurring, serious problematics and tensions: mechanisms of denial, justification and identification (Welzer, 2010), perverse fascination, commercial and artistic exploitation of the subject, and an intergenerational, Freudian “return of the repressed” (Friedländer, 2000, p. 7).

These conflicts and ambiguities are typical aspects of contemporary and post-war German identity, and have, in the case of many children and grandchildren of Nazi-era Germans, prompted research into private and public archives. Searching for documents and records, and undertaking the difficult inquiry into the context of decisions made, one inevitably finds oneself probing into deeper questions of morality and human nature. For those whose families lack a direct and active connection to the crimes of the Holocaust, yet whose families contributed to the Nazi regime, inquiries about complicity and the bureaucratic, daily actions that supported such horrors can drive inquiries into what Hannah Arendt (1994) so famously called “the banality of evil.”

I was around 18 when I started to ask questions about this troubling undercurrent to my grandfather’s stories. I started with the easy ones first, of course. I wanted to know more about when things happened, and where he was, and what he saw. I wanted to hear the “facts” as he remembered them, and as a storyteller, his answers almost always led back to a set of tales he told well, those stories which he remembered in

⁴ The subgenres of *Väterliteratur*, written by children of frequently prominent Nazis includes, among a number of works, *Traces of My Father* by Sigfrid Gauch (2002), Niklas Frank’s *In the Shadow of the Reich* (1991) or Stephane Lebert’s *My Father’s Keeper* (2001) which examines Nazi leaders’ children’s relationships to their fathers. The *Enkelliteratur* subgenre includes few works that have been translated into English; for a summary of (and interpretation of) select examples in German, see Ganeva (2007). Though not in the literature subgenre, similar documentary film examples exploring children’s engagement with these issues include Chanoch Ze’Evi’s *Hitler’s Children* (2012), Claudia von Aleumann’s *War einst en wilder Wassermann* (2000), Malte Ludin’s *2 oder 3 Dinge, die ich von ihm weiß* (2005) and German-Canadian Manfred Becker’s *Fatherland* (2006); Jens Schanze’s *Winterkinder – Die schweigende Generation* (2005) approaches the topic from the perspective of a third-generation descendant. See Mueller Dembling (2011) for an analysis of these films and their approaches to family, memory and generational difference.

detail. Most of these were nearly identical to the written stories in his memoir, and together the coherence of his oral and written stories seemed to close a kind of loop for me. I felt that I could explain things; that I understood what had happened; that there was a completeness to his story; even a narrative arc. The storyteller in me felt a film brewing, as I longed to share the story that had been a part of my life for so long.

In my fourth year of film school, my grandfather's stories inspired my graduation project, which resulted in a short documentary I called *German Lessons* (2003). Travelling to Germany with my grandfather and my teenaged cousin, we explored sites of personal, familial, and eventually political history, ultimately making our way to two memorial sites: the Bad Kreuznach prisoner of war camp where the invading Americans imprisoned my grandfather, and the site of the Buchenwald concentration camp. The project inter-cut various narratives, and the on-screen conflict between the generations was at times humorous and fascinating. How could a German grandfather, standing in these memorial sites, connect with his Canadian granddaughter, staring at the remnants and ruins of his peoples' crimes and suffering? After so much temporal, cultural and representational disconnect, how could she (and I) relate to the images, the explanations, the family history, and finally the sites where these events played out? This tension was the focus of the film.

German Lessons, when it was finished, would publicly perform our ongoing family conversations. But the process of its creation unearthed a lot of unanswered questions its short length could not address. I had started the project thinking that I could simply record and restructure the well-worn stories I had heard for so long; that they would simply be more engaging and interesting to watch when told at the sites of their occurrence. Instead, the process of bringing them back to the sites of their described events started their slow unravelling. My grandfather's lived memory of the camp, the complexity of his experiences in Nazi Germany, the sombre settings and the new stories he shared broke open the coherent and closed stories I had always heard. The memorials we visited represented his clear attempt to provide a connection across the gap between a simplified version of history – understood and, in *German Lessons*, manifested in representations – and his dark, disturbed and powerfully complex living memories. (Nora, 1989) Yet, on the trip, I was so preoccupied with filming and the construction of my film's story that I didn't dig far into this messy territory or attempt to

explore these connections. I followed his lead, remaining focused on documenting the familiar stories I felt I knew well.

In making *German Lessons*, I also ignored the family archive that had helped to draw me in to our stories. The evocative, suggestive and disturbing photographs and films that were contained therein felt potent and volatile – other than in confirming my grandpa’s stories, I didn’t know how to connect them to the neat, contained wartime tales I had always been told. I ended up leaving them out of the film almost entirely, reconstructing the narrative with which I was familiar, weaving in a layer of intergenerational storytelling, and playing with the tensions that arose. I believe now that I was so overwhelmed by the process that it was simply not in my capability to deeply delve into the video material I captured. During the filming, and for months afterwards, I just stuck to the familiar.

Instead, it was a trip to the movies while I was in the process of editing my footage that sparked the first of our most difficult conversations. After our trip to Germany together, but before the film was finished, my cousin and I went to see Roman Polanski’s *The Pianist* (2002). We were profoundly disturbed for reasons we struggled to articulate in the car ride home. We had been given a simple explanation of my grandfather’s role, a seemingly manageable story I was reworking into my own short film, but what we had watched returned us to the core of our family’s traumatic connection to Nazism. Though we had seen WWII documentaries and fictional reconstructions, there was something unflinching and penetrating about the film’s illustration of nightly scenes of neighbourhood terror and murder of Jewish citizens that was new to us. In the midst of our project together, the film left Christine and I wondering yet again how anyone could not have known what was happening.

Clearly, in some ways my grandfather was similarly struggling with these questions. In his explanations to us, both in his memoir and during the filming of *German Lessons*, he admitted his feelings of shock after hearing news about the extermination camps while he was imprisoned, and later in coming to terms with his contribution to the Nazi regime that perpetrated them. In his writing, his description of his conflicting emotions of guilt and innocence were simply stated and easy to understand. But on site, in Germany,

returning to the site of the POW camp where he actually heard the news (and with his grandchildren present) the story felt different, filled with unresolved emotion.

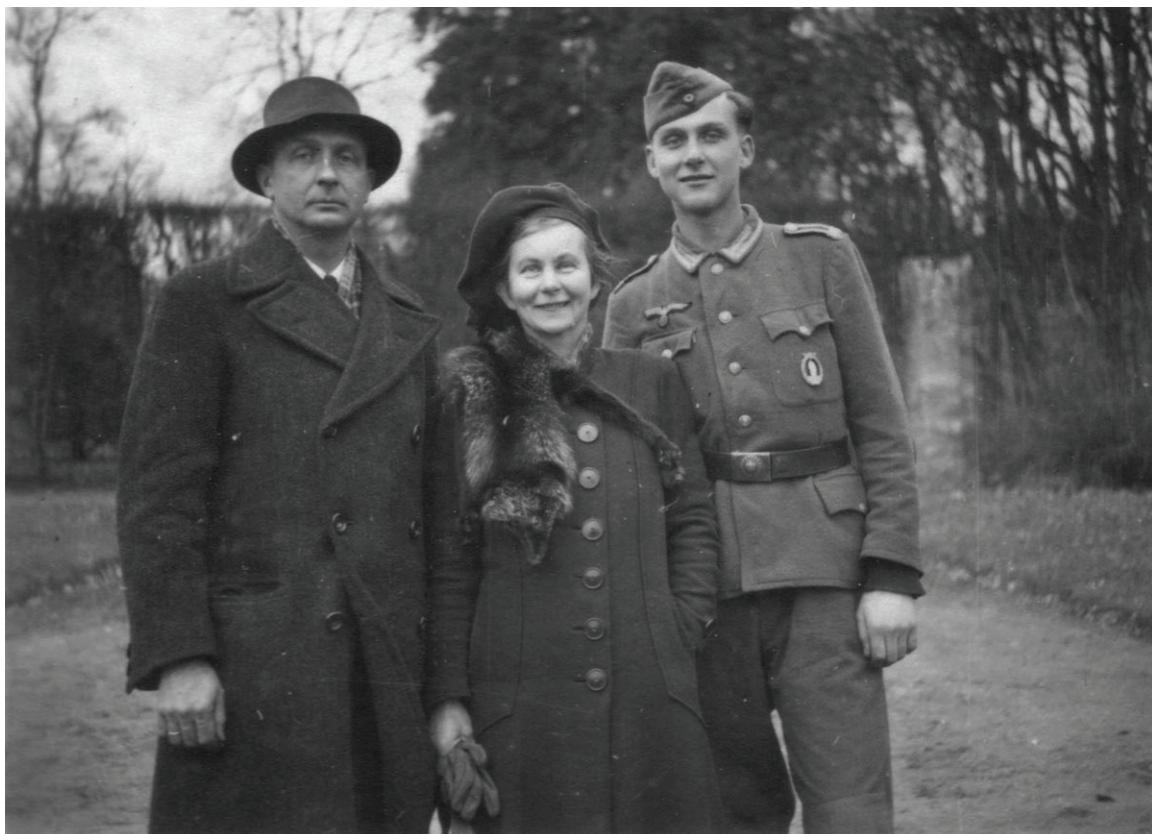


Figure 3: Alfred, Erna & Bernhard Schulze – Weimar, Germany; March, 1945

In editing, I watched this scene play out hundreds of times, remembering how when I filmed it, I was struggling with strange, humming feedback on my wireless microphones. I was distracted by the noise from the gusting wind on the hillside vineyard that now occupies the camp's former site. My equipment was pointed at my grandfather, aimed at capturing every fleeting expression and utterance in the small window of time he allotted for our visit. I didn't even think to connect with him as a granddaughter, completely preoccupied with being a new filmmaker in technically challenging circumstances.

Sitting in the car in Victoria after our unsettling theatre experience, with moments from our trip fresh in our memories, my cousin and I decided to talk to our grandfather again: Christine would ask our tough questions, and I would film the discussion. We didn't want

a big confrontation, loving and feeling loyal to our grandpa, knowing that he was made vulnerable by being on camera, somehow representing not just himself, but also “Germans” in our little dynamic. But nor could we ignore our positions as Canadians and as his grandchildren, trying to understand the stories he had intentionally passed down to us. We felt that the conversation was important, and that his explanations would help us – and maybe even my audience – to try to understand something that *The Pianist* reminded us we simply didn’t.

The footage never made it into the film; the conversation wasn’t all that clear. Just a young teenager during the wartime events we were asking about, my grandfather (then already 78) was sure that he saw little and remembered less, and the footage was impossible to edit into something short enough to work with. I let it drop, finished the film, and moved on into my career.

But for the next few years, after *German Lessons* had been screened at home, at festivals, and later shelved, passive musings and concerns more regularly frequented my thoughts. They have driven my continued work on this topic. Marianne Hirsch’s (2008) concept of postmemory, developed to help describe the experiences of children of Holocaust survivors, can similarly be used to explain the internalized trauma and guilt I seem to be carrying; haunted by photographs and films documenting the Holocaust, Nazi atrocities, German post-war suffering and their connection to my family’s archive, I simply could not unburden myself of our personal connection to this dark history.

During the process of making *German Lessons*, my role and relationship to my grandfather – once simply that of a loving, committed granddaughter – was altered and complicated. The film made visible the generational and cultural rift between us, while simultaneously bringing us closer together. Unintentionally adopting his feelings of guilt, I became inquisitive and demanding, asking not only for total honesty, but – through our documentary – also for a kind of performative penance from us both. I had to balance newly explicit roles – being a Canadian, a researcher and a documentarian constructing a story – with my already complex role as the grandchild of my research subject. The conflicting positions I have had to navigate within these roles are part of dealing with the legacy passed down by my grandfather: a driving need to find a resolution to the feelings

of guilt and trauma he carries from the aftermath of the war and the realization of his complicit guilt in the Holocaust – those I also inherited along with his stories.

I have now moved on to a career in media education, engaging educational communities in critical media literacy while simultaneously continuing my research into Germany's wartime history. Every day I work with students to find patterns and connections in the world around us, as I myself try to sort through the patterns and connections between my family history and complex narratives of German guilt, victimization and survivorship. Every day, my colleagues and I challenge youths' apathy and complacency, trying to engage those who don't acknowledge the sexist, racist and violent media messages they receive. Similarly, I struggle to understand how so many vibrant, educated and cultured Germans, my own grandfather included, could ignore the obvious signs that they were being fed propaganda and lies by their country's dictatorship.

Until very recently, I didn't connect my professional work in media education to my academic and personal research. For all my self-presumed criticality and awareness, I didn't have enough reflexivity to see that I'm trying to achieve the same goals in both areas of my life. I feel that I finally have some clarity in what I'm looking for: a connection between my worldview and another. How can I connect to a mentality I feel I can never share? How can I understand that under different circumstances, I might feel and act the same way as those whose actions and values I despise? Making these connections requires the adoption of the varied roles and positions I have learned throughout this process, navigating trauma and memory as I strive to understand my connection to my German-Canadian legacy.

In tracking the wartime narrative of the materials in the archive, including my grandfather's diary from the wartime era, and the transformation of its stories into his memoir and informal oral history, I find clear connections between our family history and larger discourses of German people's problematic and simultaneous roles as perpetrators, victims and war survivors. The German rhetoric of victimization and survivorship, frequently used to dismiss individual and national guilt in war crimes and crimes against humanity, has in many cases created a mutual exclusion between the post-war categories of "German as Nazi perpetrator" and "German as victim." For Germans in wartime, and those living in Germany immediately post-war, victimization

and survival narratives described Allied attacks and policies (including carpet bombings of cities like Dresden and Bremen, individual rapes and killings, Germanic peoples' expulsion from Eastern countries, and post-war starvation) or even Hitler's ultimately self-imploding regime (at the end of which he viewed his own people as undeserving of survival, having failed him in the war) as the cause of their victim status (Haffner, 1979; Niven, 2006). In the present, Germans' victimization is sometimes explained as a result of campaigns of "guilt immersion" from left-wing and Jewish communities (Niven, 2006, p. 13), though in my grandfather's case, he has never expressed such a sentiment.

He did, however, experience many wartime and post-war collective German traumas: he watched the incendiary bombings of Bremerhaven and Bremen and saw "rows and rows of [civilian] corpses" afterwards; he was imprisoned and starved in an American prisoner of war camp along with tens of thousands of other young German soldiers; later he was shocked and traumatized in realizing that his government had brainwashed him and that the Holocaust had been committed in his name; and for years after the war, he witnessed the intense, lasting impacts of the destruction of his homeland. Many times, he has described how in 1949 he climbed to the top of the Cologne cathedral and saw "only rubble, with lanes snaking through where the rubble had been pushed to the sides" (Schulze, 1994, p. 35). Years later he, my cousin and I travelled back to that site, where he told us about these wartime experiences of helplessness, victimization, suffering and shock that convinced him to become an atheist, and that confused and complicated his own (and our) understanding of collective and individual German guilt.

Of course, it is possible that one can assume multiple roles under these constructed "victim," "perpetrator" and "survivor" categories, and that this multiplicity can be explored to better understand the complexity of Germans' post-war identity; for my grandfather, and for our family, this possibility has been an integral part of coming to terms with our history. The attempt to separate these categories is partially responsible for preventing thorough discussion of simultaneous criminality and victimhood in German public memory (Moeller, 2006).

However, for all those generations of post-war children and grandchildren born outside of Germany, there is relatively little in either scholarly or popular literature that reflects, represents or analyzes their particular struggles. In my case, in my searches for work

describing German-American and German-Canadian narratives after the war, only a small number of books, articles and theses comprise all that I could find on the topic. North American German immigrant histories describe anti-German uprisings in response to each World War (Bassler, 1991; Meune, 2005; Tolzmann, 2000), while personal narratives and oral testimonials (Freund, 1994, 2004, 2006; Hegi, 1997; Paul, 2005) offer more subjective histories: layered descriptions of shame, guilt, victimization, along with tales of survival and integration into frequently hostile communities. Each text describes the challenges faced by German immigrants to North America after the Second World War, while generally avoiding the Germans-as-victims narrative popular in Germany (Freund, 2004).

In this project, I hope to connect and contribute to this sparse area of study, encouraging other German-Canadian families to share their own stories, using cultural production and scholarly work to articulate their connection to broader historiographic and memory processes. Many of us are connected together, trapped as prisoners in war narratives and postmemory processes, and our unpacking of this experience can offer connection, community and a possible relief from the challenges we unconsciously adopt.

I am conscious, however, that this is controversial and difficult work: trying to understand and deconstruct the latent trauma within a family of German heritage, in the face of the enormity of the trauma perpetrated by the wartime German population. Furthermore, my employment of conceptualizations of trauma and memory developed to help Holocaust survivors and their families cope with their pasts – as well as my use of the terms “survivor” and “victim” in relation to a German in the Nazi era – is potentially problematic. In no way is my memory work intended to elide this problematic, nor to diminish the primacy of Nazi victims’ suffering. Rather, in acknowledgment of this inflicted trauma, I am attempting to work through my anguish and inherited guilt owing to my family’s connection to its cause, while simultaneously coming to terms with the consequences of this guilt: the retributive “justice” that occurred at the end of the war, unfortunately meted out against many of the least culpable Germans.

For the purpose of this thesis, I will explore these issues by recounting the wartime and post-war narratives in my own family history, examining how my grandfather and I have engaged with our family legacy in various ways. To deconstruct our multiple and layered

roles, I have chosen one episode in my grandfather's wartime past that best exemplifies our ambiguous positions: the story of his imprisonment in the Bad Kreuznach American prisoner of war camp. There is an inherent tension in his repeated narrating of this experience that is of great relevance to my grandfather's position as a German-Canadian immigrant coming to terms with his own story, and of significance to my dual role as his granddaughter and as a researcher. Using this shifting narrative as a case study, it is this tension that I wish to explore.

Uncovering more, or clearer facts in the archival documentation of these camps is not my focus; qualified historians are better equipped to sort through remaining documentation to create a coherent narrative of the camp's short lifespan. My aim is to explore my and my grandfather's evolving narratives of life in the Bad Kreuznach camp through his wartime diary, his memoir, and his recollections of the camp, recorded on-site during the filming of my documentary. My analyses of these accounts and artefacts will be in the form of a memory project (Hirsch, 2001; Kuhn, 1995), employing the concepts of postmemory (Hirsch, 1997), repressed trauma (Caruth, 1996; Herman, 2001; Laub, 2002) and intersubjective performativity in oral history processes (Abrams, 2010), while borrowing writing techniques from autoethnography (Ellis, 1999, 2009; Poulos, 2009). Rather than asking for more detail about what happened, or why it happened, I will explore how past events are remembered and reconstructed by a German grandfather for his grandchildren in Canada, and how both he and I have navigated the complicated roles that these stories have required of us. I will examine the narratives of identity, guilt and victimization that are created in those collaborative processes.

This is, of course, a sensitive project from which I can make no claims of separation or objectivity. While his diary's audience is unclear, I know that I am among the intended recipients of my grandfather's memoir and that I was the initiator and co-creator of both his informal oral history on film and of this memory project. I am an active participant in his framing of these events; our roles in the creation of his prisoner of war narrative are intertwined, and my analysis aims to uncover the layers of our contributions and reinterpretations of his place in German history.



Figure 4: Bernhard and Fritz Schulze – Flensburg, Germany; January, 1945

What is generally removed from my grandfather's narrations – and what I explore in my attempt to reflexively and therapeutically work through our family history and its affective impact on my life (Ellis, 1999; Hirsch, 2008) – are the traumatic memory processes (Caruth, 1996; Herman, 2001; Laub, 2002) and intersubjective performances (Abrams, 2010) we both carry out. In my desire to understand these processes, I will strive to answer a number of questions in this memory project: How has my grandfather's repeated storytelling constructed a postmemory process for his Canadian grandchild, and what imaginative investments have resulted? What roles do my grandfather and I play in the collaborative construction of his imprisonment story, and what role has his simultaneous sense of guilt and victimization played in developing our resulting identity positions? How have our intersubjective performances revealed the "complex relation between knowing and not knowing" his trauma in his various retellings of his prisoner of war experience? (Caruth, 1996, p. 3) How do my grandfather and I contextualize his story within our German-Canadian identities, and what struggles accompany these

processes? In the forthcoming memory project, I aim to answer these questions, exploring our co-constructed prisoner of war narrative as an intersubjective performance of the multiple roles and traumatic memory processes implicated by our German-Canadian identities.

Traces and Processes of Memory

As I attempt to find the traces of my and my grandfather's memory processes and identity positions over the course of several increasingly interactive retellings of his imprisonment story, I will be employing a number of interconnected concepts in the analysis of these texts. Primarily this is a memory project, but I will be borrowing analytical lenses from the fields of trauma studies and oral history, along with writing techniques from autoethnography, each of which provides a framework from which I can better understand and express how my grandfather and I explore our layered roles within our German-Canadian family history.

The work of memory scholars, specifically those dealing with traumatic memory, will contribute most significantly to my analytical approach. Scholars have developed theories examining memory and representation in family history (Hirsch, 1997; Kuhn, 1995), and the role of trauma in the construction and interpretation of personal narratives (Caruth, 1996; Herman, 2001; Laub, 2002), and my research will apply these theories to my grandfather's memory processes surrounding his time in the Bad Kreuznach prisoner of war camp. The subjective and constructive processes of memory examine what we forget and what we remember, asking how and why this occurs while engaging with the processes and implications of memory processes. My focus is on the role of trauma in remembering and in the construction of narrative, as I see clear connections between these ideas and the how and why of my and my grandfather's collaborative storytelling.

As the theoretical approaches employed in these fields are broad and varied, I will narrow my focus to several key concepts that will be instrumental in my research. Marianne Hirsch's (2008) concept of postmemory, which I use in the development of my method, specifically explores the intergenerational transmission of traumatic memory that I wish to examine; the "relationship that the generation after those who witnessed

cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experiences that they ‘remember’ only by means of the stories, images, and behaviours among which they grew up....” (p. 106). Originally used as a concept to explain the experiences of children of Holocaust survivors, Hirsch (2001) asserts that postmemory work “defines the familial inheritance and transmission of cultural trauma [among] the children of victims, survivors, witnesses, or perpetrators....” (p. 9). Recently, German scholars Stefanie Harris and Caroline Schaumann have applied the concept of postmemory to the third generation of grandchildren of Nazi-era Germans (Ganeva, 2007). As will be explained in the following chapter, post-war children and grandchildren of German descent frequently grow up with varied types of trauma, carrying connections to their parents’ and grandparents’ guilt, shame, sense of victimization, or denial.

Equally relevant is Annette Kuhn’s approach to unpacking family relationships through memory work, specifically in situating artefacts in the context of their production and reception. Like her, I aim to “unravel the connections between memory, its traces, and the stories we tell about the past, especially... about the past of living memory” (Kuhn, 1995, p. 3). In *Family Secrets* (1995) she outlines a method she employs in the analysis of family photographs and their associated narratives, from which I will borrow: starting by describing her photographs’ subjects (including herself in the third person), she uses imaginative projection to connect the present self to the self/others in the picture, evoking emotions. Following this process, Kuhn connects the picture to its various contexts: photographic production, both social and technical, and its intended audience and currency within these past – and present – contexts. This method offers strategies specific to photographs, but many of the similar concerns are present in my own textual examinations of written and video artefacts.

In my analysis of written and video materials from my family archive that present the various iterations of my grandfather’s experience in the Bad Kreuznach American Prisoner of War camp. Thus, incorporating techniques from both Hirsch and Kuhn, my method will be as follows, aiming to engage with the issues of intergenerational traumatic memory, and associated performativity and intersubjectivity, and the shifting roles required of those undertaking such memory work:

1. I will begin by articulating my imaginative investment in my grandfather's artefacts, and their associated stories. My aim here is to use descriptive and evocative writing to express the problematics inherent in intergenerational traumatic memory inheritance, as articulated by Hirsch (2001): displacement, vicariousness, belatedness and mediatedness through "representation, projection, and creation." (p. 9)
2. Next, with each story's retelling, I will delineate my identity positions (granddaughter, filmmaker, Canadian and researcher) and each of the grandfathers present in the data sources I am analyzing (the cadet, the soldier, the prisoner of war, the post-war German, my grandfather the German-Canadian storyteller, and my grandfather the documentary film subject) as they are manifested across the gaps of time, space, generational disconnect and mediated memory processes.
3. Furthermore, I aim to explore the intersubjective performances in each retelling: for whom are we telling these stories, and what understandings do we hope they will take from the experience?
4. Finally, I will explore both my and my grandfather's contextualizations of his imprisonment story within our German-Canadian identity, reflexively analyzing both of our contextualization processes. I will seek to explore why we each choose the contexts, justifications, and explanations we do, and how this serves us in our various identity positions.

Also amongst these stories and analysis will be anecdotes and photographs largely disconnected from the imprisonment story, added for illustrative and comparative purposes. By adding these stories and images, I hope to provide a reflective pause in the narrative, in which the reader is invited to find their own interpretations, connections to and understanding of our family story. These stories and images are also strategically placed to provide a narrative widening of sorts. Every family story is surrounded by a myriad of other stories and images; by providing a sprinkling of these Schulze family stories and photographs, I hope to better reflect the experience of our family life, and the poignant, traumatic stories and pictures that were the backdrop to my upbringing.

In this project, my grandfather and I will inevitably share the role of storyteller; at times, I will provide the analytical material, while at other times, his or my experiences will stand alone, inviting the reader to experience stories without my analysis or assessment. In constructing and layering my memory work in this way, I am borrowing writing techniques from two fields within autoethnography: analytical autoethnographic practice, which aims to connect personal narrative to larger culture events and theories, and evocative autoethnography, which uses storytelling and descriptive language to evoke feelings and create meaning. My intention is to oscillate between these two approaches throughout the memory project; I aim to provide some reflexive analysis, but also to allow readers to “experience the particularity of my experience through my story... without the scaffolding of detachment that frames most qualitative work, including autoethnography....” (Ellington & Ellis, 2008, p. 453).

Undertaking this memory work, at times I am deep within reflexive analysis when my mind, or the images I see, rapidly pulls me back to the profound emotional roots, and even the larger, horrific historical context in which my personal work is situated. Following in the tradition of autoethnographer Carolyn Ellis, I “refuse to reify the opposition of objectivity and subjectivity” (Ellington & Ellis, 2008, p. 453). My background in filmmaking and film analysis has deeply embedded in me a sense of the inherently constructed nature of all media, and it is my intention to use this oscillation (from reflexive analysis to evocative descriptions and images) as a means to experientially recreate the tension I feel in creating this project.

In addition to my attempts to represent this tension in writing, the addition of unanalyzed photographs and images is intended to reinforce this tension and disconnect. As Hirsch (2008) argues, “photography’s promise to offer an access to the event itself, and its easy assumption of iconic and symbolic power, makes it a uniquely powerful medium for the transmission of events that remain unimaginable. And, of course, the photographic meaning of *generation* captures something of the sequencing and the loss of sharpness and focus inherent in postmemory” (pp. 107-8, original emphasis). In choosing the photographs within this thesis, I include those images that capture this tension, offering fragments of the past that offer a symbolic connection to trauma, but that (frequently literally) do not offer focus or clarity within the image. This lack of transparency is both in the subjects presented, and also in my frequent lack of knowledge about the context of

their creation. With each photograph, scanned from their glued-on spots in the black, frayed pages of my grandfather's photo albums, I have to enlarge the often-tiny images to see detail, and to ask him to explain what he remembers about each one. Family and personal photographs taken by my great-grandfather Alfred and my grandfather, these images never offer a direct glimpse at the trauma and horrors of the war; rather, in their indirect nature, and in needing research and mediation to contextualize them accurately outside of the albums itself, they reinforce the unfocused and mediated nature of postmemory. The disconnect between them and my family stories – I usually had to ask to see the photographs, normally kept safe and not used to connect my grandpa's stories with accompanying images – is also an influential and fragmented part of my memory process, one which I aim to represent by including them without analysis.



Figure 5: *Bernhard and Fritz Schulze in Nazi "Kinderschar" (kids' group) uniforms – Halle, Germany; February, 1935*

In this process I actively resist and reject narratives that present a closed, coherent loop; by adding stories and unanalyzed text and images, I am attempting to reopen my

families neatly presented stories, creating narratives in loose strands that better represent my own postmemory narratives' fragmented and mediated nature. Furthermore, while my analysis is important to my own memory work, and hopefully to broader work within the various fields in which I aim to situate my writing, there are valuable insights that I will not be able to find, and by using this approach, I hope that others may find these moments of discovery in the space created by absences of commentary.

As in the case of autoethnographic projects, my memory work is a kind of therapeutic undertaking (Ellis, 1999, p. 677). Though I suspect I will always be haunted by the postmemory relationship to my grandfather's experience, connecting his stories to the disturbing images of the Holocaust and the war's horrors, my aim is to continue to learn and better understand our roles by attempting to articulate the processes that have occurred between us for the past two decades. Though this is a memory project, this work also connects to autoethnography in the examination of the notions of voice and shifting/multiple identities in situations of cultural displacement (Reed-Danahay, 1997). Exploring these practices in my (post)memory analysis, I am attempting to be as reflexive as possible: to practice what Woolgar (1988) calls "radical constitutive reflexivity" in examining how my understandings and knowledge have been constructed through my memory processes. I aim to acknowledge not only the inevitable and obvious influence I have on my research findings, but also attempt to more subtly balance and delineate the multiple roles adopted by myself and my grandfather within the research process (Davies, 2008).

Using this method, my textual analysis will explore the ways that trauma influences memory processes and the sharing of painful stories from one's past. In analyzing my connection to these events, the research of Dori Laub (1992), Judith Herman (2001) and Cathy Caruth (1996) is particularly relevant to my work. As Caruth (1996) explains, the truth of a traumatic wound "is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor" (p. 4). For my grandfather, sharing his post-war trauma in silences, behaviours and actions, and in the regular retelling of his wartime and post-war stories – most profoundly manifested in sharing his post-war realization that the purportedly righteous and powerful Nazi regime of his youth

was instead both evil and fallible – has functioned to reveal what I suggest is a traumatic memory process. Each time he tells his story, he engages in a traumatic retelling, and in an intersubjective performance that creates “narrative constructions of memories of experiences actively created for [his] audience” (Abrams, 2010, p. 59); witnessing these changing performances over time has also made visible (but not yet clear) a number of traumatic memory processes at work in my and my grandfather’s ongoing discussions and intersubjective constructions of his imprisonment narrative.

Applying these concepts to my family stories, I aim to draw connections among my grandfather’s archival texts, tracing how traumatic memories change over time, across generations and between cultures. I will also connect my grandfather’s memory processes and my own understanding of the events through which he lived. Together, I hope that these analyses will offer insights into my research questions.

I will also incorporate oral history theory, specifically employing the concept of intersubjective performativity as an analytical tool, which in a memory project such as this plays a significant role in the analysis of mutual meaning creation. While intersubjectivity describes the interaction and influence of the subjectivity of the interviewer and interviewee, performance is also at play in oral history interviews, as the narrative being performed cannot be separated from its form (the performance itself) (Abrams, 2010, pp. 58 & 130). Abrams (2010) describes the interplay between these concepts, present in every interview, as

a three-way dialogue: the respondent with him or herself, between the interviewer and the respondent and between the respondent and cultural discourses of the present and the past. This means that individual memory stories are shaped (not determined) by the intersubjective relationships present in the interview and that what we as researchers hear are narrative constructions of memories of experiences actively created for an audience. (p. 59)

Acknowledging these relationships, exploring their roles in intersubjective performance, and identifying the linguistic process of articulating and structuring memory are key concerns in oral history methodology; these frameworks will thus be applied to my analysis of the third component of my research data: the on-site interviews and documentation of our visit to the Bad Kreuznach memorial cemetery and POW camp site in 2002.

(Post)memory Texts

Though I will include a number of different photographs and stories in my family's multimedia archive – those that offer illustrations of points I wish to make, or those that provide a similar or comparable narrative or evocative feeling that enriches the stories I am analyzing – for the purposes of this research, I will primarily be exploring three primary texts that document my grandfather's stories about his time in the camp.⁵ The first, a diary containing entries from December 31, 1944 to May 16, 1946⁶, will be excerpted to include those dates during which my grandfather was imprisoned by the American military after deserting from the German army. I first learned about this diary when I was planning my documentary; my grandfather brought it with him on our visit to Germany in the summer of 2002. As he walked through the Bad Kreuznach prisoner of war memorial cemetery, he paused to translate and read short sections to me as I stood documenting him from behind the camera.⁷ Though the original diary deteriorated rapidly after the war, my grandfather made a hand-written copy in the early 1950s that, though faded, is still legible. Its fragile pages are barely intact, having survived across great distance and through five decades of decay.

As the diary's contents are in German, a language in which I am not fluent, I asked my grandfather to translate those entries related to his capture and imprisonment for the purposes of this project. The first translated entry is from Friday, April 13, 1945, sharing the brief story of his capture; the last is from June 26 of the same year, when my grandfather and his friend jumped off their transport train to head home, unknowingly

⁵ Though conversations about this topic, and more broadly about the Schulze family history, have been ongoing since my early childhood, as per Simon Fraser University's Office of Research Ethics permissions and releases have been formally secured from Bernhard Schulze and Christine Marwan as of May, 2012, whose images are within the texts being analyzed.

⁶ Entries after May 17, 1946 follow in the diary, but are undated and contain clippings of poetry, writing and various comments from unknown periods. While likely worthy of future analysis and exploration, all entries other than those written during my grandfather's capture and captivity are excluded in their entirety.

⁷ See Appendix C, p. 154.

evading months more time in captivity as the rest of their transport group was handed over to the French for forced labour. The daily entries are short and often cursory, providing no more than 5 or 6 lines, and in many cases only 2 or 3. Though terse, the writing documents my grandfather's select description of the experiences of capture and of the camp, which are further expanded upon in the subsequent retellings that make up the rest of this project's texts. There are also a few small drawings made in the corners of the pages, one torn from the original diary and pasted into the copy that we now have in the archive.⁸ The excerpted translations are included in full in Appendix A, along with his added comments, included in brackets and in italics.

My grandfather's memoir is the source of the second text. Part 1 was written in 1992, just after his 67th birthday, and given to his grandchildren that same year, when I was 13. He wrote it in English, starting the family narrative by sharing information about both his maternal and paternal grandparents, and the parents of his wife, Jutta. Though references to the war occur throughout, the detailed account of World War II and the Bad Kreuznach camp experiences are described in the second part of his memoir, written in 1994 to expand upon the first section, this latter one better sharing the details of his own life. From the account of his desertion and capture, to his discharge from the camp and train ride home, four of the twenty-nine pages of the document outline his short time in American captivity. There is a storyteller at work in these pages; humour, sadness, and reflections are shared alongside the memories of the camp. These writings are highly personal, but also repeatedly connect my grandfather's individual story to broader national narratives commonly shared about the war. The four pages I am analyzing are included, unedited, in Appendix B.

In response to the issues presented in this memoir, my first documentary, *German Lessons*, brought my grandfather to an American war cemetery in the Netherlands, to the site of the original Bad Kreuznach POW camp, and to its nearby memorial cemetery in August, 2002. In each site we filmed an on-site visit and unstructured interview about his experiences of capture and his time in the camp; always nearby was my cousin

⁸ Figure 10, p. 108, this document.

Christine, who represented our “generation of the grandchildren” on-screen. Preferring to remain unobtrusive and to allow his memories to surface either in response to his surroundings or through my cousin’s inquiries, my filming approach was largely unobtrusive and collaborative, asking questions only to gently guide the process of my grandfather’s storytelling. During the filming, I found it necessary to abandon my tripod and many of my normal filming techniques owing to my grandfather’s near-constant movement, walking and overall impatience during my set-ups. Partly owing to this informal filming approach, the footage we gathered offers my grandfather’s in-the-moment reflections and stories with candour and spontaneity, traits which are highly valuable to my research. The resulting co-produced narrative on video contains anecdotes and reflections of a significantly different nature than those found in the other two texts. My grandfather frequently appears sad or serious, sharing traumatic stories and responding directly to my questions about guilt, brainwashing and his understanding of Nazi mass murders. It is a significant change in tone from the diary and the memoir, noteworthy as it is also the only text in which his grandchildren are directly involved in the choice of the content shared. Though I will be excerpting and typing very short transcripts and descriptions from this video footage for the purposes of this written project, the raw footage⁹ from these sites is found in DVD form, labelled Appendix C.

It is worth noting that the selection of this video material – which, I argue, is an informal oral history – required specific consideration. Rather than conducting new, more comprehensive interviews in the relative calm of my grandfather’s home, I have decided to re-examine the informal, on-site stories I gathered for a number of reasons. First and foremost, there are unrepeatable elements found within this material that cannot be underestimated in their value as oral history documents: the power of recollection enhanced by returning to the site of lived memories, the relaxed and invitational nature of the interviews and filming, the inclusion of stories outside of his usual narrative, and

⁹ Very minor editing choices were made, only to remove sections of footage that precede the capture and imprisonment narrative, and those that do not contain my grandfather but were used to capture “ambient” sounds. I also completed a basic sound mix to increase or decrease vocal volume levels for audibility. Otherwise, the footage remains as it was filmed.

perhaps most importantly, the previous (but now fading) communicative capability of my now near-deaf and far more aged grandfather. The footage also retains many of the contexts, pauses and entire stories removed when I created *German Lessons*, for which a time limit and specific, imagined audience restricted and mediated my decision-making. For these reasons, the existing, raw documentary footage has been chosen to accompany the diary and memoir excerpts, as it best highlights the intersubjectivity in our shared storytelling that I wish to examine.

Furthermore, though I will be analyzing selections from within the various imprisonment stories found within my chosen texts, there is a wealth of material found within each text with which this limited project will not be able to engage. I have chosen to present and analyze quotes and moments that best illustrate the concepts I am exploring, yet of course there are many other possible selections that could be used to undertake this memory work – far more than this current project will permit. I look forward to delving into those components in the future, continuing the work I begin here.

I would also like to briefly explain my reasons for excluding other secondary data for this project. First and foremost, my memory work is connected to numerous fields of study that, in the context of this short memory project, are impossible to thoroughly explore. My work is an intentionally limited memory project to enable a deep engagement with a few problematics, tensions and issues at play in my family history. As a result, though I will reference and contextualize my memory work in the fields of oral history, trauma studies, and post-war discourses of German guilt, my primary aim in this thesis is to engage in family-based memory work to contribute to an area of study – German-Canadian post-war studies – that I feel is notably sparse.

Historical records are thus not included among this project's texts. American and German military records, including documents, photographs, film evidence and statistics exist to provide a formal, military counterpoint to the personal narrative which I have

been given¹⁰, but they would not have assisted me in better understanding my grandfather's self-interpreted wartime role, for which I have ample primary source documentation. For this reason, they have been excluded. I can verify that in reading extensively about the era, the details my grandfather remembers and recounts seem to fit into all the historical accounts of the camps that I have researched, especially with the last few decades' slow and hesitant incorporation of German perspectives and Allied-critical discourses.¹¹ In this way, I have attempted to verify the overall factual reliability of his accounts, and am completely satisfied with the results; this assuredness in the overall accuracy of his account enables me to move forward in the analysis of more subjective and subtle memory processes.

A significant number of online sources also provide photographic, filmic and written accounts that share stories similar to my grandfather's, provided by individuals and groups who share a similar desire to document stories that will otherwise soon disappear. However, though I contextualize my family narrative within broader post-war German discourses of guilt and victimization, this memory project is not a comparison of various families' and individuals' narratives, nor is it an analytic comparison of German diaspora and German post-war generations, and for this primary reason these texts have been excluded from this study. Furthermore, among materials shared by family members and informal historians like myself are documents and texts used by groups and individuals to support narratives of German victimization, at times using them as evidence and justification for a refusal to take responsibility for the Holocaust, and in some cases supporting Holocaust denial and neo-Nazi ideological propaganda. As my

¹⁰ See, for example, Stanhope Bayne Jones, M.D.'s (1969) chapter "Enemy Prisoners of War," published by the Office of the Surgeon General in *Preventive Medicine in World War II, Volume IX: Special Fields*. This chapter outlines many US Army medical challenges that played out in the Prisoner of War Temporary Enclosures in (sequentially) Africa, Italy and Germany.

¹¹ There are a number of factors in his story that have been easy to verify: the timeframe of his diary's narrative of imprisonment aligns with the short-term existence of the Bad Kreuznach camp (Bacque, 1989; Bayne Jones, 1969; MacKenzie, 1992); the general description of camp structure, prisoner hunger, lack of housing and sanitation; and the number of prisoners also aligns with historical books and articles referencing records of the period (Bayne Jones, 1969; Collingham, 2012; Judt, 2005; MacDonogh, 2007; MacKenzie, 1992).

German language skills are of such poor quality that I cannot determine the validity, reliability or motivation behind the more subtle and nuanced of these sites, and as they do not contribute directly to my research questions, I made the decision to omit their presence entirely from my references and project.

Finally, within my grandfather's personal archive, a number of other stories and materials also contribute indirectly to the context of the Bad Kreuznach captivity; some of these have been included in the memory work I am undertaking for illustrative or comparative purposes, however, I have chosen to focus primarily on analyzing the content directly connected to this time frame, as I believe that this will be the most effective way to examine the changes in these specific events' recollection in a deep and meaningful way. Although archival photographs will appear within my writing for illustrative or reflective purposes, there are none that were captured by or of my grandfather during his time in the camp, and as such, I will not be analyzing photographs as a part of this memory project. Reflections will be made about my grandfather's appearance in the few military-phase but pre-camp photos we do have, used as texts to contextualize and provide a connection to the stories that comprise the focus of my research.

I also made the decision to create this document independent of my grandfather's present-time reflections on my framing and analysis of these issues. Though this was a difficult choice, I felt it was a crucial one. In consideration of his health problems, his extensive and previously provided oral history, and the potentially traumatic nature of my research at such a late phase in his life, I drew a proverbial line. Put simply, I have enough material to complete my research. My grandfather has taken personal and emotional risks in engaging in this memory work with me over the past decade, and I am grateful to him for sharing all that he has with such honesty, humour, humility and eloquence.

Together, the three primary information sources that comprise my texts are rich, varied in content and tone, and provide me with ample material in exploring my research questions. Because of the obvious overlaps and connections among these diverse concepts and fields, I have chosen to structure this memory project by presenting the events in the chronological order of the imprisonment and camp experience, applying

each concept as it appears most relevant. Reflections and thoughts will move forward and backward through time, oscillating in and out of the evocative and analytical, but ultimately will connect my present reflections and contextual family stories with my grandfather's past recollections in an attempt to connect the reader with my experiences and understandings (Ellis, 1999). In applying the theoretical lenses of intersubjective performance, postmemory and traumatic memory recall to each successive event, I will explore how each is relevant to my grandfather's historical accounts, shared and co-created by us differently across the decades.

In the chapters that follow, I will begin by presenting some historical context to my grandfather's story. In Chapter 2, I include a necessarily brief overview of the German post-war engagement with guilt found in three specific areas related to my family story: I will summarize the discourse surrounding the Allied military prisoner of war camps set up to house German military prisoners; I aim to provide a brief engagement with the wide-ranging post-war responses to the legacy of Nazi guilt and the survivor and victim narratives that are still prevalent among the German people; and I will also explore a variant of this response, as found in the sparse but illuminating literature that documents German-Canadian and German-American post-war immigrant experiences. Chapter 3 provides a brief review of the relevant concepts and techniques I employ from each of memory and trauma studies, oral history and autoethnography; following this are my memory project, analyzing the diary, memoirs and co-produced oral history video of his capture and imprisonment story in Chapter 4, and my Concluding Reflections, found in Chapter 5.

Weaving together the story of my relationship to my grandfather and our collaborative connection to his past, my aim is to create a narrative account that, in its depth, honesty and vulnerability, potentially provides insights that others can glean. My grandfather and I have together sought to understand the horrors through which he lived using story, discussion and research; this project is an examination of that attempt, using the Bad Kreuznach prisoner of war experience as case study to proceed further in-depth with my analysis.

Though this particular memory project is the expression of significant reflexive analysis, it is important that I acknowledge it as part of the ongoing memory work that will continue

throughout my lifetime. Haunted by traumatic stories that precede yet echo through my generation, I am using the tools I have acquired as a researcher, filmmaker and member of a German-Canadian family to continue in my efforts to come to terms with my role in my own family's complicated history. I sincerely hope that my readers will join me in imagining and vicariously experiencing these stories, seeking a connection to my family narrative through their own perspective, using different ways of looking, reading and reflecting to offer insights of their own.

Chapter 2.

Post-war German Guilt: At Home and Abroad

German Guilt, Victimhood and the “Survivor” Narrative

In the final days of the Second World War in Europe, as the Allied military, invading Germany and Poland, uncovered the evidence of Nazi crimes, any lingering doubts as to the magnitude of German guilt were eliminated. The Allied forces were liberating some of the most notorious Nazi concentration camps in the early months of 1945, while outside German towns and cities, small forced labour camps were also being dismantled, their ubiquitous but quiet existence even now a closely guarded secret (Rosmus, 2004). For those living outside of Nazi control, the discovery of concentration camps and wartime atrocities provided incontrovertible evidence of the horror of the Nazi regime.

In the midst of these findings, and during the collapse of Nazi Germany's infrastructure, Allied forces were attacking German cities and towns in their drive to end the war, invading Germany from both the East and West. Hundreds of thousands of German troops surrendered or were encircled, captured and imprisoned by the invading forces. Ultimately ending up with millions of prisoners suddenly in their charge, a number of solutions surfaced for how to deal with the members of Nazi Germany's collapsing military forces (Bayne Jones, 1969). Thousands of German prisoners were shipped out of Germany and put to work in forced labour camps in France and Russia (Snyder, 2010). In some cases, out of necessity, liberated concentration camps were used to house German prisoners of war (MacDonogh, 2007; Margalit, 2010). In Germany, primarily along the Rhine River, the Americans hastily erected seventeen barbed wire enclosures to house the hundreds of thousands of German soldiers who were now their prisoners of war; their vast numbers led to “ghastly realities” as sanitation, food

distribution and infrastructural inadequacies become rapidly apparent (Bayne Jones, 1969, p. 375). In April, 1945, my grandfather joined one of the largest of these enclosures, at Bad Kreuznach, sometimes referred to as “Gallows Hill,” (MacDonogh, 2007) where he and tens of thousands of other soldiers were imprisoned in open hillside fields as the European war came to an abrupt end with the unconditional surrender of the armed forces of Nazi Germany.

The documentation and representation of these particular camps, alternately called Rheinweisenlager (or Rhine Meadow Camps) or PWTE (Prisoner of War Temporary Enclosures), are examples of the problematic history of the period: the resulting death tolls were poorly documented and are still debated, and the level of German soldiers' mistreatment by Allied troops is contested (MacDonogh, 2007). Canadian author James Bacque, in writing the controversial *Other Losses* (1989), was one of the first North American writers to attempt to document the history of the camps and reconcile German eyewitness accounts with American military statements. Making staggering claims of hundreds of thousands of German prisoner of war deaths hidden by Allied military records under the category “Other Losses,” he boldly asserted that these losses were caused by intentional and strategic American policy decisions made by Allied Supreme Commander in Europe (and future US President) Dwight Eisenhower.

However, in contextualizing the camps within the infrastructural collapse of European industry and food production, along with desperate food shortages throughout Europe, it is clear that the issues of starvation, poor sanitation, lack of infrastructure and supply transportation were widespread (Bayne Jones, 1969; Collingham, 2012). In spite of whatever political or individual motivations may have existed to punish German soldiers for Nazi crimes, there is little evidence to support Bacque's claims of the American military's intentional killing of German prisoners. Many scholars, for this reason among others, largely rejected the book; Bacque's very public criticism by a number of

historians, most notably by Eisenhower scholar Stephen E. Ambrose, in many cases resulted in a wholesale dismissal of his findings.¹²

Yet there were historians and reviewers who, even in accepting that Bacque's statistical findings were largely inaccurate, were nevertheless troubled by records and eyewitness accounts (both from German prisoners and American soldiers stationed at the camps) describing extensive mistreatment, deliberate starvation and exposure (MacDonogh, 2007). Many of these reports appeared in newspaper editorial columns following the controversy, attesting to the truth of Bacque's claims; while some did not agree with his number of estimated deaths (up to one million), many agreed that the numbers were higher than those claimed by US sources (MacKenzie, 1992). US Military documents reviewing the camps suggest that poor conditions were at least partly due to a lack of planning and foresight rather than inevitability; even after similar camps in Tunisia and Italy experienced issues of overcrowding, exposure to the elements, poor sanitary conditions and problems with food supply, advancing forces used near-identical protocol in creating the Rhine Meadow PWTE (Bayne Jones, 1969). German prisoners' reclassification from "Prisoners of War" (requiring adherence to the Geneva Convention) to "Disarmed Enemy Forces" (a newly created category) by American forces allowed the contravention of the Geneva Convention and all the humane treatment it was intended to require. The International Committee for the Red Cross claims that "on the victorious side, public opinion held that the Germans were only getting what they deserved, and the ICRC found itself virtually alone in interceding on their behalf" (2010).

My grandfather's accounts coincide with these general descriptions; he shares stories of harsh conditions and starvation in the prisoner of war camp at Bad Kreuznach, and remembers American soldiers shooting randomly into the camp, striking unarmed POWs. His stories lack self-pity, yet in the context of the camps, position him as a survivor of this collective hardship. When he shares his reflections in retrospect, he believes that the discoveries of the Nazi concentration and extermination camps made

¹² See MacKenzie (1992) for a summary of the debates and controversy surrounding Bacque's *Other Losses* (1989).

the suffering of German prisoners of war seem like inevitable retribution. In the total chaos of the regime's collapse, starvation and death were happening all across Europe; even those highly critical of Bacque's claims acknowledge that German prisoners of war were lowest on the list of priorities for food distribution, suffering greatly as a result (MacKenzie, 1992).

There are also disturbing and horrifying tales of intentionally victimized Germanic peoples across Eastern Europe in the final days of the war that connect German POW stories to larger narratives of German victimhood; together, they have contributed to the "survivor narrative" so common in post-war Germany (Jarausch, 2001). The repeated rape of hundreds of thousands of women (Lilly, 2007; Judt, 2005, MacDonogh, 2007; Neary and Schneider-Ricks, 2002), the re-use of the Nazi concentration camps by military forces and local populations to imprison, torture and kill German civilians (MacDonogh, 2007), Russian slave labour of German prisoners of war into the mid-1950s (Snyder, 2010), and mass forced migrations of Germanic peoples. These migrations, in the midst of infrastructural collapse, resulted in many deaths, the debated estimates ranging from 400,000 to over 2 million (Judt, 2005; Snyder, 2010). Many accounts describe a chaotic, violent anti-German uprising – largely against those who remained in the territories being invaded by Allied forces: women, children and the elderly – that in ways attempted to match Nazi brutality. Yet, until very recently, among the vast quantities of writing about the Second World War, there were few English articles or books to be found on these topics.

This is likely because outside of Germany, the mention of German victimhood is immediately problematic when contextualized with Nazi and German crimes. Beyond the issue of Nazi participation by Germany's leadership is an ongoing, controversial and problematic question of the active role taken by the average individual and the common soldier during the war that is brought to mind when individuals reference their own post-war hardships. In *The Trauma of Perpetrators*, Bernhard Giesen (2004) outlines a common response to this sense of collective, yet individual guilt:

All those who had devoted years of their lives to a movement whose members had to consider themselves as collaborators in a mass murder could not repair their ruined moral identity, even if they had been ready to confess their guilt... The trauma is insurmountable. As a moral subject the person is dead. He or she can only remain mute, look away, turn to

other issues and hope that nobody will ask the wrong questions. A tacitly assumed coalition of silence provided the first national identity after the war. Everyone assumed that the others, too, had supported the Nazi regime and would therefore agree to be silent about their common shame.

(p. 121)

In the face of collective German shame, the Nuremberg trials, the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, and the prosecution of Auschwitz personnel in 1963 also allowed many German people to assuage or deny their guilt through the symbolic prosecution of a select group of extremists and genocidal bureaucrats (Deák, 2000; Mueller Dembling, 2011; Moeller, 2006).

However, explorations of guilt, many connected to Nazi Germany, have attempted to unpack this response in the decades following these trials. Mechanisms of justification, and the human tendency to shift responsibility away from oneself, have been extensively documented in psychological circles. The so-called “Bystander Effect” has been repeatedly examined in our collective attempts to understand why so few individuals aid another person in need, even in life-threatening or emergency situations.¹³ Studies and surveys of post-war German populations¹⁴ and psychological experiments first undertaken in the 1960s – and recreated repeatedly in the following decades – have consistently illustrated the coercive power of authority, and the tendency of otherwise

¹³ The “Bystander Effect” was first given this name after the 1968 murder of Kitty Genovese, in which many witnesses were reported to have failed to intervene in her attack (Darley & Latané, 1968). Now a part of many elementary psychology courses and texts, the effect has been examined formally in many studies, first undertaken in close chronological proximity to the murder and on an ongoing basis up until the present day. While later examinations of the Genovese murder have disproved the original story of blatant inaction that led to the name “bystander effect,” the phenomenon is well-documented and has been more recently explored by researchers to uncover more nuanced understandings of the behaviour (Fischer et al., 2011).

¹⁴ Surveys were undertaken by Allied forces during the Denazification program, along with the German government. See Chapter 1 of *Guilt, Suffering and Memory: Germany Remembers Its Dead of World War II* (Margalit, 2010) for a summary of German survey responses to guilt immediately following the war.

non-violent individuals to behave cruelly when put in positions of power.¹⁵ In order to commit atrocities – or in the process of committing them – the self can transform into something different; “a new self takes shape, and the extraordinarily evil acts become part of that self” (Waller, 2007, p. 139).

Historical case studies have illustrated this phenomenon by researching the specific backgrounds of Nazi perpetrators, and the methods of influence that were used to transform “ordinary men” into mass murderers; Christopher Browning’s (2001) famous study of the Reserve Police Battalion 101 and their role in the *Einsatzgruppen* slaughters in Poland suggests that though certainly not inevitable, conformity, submission to authority and obedience to policy and nation hold great sway over the decisions made by individuals in high-pressure situations. By developing a careful cultural construction of worldview that perpetrators share, a psychological construction of the “other” to objectify victims, and a social construction of cruelty through group identification and the provision of coping strategies, one can transform otherwise “ordinary people” into genocidal killers (Waller, 2007).

Though many Germans largely ignored their own responsibility in the first decades following the war (Moeller, 2006; Niven, 2006; Judt, 2005) – many preferring to condemn Allied re-education practices, de-nazification policies and assertions of collective guilt (Fisher, 2007c; Olick, 2005) – there were scholars, religious figures and writers in the decades following the war who publicly articulated other Germans’ attempts to understand the horrors committed and supported by “normal” Germans, and the ways in which individuals were to be held to account for their country’s actions. Immediately

¹⁵ I am referring to: the Milgram experiment and its replications, studying obedience to authority and in later variations, the impact of conformity in group perpetrator situations; the controversial Stanford prison experiment, and; The Third Wave classroom experiment in 1967, in which Palo Alto, California students at Cubberly High School were swept up in a mock neo-fascist movement covertly created by their teacher to illustrate the coercive power of fascist ideology and recruitment methodology, called “Third Wave” based on the common belief that the third of a series of ocean waves is the largest and most powerful. Two recent films provide accounts of this story, including the fictional *Die Welle* (2008), directed by Dennis Gansel, and a documentary called *Lesson Plan* (2010), directed by David Jeffery and Philip Carr Neel (a participating student of the original Third Wave movement).

following the war, there were a number of pamphlets and written series providing extensive, voluminous advice on coming to terms with this past, especially aimed at an audience of German youth (Fisher, 2007a). As early as 1947, Karl Jaspers (1961) provided a framework for Germans to explore their own culpability, writing *The Question of German Guilt*, delineating amongst individual criminal guilt requiring punishment, political guilt of the leaders and citizens of a state for which all citizens are liable, moral guilt requiring one to exercise one's own conscience and to undertake self-penance and renewal, and metaphysical guilt which implicates all mankind for failing to prevent wrongs and injustices. Encouraging Germans to "understand clearly the question of our guilt," he argued that "the guilt question is more than a question put to us by others, it is one we put to ourselves. The way we answer it will be decisive for our present approach to the world and ourselves. It is a vital question for the German soul" (Jaspers, p. 28).

Perhaps more bluntly, Martin Niemöller, a former decorated First World War German submarine commander, a Protestant clergyman imprisoned by the Nazis for his opposition to their desire to nationalize the church, and a controversial figure owing to his prior support of the Nazis and his failure to prevent their rise to power, supported Germans' need to publicly admit their guilt. His stance eventually resulted in convincing the Protestant church to issue a public Confession of Guilt (*Die Schuld Bekenntnis*), in which there is a simultaneous institutional self-criticism and a critique of Allied post-war policy (Margalit, 2010).

In spite of his position that any reckoning need be with a higher power, and his assertion that Germany had been adequately punished during war-time and post-war suffering, many Germans refused to accept Niemöller's categorical belief in German guilt. Finding subtle distinctions and exercising contradictions to justify their positions, many Germans recognized their collective responsibility in bringing Hitler to power, and acknowledged the German nation's guilt in the commission of atrocities, but at the same time identified themselves, "especially on the emotional level, as innocent victims of the Nazi regime, the war, and the occupiers, and they felt that they had been done an injustice" (Margalit, 2010, pp. 30-31).

This conflict between feelings of trauma, suffering and victimization, and a sense of collective or complicit guilt for one's role as bystander or perpetrator, created a situation

in which the German nation as a whole was unable to publicly mourn their dead or grieve their immense cultural and physical losses in the face of their crimes. As Giesen (2004) explains, “the trauma of 1945 resulted, not only from ruin and rape, death and defeat, but also from the sudden loss of self-respect and moral integrity... the nation that gave birth to a prodigious *Weltliteratur*¹⁶ had procreated also the unspeakable and inconceivable horror of the extermination camps” (p. 120). This created a situation in which Germans could not grieve or discuss German suffering without the suspicion that they were “trying to revise history in a way that could show Germans in a more favourable light or even as victims themselves....” (Vees-Gulani, p. 5).

Allied attempts at asserting the notion of Germans’ collective guilt further reinforced this conflict. Photographic displays of concentration camp horrors accompanied by slogans such as “This is Your Fault” were posted in major cities. Their messages were reinforced in similarly “educational” documentary films screened in bombed and destroyed occupation zones filled with starving populations. This approach was of such debatable efficacy (outside of its shock value) that the approach was abandoned by 1946 (Margalit, 2010; Olick, 2005). Re-education policies were also emphasized in schools and within youth populations, who had received significant attention during Hitler’s regime, and who now were seen as a “key site on which to displace questions of the past and guilt for [adult] crimes” (Fisher, 2007b).

Yet, as post-war destruction and starvation left families huddled in bombed out cellars, struggling to carry on, it quickly became clear that those who had endured through the Allied “carpet bombings,” the brutal invasion and the occupation were too busy trying to survive to realign their politics or learn from their suffering (Dagerman, 1988). Accounts of chaos, rape, starvation and desperation testify to the pressing post-war needs of the population, at the cost of greater philosophical or even legal questions of guilt (Anonymous, 2000; Neary and Schneider-Ricks, 2002). While churches and scholars

¹⁶ *Weltliteratur* is a concept articulated by famed German writer Goethe in the 1820s, expressing his belief in a movement of literary exchanges amongst cultures around the world that would surpass national literatures in promoting literary creativity.

seemed able to acknowledge German guilt, many individuals struggled to come to terms with accepting the crimes of their neighbours, their relatives and themselves (Margalit, 2010). Instead, a sense that Germans were both unacknowledged victims and survivors became a dominant part of post-war discourse (Giesen, 2004; Niven, 2006).

After Germany's division, in the former West Germany a sense of collective victimization would set in for many Germans in the absence of public Holocaust discourse and discussion during the decades immediately following the war. The "survivor" narrative, presenting the individual's struggle for life in the face of overwhelming forces outside of one's control, is predominant in wartime autobiographical accounts (Jarausch, 2001). From post-war West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer to post-unification Chancellor Helmut Kohl, the positioning of Germans as victims of Nazism was actively maintained by political leaders and individuals alike, at times resulting in the equating of German and Jewish suffering (Giesen, 2004; Niven, 2006). This discourse frequently replaced engagement with German guilt (other than in the prosecution of Nazi leadership and the SS) until the 1960s, after the surfacing of far-right-wing government officials with high-level Nazi connections began to once again prompt public debate on the topic¹⁷ (Niven, 2006; Moeller, 2006; Wittlinger, 2006).

This collective amnesia also manifested in a collective testimonial and representational absence in West Germany in the twenty years following the war. However, the breaking of this public and perhaps also private silence, in literature (the *Neue Subjektivität* movement and later in the *Väterliteratur* subgenre), in film (in the New German Cinema and its *Oberhausen Manifesto*), and in public discourse with the 1968 student generation's insistence in facing up to their predecessors' Nazi participation (Niven, 2006), reminds us "that there are not only objects of forgetting and remembering, there are always subjects of these processes, subjects whose attitudes are crucial in determining how silence is to be broken" (Passerini, 2003, p. 245). In post-war

¹⁷ The fictional storyline of British novelist John LeCarré's 1968 spy novel, *A Small Town in Germany*, built upon real-life fears of a radical, right-wing uprising in Germany. The plot connects to German political circumstances at the time of its writing, including investigations of former Nazis in the German government, and a neo-nazi and radical student riot.

Germany, these subjects were the millions of individual Germans whose wartime actions and roles would have to be reckoned, along with their descendants, who in some cases were calling their relatives to account for their actions.

In the former East, Communist and Stasi discourses developed a distinctly different tone, providing East Germans with opportunities to recognize and memorialize Communist victims of Nazi totalitarianism, but preventing further discussion about other victims, many of whom were equally oppressed by Communist dictatorships (Niven, 2006). Nonetheless, similar narratives of victimhood equated German suffering with the casualties of Nazism, and regularly elided the guilt and responsibility of the German people in favour of laying blame on a small number of leaders and criminals (Moeller, 2006).

Post-unification attempts at acknowledging guilt have in many cases also been met with resistance from German citizens. The controversial *War of Annihilation: Crimes of the Wehrmacht, 1941-1944* exhibition that toured through Germany in the 1990s illustrated the role of average German Army soldiers in the slaughter of Jews, Soviet POWs and assumed partisans in Eastern Europe, much to the shame, horror and anger of families whose elders were implicated in the crimes (Verhoeven, 2006). Amateur photographs, letters, and documents donated by German families (who had found these incriminating materials in their own family archives) made up the majority of the exhibit. Anger from some German families may have come in response to the presented “homogenous myth of the Germans as Nazi perpetrators... essential to a new generation of Western European and North American audiences in their attempt to distance themselves from these historical events” (Guerin, p. xviii). However, as is detailed in Michael Verhoeven’s documentary, *The Unknown Soldier* (2006), the exhibit resulted in discussions about the motivations for documenting and displaying guilt, calling into question the assumed ideologies of amateur soldier photographers while simultaneously forcing many resistant families to confront their direct connection to Nazi crimes and the culpability of otherwise loving fathers and brothers.

Similarly, continuing investigations undertaken by German historian and author Anna Rosmus (2002, 2004), made famous internationally after Michael Verhoeven’s previous film *The Nasty Girl* (1990) documented her story, have resulted in German citizens’

extensive attempts to stop her historical research. This response suggests that in the face of overwhelming evidence of individual Germans' participation in the day-to-day events of the Holocaust, many families and individuals choose to perpetuate denial, sectarianism, anti-semitism, and protective collaboration rather than confront their families' connections to Nazi pasts.

Consequently, despite public discourse engaging with German guilt, there is evidence that "memory of German perpetration, guilt and the suffering of Nazi victims, however intensely cultivated in school education or in acts of commemoration in the 1980s and 1990s, did not percolate down to the level of family memory" (Niven, 2006, p. 20).

Though there are German families confronting and representing their Nazi pasts (Friedländer, 2000; Mueller Dembling, 2011), one recent study of the grandchildren of wartime Germans illustrated the tendency of some grandchildren to "fabricate stories in which their own grandparents act in a morally upright way" even in the face of stories from Nazi pasts that suggest criminality (Welzer, 2010, p. 6). This resistance speaks to Germans' ongoing struggles to define their individual and collective positionality, and their understanding of their own guilt in the crimes committed during the Second World War, sometimes generations later; as Welzer (2010) explains, a family's history "plays an important role in the creation of one's own identity" and can motivate the elision of families' problematic histories (p. 6).

Decades later, as many of the last witnesses of the Nazi era disappear, these issues and conversations are being passed down (willingly or unwillingly) to future generations of Germans: those who have remained in Germany face significant challenges in coming to terms with their family legacies within the nation and the landscape of Nazi crimes. Those who have moved on to other parts of the world, however, have different struggles in understanding their roles as Germans in international and intercultural contexts.

German-Canadian Post-War Family Legacies

Germans who remained in their homeland after the war undertook collective struggles for identity together, negotiating their roles as survivors and victims within a community of people who had shared similar experiences and who shared similar guilt. However,

among the hundreds of thousands of Germans who fled their destroyed homelands and the starvation and hardship of post-war Europe were many who made homes and negotiated new identities as immigrants in enemy lands. A double hardship was a part of many German immigrants' lives in Canada: inherited and transported guilt and shame in the Nazi legacy they carried with them, and for many, the further pain of being expelled or fleeing their homes in the East, either because of Communist take-over or forced migration (the latter not a problem to which many Canadians were sympathetic) (Meune, 2005).

Many German-Canadians faced discrimination, regular accusations of being Nazis, and confronted imposed and polarized victim-perpetrator roles within Allied narratives of the war. In some cases, this understandable negativity was deserved; former Nazis, or Nazi supporters, fled from Germany along with those Germans whose guilt was purely (to borrow Jaspers' definitions) political and metaphysical (Freund, 2004, 2006). However, for most, more ambiguous and layered roles better represented their identities as bystanders, perpetrators, victims and survivors.

Among the thousands of post-war German immigrants to Canada – up to thirty thousand per year in the 1950s (Schmidt, 1983) – my grandfather and his family fall into this majority. Our family's navigation of identity occurred within the dominant Allied narratives of wartime liberation and justice and an associated sense of German guilt (Giesen, 2004). For many immigrants, direct confrontation with North American post-war anti-German sentiments and resulting discrimination regularly brought forth confrontations and accusations of German guilt and Nazi crimes (Freund, 2004; Latell, 1985; Paul, 2005; Tolzmann, 2000); for others, discrimination was minor, and community acceptance and silence about German heritage allowed the question of immigrants' responsibility to remain a private and unquestioned matter. My grandfather's experience of immigration seems to have fallen largely into the latter camp.

While there were likely incidents that occurred in my family's experience, the only story of discrimination I've ever heard comes from my father's description of being beaten up once at school in his hometown of Victoria, called a "kraut" that day, and occasionally thereafter, because of his (our) typically German last name. My grandfather describes his family's new life in Canada largely without anti-German incidents, filled instead with

success in business as an entrepreneur stamp dealer. He built friendships and joined communities both German-Canadian and otherwise. Like many first-generation immigrants, he joined the local German-Canadian Congress and the local German-Canadian Edelweiss Club and made friends, building a stable, happy life and finding his place in multiple social communities in Victoria. He taught his children German, practiced cultural traditions, cooked German foods, and kept connections with family and friends in Germany, returning often; these visits were frequently with school friends and war veterans like himself. One in particular, Walter Gerlich, his main companion from his cadet days and his time in the Bad Kreuznach prisoner of war camp, remained a close friend until his recent death; together, they occasionally visited sites of remembrance for fallen comrades, and reminisced about their war days. Like many German immigrants, my grandfather seemed to strike a balance between his life in Canada and the life he left behind in Germany, finding a comfortable, hybrid German-Canadian identity (Richter, 1983).

Though there is no way to know what his engagement with these issues would have been had he lived elsewhere, it is possible that my grandfather could have explored his feelings of both guilt and victimization more actively in Germany than here in Canada, even if that exploration may have been delayed until the late 1960s or 1970s. It is equally possible that by being in the midst of an alternate and hostile perception of the war, he was encouraged to share his perspective and his German experience of the war in the safe environment of his family and friends, understanding his wartime role in context with the multiple roles his immigrant status required him to adopt (Freund, 2004).

The transmission of the wartime stories my grandfather told constructed a legacy, passed down first to his children, and later to his grandchildren. And though there is much documentation describing the impact of shame and guilt on the children of war-era Germans¹⁸, there are only a few studies that explore the frequent secrecy, shame and identity struggles within German-Canadian and German-American immigrant

¹⁸ See for example; Frank, 1991; Gauch, 2002; Lebert,& Lebert, 2001; Moeller, 2006; Verhoeven, 1990, 2006; Ze'Evi, 2012.

experiences and those of their families (Freund, 1992, 2004; Hegi, 1997; Latell, 1985; Paul, 2005). These accounts frequently express a sense of loss, and the pervasive sense that the war (or the threat of war) is frequently present in their actions and their memories (Hegi, 1997).

This doesn't simply manifest as guilt, however, but can be evidenced in other ways that reflect wartime values and lessons learned in hardship. This was certainly the case in our family, where pervasive attitudes of frugality and preparedness were in evidence in both my grandfather and in his children: complaints about small matters were frequently met with emotional walls and the suggestion that day-to-day problems were not serious; in my childhood home, my father dogmatically insisted that wasting food was simply not tolerated; career choices were always evaluated by my grandfather by their usefulness in case of a potential economic collapse, and financial independence was highly valued. In our small family, the majority of individuals are proud entrepreneurs; I am one of very few exceptions to this rule. My grandfather's daily life is filled with thriftiness, contrasted by moments of utter indulgence during which he celebrates his ability to live in relative luxury. His self-started "Victoria Society for the Preservation of Decadence" has, for over 20 years, brought together friends for fancy dinners, wine tastings, and modest events where extravagance is encouraged within the bounds of middle class budgets. The spectre of the collapse of society, democracy and social values that has occurred, and that could again occur, is silent but ever-present.

For me, being of German-Canadian heritage requires the straddling of at least two major discourses related to this past downfall, and to Germans' legacy within it: North American representations of and engagement with the narrative of the Second World War, and German-centric stories told directly through family members and indirectly through the artefacts found in the family archive.

The former is filled with documentaries, photographs, fiction films, novels, historical accounts and news stories that present a seemingly comprehensive account of the complexity of a world war and the Nazi perpetrators that ripped apart a continent. During and following each World War, Germans have often been portrayed in popular culture, news reports and wartime propaganda in a one-sided, stereotypical and prejudicial fashion, with cultural producers frequently using sensationalized representations and

storylines to bolster sales (Tolzmann, 2000). These discourses led to anti-German uprisings preceding and during each World War (Bassler, 1991; Meune, 2005; Tolzmann, 2000) and likely played a role in German-Canadians' general post-war abstinence from Canadian politics and Canada's commemoration of wartime losses, especially those of fallen German comrades (Freund, 2006).

For many years following the war, the traumatic experiences of WWII-era Germans have also been to some degree absent from these North American historical accounts. No doubt due to German war crimes and the Holocaust, controversial Allied acts of violence against Germans (such as the Dresden bombings and incidents of rape in the east) were also under-represented in artistic, historical, and cultural narratives by Allied media. Repression was often also self-imposed by Germans, especially by those women who had been raped, widowed or who were victims of violence themselves (Anonymous, 2000; MacDonogh, 2007; Neary and Schneider-Ricks, 2002), due to shame and a sense that many of their former enemies, with whom they now lived, didn't want to hear about the painful experiences of the nation that perpetrated the Holocaust and caused trauma to so many (Latell, 1985; Paul, 2005; Tolzmann, 2000).

In direct contrast, for many German-Canadian descendants, the latter, complex familial discourse is comprised of an affective and layered personal archive, including short accounts, photographs and documents describing German families' difficult wartime experiences. Some describe their family histories and German heritage as hidden or rapidly submerged into the Canadian multicultural landscape, owing to guilt and shame (Paul, 2005); for other German-Canadians, retention of German culture, traditions and values has kept German discourses, wartime survivor narratives alive in their families (Freund, 2006; Schmidt, 1983). As with many immigrant communities, the drive either to preserve one's family stories, cultural traditions and legacies, or the attempt to integrate fully into a supposed mainstream Canadian identity, create family dynamics and discourses that pervade German-Canadian culture (Isajiw, 1998 in Paul, 2005; Schmidt, 1983). These struggles are private, largely lacking in public representations and popular culture discourses in which second- and third-generation Canadians are immersed.

Together, these two conflicting discourses form a complex and clearly incomplete picture that simultaneously attracts and disturbs. Their division reinforces German-Canadian

descendents' inability to come to terms with their dual heritage: German-Canadians' confrontations with their families' Nazi pasts are experienced in isolation and without sites of collective memory, while Canadian national memorialisation reflects and learns nothing from German immigrants' experiences (Freund, 2006). As German-Canadian scholar Alexander Freund (2006) asks: "Could we not see German immigrants' stories of becoming Nazis after 1933 and democrats in Canada as an alternative to the current national story, one that shows democracy as a work in progress rather than a one-time achievement?" (p. 154)

To accept Canadian democracy as an ongoing work in progress, however, and to accept the lessons of German immigrant stories, would require a shift in North American historical discourse. It would firstly require that German-Canadians accept their culpability as members of a society in which German democracy was so thoroughly uprooted, and in which – through action or inaction – many were agents of its destruction. Canadians and German-Canadians would also need to accept that totalitarianism could also take root here in Canada; that, in fact, brutal and systematic discrimination and abuse are a part of our past and present against our own First Nations communities (Regan, 2010).

Examining such disturbing histories and myths can be unsettling; as Regan (2010) describes in her examination of the "settler stories" Canadian immigrants (non-indigenous populations) tell about First Nations communities in Canada, "they require us to risk revealing ourselves as vulnerable 'not knowers' who are willing to examine our dual positions as colonizer-perpetrators and colonizer-allies" (p. 28). I believe that German-Canadian descendents of Nazi-era Germans face similar struggles in exploring their multiple roles. While needing to accept culpability and complicity where it is justified, one's need for family loyalty and love-inspired justification can also put German-Canadians in the position of being potential reinforcers of "German as victim" and post-war rationalization and justification discourses, perpetrating and perpetuating problematic and limited ideological positions. Also possible is the position of being an aggressive critic about family members' wartime roles, alienating oneself not only from one's family, but also from one's own personal connection to the potential (or real) bystander or perpetrator within. Most promising is the potential to be a co-creator of spaces of critical discourse between these roles, and between generations and cultures;

one can simultaneously ally with, discuss and analyze the multiple, layered and shifting positions and roles required not only of German-Canadians, but of each of us as Canadians in the face of our own country's ongoing injustices. This requires the deconstructing of myths, and the confrontation with (and working through) difficult and painful feelings of complicit guilt as we encounter those who are dealing with the impacts of our actions or our inaction (Regan, 2010).

Here in Canada, German-Canadians fit among other immigrants who left horror and atrocity for a better life, in doing so losing their ability to have their suffering be recognized (Lederman, 2012). With the passing of many of first-generation Nazi-era immigrants, German-Canadian legacies and identities are now in the hands of their children and grandchildren. They are left with the task of understanding their families' roles in the Second World War, uncovering how their parents and grandparents dealt with this charged history, and with their complex roles as perpetrators, victims and survivors after moving to the land of their former enemies. In these explorations, the analysis of intergenerational and intercultural traumatic memory processes can enable families to better understand how memories and traces of Nazi-era German pasts are manifested in living memories, in second- and third-generation family members' postmemory processes (Hirsch, 2001), in intersubjective performances of family stories (Abrams, 2010), and also in individuals' actions and beliefs.

However, with limited literature and sparse representations of German-Canadian and German-American discourses, families like mine are presented with a significant challenge in these processes: the frequent inability to find narratives in which to situate and better understand one's family stories, history and archive in a larger framework. In the section that follows, I aim to provide a theoretical context for the memory processes with which my own family is engaging, exploring how our struggles and successes in communication are connected to broader concepts of traumatic memory and intersubjective performance. In doing so, I seek a deeper understanding and context for my family's efforts to understand and represent our own stories, hopefully one which other German-Canadian and German-American families can share.

Chapter 3.

A Family History in Context

Speaking and Representing Traumatic Memory

The study of memory is inherently challenging; finding not only words but images, structures and theories to understand and represent memory and its invisible processes is a challenging task, but nevertheless a worthwhile process. Connecting collective memory to history and trauma helps us to understand its construction, examining institutional memory practices engages with the sites and functions of national and community memorialisation, while uncovering the threads of personal memory and trauma can further lead to insights about identity building, intergenerational and intercultural memory transmission.

In the field of memory studies, memory has generally been understood as a social as well as a physiological phenomenon, its processes conceptual and physical. The term is often used in broad and ambiguous ways, with “media, practices, and structures as diverse as myth, monuments, historiography, ritual, conversational remembering, configurations of cultural knowledge, and neuronal networks... nowadays subsumed under this wide umbrella term” (Erll, 2008, p. 1). Though often critiqued, this ambiguity and “umbrella quality” allows for stimulating interdisciplinary dialogue about cultural memory, “the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts... ranging from individual acts of remembering in a social context to group memory (of family, friends, veterans, etc.) to national memory with its ‘invented traditions,’ and finally to the host of transnational *lieux de mémoire* such as the Holocaust and 9/11” (Erll, p. 2, original emphasis). While the performances of memory through narrative and the constructions of identity are fruitful and dominant in memory studies, various forms of memory

including affective, visual, bodily and other unintentional forms of remembering are also a part of the field's explorations (Erll, 2008).

The field of memory studies also frequently examines trauma and its tendency to repetitively intrude on everyday life following the experience of a traumatic event. As Cathy Caruth (1996) explains, trauma is

not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature – the way it was precisely *not known* in the first instance – returns to haunt the survivor later on... It is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available. This truth, in its delayed appearance and its belated address, cannot be linked only to what is known, but also to what remains unknown in our very actions and our language. (p. 4)

This process of traumatic return has led researchers and scholars to examine traumatic memories, those "frozen and wordless" memories frequently lacking in "verbal narrative and context... encoded [instead] in the form of vivid sensations and images" (Herman, 2001, p. 37 & 38). In the field of memory studies, traumatic memory has frequently been examined in the contexts of Holocaust survivor testimony and trauma, First and Second World War and Vietnam veterans' post-war experiences, and the traumatic memories of rape and incest victims, among others. Examining these memory processes has led not only to psychiatric diagnoses for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other trauma-related illnesses, but also to more conceptual attempts to better understand individual, familial and social processes of traumatic memory.

In this section, I seek to contextualize my work by examining the ways in which the fields of memory and trauma studies have conceptualized the formation of traumatic memories in the personal and collective arenas. Though there is significant overlap in these fields, and though the terms themselves are frequently defined and employed in complex ways, I most closely examine the concepts of collective memory (Halbwachs, 2007), lieux de mémoire (Nora, 1989), traumatic memory processes (Caruth, 1996; LaCapra, 1999) and postmemory (Hirsch, 2001) in my desire to understand our post-war German-Canadian family's memory processes.

There are many theories with which one could start a brief review of memory studies and traumatic memory, yet the concept of collective memory is especially appropriate in the contextualization of my research. While my project will primarily examine personal and intergenerational memory processes, in the case of my grandfather at least, his changing personal reflections and memories of his role in Second World War Germany have been influenced by similarly changing collective, societal memories about the era from his new home in Canada.

Halbwachs (2007) conceptualizes collective memory as distinct from history, explaining that while history is constructed to “bridge the gap between past and present, restoring [the] ruptured continuity of direct memory from witnesses of these events, collective memory instead retains from the past only what still lives or is capable of living in the consciousness of the groups keeping the memory alive” (p. 140). For Halbwachs, collective memory is one of the social mechanisms in forming identity, heavily influenced by everyday communications and the cultural context surrounding the individual. In this way, films, news stories, literature and other mass media contribute to the construction of collective memories and identities of communities and individuals; the representations found therein, whether in alignment with or in opposition to one’s individual or family memory, can contribute to understandings and recontextualizations of either personal or familial experiences. In the case of my grandfather, the knowledge that his granddaughters’ collective memories of Nazi Germany would be in contrast to his own specific and nuanced personal memories of his past prompted an engagement with these constructions; as I will explore in the memory project that follows, his explanations to us, and perhaps even to himself, were frequently given with this contextualization in mind.

Building on Halbwachs’ theory, Pierre Nora has similarly explored French national identity through the lens of memory and history, specifically examining social constructions he calls “*lieux de mémoire*, where memory crystallizes and secretes itself” (1989, p. 7). He attempts to explain these sites as communities’ responses to our collective belief that our modern societies are faced with the “acceleration of history,” which he defines as an “increasingly rapid slippage of the present into a historical past that is gone for good” (p. 7). This slippage is illustrated by the disappearance of living, changing memories enacted in traditions and rituals; in the process of becoming history,

memories once embodied and experienced through traditions and rituals are instead reconstructed and represented in relative and disembodied forms. Sites of memory, then, are remains of pasts no longer part of a present and living memorial consciousness: memories that “without commemorative vigilance, history would soon sweep... away” (Nora, 1989, p. 12). Sites like the Bad Kreuznach memorial exist for this purpose, attempting to create a stable, unchanging site of memory that will endure long after the former, surviving prisoners of war have passed away.

In this way, Halbwachs’ and Nora’s theories connect directly to post-war German memorialisation, specifically in the conceptualization, construction and maintenance of national identities. The enormity of memory material to sift through in Germany is overwhelming and the memory processes undertaken by post-war Germans have repeatedly resulted in controversy (Kattago, 2001). The desire to remember German stories of suffering and valour has at times proven “so strong as to represent a challenge to the primacy of memory of the Holocaust and undermine awareness of German perpetration” (Niven, 2006, p. 5).

Various scholars have analyzed the impact of the perpetration of the Holocaust on German national identity and collective memory, differentiating between the former East and West Germanies before 1989, and the post-unification resurgence of victimization discourses (Friedländer, 1993, 2000; Judt, 2002; Kattago, 2001; Margalit, 2010; Olick, 2003, 2005). When coupled with national “Germans as victims” narratives of suffering, their findings suggest a profound collective inability or refusal to come to terms with the level of responsibility of both the institutions and individuals in Germany.

German leaders have frequently equated Jewish and German suffering in public speeches (Kattago, 2001; Niven, 2006), while memorials at concentration camps and in local German towns in the past two decades have co-memorialized German military losses and the victims of the Nazi regime (Margalit, 2010). In this context, lieux de mémoire in Germany – for example the *Jüdisches Museum Berlin* and a number of former concentration camps in sites like Buchenwald and Dachau, preserved as museums and memorials – that attempt to raise consciousness about the Holocaust and German perpetration are crucial in their construction of Germans’ collective memories of their nation’s past. However, with war memorials across Germany similarly representing

German soldiers' and Eastern European expellees suffering, there are complex discourses of trauma competing in the task of constructing and perpetuating collective memories in both wartime and younger generations of Germans (Kattago, 2001; Margalit, 2010, Vees-Gulani, 2003). This task also falls to other varied memory processes, from more abstract *lieux* as film, literature and television to families' intergenerational memory processes, the problematics of which are explored in my memory project (Vees-Gulani, 2003).

Though I will not be exploring the specific issues of Holocaust memory processes in this thesis, I feel it is significant to note that since the Second World War, German and Jewish collective memories of their shared past are intertwined while remaining distinct and frequently opposed to each other in their determination of who has the right to be labelled a victim or a survivor of wartime suffering. While German wartime and post-war suffering has resulted in a discourse of German victimization, collective memory theories have been extensively applied in Holocaust studies in examining and attempting to unpack the trauma inflicted upon Jewish and other Nazi-victimized communities. Interpreting these memory processes in Holocaust memorialisation, Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi (1982) acknowledges that "collective memory... is drastically selective. Certain memories live on; the rest are winnowed out, repressed, or simply discarded by a process of natural selection which the historian, uninvited, disturbs and reverses" (p. 95). Judith Herman (2001) similarly argues in the seminal book *Trauma and Recovery*, "the knowledge of horrible events periodically intrudes into public awareness but is rarely retained for long. Denial, repression, and dissociation operate on a social as well as an individual level" (p. 2).

These social processes of repression, in the face of the "acceleration of history" (Nora, 1989, p. 7) and young Germans' desire to move past their national identity as Nazi murderers, has created a problematic: with so much public discussion of the Holocaust and National Socialism, some Germans believe that the time has come to "retire the topic as worked through and done with... under[stood] as part of history, but not of one's own life in the present" (Vees-Gulani, 2003, p. 53). This comes hand in hand with a clearly problematic movement to recreate collective memories of German soldiers as "like any other boys who had done their duty for their country and deserved to be

honoured... normaliz[ing] the history of the Third Reich," (p. 53) equating their traumas with the traumas inflicted by the regime they supported.

A complicated dynamic thus occurs on both the individual and collective levels with traumatic memories of victims and oppressors. While both may suffer trauma as a result of taking part in violent experiences, it is essential to distinguish between these traumatic memory processes. As Primo Levi (1989) argues in *The Drowned and the Saved*, describing the repeated return of both victims' and perpetrators' repressed traumatic memories, "both are in the same trap, but it is the oppressor, and he alone, who has prepared it and activated it, and if he suffers from this, it is right that he should suffer; and it is iniquitous that the victim should suffer from it, as he does indeed suffer from it, even at a distance of decades" (p. 24).

Traumatic memory processes, suffered by Holocaust survivors and by those perpetrators who actively participated in acts of cruelty and criminality, are frequently expressed within the phenomenon of psychological traumatic recurrence (Caruth, 1996). A struggle exists in those who carry these memories: the drive to work through or remember painful experiences is in conflict with the drive to suppress or forget the horrible events that have caused the trauma. From Freud's analysis of "hysterical" female patients to Myers' World War I tests on "shell shocked" veterans and modern-day resistance to acknowledge trauma in battered women and children, our understanding of trauma has frequently been hindered by political attempts to silence those victims of trauma who struggle to function in the face of systems of repression (Herman, 2001).

On a personal level, the complex process of "working through" traumatic memories can vary drastically. Protecting oneself from judgment or seeking sanctuary from particularly haunting memories often drives survivors and perpetrators to withhold their accounts; many situations result in experiences and choices made by perpetrators, victims, and survivors that are incomprehensible to those who were not present. Further judgment about those desperate choices can add insult to victims' traumatic injuries. For example, while Holocaust survivors are generally viewed as victims of circumstance in their survivalist strategies, many are humiliated by the "inhuman" states of being to which they succumbed. Langer (1991) describes many of the memories associated with these states as simply too "noxious" and detached from chronological historical narratives to

be “useful”: they are what we often call “inaccessible, but what we really mean is that it is not discussable” (pp. 120, 118). Equally relevant are the cases of perpetrators, where either political oppression or public shame, in the case of the war-time German population for example, causes a withholding not only of memories of perpetrated crimes, but (especially in cases outside of Germany) also of being victims of Allied vengeance (Paul, 2005; Verhoeven, 2006). Though it is highly problematic to consider these perpetrators as victims of circumstance, it is nevertheless noteworthy that similar memory processes of repression and selective withholding are active in both roles involving wartime and criminal activities.

Herman (2001) suggests that overcoming this repression is therapeutic, and has placed an emphasis on bringing trauma into conscious experience; “the privileged moment of insight when repressed ideas, feelings, and memories surface into consciousness” (p. 2). However, the impact of forcibly resurfacing forgotten or repressed experiences and memories is significant, especially in the case of witnesses, survivors, and even perpetrators of violent and traumatic events. Overwhelmed by visible (or at times silent and invisible) emotion, traumatized research subjects often pause in their speech, or refuse to speak further about the trauma being remembered. Roger Simon and Claudia Eppert (1997) assert that “historically traumatic events simultaneously summon forgetting and remembrance. In their shockingness and extremity of horror, such events impel a forgetfulness or displacement... [yet] the incessant and insistent re-arrival of the past indicates how such events possess their witnesses, commanding an attention fraught with complex emotion” (pp. 176-77).

This profound struggle has also been explored within the social sciences and cultural studies; a whole sub-field – trauma studies – has emerged in which various established scholars have made remarkable contributions to the understanding of post-traumatic responses. Laub (1992), for example, explored the nature of conflicting or contradicting accounts from trauma survivors. An exemplary and oft-quoted case study illustrates this dilemma: testimony from an Auschwitz survivor told of an uprising at the camp, describing the explosion of four chimneys and the sight of flames rising into the sky. Historians reviewing the survivor’s account and the historical evidence, in discovering that only one chimney exploded, discredited the woman’s account of the event because “it was utterly important to remain accurate, lest the revisionists in history discredit

everything" (Laub, 1992, p. 60). The article explains an alternate possible reaction, provided by Laub (a clinical psychiatrist), whose interpretation suggested that the survivor "was testifying not simply to empirical historical facts, but to the very secret of survival and to resistance to extermination... the historians said that she knew nothing, but I thought that she knew more" (Laub, 1992, pp. 62-63). Laub controversially asserts a historical significance to memory that moves beyond the literal, factual or even social into the abstract and metaphorical.

Cathy Caruth's (1996) integration of scientific research into cultural studies' research in trauma has been similarly significant. She asserts that history's ongoing traumatic events are connected to individual experiences, whether or not one directly lives through them; "history, like trauma, is never simply one's own... history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other's traumas" (p. 24). She argues that our culture's collective experiences translate into the personal, and her analyses of film, literature and theory suggest that trauma becomes a major connection-point in our "catastrophic era... a link between cultures" (1996, p. 56). One has only to think of the spread of global communication, the nightly news' unyielding fixation on traumas local and international, and our innate desire to see the gory and the gruesome to connect personally to Caruth's argument.

Connecting to Freud's conceptualization of the return of repressed trauma in memories, nightmares and repetitive actions, Caruth (1996) also argues that creative and textual representations of trauma serve to "transmit and... theorize around a crisis that is marked, not by a simple knowledge, but by the ways it simultaneously defies and demands our witness" (p. 5). She asserts that traumatic memories must be expressed using literary language that allows us to capture the simultaneous experience of knowing and not knowing trauma, reflecting its tendency to be experienced only through recurrence in memory and psychological experience. Novels and films engage with representing these traumatic memory processes, employing literary, visual and aural languages in their attempts to represent history and memory through conceptual processes.

For researchers and audiences of traumatic testimony and representations, LaCapra (1999) reminds us that the experience of "empathetic unsettlement" is an important part

of secondary observations of trauma. However, he simultaneously recommends that historians and viewers avoid the vicarious sense of victim identification that can become routinized in repetitive processes of secondary witnessing (p. 699). He suggests that by employing “the socially engaged memory work involved in working-through, one is able to distinguish between past and present and to recognize something as having happened to one (or one’s people) back then that is related to, but not identical with, here and now” (p. 713). He argues that deconstructive writing and the undoing of binaries, along with performative mourning (moving back and forth between remembering and active forgetting), can offer ways to work through absence, loss and trauma.

LaCapra, among other theorists, also warns of the possibility of secondary witnesses experiencing unsettling, muted trauma, as making connections to collective experiences of trauma can create personal memories derived from these forms of witnessing. Alison Landsberg (2004) created the concept of prosthetic memory to describe these “transferable” memories, in which one’s engagement with a multi-media or experiential representation of a historical narrative creates a personal, affective, embodied memory of that viewing event, resulting in the suturing of oneself into the represented historical narrative. The experience can potentially alter one’s own subjectivity and politics to align with the represented narrative. The television mini-series *Holocaust* (Chomsky, 1978) has been frequently used to describe the resurgence of discussion on its topic in North America and in Germany; this provides a clear example of Landsberg’s concept, in which people who otherwise might not have received formal education about the Shoah were communally experiencing the event through television screenings, connecting to the narrative during the viewing and experiencing their own memories while watching the series’ story unfold. The personal impact of prosthetic memory is significant: like the direct victim of trauma, we are the survivors of everyday experiences of collective trauma, and must equally discover what it means for our consciousness to survive.

Marianne Hirsch (2001) has explained this scenario in the familial, intergenerational context using her concept of postmemory, described as “the relationship of children of survivors of cultural or collective trauma to the experiences of their parents, experiences that they “remember” only as the narratives and images with which they grew up, but that are so powerful, so monumental, as to constitute memories in their own right” (p. 9).

Hirsch (1997) argues that growing up surrounded and dominated by overwhelming narratives that precede one's own lifespan and consciousness is to "be shaped, however indirectly, by traumatic events that still defy narrative reconstruction and exceed comprehension. These events happened in the past, but their effects continue into the present" (p. 107). With postmemory, the connection to past events is achieved by the younger generation's projection of imagined memories passed down in the stories, actions, images or silences of the generations that came before. Inherently vicarious, displaced and belated, postmemory processes are mediated through "representation, projection, and creation" (Hirsch, 2001, p. 9).

In this memory project, I aim to connect postmemory to my own identity position as a third generation German-Canadian carrying a difficult family legacy; like many in my generation, I have been shaped by traumatic wartime narratives and images from previous generations, connected across time through inherited, imaginative investment. Hirsch (2001) also clarifies that "postmemory need not be *strictly* an identity position. Instead, I prefer to see it as an intersubjective transgenerational space of remembrance, linked specifically to cultural or collective trauma. It is defined through an identification with the victim or witness of trauma, modulated by the unbridgeable distance that separates the participant from the one born after" (p. 9).

Applying this concept, in this memory project I will employ a reading of my grandfather's accounts of the Bad Kreuznach camp, using postmemory to explore my imaginative investment and connection to his traumatic story and the image- and silence-based stories that surround it: in examining the three iterations of my grandfather's story of imprisonment, I will outline my identity position and our intersubjective memory processes in relation to the stories, each of which create a "space of remembrance" (Hirsch, 2001, p. 10) and create an identificatory relationship between myself and my grandfather in the varied roles our changing interactions demand. As Hirsch (2001) suggests, I aim to draw the lines of relation and identification, outlining "how the familial and intergenerational identification with one's [grand]parents can extend to the identification among individuals of different generations and circumstances... [and in this] resist appropriation and incorporation, resist annihilating the distance between self and other...." (p. 11).

Like other descendants of Nazi Germany's population, I struggle to connect to the horrors in my family's past, and to the victims, bystanders, survivors and perpetrators whose narratives endure. Through my postmemory process, while resisting the appropriation of his story, I seek to better understand and identify with my grandfather as a wartime German cadet and soldier, a prisoner of war, a post-war German-Canadian immigrant, and as a grandfather connecting to his Canadian granddaughters in their attempts to understand his wartime role. His stories formed the backdrop of my childhood, his written and oral history dominating my life and my understanding of our German-Canadian collective memory of the Second World War. In sharing our story, I hope to "unearth and [make] public untold stories, stories of 'lives lived out on the borderlands, lives for which the central interpretive devices of the culture don't quite work'" (Kuhn, 1995, p. 8). As post-war German-Canadians, I believe that our stories "don't quite work" with dominant Canadian narratives, and in examining my ongoing postmemory processes, I hope to better reconcile and connect the conflicting positions my identity engenders.

In the section that follows, I will explore the oral component of my grandfather's and my traumatic memory processes: the telling of, listening to, and construction and representation of wartime stories, told time and time again, that are intimately connected to our family's German-Canadian identity. This storytelling, informally undertaken until my collaboration brought us to Germany and documented these stories at the sites of their occurrence, has been enacted in various intersubjective performances. I will explore the theory behind these processes, connecting our family's experiences – and those of German-Canadians like us – to those within the formal oral history community.

Oral Historiography: The Products and Processes of History-Making

Not only the reliability of memory and experience as exact records of the past, but also the very notion of historical truth, have come into question; the past is constituted in narrative, always representation, always construction. (Hodgkin and Radstone, 2003, p. 2)

In essence, oral history gathering is a formalized and structured way of conceptualizing orality, “the basic human mode of communication” (Henige, 1982, p. 3). Researchers record oral accounts about events experienced in a research subject’s past, gathering stories and accounts to incorporate into historical record. Oral history practice in recent decades has also incorporated self-reflection and analysis of not only those recorded accounts, but also the methods and media used to gather them. Weaving narrative, chronology and memory into language symbolic of experienced and witnessed events, oral history method is frequently layered with deep analyses of intersubjectivity and various complex methods of interpretation.

While oral traditions and community-based oral histories have been a part of human culture for millennia, the use of oral history as a formal, institutionalized research methodology is in many ways a 20th century adaptation. In this section, I will present a brief introduction to and engagement with the considerations of modern oral history research, connecting its theory and methodology to the overlapping techniques found in the fields of memory and trauma studies. While undertaking my memory project, I will borrow from oral history practice, which provides the analytical lenses of intersubjectivity and performativity to examine and find meaning in the stories shared by my grandfather.

Though distinctly different in practice, the formal gathering of oral histories retains the same purpose as oral tradition: that of preventing communities’ “loss of a connection to their collective past” (Sacks, 2009, p. 5). Originally used to preserve the tales of elite or special-interest groups, oral history projects in the 20th and 21st centuries have attempted to democratize history and historical storytelling. These projects have been prolific on both an institutional and equally at an informal level: oral history projects and formal associations now exist internationally, where professional oral historians cross paths with amateurs and hobbyists.¹⁹ The ever-increasing accessibility of recording and video

¹⁹ The Canadian Oral History Association (Canadian Oral History Association, 2012) and the Oral History Association in the United States (Oral History Association, 1999), for example, provide extensive online resources both for members and the general public. Open forums, reference listings, email listservs, project databases, and blogs connect professional, novice, and amateur oral historians in open online dialogue.

equipment are democratizing the process of oral and visual history gathering behind the microphone (or the camera), while Internet, database, online archive, and technological progress have created a reception accessibility that is continuing to transform the field.²⁰ As Sipe (1998) explains, audio-visual media such as film and television also offer unique opportunities to

support a comparative, reflexive approach to history itself. Historians have generally become more familiar with the notion of understanding a work of history as a construction, and of considering the variant ways in which historical works might have been and might be constructed. But, ironically, writing has been so central in this that its centrality as a shaper of the construction process itself has been largely assumed and hence unexamined. Other modes of evidence and communication, in combination with or in juxtaposition to written texts, may help encourage a much-needed examination of the assumptions and deep structures of history as a whole.

(pp. 381-2)

The richness of audio-visual media encourage reflexivity in part through providing rich information available for analysis, but also through revealing the constructed nature of documentation. Choices in framing, audio recording, when the camera is turned on and off reveal the process of historical construction; more subtle information such as body language, facial expressions and the relationship between the interviewer and the subject can better reveal the process of memory generation (Sipe, 1998).

In light of these affordances, in situating their work, oral historians have turned to the constructivist subjectivity and fluidity of cultural studies. Since the late 1970s, oral historians have situated their practice in the midst of narrative theory, memory and trauma studies. While perhaps inevitable – owing to the insights gleaned from oral history research – this shift has had a significant impact on the field and the research findings gleaned from its practice: by acknowledging the subjectivity of oral history, and

²⁰ Noteworthy examples include: The British Library's History website, including the *Voices of the Holocaust* History page excerpting and streaming survivor testimony (The British Library Board, 1999); *Voices From the Thirties* (Banks, 1998), excerpted life histories from the Federal Writers' Project, and; the *StoryCorps* website (StoryCorps, 1999) a community project inviting individuals to rent equipment, record stories, and submit them for online audio posting, connecting to the Mass Observation British movements of the 1930s.

at the same time defending the validity of its contribution to factual historical record, oral historians have attempted to distinguish their work as a highly specialized practice that can offer profound insights into both the details and experiences of history. This distinctly anti-positivist view, characteristic of most oral history scholarship, connects oral history to critical discourses as diverse as the interviews and subjects themselves: history, communications, psychology, memory and trauma studies.

Alessandro Portelli (1998) outlined the elements that make oral history sources intrinsically different from other historical sources: orality (including pace, intonation, and many non-grammatical elements); narrative capacity (through structure, velocity, purpose and meaning, and in co-authorship between subject and interviewer); subjectivity (resulting from the subject's relationship to the interviewer, the unique nature of each re-telling, and the psychological impact of events); and a uniquely overt distinction between factual and psychological credibility. Portelli famously stated: "Oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did" (p. 67).

Furthermore, the notion of intersubjective performance, in which interviewer and subject construct subjectivities (Abrams, 2010) has created a layered, complex understanding of the interview process as "a mutual construction of reality in which participants exchange messages, negotiate meanings, and try to achieve a degree of agreement on what they are doing and why" (Futrell & Willard, 1994, p. 85). While traditional historians' methods and writings frequently elide this problematic, presenting their work using a third-person omniscient perspective (Portelli, 1998), the oral historian frequently incorporates a self-reflexive analysis of their unique research dynamic into their work. Oral historian Wendy Rickard (1998) suggests that "disentangling reflexive issues as a separate object for discussion is paradoxical since oral history is by nature intimately bound up with these issues. Finding out about people's consciousness and the nature of their memory are endeavours that never negate the need for some level of reflexivity" (p. 34). Oral history methodology thus encourages an analysis not only of the methods employed, but also of the researcher's role in everything from the responsiveness and openness of the subject to the framing and excerpting of the data based on personal bias.

This interconnection is a significant part of the exploration within my own project. Interviewers frequently enter communities in which the socialization process is implicit or hidden in interactions that they are then obliged to attempt to decipher or ignore; in my case, however, the implicit relations are perhaps even more difficult to interpret. Part of this memory work requires not only an analysis of my own socialization and memory processes, but also those of my grandfather. In (auto)biographical research, the already complex social norms of oral history interviewing – of listening, of attentiveness, of interactivity, and of linguistic choices – are further layered with respect, trepidation, and the complex dynamics of long-term, close relationships suddenly altered through formal research. As such, in this project I will examine our complex intersubjective relationships to ourselves, each other and to our shared and divergent cultural discourses (Abrams, 2010).

As in all oral history projects, subtle alterations on the part of the interviewer in the selection of context and wording can impact the subject's event and personal memory recall (Sypher, Hummert, Williams, 1994). In the case of familial research, the need to be self-reflexive and conscious of these subtleties is all the more important, as interviewer and subject frequently share common socialization. As Elizabeth Tonkin (1992) argues, "Facts and opinions do not exist as free-standing objects, but are produced through grammar and larger conventions of discourse which in turn are interpreted by hearer or reader in order to register as such. Meanings exist because people mean and others believe they understand what was meant" (p. 2). Successful interviews that produce coherent narratives are likely the result of shared values, common assumptions and a good rapport and communication between interviewer and subject; by contrast, interviews that reveal little but factual answers or an incoherent narrative can be caused by the opposite. Assumptions about meanings will play a significant role in my research, and I will do my best to find and acknowledge them throughout my analysis.

I have noticed recently, for example, that I have frequently asked "why" and "how" questions (a strategy for asking "open questions" drilled into me as part of my training in documentary filmmaking) rather than "what" and "when" questions. I followed this process partly because my grandfather's stories were so familiar and coherent as to create the illusion that I "knew" them and all their possible meanings. Partly socialized

by him, I felt that the answers I sought for the documentary were not for me, but for my documentary's audience, whose interests and needs I had clearly constructed in my mind. However, in this intersubjective process, while we performed our family dynamic for our audience, I completely missed asking him more detailed questions about his experiences – asking him to recall the sights, sounds, tastes, smells and feelings, for example – that may have prompted more and different stories to emerge, and that could have provided different meanings and possible interpretations to my grandfather's story. I limited our intersubjective memory process in this way, creating a document for an imagined audience rather than for our family or for historical purposes, encouraging him to retell the stories I knew like an actor delivering a rehearsed performance. I now find this process highly problematic, and as this example illustrates, the influence of my grandfather on my socialization (in this case, his rehearsed storytelling performance and its closed narrative cohesion) requires close examination as part of my analysis. Many of the assumptions I am attempting to work through can be traced back to our shared socialization and collaborative memory processes.

The fallibility and mutability of memory, and the way that intersubjective performance and collaboration influence the nature of subjective accounts, are also deeply interconnected with oral history practice. Accounts provided at various points over time, or shown in contrast to personal documents from the past, shed light on the processes at work in the transformation and construction of memories. Telling and retelling the life story is part of the ongoing and ever-changing composition of our sense of self. As feminist sociologist Liz Stanley (1994) argues, the selves invoked in oral history autobiographies "seal the circle between now, the present, and then, the past: stories 'telling the tale' of past people and events which are used to shape the present by proscribing and prescribing the acceptable possibilities" (p. 88). In the case of my project, my grandfather's diary and memoir engage with the same topic as our oral history interview, and yet the specific stories told, and the tone and intention of their telling, are clearly different and are situated in the present. At one point, standing in the Bad Kreuznach memorial cemetery, my grandfather and cousin engaged in a conversation about memory. He insisted to her that memory is not reliable; that in contrast to his war friend Walter Gerlich, and even to himself (through the diary) his memories aren't accurate. In addition, revisiting the site of the events triggered significantly different memories and feelings that occur in neither the diary nor the

memoir, and his grandchildren's presence changed their telling; however limited it may have been, the oral history that was created and performed reveals not only new narratives, but also new identity positions for my grandfather and I.

As the telling of our family stories also involves an audience, the performances of my grandfather and myself in the texts I analyze are key components of my research. Connecting the process and the product of storytelling, the teller and the audience cooperate and create stories told through their interaction: "As much as the storyteller can be the author of his or her narrative, he or she is also an editor who constantly monitors, manages, modifies, and revises the emergent story" (Gubrium and Holstein, 1998, p. 170). On a broader level, oral history performance can also include non-verbal elements, such as gestures, facial expressions and subtle cues difficult to document, articulate or to which one can ascribe meaning. Furthermore, "the performance of oral history is itself a transformational process. At the very least, it translates subjectively remembered events into embodied memory acts, moving memory into re-membering. That passage not only risks but endows the emerging history/narratives with change" (Pollock, 2005, p. 2). As the video footage of my grandfather's performance and the vocal record of my own are present, they are subject to such analysis.

As in many memory projects, the primary reason for the sharing of my grandfather's oral history is the influential and traumatic impact of his imprisonment story on our lives, and his desire to share his unique perspective of historical events. However, as in our case, there are well-known representational challenges in articulating memory and trauma in oral form. The limits of verbal language can be seen in oral histories by observing the repetition of stories using well-rehearsed language or in the struggle to find words to explain their experiences. As Elizabeth Tonkin (1992) asserts:

Witnesses are social beings who *must* bring previous understandings to their lived experience in order to interpret it. And, when they try to proffer this experience in words, they will turn to known formulations, modes and genres to do so. This may mean that deeply felt experiences appear cliché-ridden, but even the most 'original' experience has to be represented through accepted rules of language and of narrative production. (pp. 86-87)

In my family's case, the oft-repeated and well-practiced stories of my grandfather could be explained by this practice, in which he uses narrative structure and a consideration of his German-Canadian audience to formulate his traumatic experiences and memories within humorous tales. To my cousin, often bored during the video footage documenting my grandpa's onsite storytelling, hearing the same words so many times made them into a cliché. Yet for my grandfather, these were the words he had developed over repeated retellings to communicate his experiences, essential to his sharing process.

This practice is thus a requirement for the speaker (seeking a linguistic representation), and a relevant consideration for the historian or researcher (creating a textual, audio or multi-media representation), and for the user of those oral or visual history archives, who then consumes these oral histories in radically limited verbal representations, and often excerpts oral histories to further an argument or theory and/or to create further media-based representations.²¹ The knowledge that one's oral history is later to be consumed, discussed and judged by readers and viewers with little context outside of these representations can provoke a choice of silence, resulting in a researcher's inability to find subjects willing to even engage with interviewers or with specific traumatic topics long-past. Phenomena including witness and survivor forgetting, withholding, and contesting – so frequent, so distinctly human in nature, are never more comprehensible than in the case of trauma survivors (Herman, 2001; Langer, 1991).

Consequently, Langer (1991) argues, the responsibility of the interviewer, researcher, and historian in gathering and representing traumatic survivors' oral histories is considerable. He borrows Holocaust survivor and author Charlotte Delbo's terms of common memory (intellectual and present-located mediations of atrocity) and deep memory (profound, visceral and experiential traumatic memories) to explain that they each reveal and conceal different realities and are shared selectively by traumatized

²¹ This phenomenon is frequently found in the testimony of Holocaust survivors, notably in various oral history archives and their popular film reincarnations and representations such as Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985), or in James Moll's *The Last Days* (1998), where a Holocaust survivor returning to her childhood home insists to a neighbor that "it was much worse than what you saw in the movies."

survivors. He cautions the researcher, however, that “the subtle urging of an interviewer, who after all is no more than an emissary of the outsider’s point of view, can lead a witness to shift from one form of memory to another, and indeed control and shape the content of each” (p. 9).

He asserts that the ongoing role of interviewers and researchers in interacting with individuals, as well as in analyzing and representing these cases, is to reject interpretive formulas, mythic associations, invocations of closure or reassurance that try to connect survivor experience to common-memory, present-based historical narratives. Langer insists that there is no paradigm and no pre-set methodological or analytical guide to follow, save the acknowledgement that testimonies of massively traumatic events warrant a careful but ultimately possible connection to present listeners.

Furthermore, because re-traumatization is a distinct possibility in revisiting a private, traumatic history, researchers are obliged to consider emotional and social implications for the interviewee. The trauma of an event (or a series of historical events) often requires a period of silence, and partial forgetting, before memories can be articulated in language and in speech (Caruth, 1996). As silence itself can also carry memory – through physicality, through tradition, through the simple absence of speech in the guarding of images and memories larger than the words that would seek to represent them – it is a matter of seeking what Luisa Passerini (2003) calls traces of memory: those that have the potential to create new meanings of traumatic memories through articulation.

Faced with these challenges, concerns, and realities, researcher responsibilities – especially when the research subject is in one’s own family – may fall on the side of empathy, the preservation of the relationship, and respect for the subject’s emotional and mental health. In the case of German and German-Canadian families, this has sometimes resulted in the elision of problematic histories and narratives (Welzer, 2010), the wholesale acceptance of survivor narratives (Jarausch, 2001) and the desire to be a care-giver to those who have experienced trauma, rather than one who pushes for more information about their pasts (Latell, 1985). I have sensed and attempted to question these tendencies in myself; part of this engagement is the following memory project, which identifies and selectively accepts and resists these drives depending on the

intersubjective role I fill in each situation. This is part of my and my grandfather's intersubjective performance; whether out of respect and consideration for each other, our imagined audience, or ourselves, our choices reflect the navigation of our German-Canadian identities, and as such, I explore them in this project.

And while the issue of verifiability and reliability is not one I plan to explore in this memory project, owing to the fact that this has not been a major concern in relation to my family's narratives, it is worth mentioning that oral historians frequently encounter the problematic of conflicts between oral accounts and recorded documentation. Elizabeth Tonkin (1992) reminds us in *Narrating our Pasts* that the recurrent unreliability of verbal accounts can actually "make one realize that conventional literary historians have taken documents over-literally; documents, after all, are often orally recorded" (p. 114).

In perceived perpetrator communities especially, conflicts arise between the accounts of individuals and the records of their actions. Max Friedman's (2000) case study describing the "contested terrain" of American-led deportations of Germans living in Latin America (those with perceived affiliations to the Nazi party) illustrates the challenges faced by documents that directly contradict individual memory. When faced with a conflict between his research subjects' accounts and archival evidence (as in Friedman's example of men claiming no party membership but whose Nazi party registration cards were recovered) Friedman followed oral historian Alice Hoffman's suggestion that oral historians should confront their subjects with contradictory evidence. Yet Friedman's subjects provide incomplete and unsatisfying explanations to the conflicting accounts:

By playing down or denying their connections to the Nazi organization, the deportees may be trying to cast themselves in the best possible light, or they may wish in this way to depict themselves as they believe they were, not as what we think of today as 'Nazis.' But by evading the fact of their membership, they present an incomplete account of events. (p. 10)

This action cast doubt onto the reliability of their entire accounts, however, prompting researchers to verify information presented as fact by the interview subject.

As Kathleen Blee (1993) suggests, perpetrator histories are often "laced with deceptive information, disingenuous denials of culpability, and dubious assertions about their political motivations... [that] with careful scrutiny and critical interpretation... can yield

surprisingly informative and complex historical information” (p. 597). Describing her own subjects’ repeatedly “irrelevant or inconsistent answers,” oral historian Luisa Passerini (1979) explained that, “oral sources refuse to answer certain kinds of questions; seemingly loquacious, they finally prove to be reticent or enigmatic, and like the sphinx they force us to reformulate problems and challenge our current habits of thought” (p. 91). Friedman (2000) asserts, however, that together, the “necessary selective memories of the participants and the likewise selective record-keeping that takes place in government archives,” can present a complementary and fuller picture of events (pp. 11, 15).

These challenges have been an ongoing issue in the memory construction and representation of the Rhine Meadow Camps, for which there is fierce debate about the statistics and facts describing living conditions of the prisoners (Bacque, 1989; MacKenzie, 1992). My grandfather's memoir illustrates a simple element of this conflict within a short story he tells, describing his release from the camp in June, 1945.

When we were dismissed, before we were dismissed, we had a medical exam. And we went in front of a man, and he said, "Are you healthy to be dismissed? Are you healthy?" "Yes, we are healthy." Fine, and then he signed a paper and then we had a health certificate that we were healthy. There were two things funny about that: firstly, if somebody has the opportunity to be dismissed, he will say he is healthy and if it kills him. [sic] And secondly, the guy who did the signature had learned the signature from the medical officer who had told him how to sign his signature. It was a German prisoner of war who did the signatures. So that is how you get the record in the military statistics that the prisoners of war who were dismissed were all healthy. They said so themselves. See? There were funny things happening. (Bernhard Schulze, 2002)

The story would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to verify or disprove. This is how this event was remembered in my grandfather's oral history, and yet retrieving the statistical evidence of which he speaks would do nothing to confirm or deny his account. Furthermore, with the deaths of most people in his generation, there are few individuals left to provide their own perspectives of this moment in history. This example speaks to the problem of documentary evidence and its conflict with oral history, opening up discussions about the process of historiography while offering little resolution.

Rather than focusing exclusively on verifiability, however, oral historians can move away from straightforward conclusions to more complex and situated historical portraits, offering a deeper understanding of the individual realities and perceptions of people living within noteworthy historical eras. Exploring variations among people's complex self-representations in politically contentious situations, Luisa Passerini (1979) studied Italian working class communities during the rise of Fascism. She found significant inconsistency amongst her subjects' oral accounts, and also noted a clear disconnection between their life-stories and the well-accepted story of "a spontaneously anti-fascist working class" typically used to describe the era's uprisings (p. 86). Similar self-representations and conflicts occur in Marcel Ophüls' (1969) famous, in-depth exploration of French collaboration and resistance during the Nazi occupation in his documentary film, *The Sorrow and the Pity*. Passerini (1979) explains subjects' inconsistencies through explorations of subjectivity; rather than describing memories as static products of history, she argues, it is the process of creating memories and recalling/remembering them that is key in the formation of self and one's own narrative. Cultural context, trauma and its impacts, and a myriad of other factors are acknowledged as influential in the creation of the subject's account of events.

In studying German history, three recent oral history projects undertaken within German populations during the past few decades have similarly contextualized the varied personal motivations for Nazi support in the years prior to and during the Second World War. The first, a study of the working classes of East and West Germany pre- and post-unification completed by Lutz Niethammer (1993) and his team in the 1980s, explored issues of generational conflict, especially during the 1930s and war years. Parents and siblings who generally disagreed on political grounds shared views temporarily, however, in the economic booms in Germany during the early war years and following economic support in the early 1950s. It was the reprieve from poor or difficult living conditions that primarily drove more political support (in the 1930s, and now again in post-unification East Germany) toward those groups that blamed immigrants for job losses and supported pro-German policies. Also examining intergenerational relationships, Welzer (2010) found a distinct transformation in German families' intergenerational stories, in which grandchildren had a tendency to alter and explain their grandparents' and relatives' wartime perpetrator or bystander stories using mechanisms of justification, their changes motivated by the "specific need for meaning of the

recipients of those stories” (p. 6). An oral history project spearheaded by Eric A. Johnson and Karl-Heinz Reuband (2005) offered a regional and religious view of individuals’ Nazi support, indifference or defiance, while equally examining Holocaust awareness in its subjects. These studies offer viewpoints rarely examined – regional, religious and generational differences among wartime German populations and their descendants – that explore and problematize oversimplified national characterizations of German identity. In doing so, they offer opportunities for researchers and families to more deeply understand their subjects’ and their members’ unique roles in historical events.

Certainly this has been the case for my family’s oral history; the process of situating and contextualizing my family’s stories and memory processes has driven this project from its conception. Never encountering any worrisome inaccuracies in our family’s accounts, instead I find myself exploring the context of our family’s history, examining the memory processes we undertake to better understand it. Manifesting itself first in video and now in this written memory project, the processes and techniques of representation are now a concern in my work. As in oral history, written histories and memory projects require strategic and intentional representational techniques; in my case, these will be borrowed from the field of autoethnography, which provides strategic approaches to those undertaking autobiographical research and writing.

Autoethnographic Writing

For better or for worse, I have never been able to separate my personal experiences and reflections from my professional and academic work. After much introspection, I realized that this is because the texts and films that interest me most involve a significant personal component, layered with story, emotion and some kind of journey. More than simply being entertained by stories, I feel I have always learned the most from personal narratives; that there were intangible and almost indescribable insights found in the layers of reflection and representation, and that the interaction of all these layered meanings was more than the sum of its parts. I have also been driven to share what I have learned through telling and analyzing my own narratives; in presentations, workshops and through photography and video, this has been a constant compulsion

that I have used as an emotional, narrative hook to connect my audience to the larger idea I aim to share. In the process of researching my current topic, the feeling that personal narratives influence, structure and manifest in everything – identity, culture, society and history – has become stronger than ever. As Aboriginal author Thomas King (2003) so eloquently states, “The truth about stories is that’s all we are” (p. 2).

In film school, this bias transformed my final year’s projects into practice-led research, using my family’s archives and history to weave our personal stories and thoughts into larger cultural and social narratives. However, the methodology employed was documentary filmmaking, filled with reflexivity and theory, but equally entrenched in the mechanics of creative production, storytelling and conceptual application. As I undertake this memory project, I aim to more thoroughly explore the theories behind practices I now find intuitive but which I have left unexamined and unquestioned. I find familiar the struggles, challenges and feelings of being overwhelmed and inadequate to the task of finding a fitting and appropriate area of study that represents my larger search (Ellis, 1999). The process of documentary filmmaking, with which I am accustomed, offers these same challenges, which I now treat as essential companions in my process. Nevertheless, this written project is larger in scope than anything I have previously undertaken outside of filmmaking, and as academic memory work is a new venture for me, it is crucial to examine the fields of study connected to my endeavour. In situating my work amongst other memory scholars, and in borrowing from oral history, trauma studies and autoethnography, I am attempting to glean from their wisdom and better understand these fields of study by engaging them in practice.

Autoethnography in particular offers strategies of writing that are closely connected to creative filmmaking practices with which I am familiar. Autoethnography has roots in anthropological and ethnographic tradition, and in many cases borrows freely from therapeutic, dramatic, and fictional practices. The term itself is perhaps unstable, connecting to a wide variety of practices and techniques employed, referring to distinct but related issues (Atkinson, 1999). At times called reflexive ethnography, autoethnography, feminist ethnography or even personal narrative, the underlying premise of these approaches appear to be shared: that any researcher is inherently connected to their object of research; that this unavoidably influences the selections,

process and findings of research, and; that owing to this inevitability, overt reflexivity is a requisite part of any research process and product.

In ethnographic study, during which engagement with the subject of research frequently occurs over a long period of time, and through which interactions and resulting observations are transformed by the researcher, reflexivity is crucial. While in many cases this simply manifests as an reflexive analysis of one's theoretical position or methodological choices, more intense reflexivity can become self-conscious, with the researcher analyzing their own process of knowledge building, termed by Woolgar (1988) as "radical constitutive reflexivity" (p. 28). In spite of the potential pitfalls of this approach, which I discuss below, the need to incorporate multiple voices and narratives is crucial to engage in such research, to break from meta-narratives, and to "mediate between different constructions of reality" (Davies, 2008, p. 6). As this memory project aims to delineate and describe the various identity positions at play in my grandfather's collaboratively constructed imprisonment story, I will use reflexive writing to identify and mediate between our constructions.

As there are various practices used in the research and writing processes of the aforementioned "radically" reflexive variants of ethnography, I will narrow my focus in this section to exploring autoethnography, as it is the approach I use in the course of researching and writing this thesis. There are numerous methods employed by researchers in this practice, each finding creative ways to incorporate their personal narratives into the greater research process and product. Conversations are written into constructed plays, stories and articles (Leggatt-Cook et al., 2011; Ellis, 1998, 1999, 2009), dual-track written narratives engage readers in discovering their own learning strategies and biases (Lau, 2002), diary entries, field notes, memories and personal reflections are woven into historical and ethnographic research (McAllister, 2010), while literary, filmic and visual explorations (though they might not be formally called autoethnographies) use many of the same strategies of narrative reflexivity to work

through personal connections to larger issues.²² Though there are various models and possible approaches, it appears that there is no prescribed formula to creating autoethnography, which is simultaneously liberating and challenging to consider in the development of my writing strategy.

In descriptive and analytical autoethnographies, there is a distinct focus on the personal, emotional and evocative in the writing that results. Not only does the researcher self-reflexively acknowledge her subjectivity, but this also becomes an embedded part of the text, in which “analysis and interpretation are intimately intertwined but not synonymous” (Chang, 2008, p. 146). Connecting one’s personal or familial story to broad theories and concepts about the issues at hand, autoethnography attempts to break from the social science research practices that “categorize, generalize and abstract about the experiences of others from short snippets of fieldnotes or forced-choice survey responses” (Ellis, 1998, p. 58). Instead, descriptive autoethnography can present an in-depth, individual truth and share a personal epiphany that provokes another to similarly examine and share one’s own experience (Ellis, 1998).

In the face of these strengths, the process of writing autoethnography offers significant theoretical and practical challenges: challenging one’s own tendency towards self-absorption, the lack of trans-personal (or even intrapersonal) replication and consistency in research findings (Burawoy, 2003), and postmodernist/poststructuralist problematics such as the inability to identify boundaries between the research subject and object (Davies, 2008). While I obviously aim to avoid narcissistic self-focus through contextualizing my family narrative in a larger historical picture, it is unlikely that I can avoid these pitfalls altogether.

My study is personal and specific to the extent that it is impossible to replicate; though other grandchildren of German Canadian Nazi-era war veterans could have similar

²² Interesting and experimental filmic examples on the subject of World War II include Su Friedrich’s *The Ties that Bind* (1985), Rea Tajiri’s *History and Memory* (1991) and Michael Verhoeven’s *Nasty Girl* (1990) and *The Unknown Soldier: What Did You Do in the War, Dad?* (2006). Relevant literary examples include Primo Levi’s *The Drowned and the Saved* (1998) and Sigfrid Gauch’s *Traces of My Father* (2002).

insights when undertaking such a project, my research process does not attempt to provide universal truths, essentialist statements about German-Canadians or definitive generalizations about German-Canadian emigrants' post-war personal and family narratives. Nor can I make any claims to this study's consistency, even within my personal findings from the past and present. All the research data I am examining in this project has been in my possession for the past 10 years, and was in use during the editing of *German Lessons* (2003). Nevertheless, the insights discovered during this research are new, and I believe that were I to undertake this study in another 10 years, further findings would result. Knowing and accepting this, my intention is to use this very specific case study and research situation to examine my and my grandfather's co-constructed realities about his prisoner of war experience. Through this, it is possible that others will find that my story resonates with theirs; I am hopeful that they will similarly share their family narratives, as those of German-Canadians and German-Americans are scarce in literature exploring post-war German identity negotiation.

Similarly, I cannot avoid the blurring of lines between subject and object in this study. I am both the subject and object of study as much as my grandfather is. My analysis intimately connects our narratives, using the autoethnographic process to trace the transformation of his story of the camps as I become more actively involved in each retelling. I could not imagine attempting to develop or employ a purportedly objective method of analysis in this research.

While the reflections above may seem obvious when considering my highly subjective research questions, I have found few studies similar to my own in English that remove strategies of intended objectivity entirely. Historical texts examining post-war German narratives attempt to remove the hand of the historian entirely, using survey data or analysis of political statements or actions to make claims about German attitudes, beliefs and politics.²³ Somewhat more helpful are oral history studies that incorporate some

²³ For example, see Kattago (2001), Kleßmann (2001), and Niven (2006). Though these are comprehensive and well-researched accounts, none discuss or engage with the researchers' methodological approach or any problematics therein.

reflections on methodology and personal approach, such as the illuminating *What We Knew: Terror, Mass Murder, and Everyday Life in Nazi Germany* (Johnson & Reuband, 2005) and the studies of German survival stories described by Konrad H. Jarausch (2001) in *Living with Broken Memories*. Nevertheless, traces of quantitative strategies, attempts at objectivity (such as the use of identical questions for large groups of survey participants), and the desire to make generalizations about research findings frequently appear in these researchers' methodologies.

Most valuable to my research questions are the personal German non-fiction narratives that offer a point of view similar to my own, and those that employ autobiographical – although not autoethnographic – writing from which various structures and approaches are modelled. Though many are difficult to find in English, the exceptions I could source offer profound insights into the struggles and challenges faced by the children and grandchildren of war-time Germans. These include the groundbreaking *Traces of my Father* by Sigfrid Gauch (2002), which describes the author's attempts to reconcile his love and hate for his father Herman Gauch – the “desk-murderer” and “race research” physician – as he prepares his funeral. Two alternating sets of chapters (identified using Roman and Arabic numerals) speak first to his readers, descriptively and in telling the story of his arrangements for his father's funeral, and then directly to his father, providing anecdotes, reflections, and accusations that illustrate the complexity of their relationship. The structure of the writing mirrors the duality in Gauch's feelings; both loving his father and hating the Nazi, his father's dual identity is ultimately separated by Gauch in his writing; he uses the technique as a tool to “free [him]self of him” (p. 130).

In Niklas Frank's *In the Shadow of the Reich* (1991), this struggle is simplified somewhat, though his emotional turmoil is equally evident. Frank's text is vitriolic and accusatory, responding to his father's endless lies to the family about his guilt, which extended up to his execution in 1946 for war crimes committed during his time as the former Nazi Governor General of Poland. His text offers a set of memories offered exclusively from the son's perspective, frequently employing imaginative investment in stories told to him by his mother and other family members, using a chronological structure to describe his father's crimes and to explain the impacts they had on those communities under his control. Like Gauch, he writes directly to his father, but there is no sympathy or empathy to be found. There is no escape from Frank's angry and

accusatory language; he condemns his father, the German nation and its population. Frank (1999) states, "Wherever I go abroad and say that I'm German, people think 'Auschwitz.' And I think that's absolutely just" (p. 51).

Likely owing to the fact that my grandfather's role was insignificant when compared with older and more prominent Nazis like these, I see only a distant reflection of my story in theirs. Like many in this third generation of descendants, the "generation of the grandchildren," though I feel critical and question our roles, my frustration, anger and emotional navigation were never oriented towards blame or accusation. Instead, I feel that in sharing his own traumatic memory processes with me, and owing to his willingness to be emotionally vulnerable to me and to those audiences with whom I retell his story, I now share my grandfather's confusion and horror about the war, the Holocaust, and his peripheral but typical role within these events.

I aim to express these emotions, and their implications, by borrowing writing techniques from Carolyn Ellis, whose work seems to connect to my own struggles to construct emotional and personal narratives with larger social and cultural issues and stories. She works with storytelling, engaging the reader in experiencing her story, and through it finding their own connections and meanings.

Well, I start with my personal life. I pay attention to my physical feelings, thoughts, and emotions. I use what I call systematic sociological introspection and emotional recall to try to understand an experience I've lived through. Then I write my experience as a story. By exploring a particular life, I hope to understand a way of life, as Reed-Danahay (1997) says.

(1999, p. 671)

Though I will not be writing my family's narratives as a single story, I will use elements from this approach to explore my research questions through personal narratives that connect to larger issues of guilt, trauma, memory and experiences of victimhood. Specifically, I aim to use descriptive, accessible and emotive language to share stories anecdotally and to connect the reader to the particular experience of my family story. Combined with this storytelling, I will incorporate the analytical lenses that will inform my analysis: oral history's concept of intersubjective performance, and trauma studies engagement with the processes of denial and guilt. Using a method derived in large part from Hirsch's (1997, 2001, 2008) concept of postmemory, I will engage with my

grandfather's stories, with the stories I tell about his past, and with each of our roles in this shifting and ever-changing relationship. In a memory project framework influenced by descriptive and analytic autoethnographic writing techniques, these approaches will hopefully offer the reader an insight into my family narrative, and through it, the struggle to make meaning out of difficult and troubled family histories.

Chapter 4.

Prisoners of War: A Post-war Memory Project

Summers by the Water

My great-grandfather Alfred was an avid and methodical hobbyist. As my grandfather tells it, when he decided to undertake a hobby, it was an intense and serious venture. And if his photography and filmmaking exploits are any indication, the stories are true. The family archives contain stacks of photo albums filled with now-crumbling black pages, small, square photographs, and my great-grandfather's slanted, white writing titling each scene. His face appears in wild-looking costume parties with my great-grandmother Erna, on camping trips with their two boys, and in travel photographs from local adventures. A carved wooden box contains fragile glass slides with similar content, some even created for three-dimensional viewing, their slide-viewers creating a window into a frozen-still, black-and-white, family life in 1930s Germany.

I have Alfred to thank for my passions; I inherited his archive and many of his methodical habits. Ultimately, I believe that it is his work that has most deeply inspired my interest in our family's rich and textured history. The photographs, and their connection to my present family, were too tempting to ignore.

Beside these fragile, aging albums, is a small stack of silent, 8mm film footage – the youngest component of the archive – begun in 1959 with my great-grandfather's proudly titled "First Film," and ending in the early 1970s before a final movie appears in 1979, shot by my grandfather after Alfred's death: that of my parents' first visit to the Schulze family home in Victoria after my birth. All the rest of the footage ends almost a decade earlier, petering out with my great-grandfather's ill health; my great-grandmother and grandfather must have seen less reason to pursue his home moviemaking.

I was both the first grandchild and first great-grandchild of the family, and I can imagine my birth was an event special enough to warrant the re-emergence of the old 8mm camera. A simple family moment is captured as my parents give me a bath, smiling and presenting me to the camera. The reel is short – only a minute long – but watching it brings with it the strange and uncanny feeling that I was somehow present in a past I cannot remember. That, if only for a minute, I am part of the nostalgic and alluring archive that brings another mysterious era to life.

I seem to be alone in my interest in these movies, as I am the only one in several decades to watch them all the way through. My grandfather has always found Alfred's films especially boring. They're too slow, he says.

Bernhard: I tried, I mean, I tried. So I put in a reel: in Bonn, we arrive with the car, we get out of the car, we look over this, and we look over the city, then somebody comes, and then we look over the city again, and then they go stand under a tree, and then they go back to the car, and then they drive somewhere else, and then they sit down and have something to eat.
Sighs....

Liz: You find that a little dull?

Bernhard: Yes... yes!

Bernhard Schulze in conversation with the author, 2003

So, after borrowing the archive and a friend's Super 8 projector, I watched the movies alone at home, falling into a meditative nostalgia watching hours of mundane but sweet shots of daily life, first in Germany, and then – after the whole family's immigration to Canada by the early 1960s – at the lake near Victoria, British Columbia I knew so well from my childhood summers. Frequently out of focus and poorly framed, the soft, muted colour palette of my great-grandfather's 8mm Kodachromes is warm and inviting.

I first encountered the archive at my grandfather's home, where he's lived since 1959. Shortly after immigrating to Canada, he wrote to his father in Germany, asking for help with a down payment on a lake cottage near Victoria. It was pretty affordable at the time: the place was isolated and out of town, in a rather dirty and poorly maintained condition. But with his and his wife's industriousness, and his training in architecture in post-war Germany, my grandfather very slowly, but surely, completed renovations and additions, building a lovely house overlooking a gorgeous lake.

This house became the core site of my initial research. A concrete, basement bomb shelter built during the Cold War, filled with mysterious, crumbling antiques, a secret wall-safe containing the family archive, and the well of my grandfather's stories: together, there were carefully guarded treasures for an amateur family historian like myself.

Though the family has made more recent additions, spending decades of renovations fashioning a collage of architectural design, the oldest area still lived in is found in my grandfather's small suite, where most of our conversations have occurred. The smell of the rooms is distinct: permanently damp from the coastal rains, the rich smell of old, moist wood seeps from every crevice. Pushpin-filled maps, colourful trinkets and souvenirs from his travels adorn the walls. Albums and boxes of loose stamps are always lying nearby, the remnants of his now-sold stamp-dealing business, in which he still has a hand. The wallpaper is peeling in places; the carpet is worn and almost always a bit dusty. He doesn't think it needs cleaning *all* the time.

Stepping into his suite is like walking into a time capsule; so little has changed since my childhood. In his bathroom is a huge, deep, hand-tiled bathtub where my cousin, sister and I would warm up after long days swimming in the lake. My great-great grandfather's hand-carved armoires and lamps, unmoved in decades, bring a dark, medieval German feeling to the rooms. One of my first memories is of sleeping on the living room couch, waking up terrified after having a nightmare about a huge, black dog attacking me. I was so sure it was real; for years afterwards I was afraid to be alone there in the dark.

In these heavy rooms, where every object is weighted with memories, my grandfather indulges and invites my questions about his life. He shares photographs, stories, books and documents, attempting to translate his past into my present. The way he tells it, life was once about hardship brought on by circumstances beyond your control, and it's now about enjoying simple pleasures and luxuries while you can. That one day you can be shivering and eating the burnt bits of your daily potato ration out of a scorched tin can, while the next you can be headed home to your family, fortunate enough to avoid a terrible fate. And, if you're really lucky and you work very hard, one day you can indulge in a life of decadence: travel, good food, wine and the company of friends and family.

Ours is a small family that has stayed small over the years. The Canadian branch of the paternal (Schulze) side of the family started with my great-grandparents Alfred and Erna and their two sons: Fritz and Bernhard, my grandfather. After the war they all found their way to peaceful Vancouver Island and into isolated waterfront communities long before they were urbanized. Fritz came first, drawn to Vancouver Island, later inviting his brother to move there as well. In the late 1950s Bernhard and his young family made their way to the lake in Saanich, at the time still a cottage community not yet part of Victoria, joined by Alfred and Erna in a nearby house several years later.

Bernhard's wife, Jutta, and his children, Barb and Fritz (my father), appear regularly among the lake scenes Alfred filmed; my grandfather's home and his parents' were separated only by a small bay on the lake. When I visit the home, I sit on the dock and look up at the house, perched on a hill high above the lakefront. During their elementary school years, the kids would row a small boat across the narrow stretch of water before school each morning, climb up the stairs on that tall hill, then ride their bicycles along the winding lakeside road up to the local school. Knowing that lake and that road so well, when I watch the films I sometimes try to project myself there and then, behind the camera as I am now, filling in the missing sounds and the world outside of the frame from the images I see.

After seeing hours of footage of domesticity and the same nuclear family, I noticed one day a beautiful scene with two unfamiliar young boys playing with my father and aunt on a beach at my great uncle's home on the ocean. One day, in casual conversation about the films, I asked my father who they were. Family friends? "No," he said, "those were my cousins." These boys were close relatives. Two children in a small family that, at that time, was made up of only ten people. They were Bernhard's nephews, my uncles, now long dead after heartbreak, ultimately unsuccessful fights with haemophilia. Never mentioned, never discussed, only the moving images in front of me provided evidence of a tragic story we grandchildren were never told.

In the face of memoirs and stories from my forthcoming grandfather about a shame-filled and very complicated wartime past in Germany, this omission was a revelation: some stories were just too awful to tell.



Figure 6: Jutta and Fritz, at home at the lake – Saanich, BC; 1962

I never met my paternal grandmother. Bernhard's wife Jutta died years before I was born. Their daughter Barb had just been married to the son of a family friend, and there are lovely, professional photos of Bernhard and Jutta on the wedding day. They seem quietly content, dressed with elegance and flair.

I still can't get much of a story out of my family about the day she died; it comes in bits and pieces. I know that my grandfather and grandmother decided to go for a swim a couple of days after the big event. It was probably a warm summer's day. I know those days on that lake. I spent my childhood enjoying them, the smell of the grass and the summer flowers mixed with the gentle smell of lake water.

Walking along the grass to the lakeside, my grandmother stepped on a bee, or a hornet. Or maybe it was one of the wasps I've seen there so often. I don't know which it was, but she walked it off, and they swam in the cool water, enjoying the day.

I don't know how long they were out in the lake, but I know that when they came ashore she was already losing her vision. My grandfather had to carry her up from the water; she was already unconscious. He told me that she said a few words to him before the

end, and then the story gets blurry. There's something about Bernhard calling his father in a panic, asking what to do. Someone calls an ambulance and gets her to the hospital. Then, maybe driven by Alfred and Erna, my dad arrives. Neither my dad nor my grandfather remembers exactly how. They all learn that Jutta's allergy to bees was serious; they had known about it, but there had been some kind of miscommunication. It might have been a language barrier. My grandfather doesn't know what happened.

Now Jutta is in a coma; she won't wake up. My aunt is called back from her honeymoon by the coast guard, who had sent out word to locals to keep an eye out for a young couple fitting their description. They make their way back to Victoria. And then the family has to say goodbye. I don't know how this happens. All I know that within a few days of the sting, she's gone.

My parents' generation rarely speaks of what happened, but signs of Jutta have always been present: photos, family heirlooms, and reflections of her face in the women of our family. After more than 35 years, two other wives and a long-term partner for the past 25, Bernhard still wears his wedding ring. They all agree that we grandkids would have just loved her.

Once, early in film school, I told my grandfather that I would one day like to make a film about the story. It might be the only time I've seen him injured so deeply. "Oh, Lizzy. Why would you want to make a film about that?"

Performances of History

My grandpa loves to perform stories; for years, if someone would speak while he was telling an anecdote, he would pause and wait for them to finish. Sometimes he would stop his story altogether, annoyed at their rudeness. Without an attentive audience, the story wasn't worth telling.

Almost all of his stories connect to two contradictory themes, which in my desire to learn his storytelling skills, I find I frequently mimic. On the one hand, he tries to create an enduring and positive impression of life. He jokes, he laughs and lightens even the darkest tale; he's a consummate storyteller, and he's popular for it. People like him

when they meet him, as long as his humour and bluntness don't offend (which, softening in his old age, they now rarely do). His charm tends to win them over.

At the same time, he is obsessed with history, including his own, and from these histories he shares fatalistic and dark views on humanity. Ancient history, modern history – anything he can learn about, and learn from, he will read. And share. For years, sitting down with him meant listening to tales of feudal-era life, hearing about the conquests of one ancient leader or another. As a teenager, I would politely listen out of love, awkwardly fighting back yawns.

When he spoke of his own history, my interest would perk. Hidden in his wall-safe, he had photos to accompany his stories, and his descriptions connected me to the feelings and details of the events. I was hooked. When I received the first half his memoir in the mail, I read it through, and did the same with the second half when it was given to me two years later. He wrote it at the big wooden desk in his suite, on an old, noisy typewriter. The pages are filled with little handwritten notations and corrections; on the front page, in his handwriting, it says: "for Lizzy."

By the time I got these pages in hand, I knew well his connection to Nazism. He had explained the basics of his brainwashing, his short military career, and his imprisonment in a series of concise, episodic stories that became the primary material of the memoir. I had already justified his involvement to myself, identifying with his character in the stories he told in first-person narratives.

But as I learned more about the Holocaust, a kind of perverse fascination developed; probably because of my fatalism (surely adopted from the pervasive undertones of suffering and violence within his stories, which filled my childhood), I could logically believe what had happened, what we humans had done to one another, and I dug for details from his experience. I read testimonials of Holocaust survivors and news articles about the concentration camps, and I watched documentaries about the war. My research was neither thorough nor academic. I was fixated on the topic, examining the family photo albums for pictures that contained deeper, traumatic meanings I projected onto the faces of my family. Smiling faces and humorous stories elided the nightmares that surrounded my grandfather's youth in World War II Germany. But the swastikas, uniforms and gestures in the pictures spoke as loudly as his voice.

At some point in my research – I don't remember when or how it started – my mind started to fill with imagined memories from wartime and post-war Germany: fragmented images, sounds and powerful emotions that started to echo through my present as loudly as my own past. Marianne Hirsch's (2008) description of postmemory processes, second- and third-generation mediated connections to traumatic family experiences from previous generations, explained experiences I seemed to "remember" only by means of the stories, images and behaviours among which [I] grew up" but which were transmitted "so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right" (p. 106-7, original emphasis). Hirsch developed the concept of postmemory to explain the experiences of children of Holocaust survivors; yet, despite my family's connection to its perpetration, I found myself unable to describe the haunting feeling I sensed using any other framework. Though my family's experiences were only mildly traumatic in the context of the war and the Holocaust, it was this greater background and its too-brief appearance in my grandfather's stories that darkened and transformed their meaning in my mind. The silences and absences that suggested trauma, hinted at in moments within my grandfather's stories of wartime imprisonment and post-war revelations of complicit guilt, were unfinished stories I sought to complete.

My interest in our connection to this history deepened during a trip to Germany in the summer of 2000. Together with my grandfather, I toured castles and landmarks and architectural marvels, enjoying my first taste of Europe and its charming beauty. After he left for another side-trip, I spent a week with the wife he had married after Jutta; she was still a family friend, and my family was especially pleased that I would get to know her.

I certainly did get that chance: with the slow pace of life accompanying her age, the week with her was largely passed drinking tea and talking in her kitchen. As she told me often-strange stories of her life with and without my family, I drank so much peppermint tea I literally got sick, its "digestive" properties creating an acid overdose in my stomach. I finally discovered what was happening just before leaving, and recovered from the problem on my last day; she was supposed to be my last stop before returning home to Canada. My memories of her family stories from the years following Jutta's death are tinged with the intense physical pain that accompanied them.

Though I hadn't planned it, just before I left Germany I bought a ticket and hopped on an overnight train and went alone to Dachau concentration camp. I decided to join a guided tour, and walked around listening to the stories of life in the camp: "medical" experiments that sounded more like sadistic torture; trainloads of inmates left to die in closed train cars just before the war's end; liberation day, during which the prisoners literally tore apart their guards. A former inmate and Holocaust survivor was there, lingering outside the crematoria; the guide suggested that we leave him alone. That if he wanted to talk to us, he would; she said he was there most days telling his story to those he chose. I didn't know whether I wanted to be chosen or not, but it never happened in any case.

Strangely, standing in the site where so much horror had occurred was less impactful than seeing footage or photographs of that same place from 55 years before. I struggled to connect the sanitized buildings and memorials I now saw with the images depicting a parallel world of horror, pain and suffering. Standing there, I felt nothing, and by this I was deeply disturbed.

The Kid in the Photograph



Figure 7: Bernhard Schulze (far right) – Brittany, France; Summer, 1943

The photographs of my grandfather in his military uniform show him looking like a kid, no older than most of the high school students I teach. In some photos he stands proud, looking almost handsome in his fancy clothes, smiling or serious for the camera. In others, his childishness shows: he makes faces at his brother and his cadet friends, his lanky frame poses awkwardly, and his uniform hangs limp, too large for his lean body. These photographs are where I look for traces: traces of my grandfather's face in the teenager I see, traces of expressions and emotions, and the traces of the stranger he says he was.

Brainwashed. A good little Nazi cadet. It's hard to believe.

This same kid was wandering the German countryside, tired of the war, deserting from the Army and risking death, and ultimately the same kid was captured with so many others his age, imprisoned by the Americans as a prisoner of war in barbed wire camps where thousands of them starved to death. We know that on the ground, war is largely

fought by the very young, but when you see the faces of these kids, it's difficult to fathom. How could they kill, or be killed? How could they be the faces of the famous battles of Normandy, or Stalingrad, or Okinawa? From the photographs, it looks more like my grandfather was in costume, on some kind of bizarre interactive field trip.

I'm trying to establish a connection to this kid. I stack my books nearby, put away the articles. I close down the other files on my laptop. I sit quietly and I listen, waiting to hear something from my own mind. A vague voice or a few notes of music. Something to break up the static. Nothing.

I pull out the wartime photo albums, and I look at my teenaged grandfather. One of the pictures is intriguing; slightly out of focus, but still clear enough to make out lots of detail. Bernhard is on a road with other young cadets in uniform, with rifles and packs and bicycles. He's squinting at the sun. The swastika on his armband stares back at me. I look back to his face. For some reason, the connection is suddenly there.

He's cute, I think. Not yet handsome, but getting there. I try to imagine his voice higher, lighter; like the teenagers I teach. No, I can't do it. I just hear my grandpa: the deep, gravelly voice of an old man.

I imagine this same kid pulling out the small diary I've seen, scratching on its pages with a dull, short pencil every night. Just a couple of years later, far from this warm summer day in France, he's going to be writing in his diary in a meadow somewhere, huddled with a group of soldiers on a freezing night. All around him, Germany – his homeland – is collapsing. Months ago, standing under the only hot water showers in the military complex where they were on duty, his little brother told him that the war was lost. Now it's actually happening.

It's been an eventful day. He'd spent a couple of nights in the woods, deserting and getting caught, then deserting again, and suddenly he walks down the wrong pathway in the wrong village and the American forces are in front of him. Now he's been captured. He's cold, and he's given up on trying to escape, to get home; I'm sure he misses his bed and his mom's home cooking, and his stomach has probably started to grumble. In the diary, a few words tell the day's story:

April 13: (*Friday*)²⁴ Woken up by enemy flak. Walking through the woods, on the Weimar, it is supposed to be free of enemy forces. The Army (*Americans*) catches us at the entrance to a village. Windmotor. P.O.W. All my things thrown away, shameful march through the city of Jena, at night slept again in the open powder mill Jena (?), cold!

The text reads like notes – simple reminders of events you can't imagine forgetting, though my grandfather's frequent question marks, added in his recent translation of the diary, speak to the deterioration of his memory over time. Having heard him tell the story, and having read it in his memoir, I fill in the gaps myself. I remember that “windmotor” is his word for a powered windmill, and that the walk through the small town where his capture occurs is drawn out in the stories I heard and read much later. There, it's told in a way that makes it kind of funny:

After a while we approached a village, on a dirt road, between fields. There was this wind motor in front of us, turning and rattling. Rattling very loudly, we wondered why it rattled so loudly – some said that it can't be just the wind motor, maybe some cars or motors behind? One of us ran into the field and hid himself. It was strange but we cautiously proceeded until there came a stop to the rattling noise – and a loud voice in broken German: “Come here!” We looked at where the voice sound came from (from the right) and we got one major surprise: there were half a dozen tanks, ten or so personnel carriers and a few cars plus soldiers on foot – and all had their guns aimed at us – Americans. Oops. We saw one soldier approaching us, halfway, he was perhaps 50 yards away, the American lined up might [sic] about 100 yards away, on a parallel road leading out of the little village. He saw our two guns and asked whether we wanted war, certainly a somewhat rhetorical question under these circumstances, but we could answer truthfully that we didn't want any such thing and handed him our guns, which he hit against a tree and bent them into uselessness. (Schulze, 1994, pp. 39-40)

After this section, he expands on the rest of the day's story in different ways than one might expect from the way the story is told in the diary. There is no mention of the shameful walk through Jena. Instead, he writes of a trip to a local bar so that the

²⁴ All bracketed notes in italics were added during the 2012 translation of this diary by Bernhard Schulze. “(?)” notations were added to suggest that he no longer remembers the meaning of the preceding comment.

Americans could have drinks ("in rather a civilized manner both ways"), recounts an insider wink with the young bartender (a more successful deserter), and describes the incident when his bag was thrown away as a comical story: "He wouldn't let me recover it and said 'all new' – meaning I would get all new things. He was an optimist." (1994, p. 40) He describes April 13 as "the day when guardian angels have their day off." (p. 40) Knowing him, I am sure he's joking. For years, he has proudly and incredulously quoted the statistic of how many Americans believe in guardian angels (68%, from the survey result he read) as evidence of common stupidity.

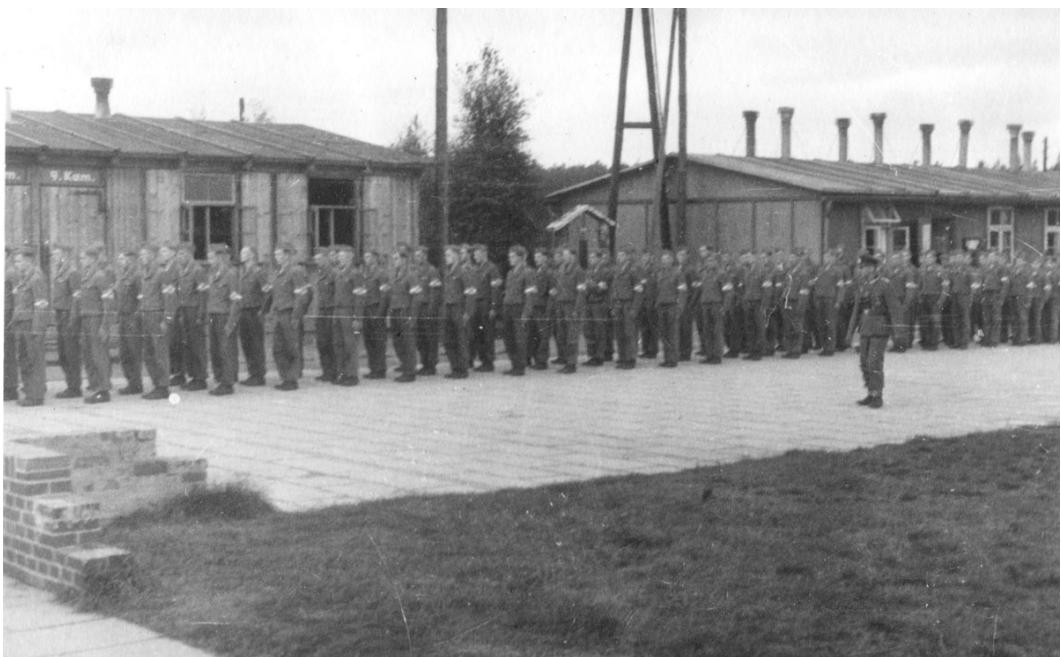


Figure 8: Photograph by Bernhard Schulze: Military Training Exercises – Husum, Germany; 1943

When I look at the photo, I imagine that the Americans are capturing the uniform, not the kid inside it. He might be dangerous, sure. But he's not – at least, not to me. This squinting, skinny kid didn't get the chance to be dangerous. Even if he wanted to be. His story is a different one.

Yet it's entirely possible that my inability to see young Bernhard as dangerous is because the loving grandfather I know now is conflated with the kid I see in the Nazi uniform. I know logically that kids just like him were in the majority on WWII battlefields; in Nazi Germany, they were involved in atrocities I will never comprehend. But I can feel the struggle between myself as a loyal granddaughter and as a researcher: in the case

of the imprisonment story, the granddaughter, who has listened to the same story told the same way for nearly two decades, wins.

My sense of Bernhard's harmlessness is connected to how the story was told. My grandpa's storytelling is always animated, jovial and lively, and this story is no different. When he tells us this story in the American war cemetery in Germany, when we are later that day heading to the Bad Kreuznach former camp site, he acts out the scene with his body, and imitates the voices of the Americans, even making fun of their broken German as they asked him and his comrades if they wanted war. When he says "Wollen sie krieg?" in that hilarious tone, or mimics the way they asked for their watches, I have to smile. My grandpa has made it funny to be captured by your enemies and robbed of your property at the end of the Second World War.

The silences and pauses, and the moment of mild bitterness in describing how he felt later, are noteworthy exceptions to this positive performance of capture; Bernhard the storyteller becomes more reflective in sharing these moments, yet they nevertheless appear for the first time on camera.

The fact that I can find humour in such a story – which I would otherwise imagine with concern and dread, knowing what comes after – reveals the intersubjective performance at play in our construction of wartime stories. Abrams (2010) explains that three performances occur in every oral history interaction, between the respondent with him- or herself, the interviewer and the respondent, and between the respondent and the past and present cultural discourses at play (p. 59). In the diary, my grandfather's performance is likely for himself, while in the memoir and the documentary footage, the subjectivity of both my grandfather and I are shaped by each other's; as my grandfather is constructing a subjectivity in each performance of the capture story, I "devise an 'appropriate performance' in response" (p. 58), depending on the circumstance of my engagement with the story. At times I listen and, as a granddaughter pleased by her grandpa's story, or a filmmaker listening for easily edited sound-bites, simply go along for the ride. At other times, as a more critical granddaughter, a Canadian and a researcher, my intersubjective performance requires that I probe deeper into the story to find different contexts and interpretations, comparing performances and observing the ways in which memory and changing subjectivities have altered my experience of the

narrative. I explore the reasons he has for framing his stories as he does, and I want to know more.

In the case of the capture story, I know that while the diary is rich in the information it presents, it more simply represents the interaction between my grandfather and his imagined future self. However, when compared with the diary, the memoir and the documentary descriptions and details take on new intersubjective meanings. There is obvious intentionality in these performances. In the memoir, his stated intention was to connect with us, his grandchildren, as “storyteller” grandpa. The capture story is episodic, entertaining, and begins the narrative of his imprisonment by reflecting the naïveté he must now feel he possessed. Though the kid in the scene he describes is uncomfortable, and likely nervous, he describes a situation sprinkled with moments of humour. I imagine the young man from the photographs winking at that pub’s young bartender, unsure of his own future, but willing to join in on a secret joke.

But in this added humour, this performance of the story, it’s hard to sort out how cadet Bernhard really felt. His diary contains traces that, despite this lightness, suggest that the moment of his capture is a much more scary story than it feels in his retellings to his grandchildren; the “shameful walk” through the town of Jena, and the loss of all his belongings. Even the “cold!” night he mentions. In the memoir he also mentions that at one point they were all lined up against a wall, and that he thought they might be shot; instead, they were looted, their belongings searched for valuables and dumped in the woods. In the diary, this is written in a few words: “all my things thrown away.” Almost all the notes made in the diary are perfunctory and referential. “Windmotor. POW.”: two words describe a new life, even if it isn’t to be long-lived.

For most, I imagine the process of capture would be frightening and unsettling; yet, framed for his Canadian audience, Bernhard the storyteller, and for his grandchildren, Bernhard the grandfather, frames the story in a humorous light. Perhaps this is because now, with the safety and perspective of his much older present self, he can laugh at the fear. Perhaps this story’s performance is altered now that he is living in Canada, told this way because without the humour, it’s not sympathetic, and he’s potentially seen as a villain angry at the downfall of the Nazi regime. It’s also possible that he simply enjoys

telling the tale the way it's evolved – that as a storyteller, the responses of his audiences helps to shape his story, and the way he sees his former self within it.

Having heard his capture story so many times I can easily recount it from memory, I imagine the scene as he always tells it. My postmemory of the event is influenced by his narration, and by the tones, expressions and pauses in-between the words he uses; my imagination brings the details to life, filling in the gaps. I try not to confuse the young, lanky kid from the photographs with the tall, grey grandfather I know and love, but otherwise, my mind's eye fills out a landscape whose only solid objects are those he mentions. I see the boy in the photograph leaning against the wall in the bar. I hear the sound of American voices loudly and boisterously cracking jokes while the Germans mill about, trying not to move. It's a comedic but awkward scene I feel I almost remember. I can see it in my mind's eye, and I wonder how I would construct the scene on film.

As a filmmaker, my role in this story changes yet again; now I think about how to visualize this moment, what soundscape I would design, and I ponder how to reconstruct this memory without being overstated and obvious; at the time he told it I am sure that my grandpa's sense of performance and audience is at play in the various versions of this capture story. In the film version of the story, knowing that my intention was to screen the documentary both in student and professional film festivals, my grandfather manifests an intersubjective shift by positioning the story in a even more amusing light, in direct contrast with what I imagine he was feeling at the time of his capture. He speaks in a lighter and more animated tone: as he imitates the voices of the Americans speaking German, he adds careful pacing and intonation, and transforms the facts of the story into a longer, engaging narrative. I asked him to tell the story, having heard it told before; I knew that he would be aware of the camera, and that he would tell it again with my audience in mind.

His present self, reframing the event not only from his current perspective, but also considering the view of his grandchildren and eventually the imagined point of view of future film audiences, dismisses fear and transforms a potentially frightening story into a funny one. And I, loving granddaughter and new filmmaker, looking for a clean narrative arc, don't ask questions or prod at this story. It creates a nice dramatic contrast to the camp's starvation story to come. I knew this as I prepared for the trip; I knew how I

intended to add this component in the overall structure of my story, and so I had him tell it in a German war cemetery to juxtapose this tone with the dangerous reality he faced during his capture.

But now, as a researcher examining the footage 10 years after the filming and editing of that documentary, I read other meanings into the interaction of the story's telling and the cemetery as a site of memory. As Nora (1989) explains, *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory) exist because of the separation between lived memory existing in a state of "permanent evolution," and the incomplete and problematic reconstructions of memory as history (p. 8). These sites serve to intentionally embody memory in static representations that are at once material, symbolic and functional (p. 19). The cemetery I see as such a *lieu de mémoire*, filled with crosses representing the memory of lost soldiers and, en masse, the enormity of the war. This is a site that perhaps, "without commemorative vigilance, history would soon sweep away" (p. 12).

My grandfather, alive in a sea of those who didn't survive, his living memory soon to become history, through his storytelling remembers and relives the moments in which luck and wits kept him out of a similar graveyard. He was lucky to survive, and we are lucky to exist, and in this site the actual people who have died are symbolic, rather than real. In the film version of this story, we too are symbolic.

In this site, where the memory of the war is embodied in a sea of identical crosses, my grandfather, my cousin and I all walked freely on the graves, leaning on them, my cousin even lying down on a grave at one point on our trip. To some, these actions could seem very disrespectful, and I now feel that they were. It's embarrassing that I didn't notice it at the time; to us, the cemetery's meaning, and the graves themselves, was altered by the purpose of our visit. By filming in the cemetery, the location was transformed from a memorial site – constructed to connect grieving or reflective visitors to the memory of those buried there, or to the concept of the enormity of war's destructive effect on human life – into a backdrop or a setting to accompany my grandfather's story of capture and impending trauma. It was an integral part of the narratives of intergenerational storytelling we were collectively performing on-site in Germany: the devoted granddaughter and filmmaker documenting her grandpa's stories, the bored

granddaughter exhausted to hear the story yet again, and the war veteran grandfather, sharing his dramatic and humorous tale of survival.

By staging the retelling of this story using a predetermined setting, my construction of the story was as intentional as my grandfather's. Together we created an intersubjective performance of an event in an entirely different tone than its occurrence. Its role as a narrative device was more important to us than the desire to accurately remember it as part of historical events.

When the camera is pointed at this performance, my grandfather and I overtly use it to enhance his story for both his granddaughters and his imagined audience; he looks into the lens, gestures towards me behind it, reads information he wants to share, walks away, then returns to tell stories and make comments. I follow him, documenting his process while ignoring my own; I barely remember that trip, as the entire experience was mediated through a two-inch LCD screen on my camera. Christine appears less interested in our performance, even seeming to avoid the camera's gaze; as soon as he finishes his capture story, she asks her own unrelated questions about the graves on which they had been standing. Throughout the filming, as I perform my role as dutiful granddaughter, my camera primarily following my grandfather, she has her own position as a more independent and separate entity. I stay glued to him, not wanting to miss a moment.

It pays off in little ways throughout the trip. As we're about to leave the cemetery, Bernhard returns to share a story about his best friend from childhood, who disappeared from the infantry on the eastern front; years earlier, he had found a patch of clover filled with four-leafed plants. My grandfather laughs and lightens the story of his friend's disappearance with this image; yet it's me who reframes his memory by saying, "Guess they didn't bring him luck, though."



Figure 9: Bernhard Schulze – Brest, France; Summer, 1943

Play Time

The lake house in Victoria is relatively isolated, and perhaps as a consequence, so were we three granddaughters when we spent our summers there. There were kids at nearby homes, but somehow we just weren't interested in spending time with them. I think it started with my strong desire to enjoy our time together on our own, but the feeling

spread through us all eventually. My sister and I were separated from our cousin the rest of the year, living with our mom in Edmonton. With only four or five weeks together each summer, we felt a strong need to make the most of our time together while it lasted.

My dad, also living in Victoria, had to work most days, as did my aunt. My uncle was there at the house, but as a teacher, was frequently busy in the summers preparing his lessons for another school year. My grandfather, though he loved spending time with us, also loved quiet. He usually abandoned the house for the majority of our visit: he was a world traveller, and preferred to miss the drama of three kids' chaotic summers in favour of another adventure. To us, it felt like the house was ours, and we loved it.

Our days were spent in childish leisure activities I remember with deep affection. Rain or shine, we would always swim as much as possible. In summers when the often cloudy and mild west coast weather prevented the normal heating of the lake, we would build obstacle courses that would raise our body heat and end in a courageous jump into the cold water. We would tread water, trying to stay warm, staying in the water until my skinny little sister would start shivering. Only then was it time to get out and warm up in grandpa's tub; our determination was strong, but we did have our limits. When the sun was out and the smells and sounds of the lake were enticing and intoxicating, we would spend hours practicing diving, handstands and silly, improvised synchronized swimming routines. As a teenager, when (according to our parents) I was old enough to "supervise" my sister and my cousin, we would use the family's white aluminium rowboat to make day trips out to a tiny island on the lake. Motorboats would whiz by with water-skiers in tow, making small waves into which we would run and dive from the island's rocky shore. Missing them was always a disappointment.

The house was also a playground filled with amusements. The concrete bomb shelter was filled with old liqueur and wine glasses, which we would use for our own little parties. There were boxes of fabric, empty cigarette cases and German books and trinkets from bygone eras. A playhouse had been built for us kids when we were very young, but after years of our neglect, had become infested with spiders seeking shelter and nesting grounds. One year we made an epic attempt to reclaim it, waging a war against the eight-legged hordes within. Terrified of spiders, we covered every inch of

skin, tied our hair back, and armed ourselves with sticks and cans of pesticide. It was a battle we may have won that day, but the smell of Raid kept us out of the playhouse long enough for the spiders to win the war.

Parts of the house had a low, flat roof, and we would climb a ladder (against the rules when my cousin was small) to bring a picnic lunch we could warm on the shingles: soda crackers with processed cheese, lunch meats, pickles, fruit and other snacks were our fine delicacies. Sometimes we would end up getting in trouble for these rooftop picnics, though one day my Dad told us how he too used to climb up on that roof, throwing pebbles at his big sister when she would be dropped off at the door by a date. We felt somehow vindicated, and kept up our picnics with better precautions.

We kids loved to write and perform plays for our family, practicing for hours on summer afternoons. Little is remembered from these ridiculous stories, though they were always musical comedies. We remember a bit of a song from one play, titled “We Clean for Money,” and another about a seaweed monster, inspired by our disgust in touching the lake’s slimy plants. After a Christmas trip to Mexico one year, we came back with a spoof of the science fiction TV series *The X-Files*, where Scully and Mulder were Scummy and Mouldier, investigating disappearances on the beaches of Mexico. It’s the only “script” we still have, written as an outline, its story inspired by our love of the hilarious “news” in our favourite tabloid paper, the *Weekly World News*.

After years of hearing family stories, and with a number of productions under our belts, we eventually decided to turn our comedic lens on ourselves. We wrote a play about the Schulze family from the time when our parents were teenagers. We constructed scenes from the stories we had always heard: about my Dad’s mischief, family squabbles, and a particularly hilarious but somewhat vague story about my grandfather getting drunk and ending up in a bathtub on the lawn. We exaggerated, filled in the gaps, structured it into a play, and started rehearsals.

A few days into this process, we told my uncle about the story; we were sure this was the best play yet. He surprised us with a warning that he didn’t think anyone would find it funny; he worried that we would hit a nerve and upset someone. We were shocked enough not to continue. The whole point had been to laugh and enjoy the stories, and we didn’t want hurt feelings. Yet, as kids, we didn’t understand why people would be

upset: if the stories had been told to us as funny anecdotes from a happy past, and what was the harm in retelling them ourselves? I was suddenly connected to a mysterious feeling of unease. I wondered, what was hiding underneath the comedy?

I find my uncle's warning has stuck with me through all my family research, and in every bit of writing and video work I produce. I feel compelled to share our stories, to use the narratives of our past to connect to others, and to become a better storyteller myself. The strange collision of the serious, the tragic and the comedic is common in our family history, and makes for great anecdotes and rich narratives. People are often interested when I share the details of our past, and of course it encourages me to share more. While every story isn't my own to tell, they have been told and re-told, passed down to me with intention. Whether or not I was my grandfather's target, as the eldest granddaughter I have, in part, internalized his history. His stories are now an integral part of me: powerful comedies and tragedies, told explicitly or revealed through signs and silences. Both create postmemory processes I now consider a part of my own identity.

Yet, like my uncle, I don't know for sure how each story will be understood by my family until it's been performed, even if they agree to support its creation and release into the public eye. I never want to hurt them, and feel a strong desire to censor myself, to protect them in the process of writing about our lives together. I carefully phrase my sentences, try to protect and elide those who did not choose to be directly involved in my projects, and at the same time strive to tell as full and meaningful a story as possible.

For example, as this project is largely about a grandfather and his grandchildren, my parents' generation is largely missing from my writing. Similarly, the stories of my great uncle Fritz, a war veteran in his own right, and a presence in my grandfather's photographs, are completely missing, as I grew up largely without him in my daily life. I simply never heard his stories, and with my grandfather's narratives already a dominant force in my life, I never sought them out either. In the same way, with the absence of my grandmother Jutta and my great-grandmother Erna, the voices of women from this era are totally missing. These stories I miss especially when I look at the photographs of the women in my family.

I do have a few wartime family stories from women: one about Jutta losing her pet dog to wartime starvation, which upset her deeply as a teenager, and another about my great-great-grandmother, stuck in the basement of her bombed-out home, screaming to passers-by for rescue. These are rare stories, however – for my generation, without female figures that had lived through the war, our postmemory processes have been mediated by dominant, male stories so powerfully that I frequently elide my own gender completely.

It wasn't until my grandfather gave me a book about women's stories of wartime rape and expulsion (Neary and Schneider-Ricks, 2002), again mediating my discovery, that I even thought to ask if my grandmother (a teenager at war's end) had been raped. They lived in Halle, in an eastern zone of Russian occupation, but all the stories I heard about the time were my grandfather's. Just back from the POW camp, he had fled from the threat of Russian re-capture and hid out in his grandmother's garden shed in a nearby town. But what, I imagined, had happened to Jutta? She was young and beautiful – a prime target (Anonymous, 2000) – and in all likelihood had at least been in danger. "No, nothing like that," my grandfather said when I asked about it. He would have known, he was sure; they had a very honest relationship, and he was sure she hadn't undergone this terrible experience so common to women in the east (MacDonogh, 2007).

Nagging questions prompted by my own realization of many story strands never explored, start to surface. I'm reminded of a repeated childhood memory: after-dinner drinks (too many, perhaps), sending the men – my uncle, father, my grandfather and his brother – into loud, boisterous, testosterone-fuelled debates about history, business, war and politics. The table would always need to be cleared, the dishes needed cleaning – the women and children (all of us girls) would usually, quietly, slip away, taking care of the details and moving to other rooms in the house for our own conversations.

We're strong women, the Schulzes. We could have stayed to hold our own in whatever discussion was underway. But the atmosphere was so intense, the "debate" so like an argument that I (at least) didn't enjoy it, preferring other, more peaceful activities after dinner.

Frequently, raised voices would carry down the tiled hallways towards our quiet space. We might return to the kitchen – next to their still-raging debate – for a cup of tea. But

by then the heated discussions would often blow themselves out. Or transform into a game of Skat, a German card game complex enough to elude my passive attempts to learn it through observation. And then, when the house was a bit quieter, if it wasn't too late, we grandchildren might return to reform the family group.

Knowing how many times this scene played out, I wonder what conversations I missed in the absence of my grandmother. What would her stories have been? What other stories or memories might have dominated my childhood? In these thoughts, her absence becomes a presence, representing whole avenues of thought left unexplored.

All these missing voices are characters in the stories I tell; even when I don't explicitly bring them forth, they are both present and absent, constructed in my postmemory processes. The tension this creates is not one I can resolve; instead, I use it as an integral part of this project. By doing so, I hope to illuminate these problematics, both for those who read this, and for myself. Despite (or perhaps because of) my uncle's warning, I am performing our family history after all.

Intersubjectivity, Suffering and “Camp life”

Without intending to, I am constantly comparing and contrasting my grandfather's narrative about his experiences in the Prisoner of War camp with the accounts I have read from Nazi concentration camp prisoners. With my grandfather's every mention of thirst, hunger, rations or poor food supply, I think about the descriptions of watery soup and bread in Auschwitz. When he tells of sleeping in the exposed, rainy, cold field, lice infesting their clothes, I think of the cramped bunks at Dachau and Buchenwald, where six or nine people would share a torturous space built for two or three. His mention of a case of typhus in another part of the Bad Kreuznach camp reminds me of the rampant disease that killed so many prisoners at Bergen Belsen at war's end. The American guards' random shooting into the camp I compare to immeasurable SS brutality. And so on and so on.

Of course, it is problematic to attempt to equate or compare the suffering of German prisoners of war to the systematic genocide of the Jewish, Roma, and other “non-Aryan” populations of Europe. The process of *Aufrechnung* (the settling of scores or reckoning

up) is dangerous for many reasons, including – as was feared by opponents to the memorialisation of German suffering – the possibility of allowing perpetrators who were also victims to use such reasoning to lay their own past crimes to rest (Moeller, 2006). And yet in describing the enclosure camp in which he was kept, it is difficult to separate Bernhard's story from the greater context of the burning, crumbling Third Reich. The Allied forces were discovering Nazi concentration camps in the months preceding and during his imprisonment: Auschwitz by the Russians in January, 1945, Buchenwald by the Americans and Bergen Belsen by the British in April, 1945, to name a few.

It is impossible to definitively determine if, as many German prisoners of war maintained, the Allies decided to wreak vengeance through starvation on their captured perpetrators after what they had seen. This idea of vengeance was hotly debated in the wake of the publication of James Bacque's *Other Losses* (1989), in which the author made bold claims about the motivations and drastic impacts of the lack of food and shelter in American and French camps in Germany. What emerged from those discussions is the strong likelihood that in the chaos of surrender and German collapse much of what happened in the camps is either partially undocumented, inaccurate, or difficult to interpret with clarity (MacKenzie, 1992). My grandfather's story about suspect statistics from POW camps, post-war forced labour camps, large numbers of prisoners transported in open rail cars, disease and poor living conditions in the Bad Kreuznach camp are reminiscent of the treatment of Germany's concentration camp victims, and immediately suggest a problematic comparison.

Was the treatment vengeance, a fitting punishment for Nazi crimes, or was it the circumstantial condition of dealing with millions of surrendering enemy forces? Scholars' deductions decades later can do little to answer the question: for the Germans who lived through the experience, nor for those who have an investment in seeing the situation from the Allied perspective (MacKenzie, 1992; Moeller, 2006).

In my research, I've noticed that my grandfather doesn't mention any of these thoughts or issues in his diary. Even now I have only rarely even heard him speak of his camp experience and the Nazi camps in the same conversation. He's aware that the comparison is dangerous, offensive, and unpalatable to Canadians. In Germany,

perhaps these conversations run differently, but here in Canada, even German-Canadians mustn't equate the suffering of Germans and their victims.

Before his release, Bernhard hadn't found out yet about many of the specific conditions of Nazi concentration camps – this was to come much later. Hearing American announcements of Nazi atrocities while at Bad Kreuznach, he says now that he believed the information to be exaggerated propaganda. He has always tried to remind us grandchildren, raised in Canada with a free press, that Germany in the 1940s was so rife with propaganda as to have confused many people about what was truth and what was fiction. This was one reason for his belief that the news of concentration and extermination camps to be simply an American extension of this practice; from his description of post-war struggles, I can imagine that another was the inability to understand that such horrors could actually happen in reality, and worse, in his and his country's name. He was not alone; for many, the idea of systematic murder simply surpassed their imagination (Johnson & Reuband, 2005). The details were simply too horrific to believe.

Though it's hard to imagine in a post-Holocaust world, where images and films about the Shoah fill popular and historical culture, I frequently try to imagine a time before this unimaginable rumour became a fact to the rest of the world. Photographs and documentary footage of the camps are so shocking as to create a barrier that has to be overcome to try to understand the reality they represent. And though Holocaust denial is one of the most despicable viewpoints I can imagine, underneath the layers of racism and politics may be a natural denial reaction to the unspeakability and unrepresentability of the events. As with many post-war Germans, avoiding, rationalizing or attempting to diminish the realities of Nazi crimes may be a defensive response to not having your own trauma recognized in the face of the enormity of the suffering experienced in the Holocaust (Lederman, 2012).

I don't know if my grandfather ever felt these sentiments, but I do know that by the time he arrived in Canada, he was informed enough about many of the facts of the Holocaust to know that his own suffering was insignificant in comparison. I know he was deeply disturbed to realize his complicit guilt in Nazi crimes, and yet, after his imprisonment, had his own sense of suffering and victimization to work through here in Canada.

At one point in the documentary footage, he seems to become frustrated by this struggle and it plays out on-screen: he shares that he wishes he could clarify his conversation with an American soldier about his political leanings, assuming that the man must have imagined him a liar for denying Nazi party membership. He seems frustrated by the situation, and seeing this emotion, I zoom in to capture his more subtle expressions and to take advantage of his unscripted and unplanned moment of honesty. It makes a great film moment, but its intimacy is now uncomfortably exploitative to me. I struggle to watch the scene:

To this day I'm sorry that I couldn't explain it to him, because we were told, 'You answer only questions, you don't say anything unless you are asked.' I would have told him today, 'Some classes were transferred, they were all forced, or they were just told they were members of the Nazi parties [sic] and some classes were not. I couldn't tell him that. And he must have been a little confused and thought one of us is a liar. That's all I have to say about that. That was the only political question I got. I mean I was nineteen years old. How political can you get except being brainwashed? (*long pause*) And the brainwashing took some time to get over, took some time to unlearn. The heroes became the crooks and the crooks became the heroes.

(Schulze, 2003)

Bernhard's sense of unease and unsettlement is clear in these words; his head bows, his eyes focus somewhere in the distance. Caught feeling both guilty for his role in the Nazi regime, and victimized by his own government's propaganda, this moment is clearly upsetting to him, reconnecting him to the emotions and thoughts from the time of his release. He shares this with me, his granddaughter, but also with our shared documentary audience, clarifying and justifying his positions and connecting to post-war German identity struggles. As my grandpa's (and our co-produced) stories reveal, I don't believe he was ever able to fully reconcile the tension between these conflicting feelings and identities. I believe I inherited it with the postmemory processes in which I engage.

Traumatic Absences

I start to hear loud static again, this time with loud voices of politicians and angry German street protesters mixed in, fighting over all these complicated issues. So I look at the photo of the unfamiliar teenager, and try to connect again to young Bernhard:

skinny and aching with cold, hungry and thirsty, and perhaps starting to regret that he didn't run into the woods to hide like the other kid in his group of deserters. He's been shuffled around from one small group to a larger one of 200 people, then into a group of thousands of German soldiers in a field, then finally sent into the Bad Kreuznach camp, with tens of thousands of soldiers grouped together in a patchwork quilt of fenced-off squares of open land. When he arrived in that huge field, the camp was so new that they were still digging the fence posts and stringing up the barbed wire. They had a big machine, he said. A fence-digger. I try to imagine how it sounded, grinding away, loud amongst all the raised voices, young and old. Finding a spot in the crowd to sit down, to start digging out a hole; he and his friend Walter settled in, as their army training had instructed them to do. Some men decided to run for it, but Bernhard and his friend Walter stayed put; they were content, he said, not knowing what was to come.

The situation changed rather quickly.

Like most people in physical stress and danger, from the diary entries it is clear that Bernhard's focus while in the camp, for the most part, was on the immediate conditions of his own life: entries almost exclusively discuss food, health, weather and rumours of prisoners' possible release or transfer, and are sprinkled with rare comments about family and a post-war future. So many of his diary entries talk about hunger. A few are descriptive enough to help me to imagine what it would have felt like to be there:

- April 15: Cold, cold, thirst. Lined up for water for a few hours. Camp life. No blanket or tent cloth, little food, much thirst, lice. The war is supposed to be over... That will be another cold night.
- May 4: There is only one problem: food supply. Hunger now for days. First effects can be noticed. Today 1/3 full of container with meat/veggies, $\frac{3}{4}$ of a potato, raw, 5 cookies, 1 spoon tomato. Did Russians ever get treated like that? What would mother say?
- May 9: It's hard to believe with how little a human being can get along. Effects of undernourishment, all the time night fails (*black in front of our eyes*), pudding knees.
- May 16: After hours of waiting half of the people in our camp area moved away. Did not move. Move cancelled since we were almost officers. Got some potatoes, so we are a little less hungry than the others. We barter Harald's wristwatch for cigarettes – we live!

May 29: Quite tired and lazy, I doze and sleep almost the whole day in our hole. Today injections. The eating containers (*lid of gas mask holder*) must get disinfected – they are to be blamed for the typhus, not the hunger. I am not afraid, I doze and continue to be hungry.

June 5: Recently food supply so-so tolerable, about 1/3 liter thin milk soup, about 1 liter thin veggie soup, 1/4-1/5 of a loaf of white bread. We hardly ever get up before noon.

At points in the diary, American K-rations and better food supplies are provided, to great excitement; Bernhard lists the menu items in detail. Only in moments like these does he write about home and his imagined post-war life. Yet he does mention discussions, organized to share knowledge and pass the time, and (I imagine, though he doesn't mention it in his memoir) to distract themselves from the gnawing hunger that filled their waking hours.

As with the starving, desperate “cellar Germans” living in the basements of post-war Germany’s ruins, made famous by journalist Stig Dagerman’s (1988) accounts of their lives in his journalistic reports in 1946, Bernhard’s diary illustrates that when his hunger is at its most intense, he seems largely unable to focus on any greater lessons or messages he could be learning during his forced confinement during the defeat of the Nazi regime. As Dagerman aptly observed, “hunger is a very bad teacher” (p. 13).

Reading this is a strange experience for me, as a granddaughter and as a researcher. I hear my grandfather’s contemporary voice in my head, even though I see the kid in the photograph staring at me, reminding me that he’s not the same person. I imagine from the few photos I’ve seen of the Rhineweisenlager that I know what this landscape looked like; all these empty fields looked pretty much the same, but having visited the site of his former camp, I know that the steep vineyard hill on which it sat would have added even more challenges to the situation. I imagine the soldiers tramping up and down the hill for every bit of food or water they could scrounge. I imagine their voices raised in anger at times; at other times I imagine what it was like to hear the weighty silence of a group exhausted in their struggles.



Figure 10: Drawing from the original wartime diary of Bernhard Schulze. His caption reads: "April 14, 1945: Figure in Kreuznach camp with all his luggage. Type 23rd Company"

When I hear wartime stories of suffering, images of concentration camp inmates invariably rise to my mind. In all my research, I have seen thousands of these images, and only ten or twelve online pictures of the barbed-wire enclosures and their inhabitants. The process of contextualizing my grandpa's stories is mediated in part through these pictures, and the accounts I've read about starvation and death rations; the sheer volume of this media makes it impossible for these pictures not to rise in my

imagination while reading my grandfather's brief notes about watery soup and bread, despite all my best efforts to see the two scenarios independently.

Part of the issue is that in my grandfather's diary, the writing is so sketchy that it leaves perhaps too much room for my own projections. In this situation, my subjectivity is made overtly problematic, even to me. When the story is too incomplete, I am aware of the gaps I am filling in, and the researcher in me rises up to protest.

Yet, if I read the diary without context, I have little choice: my grandfather's entries are so brief and focused that it is difficult to understand why any other camp details are not mentioned. Bernhard stayed in the camp with two friends, Harald and Walter, but otherwise few other names appear. There are brief comments about Russian prisoners of war (as above) and mentions of German officers in the camp's "committee"; we don't know who he spoke with every day, from whom his items are bartered or stolen, and who was sent to the "hospital tent" which housed the sickest of the men.

Clearly striking is the lack of commentary around the starvation deaths that were occurring in the camp. Though Bernhard says that of his graduating class of 26 youth, none died in Allied prisoner of war camps, the memorial cemetery contains almost 2,000 graves, most from the time of Bernhard's presence in the camp. He likely saw bodies, or witnessed extreme starvation, disease and exposure that brought prisoners close to this point. When we were at the cemetery during our filming, walking among the graves of the men who died in the camp, my cousin mentioned that he probably knew some of them. His only comment in return was a quiet, "Yeah, probably." Yet no explicit mention occurs in the diary. There is the brief suggestion of the possibility of death with the entry on May 16, as the barter of Harald's watch for food prompts the comment: "we live!" Whether somewhat tongue-in-cheek or completely sincere in his excitement, it is the only time when the reality of his life or death situation is explicitly mentioned. As a reader and a granddaughter having heard the stories of the experience time and time again, this omission is startling enough to prompt more active inquiry: the loyal granddaughter gives way to the persistent granddaughter and researcher.

It is possible that this absence in his diary is owing to a self-focused survival instinct, but the notation of rumours, ponderings and worrying about his future life suggest that other factors may have been at play. Trauma resulting in denial and the repression of these

thoughts and realities is certainly a possibility; conscious memory selection – choosing not to remember the unpleasant and the disturbing – is another (Caruth, 1996). In both later accounts, Bernhard describes the experience of physical trauma with both facts and commentary, mentioning the “hospital tents” and acknowledging the estimated number of dead soldiers. Though the facts of the rations and exact food supply are inaccurate when compared with his diary, it is the changing nature of the comments in his retrospective reflection that is of greater interest in my analysis:

Now came the most interesting period of my life, so to speak. In tandem with bad weather came a long period of hunger rations. I forgot whether this worst period lasted 3 weeks or 6 – we each received every day one medium size potato plus half a teaspoon full of lemon powder plus a teaspoon full of coffee (ground). Hunger became normal, hunger with incredible power when the body eats itself. Every night all of us dreamt of food, during the day hours were spent on the subject of food – how this was prepared by his mother, our favourite this and that. And it rained. On the first of May we had a snowstorm, but the snow melted soon. Many prisoners had no cover whatsoever. During the night they sat there in the mud, in the rain – and then they got their raw potato per day. Many, many got very sick. There were two or three large tents for the sickest of them... In our camp over 1800 prisoners died of exposure and starvation within those weeks. We were young and healthy and had a piece of tarp and survived but we had become very slender. The camp was at Bad Kreuznach near Bingen, Mainz, west of Frankfurt/Main. There were quite a lot of such camps around. I believe around two million prisoners were taken in the west. Books in German were written about these camps long ago, recently one by Bacque in Canada. At the same time the horrible death camps were found with thousands of dead and dying Jewish people and political prisoners and I assume that the treatment for us was partly a form of retaliation. (Schulze, 1994, pp. 41-42)

In retrospect, in sharing this information with his granddaughters through the memoir, Bernhard incorporates statistics and causes for the prisoner deaths, the context of the Prisoner of War camps (available now through relatively accessible historical information), and a possible political motivation behind the starvation he endured. Even in this context, the information is shared without much emotion. But the descriptions are clear and evocative: hunger of “incredible power when the body eats itself,” and fantasies about home-cooked food.

The language engages my imagination yet again. I think of Bernhard the young soldier, sitting in his muddy hole, getting weaker by the day, and feeling his “pudding knees”

destabilize his usually energetic and strong young body. I project myself into that moment, and realize that I have never experienced hunger like that, and that I hope I never will. I imagine it would change your perspective on food for the rest of your life.

In reading this section, the researcher and Canadian in me worries a little bit for my grandfather, knowing that the idea of retaliation and comparisons to Nazi camps is potentially very offensive to those who would read this project. The memoir in which these thoughts were published was intended for private use, yet my project brings it into publication and exposes it (and him) to criticism. The loyal granddaughter in me feels the need to explain further: my grandfather has since told me he knows Bacque was wrong about the numbers; that even with German mistreatment, it might not have been retaliation. But I also understand that the grandfather writing this must have felt angry, from his experience believing the claims of extensive deaths and mistreatment to be possible, and maybe even true. I imagine again what he must have seen, what is going unsaid, that would make him think this was possible; perhaps the experience was more traumatic than he lets on. Perhaps there's more he isn't telling us. As his granddaughter, my curiosity swells; as a researcher, I think of finding eyewitnesses, of digging through other families' archives to see what might exist. Across a distance of time, culture and shifting memories, I can never know my grandfather's truth about his camp, let alone any supposedly definitive truth about what happened. But for me, it's impossible not to explore the stories nevertheless.

But (like Bernhard), I still feel the need to better understand and justify his position, to look at things from a German-Canadian perspective. Isn't it possible that as a researcher and filmmaker, I can provide North Americans with a balancing narrative, to give them some context from the other side of the war? Isn't there a way to carefully tread between sharing information about German victimization and guilt, while not dishonouring the victims of Nazi crimes?

And there it is: I have taken up my grandfather's quest to balance the sides, and show that Germans could, and did, inhabit both sides of the victim-perpetrator spectrum. And in this, any imagined objectivity I may have held about my research disappears. Like my grandfather, I am trapped in a post-war German discourse that is desperately trying to come to terms with a traumatic legacy and difficult memories. The justifications I provide

for undertaking my creative work – that the stories are powerful, that they need to be shared, and that we all might learn from experiencing them in narrative, visual and aural form – may be true, but they elide the deeper reality: that this work is truly about trying to cope with an inherited trauma to which my postmemory processes keep returning me. In this, I perform my German-Canadian legacy and identity position again and again. And in this, I am not only my grandfather's granddaughter, but also, in my imagined investment, I am my post-war grandfather himself, struggling to come to terms with traumatic experiences he only remembers in fragments.



Figure 11: First air attack witnessed by Bernhard Schulze – Bremerhaven, Germany; 1944. His caption reads: “Photo from smaller air raid before the big second one [Bremen] when I forgot to take photos.”

Memories of Guilt, Victimization and Survival

I look back to Bernhard's young face, and now he seems almost sad. Lost. I know I'm projecting, reading the photograph differently based on how I'm feeling and what I'm reading in his stories, but I convince myself that he felt all these things. That even though photographs lie, surely they also hide some truths.



Figure 12: Bernhard in Navy Uniform, Mürwik Naval Academy – Flensburg, Germany; 1944

I think of how his stories changed when we got to the Bad Kreuznach memorial cemetery.

In the footage he becomes almost bitter and sad as he speaks. He dismisses the idea of any legitimacy to the “hospital,” and shares a story I’ve never heard before. Bernhard speaks quietly and slowly; when he spontaneously started speaking, I missed recording the beginning of his sentence. I caught the end, but when I asked him to repeat it, he got annoyed. “Didn’t you get it?”

A German prisoner working in the hospital tents, he said, was discovered stealing food intended for sick patients, trading those rations for golden wedding rings from other starving camp inmates desperate for food.

Bernhard: ...and he was found with – I don't know – 40 or 80 or so wedding rings. And they killed him.

Liz: Who did?

Bernhard: The others who were around him, who found out about it. And they probably dug him in, in a hole, and he is probably among the, uh, missing persons.

It was the first time that any description of real sadness or trauma appeared in the tales of his personal wartime experience. Every other tale of hardship was a tale of survival and success against overwhelming conditions beyond his control (Jarausch, 2001). This story shared a sense of desperation, of unmanageable conditions and a dark side of human nature. Though a minor and unremarkable incident in the course of the war, its sudden appearance in the footage alludes to the fluid and selective processes of memory.

How many more stories are hidden underneath the safe wartime story shared between grandparent and grandchild – between my grandpa and my cousin and I? What other moments are lost for good, forgotten, omitted or repressed? His memories are being remembered and re-called because of triggers and summons. Together we build an incomplete story filled with fuzzy-edged fragments. I reframe the events with the perspective of a privileged young woman who has never had to live through terror or real fear, seeking the darkness out of curiosity and fascination; my grandfather reframes them as someone who has seen the darkness, and would prefer to look at the light.

The story of the golden wedding rings provides a tiny example of the greater process of collaborative narrative building, in which most of the emotional depth of a traumatic experience is inevitably left unsaid. Bernhard knows I'm interested in unsettling stories like this, as I always ask him more about them. But they are often the ones he doesn't want to tell. He wants to laugh, he wants to make light of his experience; even with his trauma, his isn't a past he chooses to hide from. He has decided instead to remember the good moments, to stay happy, and to leave the worst behind. I may not have been the one in the camp, but I'm the one digging in the muck.

When I think of the barbed wire of my grandfather's POW camp, I'm reminded of a small, framed picture I had always noticed on his bookshelf in his suite in Victoria: a clipping from a newspaper, it was a picture of an emaciated child looking into the camera from behind a barbed wire fence. I always assumed that it was a concentration camp victim, and one day asked him if this was true, and why it was there. He said simply, "I keep it there to remember."

I have always assumed that I understood that comment, but in the writing of this project my memory of the story has filled with static and noise. Again, I am disconnected, trying to hear the traces of his voice. I look at the pictures again. In one, he's doing some kind of military hand gesture. His arm is blurred from motion in the frame. Part of me prays it's not a "Heil Hitler" salute, even though logic dictates that he must have done them all the time. He may have come to terms with this reality, but for now, I cannot; this is what I am working through. I know I struggle to accept that my grandfather is one of the Nazis, no matter how minor and non-violent his role may have been; in the pictures and stories I have, the signs of Nazism are draped over him like costumes and scenic backdrops. In the photographs, his body carries these signs, but he doesn't embody them. He doesn't personify the Nazis. With my defensiveness, in my postmemory processes, I don't let him.

He is the first to admit that he was brainwashed. Conversations on the topic started with just that simple admission; in the memoir, it's explained as meetings, marches, learning about "history" in the form of propaganda, Hitler Youth labour service in France, and youthful adventures. Guarding building materials after being drafted to the French occupation force, he describes silly kids' adventures: getting drunk in a local bar, accidentally asking for the papers of a French man while teaching a fellow cadet how to say, "Arredez." It's all so harmless. Until you see the swastika on his uniform.



Figure 13: Bernhard Schulze, Cadet – Brittany, France; Summer, 1944

This has been a running theme through my connection to him, as it is between so many grandchildren and grandparents. Together, through storytelling, we've been building family legacies, deciding which stories to tell (and re-tell) and which to leave out. The themes of brainwashing, survival, guilt, and victimhood recur in all my grandfather's wartime stories; they have been impossible to ignore, and are projected onto the earliest documents in our family archive.

I've added so many layers to the photographs and stories that at this point, I frequently don't know which memories are his – performed and reconstructed from rich, multi-sensory life experiences – and which are mine: two-dimensional memories I've gleaned and constructed from representations, and from the absences and silences I find in his constructed histories (Hirsch, 1997). There are solid frameworks I build in my mind from the words he uses to bring his memories to life; then there are the silences and the suggestive gaps. These I fill in from the images and readings I have consumed from within my family archive, and from the wider discourse of North American cultural representations. It's like colouring inside the lines: my imagination is simultaneously excited and limited by the stories that frame my understanding of these events.

When we were travelling in Germany, we sat in a little traffic jam on the road to the site of the former Bad Kreuznach camp, and I turned on the camera and started to film. I remember thinking that if I stayed quiet, that somehow the absence of my voice would mean that I was removed from his memory processes in returning to the site of his traumatic experiences. Instead, his grandfatherly self, in the car with his granddaughters, is very present when I asked him what it was like to return to the site, knowing that what I record will document his subjective memory:

Bernhard: Funny (laughs quietly)... Funny
Liz: How do you mean?
Bernhard: Well, the whole, the whole ambience is so different. The whole feeling is so different. I was down and out and hungry and cold and whatnot, and now I'm sitting in a warm car, with two pretty girls, who happen to be even relations of mine. (*long pause*) Fifty-seven years ago. (*long pause*) And the world has changed. From the camp we could see – very rarely, occasionally – a private car driving. And we thought, 'Hey, they allow cars to drive. Look!' (*turns to Christine and laughs, then takes a long pause*) There was a cherry tree, next to our camp, a big cherry tree, and the American guard wanted to get some cherries. So he used a very practical method. He just broke off a big branch, and picked his cherries from that branch. (*long pause*) We didn't get any.

I remember sitting in the back of that rental car, focused on the bumpy, awkward angle of my filming and thinking that I likely wouldn't use the footage. I was right. As a filmmaker, the story was only as good as its ability to fit into the documentary I had

scripted, and that I was in Germany to film. Everything had to serve a purpose; if it didn't, it would be left on the cutting room floor.

Now, as a researcher, watching this story is an amazing exercise in analyzing subjectivities. It's hard to tell if the pauses are from his focus on the driving, or his recollection of the story, but I feel a presence in his memory process that is enticing to me, as I try to deconstruct the way we're creating our intersubjectivities together. In my ever-dramatic fashion, my instinct is to assume that inner turbulence is brewing beneath the surface. That with every long pause and laugh, he is thinking about the camp experience in a new way, with his young granddaughters in the car, trying to help us to understand his life's most difficult events with a bit of humour and levity. Maybe this is the case. My cousin isn't visible in the shot, nor am I; who knows what gestures or facial expressions we might have made to prompt his comments, during or before the camera started. Without our voices, the information is completely absent, our presence suggested only from the knowledge of the camera operator's identity and Bernhard's gesture to Christine. It may be that the traffic was simply a reminder to my grandfather of the temporal and physical disconnect between then and now; a prompt to tell a story, the way that grandparents do, to share reflections about how much has changed between past and present.

Whatever the case, the mention of the tree story is a simple reflection of my grandfather's almost childlike feelings of unfairness over the soldier's cherry picking. While he laughs as the memory of seeing the cars, the cherry tree story prompts a quiet, serious moment of reflection. I imagine him starving, knees weak, vision failing, watching an American soldier eating cherries in front of him. With the cold weather and the early season, I doubt they were even ripe. I wonder if – had they been shared – they might not have caused worse diarrhoea and dehydration. For me, the story is about justifications and retrospectively determining motivations. I don't think that the soldier was acting altruistically, but I do know that his actions may have inadvertently prevented more problems for the prisoners. For my grandfather, the story is about other things: feeling like a victim; feeling that his life was suddenly out of control.

As with many of our on-site stories, this one is shared nowhere else. In the diary, this tone of fear and victimization appears in between facts about dirty water and frigid

mornings to offer insight into his feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness: "Now appears the time of my youth at home like an endless beautiful dream, disappeared for good" (April 24, 1945). A few days later: "What do I care, whether Hitler has been caught by the Americans as rumour has it. Is my father still at home? And where is brother Fritz? Thoughts I have always when I have some rest" (April 28, 1945). And two months later, upon his release: "Obtaining food from civilians. Talking with them. They appear to me to be strange, privileged people, who were luckier than I" (June 25, 1945).

The comments are brief but, in my reading of events, offer an interesting insight into Bernhard's state of mind. After experiencing starvation and survival in the face of possible death, he seems to oscillate between feeling like a victim and accepting the harsh reality of his surroundings. All of this is speculative, of course; and when in the cemetery, my grandfather reads from this same diary, his tone is often light. He laughs genuinely and deeply when telling the story of the burnt potato. It's a story I heard often growing up: a fable about appreciating what you have. And, of course, a warning for us grandkids not to complain.

When we were in the cemetery together, after he had read from the diary about being unlucky; I asked him later if he still felt that way now. He responded, incredulous, "Of course I was lucky. It was bad luck to be a prisoner in an awful situation like that, but all told I was lucky I survived. (*Pauses to read the diary*) Yeah, in Halle I gained thirty pounds in four weeks. (*Laughs*)"

In the memoir, as in the cemetery account, self-pity is missing altogether from the story. His comments explain the facts and stories as he remembers and reconstructs them for us grandchildren, in anecdotes that contextualize the stories of victimization with those of the complicit guilt of the perpetrator. Perhaps he trained himself out of feeling like a victim; or, perhaps his realizations about the victims of Nazi genocide shocked him and provided him with a permanent and immovable level of suffering to which nothing else could compare.



Figure 14: Photo by Alfred Schulze – Weimar, Germany; March, 1945

In the cemetery, we both try to justify his story of suffering with the greater suffering of the victims of the war. It's obvious, and we do it because we know our audience, and we know that any mention of a Nazi soldier's suffering needs to be provided with a disclaimer. But in the context of the filming, standing in the cemetery of the other Bad Kreuznach prisoners of war who didn't survive, the context of our justification is

complicated. Rather than simply being a question of luck in the broad sense of the war's horrors and in contrast to the Nazi victims who fared much worse, here the question of luck combines his identity as a survivor of the war itself with his luck in being German. As a German, and a perpetrator, in a North American perspective like mine, he's not allowed to feel self-pity; but he is allowed to feel lucky. That I can identify with, and that we both can easily justify.

It's when describing his own sense of complicit guilt that my grandfather's narrative suddenly transforms. In my role as a Canadian, and as a researcher, its meaning is coloured by all the statistics and images of concentration camps from my cultural and formal education. I know logically that he experienced these things; that the discovery is important for him as a German; as a Canadian, I have moments of near-vindication at hearing a German, even my grandfather, describe the experience. I've seen and read enough about the Nuremberg laws, the oppression, Jewish expulsions, anti-Semitic violence and ubiquitous slave labour camps to know that all the signs were there. Nevertheless, the story of his discovery is painful to hear; I project myself into it, feeling anguish and sadness along with him, and remembering some of the earliest stories I heard about the camps, and how my understanding of the world shook for years afterwards. How it's still shaking.

In his memoir, he shares his sense of shock about the news:

Then, in the prisoner of war camps, we had radio loudspeakers bringing news of camps where people, mainly Jews, were deliberately killed. We thought at first that this was a stupid piece of propaganda which couldn't possibly be true. We were two or three dozen young men around 20 and none of us had ever heard of the mass murders.

After a while we realized, that this was not propaganda, it was very hard to accept and quite a shock. Now we all would be blamed for being part of this nation which had done these horrible things. There was no escape, we had supported this idea, this government and its aims. To this day I hang in between feeling partly guilty because of me being part of the organization, and feeling not guilty because I didn't have a clue of what was happening. (Schulze, 1994, p. 42)

He explains in later conversations and interviews how long it took to get over the brainwashing and to believe that the stories of the camps were true; that the Nazi

propaganda of the camps being for criminals and “enemies of the state” was a disturbing distortion of the truth.

Bernhard: We were pretty brainwashed. We, we took it, we didn’t argue, we didn’t discuss it. But, uh, then when we were here, they had loudspeakers in the camps and they reported that they found camps where terribly many people were killed, deliberately killed, and all these gruesome details. And we thought it was silly propaganda, we didn’t believe a word of it. Couldn’t they be a little smarter with their propaganda. And then gradually, gradually, it sank in that this must be the truth. We were terribly, terribly shocked.

Liz: How did people take it? Well, I know they were shocked, but—

Bernhard: What can you do, what can you do? We just thought it was awful, horrible. We couldn’t understand how this could have been done. I can’t understand it to this day. And, indirectly we were responsible for it, because we helped that, we helped defend that regime. Brainwashed as we were, but we did! (*Long pause*) Yeah, it wasn’t easy.

Watching this footage – years now after the completion of my documentary, during which I watched it so often, and manipulated its emotional potential so thoroughly that I became numb to it – I always get emotional. I see how I have disturbed my grandfather in asking these questions. In dragging him back here to the site of his physical suffering, to discuss the anguish and guilt he has struggled with for fifty-seven years. It feels so presumptuous, and so exploitative, not just to him, but to the memory of the Holocaust itself.

My questions in that moment are driven by a carefully prescribed narrative that I know only because of the memoir and the discussions and stories we shared for years preceding the filming. The film I created shared both my grandfather’s angst and mine, but in watching the raw footage now, with another decade of perspective, I don’t know what I achieved with its creation. The process of travel, of gathering his informal oral history on-site, and of exploring in the traumatic and unsettling elements and narrative constructions of our family history was a rewarding process; it is the editing, distribution and publication of further reconstructed narratives, processed and packaged for an audience, that makes me question my own motivations. Is it for my family that I am doing this memory work, or is it just for me? I honestly don’t know.

Naturally, I have always believed him and his claim of ignorance, and have never had a reason to doubt it: it made the whole situation easier to accept and even – at times – to almost dismiss, including it as a natural part of the German wartime story. Though my grandfather didn't generally discuss the details of his past in public, he freely shared his stories with his friends and family: those he knew and loved, who – I'm sure he believed – would likely understand and sympathize with his position.

Though he remembers seeing “criminals” walking through his hometown in black-and-white striped uniforms, and remembers deportations to the East, he says that he never questioned the reason for this treatment, believing it to be a normal part of life. Believing reports of concentration camp atrocities to be ridiculous propaganda, the news of the genocidal acts of the Nazi regime were at first disbelieved and dismissed. When compared with Allied discourses, these statements are shocking and even unbelievable; when compared with other German accounts (Johnson & Reuband, 2005), explanations like these are typical and contextualized in rumour- and propaganda-filled wartime Germany. Coming to terms with the realities of the Holocaust after the war, my grandfather (and ultimately, our family) have had to accept our connection to its perpetration and the lasting trauma caused by its horrors.

I do, however, feel that both my and my grandfather's self- and collective identities are intertwined with our ability to navigate successfully through our shared sense of trauma. Together, we ask questions, we challenge one another, and we strive to understand how one can reconcile the feeling of victimization and the feeling of guilt. How does one navigate these multiple identities? In my filmmaking and in the writing of this project, we've had to find ways to do so; for my part, this has required a regular delineating of roles, being conscious of when I'm the granddaughter and when I'm the researcher, and trying to respect the roles of grandfather and post-war German-Canadian in all I produce about his life. It's a tricky process, but together we are trying to make it work.

In our shared processes of memorialisation we are also striving to construct not only narrative but also meaning and identity; to come to terms with what it means to have German heritage in a post-Holocaust world. We are haunted together, although I believe that my grandfather is much better at letting go than I. He has constructed and told his story, and in doing so, has in some ways unburdened himself of the trauma he

feels. Some of his anguish might be left in the past, with that kid in the photograph. But some of it is also with me, internalized in my own feelings of guilt.



Figure 15: Bernhard Schulze – Germany; 1946

The constructions I create, on film and in writing, are my own attempts to use storytelling to work through these feelings and through the experiences that create and accompany traumatic postmemory processes. As I engage with these historical narratives and our little place within them, co-creating our family stories with my grandfather, I too am struggling to comprehend the facts of human capability and human apathy. For me, these stories are still quite raw, but for my grandfather, his stories – told time and time

again over decades and for numerous listeners – have helped him in his therapeutic process of working through trauma. On our trip, walking through the Bad Kreuznach memorial cemetery, my cousin asked our grandfather if he gets emotional when visiting these sites. He answered, “I do somewhat, but it’s not overwhelming. Fifty-seven years ago, you know... a lot of things become dusty. The sharp corners get rounded.”

Chapter 5.

Concluding Reflections

As time passes, memories inevitably transform and fade, and their transmission becomes more about narrative reconstruction than accurate recall. In analyzing the transforming stories of my grandfather's prisoner of war experiences, I realize that while he is striving to see a connection made between his past and our present, I am seeking something altogether different: I am trying to satisfy a curiosity, to weave my subjectivity into a historical narrative to which I have a vague and indirect connection, and to "seize memory at the moment it is on the point of evaporating" (Hodgkin & Radstone, 2003, p. 10). I am performing history with my grandfather, and together we are collaboratively constructing our family legacy.

In *The Uses and Abuses of History*, Margaret MacMillan (2008) reminds us that "history comforts us even though, paradoxically, we know less and less about it" (p. 21). Until undertaking this memory project, I had always felt secure in my knowledge of my grandfather's story. I thought that by being blessed with so much more documentation than many families, I had a kind of treasure. Although the material was challenging, internally contradictory and emotional, I possessed a naïve sense that I understood it. That after years of reading and examining the narratives, I was practiced in the path I was to follow. Simply stated, I was wrong.

My grandfather's memoir, our documentary footage of his oral history, and my interaction with his diary are instead complex case studies in intersubjective performance and collaborative memory processes. Every interaction and engagement with their complexity will result in a new exploration, new findings, and new emotions. The sense that my careful research is exploitative is an unresolved issue: an ongoing problem I will have to face alongside the trauma in our family's past.

Examining my grandfather's different versions of his documentation of the German prisoner of war experience – including his initial wartime diary, his informal memoir from the early 1990s, and oral history interview footage – was a difficult and introspective personal undertaking. I expected to examine the story of the camps as I became more actively involved in each retelling, and from this analysis, in many ways I discovered what I sought: that my imaginative investment, part of my postmemory process, is significant in shaping my constructions of his story in ways that are both loving and critical; that in this collaborative postmemory process, my multiple roles have confused our relationship; that my grandfather's uneasy negotiation of his role as both victim and perpetrator is a tense and irresolvable problematic within his German-Canadian identity; that repeated narrations and reiterations have led to clearer, episodic, refined and carefully framed stories removing self-pity and frustration; and that through this process, my grandfather and I have attempted to come to terms with our German heritage here in Canada.

However, there were many new, more nuanced discoveries as well. I have discovered that I enjoy storytelling as much as my grandfather, not only for the pleasures of hearing and listening experienced by both narrator and audience, but also for the emotional and cathartic process of articulating and re-articulating a story time and time again. Through my grandfather's retellings of his prisoner of war story, each iteration became more practiced, complete, closed and tidy; in my own retellings, site visits and research have made each articulation more complicated, unfinished and contextual. Though my grandfather's stories – and the time between their retellings – may have assisted him in coming to terms with his past, the intergenerational transference of his experiences within my postmemory processes have left an unresolved situation in my life, for which I too hope to use storytelling as a therapeutic tool. The act of creating storied representations of my memory processes – first on film, and now in this memory project – articulates a small part of our family's past. After much research, when I reflect upon their incompleteness, their inaccuracy and their definitions, I can begin to say what about these representations feels right, and what feels wrong, and in this analysis I come to greater understandings about my own assumptions, beliefs and identities.

I have learned that the various identity positions required by my grandfather's traumatic legacy are situated in a temporal, geographical and intersubjective network of people,

places and time. As we all navigate roles, language and meanings dependent on our moment-to-moment situation, my grandfather and I are constantly redefining our positions in relation to one another, our audience and our context. As a cadet and a soldier in Germany, and later a post-war East German citizen, my grandfather was part of a community of people who were similarly culpable and suffering for their nation's and their community members' crimes. His identity position, though fluid and changing as he went from adolescence to early adulthood, and as he came to terms with his own sense of complicit guilt, was nevertheless German, and in that, part of a collective group coping with similar problematics. Moving to Canada and adopting a German-Canadian identity required an understanding of how to navigate a new role as an immigrant in an enemy land, and as a villain in the land of righteous and justified conquerors. Becoming a grandfather to German-Canadian grandchildren required yet another identity position; his navigation of this role, in relation to his traumatic past, was through storytelling. Finding ways to simultaneously position himself as a survivor, victim and perpetrator for his grandchildren was an act that then required me, as his Canadian grandchild, to find my own identity as someone with German heritage.

This dynamic between us created more complex, intersubjective relationships with varying, layered combinations among them: the relationship of granddaughter and grandfather, sharing a loving and caring bond; of documentary filmmaker and grandfather, in which I am seeing him as a subject whose story I need to examine and reconstruct, performing my role as a storyteller and technician, while he sees me as a family member who should be cheerful and happy to be on vacation; and of researcher/documentarian and subject, in which we are both aware of our roles as performers of our social and historical roles for an imagined audience. There are a numerous iterations of our intersubjective roles, some of which may yet be created with the completion of this thesis and with my grandfather's eventual passing.

Perhaps most importantly, I discovered that my investment in his story, a result of the traumatic postmemory processes in which I engage after repeatedly hearing and reading his stories, his actions and his silences – and historically contextualizing them within German wartime and Holocaust representations – is connected not only to my adopted feelings of shame and complicit guilt in being of German heritage, but also owing to my belief that Jaspers' (1961) metaphysical sense of guilt implicates all humanity for the

crimes we can prevent. Though I may not have lived my grandfather's past, the imaginative projection of my postmemory process creates the ongoing sense that I am experiencing it nevertheless: that I too am a prisoner of war, sitting in a muddy hole, contemplating my survival and my guilt. In this projection, I vicariously live through the shame and horror of these experiences, while simultaneously knowing that I can never know them at all. Mediated through story, photography and film, through subjectivity and performance, my postmemory processes are inherently refractions of the history through which my grandfather lived. Nevertheless, they feel present, and have become an active part of our Schulze family legacy partly owing to their presence in my memory landscape.



Figure 16: *The Schulze family, on one of their last days living together in Germany; 1957*

I have also made discoveries in the recontextualizing of my grandfather's stories in the work of other memory scholars and autoethnographers, whose personal narratives connect to literary genres. In reading his diary again I found a new narrative context to my grandfather's story: a coming-of-age story, happening in the midst of brutal circumstances outside of his control. His role as a survivor is complicated, wrapped up

in his dual identity as a victim and a complicit perpetrator. And though he doesn't know it as he writes, from the moment of his capture, he is documenting personal history along with the larger, controversial history of post-war German identity.

Looking at the pictures of him in his uniform, my grandfather's naïve face contradicts the swastika he wears. Yet, in trying to explain these pictures to his Canadian grandchildren, he had to embrace this contradiction in order to be understood by us. Unlike many German grandchildren, whose identity is connected to Germany's, and who, out of love, frequently excuse and elide their grandparents' passive bystander or perpetrator behaviour (Welzer, 2010), my Canadian identity encouraged the opposite critical yet loving reaction. In accepting the burden of the past he insisted on sharing, in return I asked that we examine that past critically, as unflinchingly as possible, together.

I sought to understand the passive, ignorant bystander, the brainwashed kid who was our grandfather, in spite of his actions. Rather than ignoring his role, our disparate cultural experiences and identities created a vigorous and productive discourse that confronted us both with questions and issues. He invited these questions by offering explanations and, though I will never know if I would have engaged in this research without his support, I am grateful for them. My memory work is ongoing, and will likely continue for the rest of my life, ignited in large part by a desire to understand my family legacy and the traumatic elements of our archive. Through these memory processes, my grandfather and I are learning together, exploring narrative and memory, and sharing experiences that will hopefully help future generations of our family come to terms with a then-distant past across a temporal and cultural gap.

Though as a child I never thought I was German, and didn't identify with that cultural heritage, I realize now that I must have adopted it. Somewhere between being told I shouldn't be ashamed to be German at 12, and filming my grandfather at the site of a former German prisoner of war camp at 22, I joined the German "generation of the grandchildren," adopting its associated challenges. Whatever the difficulties, I believe that these intergenerational, intercultural processes can serve an important and transformative purpose in helping multiple generations to come to terms with trauma and disturbing family histories.

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Appendices

Appendix A.

Translated Excerpt from the Diary of Bernhard Schulze (April - June, 1945)²⁵

- April 13 (*Friday*)²⁶ Woken up by enemy flak. Walking through the woods, on the Weimar, it is supposed to be free of enemy forces. The Army (*Americans*) catches us at the entrance to a village. Windmotor. P.O.W. All my things thrown away (*by US soldier guarding us*) shameful march through the city of Jena, at night slept again in the open powder mill Jena (?)²⁷, cold!
- April 14 Awake 5:30am stiff and freezing, in the powder mill rested on straw bag. A little water, nothing to eat. Walter (*my companion Walter Gerlich, he died recently*) has saved a loaf of bread. By truck to a sportfield in Weimar, separated from civilians, no water, camp life – clear star sky, mustery [sic] when comrades sing – last time in Eilenburg. Music and thoughts of grandpa (*Eilenburg grandpa*) and the room where we used to sleep in. Cold night, no blanket, feet ice cold, in between stomping to get warm.
- April 15 Cold, cold, thirst. Lined up for water for a few hours. Camp life. No blanket or tent cloth, little food, much thirst, lice. The war is supposed to be over – Keitel (?). That will be another cold night.
- April 16 Political arguments, lots of junk ideas. During the day very hot. Transport by truck into a camp near Eisenach. During the night on right away: Autobahn to Frankfurt, Mainz, Bad Kreuznach. (*Bad = bath = part of town name*)
- April 17 Arriving before noon, about a dozen of buddies from Weimar. Talk about shooting in B (?). Heat, heat! First cat wash with the 13th (?). Lice. Good food supply in tins. Box of these on truck pilfered, secret fight about them.

²⁵ These translations are kept exactly as completed by Bernhard Schulze, including minor errors in grammar or wording.

²⁶ All bracketed notes in italics were added by Bernhard Schulze during his 2012 translation of this diary.

²⁷ The "(?)" notations were added by Bernhard Schulze to suggest that he no longer remembers the meaning of the preceding comment.

- April 18 During the night we sleep in the dust of the planes. During night I am fetching water because line-up is shorter. Today we are supposed to be 85,000. Food supply in time continues to be good.
- April 19 Warming up food on little wood fires. Hours and hours lining up for food supply. Dreadful if rain should come. Gourmet food supply – sufficient. During nights awful hard and cold sleep.
- April 20 Now about 25 ensigns in the camp. (?)... (?)²⁸ Waiting for food supply, with this heat almost going crazy. Again chocolate, sweets, cookies, orange juice, sausage etc. etc. (*We got for a while American K-rations.*)
- April 21 More into the officer's camp, under triangle tent cloth with Walter, Bayer (?), Delius, the friend of the gods. Fabulous food. I make the cook for the 4 of us. Saving impossible because of opposition (?) and appetite. Rain – cold and wet. Built tent-like housing, grass underneath. Someone stole my cap (*hat?*) and we stole a blanket.
- April 22 Deeper into the soil, morning coffee, cookie, butter and jam, tomato soup, meat dish, rhubarb dessert, chewing gum, roasted peanuts and raw ham – terrific!
- April 23 Cold in the morning, ok in our hole. Going deeper with a spade. Enormous diarrhoea. Arguments with J. Bayer, who is often fairly obstinate. Harald Delius very pleasant in an unusual way. (*He was a student of philosophy and slightly squint-cross eyed.*)
- April 24 After cold rain days finally nicely warm. Strong diarrhoea. Underwear dirty. Now appears the time of my youth at home like an endless beautiful dream, disappeared for good.
- April 25 This morning the water was frozen, but we were not very cold. Cover built over the feet. New surprise: little boxes with blueberry lemonade. Menu 1: Meat and rice, dry. Ham and egg, tomatoes, pudding, cocoa filled chocolate. Menu 5: Dry corned beef, sausage, real coffee, black chocolate, cocoa, cheese.
- April 26 Continued wild diarrhoea, but despite of that I keep eating. We got a piece of tent cloth for 50 cigarettes, the camp currency (*from the K-Rations*), also to pay for haircut. Food short.

²⁸ Short sentence of indecipherable text.

- April 27 Moving into another barbed wire square. Existing hole in the ground made deeper and wider. Rain doesn't bother us anymore. Food short.
- April 28 It is cold and rainy. Food supply is far too little (supply per 100 men), hopefully only temporary. Everybody is hungry and cold. Bayer left on his own. We 3 are lucky in our hole in the ground. What do I care, whether Hitler has been caught by the Americans as rumour has it. Is my father still at home? And where is brother Fritz? Thoughts I have always when I have some rest.
- April 29 It is a cold, wet Sunday, the only joy is food which – thank heaven – has again a bit improved. Now fenced in officer camp. We are lucky to be in it. So obviously [sic] since yesterday armistice. (*Rumours strong and frequent.*)
- April 30 Today about the most important matter of course: food. I eat only soupy stuff, one container full. But during the day hungry for hours. Macaroons made with cereal, sugar and lard.
- May 1 The May arrived with rain, cold, snow and awful hunger. But towards evening the sun comes out, how important! And tomorrow a commission (*group of people*) is expected. I will try to give a letter for home to people who get dismissed (*a pipe dream*).
- May 2 Letter given to Hamburger guy with chance of early dismissal. Awful cold, wetness, hunger.
- May 3 Every day we lie down in our hole in the ground for about 14 hours to avoid becoming too hungry. It would be easier to suffer through this if the weather was nice.
- May 4 There is only one problem: food supply. Hunger now for days. First effects can be noticed. Today 1/3 full of container with meat/veggies, $\frac{3}{4}$ of a potato, raw, 5 cookies, 1 spoon tomato. Did Russians ever get treated like that? (*The Germans made about 2 million Russian POWs starve to death, which we didn't know.*) What would mother say?
- May 5 Almost all day rain. An American inspection team call this the "hell of Kreuznach." Today our hole is still dry. Many walk around aimlessly. Some holes had water run in, some collapsed. Rumours in 4 days we will go to an officer's camp, probably in France.
- May 6 A sad Sunday. Getting up 3pm. Hunger like never before in my life. I am quite weak. Raspred potatoes, boiled it, add sour cabbage and meat, actually a container full, good!
- May 7 A case of typhoid (elsewhere) in the camp. Weakness enormous, very bad today but good weather.

- May 8 Continued great heat and hunger. I read old letters. We made the best out of the war years. Let's hope the peace time will be better.
- May 9 It's hard to believe with how little a human being can get along. Effects of under-nourishment, all the time night fails (*black in front of our eyes*), pudding knees.
- May 10 Despite of weakness now daily 1 hour English lesson. In the evening often talk about past beautiful times. At night almost always dreams of home with wonderful things to eat.
- May 11 Loudspeaker brings news. Unfortunately depressing. Jubilation mood all over Europe about liberation from "violence and terror."
- May 12 Generally slight improvement. By barter we got some potatoes for our coffee. Last cigarette gone. Slowly they install cooking vessels in the camp. Paltry "battles" during issues and dividing up the food. Beautiful weather. Rumour about total dismissal (*of POWs*) in the Koblenz camp regardless the ages of POWs. But I estimate one year.
- May 13 Versatile food supply: flour, dried milk, tomatoes, spaghetti, meat etc. in tiny quantities. Also some potatoes. Our general health etc. has improved a little. Music via loudspeaker. In the afternoon we read in "Faust."
- May 14 Officers were fighting over turnips which the American guard threw over the fence. Great heat. Reporting: assembling of all officers with hour long sitting around in the sun. What for? We will eat well when we have to wait that long. Tomorrow we are supposed to move into a firm camp. So we will celebrate Walter's birthday earlier.
- May 15 Walter's birthday. Last night we ate our fill with wonderful things. Satisfied after this horrible hunger time.
- May 16 After hours of waiting half of the people in our camp area moved away. (*To France to work. Other half including us*) did not move. Move cancelled since we were almost officers. Got some potatoes, so we are a little less hungry than the others. We barter Harald's wristwatch for cigarettes – we live!
- May 17 A ring bartered in work camp. Great risk involved, but advantageous: bread, cigarettes, wood, potatoes.
- May 18 Food supply so-so with the help of Harald's cigarettes. Wonderful weather. Any day we may go home. In the evening news (*loud-speaker*) in short sentences. Often music from records. Now we still sit in our dirt hole.
- May 20 A gourmet enjoyment at Whitsuntide (*minor religious day*). Cream and mocha, cream in 3 layers. A worry free time only to eat.

- May 21 Cloud burst at 3am (*water ran into our hole*). We take shelter under a tent. We stole some wood. We made our hole rain proof again. Let's hope for sunshine tomorrow.
- May 22 Rainshowers [sic] continue. We built the "tent" to be rain-proof. We first shed our emergency food. Now white bread with food supply. Weather most depressing.
- May 23 Warm food supply: very good milk soup and white bread. Suddenly 10am line-up. Called after a list. Finally moving with sticks and tins to commoner's camp No. V. Hunger-food supply even much worse. Stony ground.
- May 24 Painfully dug hole deeper into the ground. Roof collapses. About 200g white bread, daily now? We hope for discharge some time. One will leave tomorrow.
- May 25 Poles and Czech [sic] already gone. Every day about 2000 are supposed to go, collected in Frankfurt, there group transport to the provinces. The camp should be empty by June 5th. And how much of this will be true?
- May 26 Will they dismiss us young ensigns? This is much on our mind. The committee works even on Sundays. But the guys over 50 years old are still here. Today the disabled. Hopefully our hunger-life in this dirt will end soon, perhaps we will go to another camp?
- May 27 Slept and dozed 'til 2pm. Two times soup and once white bread with cheese, cream, plums. Finally a nice feeling again.
- May 28 The rumours refer to "home"; rumours re. dismissal, food supply and news, of which perhaps 30% are correct.
- May 29 Quite tired and lazy, I doze and sleep almost the whole day in our hole. Today injections. The eating containers (*lid of gas mask holder*) must get disinfected – they are to be blamed for the typhus, not the hunger. I am not afraid, I doze and continue to be hungry.
- May 30 Slowly but surely the barbed wire and hunger influences our normally good mood. There are little arguments and we laugh only rarely.
- May 31 Still 5,000 from working units from eastern regions, including Halle²⁹. Only common soldiers, what does that mean? Are the Russians here?

²⁹ Halle is Bernhard's home town.

- June 1 Last night strong mocha-coffee kept us wide awake. Today exhausted. In the evening we dig our hole deeper.
- June 2 1/4 loaf of white bread eaten, that was great! Does it make sense to save coffee? Is this rumour correct: 5 years no alcohol, 10 years marriage prohibited? Very short food availability? Will I or won't I go as farm helper to the farm in Boyda? How much longer here? Low flying planes amuse themselves.
- June 3 A real Sunday thunderstorm. The committee works faster, unfortunately still only the Rhine area provinces and people with desirable trades, no teachers or pupils. To list another profession makes no sense.
- June 4 The tip of Walter's spoon broke off. He tries to form a new one with scissors and sheet metal. But miserable failure. Like Robinson.
- June 5 Recently food supply so-so tolerable, about 1/3 liter [sic] thin milk soup, about 1 liter [sic] thin veggie soup, 1/4-1/5 of a loaf of white bread. We hardly ever get up before noon.
- June 6 We will again be the two of us: Harald goes as Hannover citizen. We will not forget each other. Evening thunderstorm with hail. We remain fairly dry. 2 others from our group ready for dismissal.
- June 7 We think about future occupation and place to live. Is Halle really 70% in ruins? Shop employee in Langensalza (*Walter's home town*). Thuringians go through the committee.
- June 8 I assume that my parents are in Langensalza. So let's go there. Hours of rain. Will everything remain dry? I read (2 books).
- June 9 We passed through the committee. Now we actually wait for our dismissal, which I consider with very mixed feelings, because Halle is supposed to be 70% destroyed (*not so – only 15-20%*). Who knows what happened to our apartment and to my parents. And my brother? We will walk through a dark gate into a new world.
- June 10 Food supply again fairly poor. Knees like pudding, but soon we will get away. 1000 new fighter planes fly eastwards (parade in Frankfurt). In the examination camp they work hard even Sunday afternoons. We wonder about the relationship between USA and the Soviet Union.
- June 11 The first Thuringians in the transports. From Langensalza together with Bavarians. Will we be allowed to travel on our own after Bingen or Frankfurt? We wonder what will happen tomorrow. I hope to be in Langensalza on Sunday the 17th.

- June 12 Weather like a dog. Let's get out of the dirt holes! I play writing games and chess with Walter.
- June 13 So and so is among the dismissed. Will our turn come tomorrow? Let's get away from here! Saxons delayed, now first Bavarians. Are the Russians in Thuringia? In Halle? I almost assume that. Decisive days ahead of us. And what about home?
- June 14 We get our morning soup elsewhere. We barter a blanket for some food. Today no Thuringians called up. Fights and trickery when food is divided up.
- June 15 Food supply fairly reasonable the last few days, also by some trickery. Weather always changing. I say only: Kreuznach. Now only Thuringians, Hessians and Rhinelanders.
- June 16 Bavarians and Thuringians which were supposed to leave, are held back. All others go to other camps. Getting moved to other camps. We worry about home. I am still together with Walter.
- June 17 From Kreuznach camp by truck to a camp near Bingen. We are supposed to go through the check up again. What horrible stupidity? Who knows when we will get into a transport. But after a while it must happen.
- June 18 Diddersheim. We are in a camp near Diddersheim, camp 3A, 5a. Complete food supply reasonable. It seems that the camp leaders (*US officers*) sell less food on the ride than in Kreuznach.
- June 19 We meet a transport with Thuringians while fetching food. Hopefully my turn will come soon. The occupation dividing line (*between Russia and USA*) is now established at the Elbe-Mulde Rivers (*wrong rumour*).
- June 20 The "washing meadow" helps to stand the great heat. The camp leadership is much more ok than in Kreuznach. Water supply has problem, it is supposed to get better. In a few days we are supposed to go through the check-up.
- June 21 (In the camp) numerical listing of all workers from east of the Elbe River. Sergeants from the American army. What does that mean? (*stupid rumour*) In the evening comes a wild summer thunderstorm (*we have no protection*).
- June 22 During the heaviest rain showers up into the sour cherry tree. During the night completely wet. Slept on a toilet seat and on a piece of cardboard. Clothes drying in the morning wind. That doesn't bother us anymore. Additional food at working gangs, regularly and by trickery. Tired.
- June 23 Mother's birthday. (A month ago I wrote: will I be home by June 24?) We are supposed to leave tomorrow. Full moon.

- June 24 Milk soup. Preparations for leaving and waiting in the rain. Departures in open cattle car (*standing up*). Ridiculously slow speed. Quite poor food supply.
- June 25 Obtaining food from civilians. Talking with them. They appear to me to be strange, privileged people, who were luckier than I. How is Halle?
- June 26 In Gotha we (Walter and I) jumped off the train. Free? It is a funny feeling. Hunger during the train ride – so from the beginning to the end of our captivity: hunger. Off today to Langensalza.

(We had our dismissal document with us. The others went to Erfurt, waited, and were not dismissed but returned to captivity in the west because this area was to be soon occupied by the Russians in exchange for West Berlin. Halle too.)

Appendix B.

Excerpt from the Memoir of Bernhard Schulze (1994, pp. 39-43)

After a few hours we started walking again. Only Walter and I had a rifle. After a while we approached a village, on a dirt road, between fields. There was this wind motor in front of us, turning and rattling. Rattling very loudly, we wondered why it rattled so loudly – some said that it can't be just the wind motor, maybe some cars or motors behind? One of us ran into the field and hid himself. It was strange but we cautiously proceeded until there came a stop to the rattling noise – and a loud voice in broken German: "Come here!" We looked at where the voice sound came from (from the right) and we got one major surprise.

There were half a dozen tanks, ten or so personnel carriers and a few cars plus soldiers on foot – and all had their guns aimed at us – Americans. Oops. We saw one soldier approaching us, halfway, he was perhaps 50 yards away, the American lined up about 100 yards away, on a parallel road leading out of the little village. He saw our two guns and asked whether we wanted war, certainly a somewhat rhetorical question under these circumstances, but we could answer truthfully that we didn't want any such thing and handed him our guns, which he hit against a tree and bent them into uselessness. Each of us got one foot soldier to take us back to the village and we went to the local very small pub. We stood around, with our guards. American soldiers got drinks served, in rather a civilized manner both ways. One man behind the counter was a young man, perhaps 22 – 24 years old. In those days in all of Germany there was no healthy waiter of that age, he was a soldier who got away and tried not to become a prisoner of war (he probably succeeded). I winked and he winked back.

They took us outside and lined us up against a wall and some soldiers came, with guns – for a moment I thought they would shoot us, but they just wanted to take us back further. More prisoners came, we hung around for hours. For a while I was again guarded by one soldier. He asked for my watch. I had an old pocket watch my grandpa had given me. He looked at it, shook his head and gave it back – it was too crummy to serve as war booty. Sooner or later, all watches (with rare exceptions) were taken away. My man then examined my rucksack, found nothing of interest, then threw it behind him into the field. He wouldn't let me recover it and said "all new," meaning I would get all new things. He was an optimist.

That night, we were perhaps 50 people and were told to go to sleep, on a meadow. The day was April 13, a Friday. (That is the day when guardian angels have their day off). We all huddled up as closely together as we could because it was cold, there was hoar frost on the ground in the morning. The next day we were taken to a school yard, we were now about 200 of us. We just sat around. In the night we were taken by open truck, standing up, to the west, to a large meadow, where there were thousands. Another day or two, then in a night truck ride in the same fashion further west, through the whole night. Then we were tens of thousands, to be exact, about 65,000. This time we were in an area surrounded by barbed wire, except one side where there were guards. Again, as always we slept on the ground. During the first night, there was some running and shouting and shooting from time to time as some prisoners tried to escape; quite a few succeeded, I guess. We had no such ideas, we were quite content. After a quick interrogation we were put into a part of the camp where there were all soldiers of our rank (Oberfaehnrich – I don't know the English word for, just the last rank before officer.) We met some old buddies and exchanged news. The all-important weather was fine and not too cold during the days. We received American K-rations, small packages with food, in our view simply fabulous. We saved some foot and the cigarettes. After serious thought, we decided that our main problem was the lack of housing, so we had to create something, because the weather

would turn bad sooner or later. We had no rainproof cover – so we went around and asked and asked and finally found somebody who could spare a square piece of tarp, in exchange for some choice food and a bunch of cigarettes. We had dug a hole in the ground, oblong, maybe a bit over one meter deep, covered the one half with bits of wood, cardboard and then soil on top, in a heap, so rain water would run off. For the other half of the hole we needed the tarp, fixed in place in an angle, so we could get into the hole and the tarp would keep off the rain – which came that very night. Buckets. We had dug little ditches around and the water ran off.

We were now 3 of us, we had adopted another guy we knew from our time as recruits. Harald Delius from Goettingen. Funny guy. He was a student of philosophy and he was slightly crosseyed [sic], a good combination. He was fairly incompetent with about everything but he had a beautiful soul. I can't remember exactly how it happened, but in any case we felt he needed some guidance in the non-philosophical spheres of this world and we took him under our wings.

Now came the most interesting period of my life, so to speak. In tandem with bad weather came a long period of hunger rations. I forgot whether this worst period lasted 3 weeks or 6 – we each received every day one medium size potatoe [sic] plus half a teaspoon full of lemon powder plus a teaspoon full of coffee (ground). Hunger became normal, hunger with incredible power when the body eats itself. Every night all of us dreamt of food, during the day hours were spend on the subject of food – how this was prepared by his mother, our favorite this and that. And it rained. On the first of May we had a snowstorm, but the snow melted soon. Many prisoners had no cover whatsoever. During the night they sat there in the mud, in the rain – and then they got their raw potato per day. Many, many got very sick. There were two or three large tents for the sickest of them.

We had managed to get a tin and a nail. We made holes into the tin and used it as a rasp, rasping the 3 potatoes we 3 prisoners received. This mush was boiled. A little bit got burned at the bottom, of course. Since there was no salt, the boiled mush was really awful, but it tasted heavenly. The burnt stuff was the best, it really had a bit of genuine taste, a solid body of character. One of us had the privilege of enjoying it, we took turns. Hand in hand with this starvation went a remarkable increase in mental interests, we had endless discussions and every day one of our group around us organized a talk by one of us about a specialty area, a book that had impressed one of us, a hobby or some research one had done, a special trip, one talked about Sanskrit, I remember. In our camp over 1800 prisoners died of exposure and starvation within those weeks. We were young and healthy and had a piece of tarp and survived but we had become very slender. The camp was at Bad Kreuznach near Bingen, Mainz, west of Frankfurt/Main. There were quite a lot of such camps around. I believe around two million prisoners were taken in the west. Books in German were written about these camps long ago, recently one by Bacque in Canada. At the same time the horrible death camps were found with thousands of dead and dying Jewish people and political prisoners and I assume that the treatment for us was partly a form of retaliation.

We knew that in Germany at the time, Jewish people were sent to the east to work camps. We knew there were concentration camps where opponents to the government, traitors and rebels and spies were taken and treated harshly. We had seen some, in the uniforms of hard criminals, black and white striped suits. Then, in the prisoner of war camps, we had radio loudspeakers bringing news of camps where people, mainly Jews, were deliberately killed. We thought at first that this was a stupid piece of propaganda which couldn't possibly be true. We were two or three dozen young men around 20 and none of us had ever heard of the mass murders.

After a while we realized, that this was not propaganda, it was very hard to accept and quite a shock. Now we all would be blamed for being part of this nation which had done these horrible things. There was no escape, we had supported this idea, this government and its aims. To this day I hang in between feeling partly guilty because of me being part of the organization, and feeling not guilty because I didn't have a clue of what was happening.

After the potatoe [sic] period came a period with rations which were a bit less deadly and more varied, still no salt. Then we had an interview where they asked us how much we had been

involved, were we a member of the Nazi party and so on, in our case just a formality – after this we were sent to another camp for maybe a week and then sent towards home, in cattle cars, open, with plenty of standing room, 3 days or so we rolled east.

A bit more about the prison camp: the 65,000 soldiers were separated into the various ranks. The camp was several square miles, subdivided perhaps in ten smaller camps, with high barbed wire fences in between, and roads connecting everything – the roads also enclosed by wires. Soldiers everywhere, the odd tent for the very sick, the rest on the ground, in the dirt, many in little holes in the ground, many without any shelter. It was a miserable sight. At night there were tiny fires here and there, but that was also a bit dangerous because the American guards on the outside of the camp compound sometimes shot with their rifles into the camp at random, occasionally hitting somebody in the dark.

There were not many Americans guarding us and organizing things, much of the routine work had been delegated to German prisoners. When we received our final medical examination before being dismissed, this was conducted by a prisoner who asked us whether we were fit, physically, to be dismissed and sent home. Naturally everybody felt fit for that, in fact he felt it quite strongly. Then the prisoner would sign a space on our dismissal document, or whatever. He faked the real doctors [sic] signature, he had been shown how to do it – and the real doctor had a lot more free time that way. I just wonder: as a result of this method, the American records must show that everybody was healthy when dismissed – that's statistics for you.

At the end of the Second World War, American troops had occupied large areas in middle Germany, which were later exchanged with the Russians for large parts of Berlin. My hometown was located in one of those areas to be exchanged. In fact, it was only a few days after I was home, when the Russians took over, in our area in a reasonably civilized manner. We didn't know about these things, when we rolled east towards home. The train took 3 days, it went through stations very slowly – so Walter and I jumped off the train at his station and ran away, as fast as we could, because there was – it appeared - only one guard each at the front and at the end of the train. We got away easily. The others on the train were shipped to another camp close by and held there for a bit. Then the news had arrived that the Russians would take over this area, and all were shipped back west and didn't get dismissed at that time, but much later. So, a little daring had paid off for us.

After a day or two at Walter's home, with very careful frequent feeding by mama (boiled rolled oats, milk soup and such extremely light stuff), I marched off to reach home, by hitchhiking. The last ride was a big open truck of the US army, loaded with dismissed prisoners of war, destined for my home town Halle. I managed to stop the truck (the guys told me that they went to Halle), the truck passed, but had to go for a long loop to a bridge over the river, while I could take a shortcut over a provisional pedestrian walk over the river. I arrived home just shortly before the curfew (10pm, I think) For me, the war was over, the most interesting time of my life had past – but believe me – it didn't get dull after that.

It was all so strange. Peace, no more bombing alarms, no more lurking danger, also there was now not this feeling that we had a duty to perform, all we had to do now, was to live. Most people had still a bit of food stored away. My father had helped plundering the army's storage area and had got a big bag of some low type grain, which helped us a great deal in the hungry times to come. I felt it strange also, to sleep in a soft bed, had trouble with that, a few days I went to our garden plot nearby, with a blanket and slept on the earth – that was better.

Appendix C.

DVD:

**Excerpts from raw footage, filmed during the
production of *German Lessons* (2003)**