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Opa Was a Nazi: Family, Memory, and Generational Difference in 2005 Films by Malte Ludin and Jens Schanze[1]

In 2002, a team of social psychologists published a study that explored how the memory of the Nazi past and the Holocaust is passed down within German families. The title of their book, "Opa war kein Nazi," sums up their findings: children and grandchildren of the war generation tend to view their elders as anti-Nazi, resisters, and helpers of Jews, not as convinced National Socialists or perpetrators of the Holocaust, even if they have been told otherwise. Within the family, Germans tend to remember their relatives' suffering and hardship during the terror of the Nazi regime, the Allied bombing war, and time served as POWs. The findings highlight the disparity between the war and the Holocaust as found in history books and the emotionally charged imaginations of one's own family history (Welzer 9–10).

As early as 1946, the philosopher Karl Jaspers probed the question of German guilt in his famous lectures "Die Schuldfrage," appealing to his compatriots: "In der Tat sind wir Deutschen ohne Ausnahme verpflichtet, in der Frage unserer Schuld klar zu sehen, und die Folgerungen zu ziehen" (75). This call for an open and self-reflexive approach to the crimes committed during the Nazi period, however, was not supported by the political culture during the immediate postwar decades. The historian Norbert Frei has shown that West German chancellor Konrad Adenauer's "policy for the past" resulted in amnesty for Nazi officials, and even the release of convicted war criminals, facilitating their rehabilitation and reintegration into postwar society (xii). At the time of Adenauer's election in 1949, there were alternative voices, such as the Social Democratic leader and former Dachau inmate Ernst Schumacher, for whom a confrontation with the Nazi past was vital for the future of a democratic Germany (Herf 244, 251–52). Nevertheless, in the words of the historian Jeffrey Herf, "[t]he West German electorate opted for Adenauer's emphatic support for social market capitalism, a Western alliance to contain the Soviet Union, and his tactful silence about the Nazi past rather than Schumacher's discomforting, outraged memories" (261). It was not until 1958 that an office for investigating Nazi crimes (*Zentralstelle der Landes-*

justizverwaltung zur Aufklärug nationalsozialistischer Gewaltverbrechen) was founded in Ludwigsburg. In Herf's view, "[t]he era of democratization based on silence and integration was coming to an end, and a more intensified period of West German judicial confrontation with Nazi crimes was beginning" (296). However, this development did not necessarily lead to an open and self-reflexive discussion of the Nazi past in any other realm of German society. On the contrary, historian Gerhard Paul notes that Germans have consistently distanced themselves from the perpetrators by viewing them as extra-terrestrials, criminals or demons, or by interpreting the Holocaust as an abstract, industrial, bureaucratic, and anonymous process that seemingly did not involve human beings as persecutors (16–24). Even the generation that participated in the student protest movement in the 1960s and '70s refrained from asking their parents pertinent questions about their past. "Die Frage der Kinder- an die Vätergeneration wurde niemals konkret gestellt. Man beließ es bei einem allgemeinen Verdacht" (31).

The refusal to acknowledge the Nazi legacy within one's own family is also compatible with an official German memory culture as it took shape in the immediate years after reunification. Indeed, the government of Chancellor Helmut Kohl embarked on a course of official "Vergangenheitsbewältigung" that attempted to remember both wartime Germans and those persecuted by the Nazis as victims of terrible circumstances, as became clear in the Bitburg and Neue Wache controversies.[2] The succeeding debate about the Holocaust memorial in Berlin indicated that Germans were ready to publicly commemorate the Holocaust by identifying with the victims, rather than by probing the Germans' involvement as perpetrators.[3] On the other hand, the refusal of Germans to speak about the Nazi legacy in their own families is contrary to recent Holocaust discourses that do address Germans as perpetrators, as evidenced in museum exhibits and historical writings. For example, American historian Christopher Browning's *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, published in 1992, was path-breaking in Germany for a new kind of academic inquiry that focused on the perpetrators in their situational and institutional circumstances as well as on individuals with their own dispositions and motivations (Paul 37). The public debate about the first Wehrmacht exhibit, *Vernichtungskrieg: Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941–1944*, destroyed the myth of the "clean Wehrmacht," as it displayed photographs of ordinary soldiers engaging in mass-murder. The exhibit caused a stir in the media as soldiers' associations, conservatives, and right-wingers protested what they considered a provocation (Paul 39).[4] Welzer's interviews thus highlight the incompatibility of public memory in Germany, as shaped by debates in the media, and the ways in which Germans approach the Nazi legacy in the private sphere of their own families.

German filmmakers have made a remarkable contribution to this discourse, with autobiographical documentary films that explore their families'

Nazi legacy, including their relationship to the Holocaust. In interviews with family members, they expose both their relatives' support for the Nazis, and their subsequent denial. In 2000, Claudia von Alemann's *War einst ein wilder Wassermann* showed herself and her young daughter in conversations with her mother, who had been an enthusiastic supporter of the Nazis. In 2005, Malte Ludin's *2 oder 3 Dinge, die ich von ihm weiß* showcased the filmmaker in conversations with his sisters, brothers-in-law, nieces, and nephews about his father, who had been Hitler's ambassador to Slovakia and was later executed as a war criminal. In the same year, Jens Schanze in *Winterkinder—Die schweigende Generation*, discussed his deceased grandfather, who had been a Nazi functionary in Poland, with his mother, father and sisters. In German-Canadian Manfred Becker's *Fatherland* (2006), the filmmaker leads conversations with his young son and elderly father in Germany about his memories of the Nazi period.[5]

Although the directors of these family documentaries belong to different age groups—Ludin was born in 1942, von Alemann in 1943, Becker in 1960, and Schanze in 1971—their works all break with a German cultural taboo that forbids speaking about one's family's support of the Nazi regime, and they contradict Welzer's findings about the third generation's refusal to face the fact that many of their grandparents had been Nazis.[6] Indeed, the third generation figures more or less prominently in all of these documentaries, and due to their presence, the multi- and transgenerational nature of self-reflexive engagement with German family history is highlighted. Nevertheless, we can discern generational approaches to the Nazi legacy within the family. They become apparent not only in the different responses by the various interview subjects, but also in the ways in which the filmmakers constructed their filmic narratives. In the following, I offer an analysis of Jens Schanze's *Winterkinder* that identifies it as a prime example of the grandchildren's empathetic yet critical examination of their family's past, especially when compared with scenes from Malte Ludin's *2 oder 3 Dinge, die ich von ihm weiß*, which displays the confrontational, accusatory stance typically attributed to works of the children of the war generation. While both films were generally well-received, Schanze was also criticized for not asking his mother more painful questions, as Ludin had done in his interviews with his older sister, and for creating an ultimately "harmonious" picture of his family, even though it was clear that his mother was still in denial about her father's Nazi past. These remarks, however, reflect an expectation of the film that disregards what it is really trying to achieve. Rather than accuse and judge his mother, Schanze's film explores the difficulties involved in remembering one's father and grandfather as a Nazi perpetrator. It is a testimony of the son's struggle to come to terms with the mother's failure, and the process the family undergoes is far more important than the outcome. Yet the filmmaker found ways to criticize his mother's denials; unlike Ludin, who argues with his relatives in front of the camera,

Schanze embeds his critique in the narrative of the film, thus highlighting discrepancies between historical fact and individual memory.

In order to discern differences in generational approaches in these documentaries, I will invoke Sigrid Weigel's thoughts on the concept of generation as a category of memory. The term generation in cultural studies discourses today is typically based on the concept defined by sociologist Karl Mannheim in his oft-cited study "Das Problem der Generationen." For Mannheim, the members of a same-age group that share experiences in the same socio-historical context make up a generation. More recently, Sigrid Weigel, in her works on the genesis and history of this term, has pointed out that Mannheim's sociological definition leaves out a genealogical or diachronic aspect, one that is crucial to understanding how Germans remember their past across the generations. She highlights the phenomenon of "'transgenerational traumatization'" that has been noted by psychoanalysts since the 1980s in the postwar German context: second and third generations of Germans grapple with symptoms resulting from their parents' denial of guilt ("Generation" 269). "[T]hese symptoms are perceived by those affected as a propagation of silenced and repressed guilt" ("Generation" 269).[7] Weigel therefore suggests that rather than a clearly defined sociological cohort comprising a certain age group, we regard generation as a category of memory in which the genealogy is located in the unconscious (269). She points out that it is not possible to clearly define the groups of second and third generation of Germans in terms of age or time periods, since the language of the unconscious allows for the "ramming together (*Verschachtelung*) of the order of generations," which she also refers to as a kind of telescoping (271). Weigel's notion of generation as a category of memory is a helpful tool in an analysis of recent cultural productions by younger Germans, as it allows us to evaluate continuities and disjunctions in the processes of memory transmission. In Weigel's terms, the recent family documentaries could all be counted as belonging to a new generation of works that attempt to counter prevalent modes of denial in postwar German culture. However, the documentaries also highlight moments of telescoping in which it becomes clear that an older generation's denial has been passed on to a younger one, essentially blurring the lines between them.

The recent documentaries by German filmmakers need to be viewed in connection with works of literature written by the children and grandchildren of the war generation. Beginning in the early 1970s, authors of the first postwar generation started to explore their parents' involvement with the Nazis in autobiographical accounts. Many of these literary works of *Väterliteratur* were written in a judgmental tone, and the narrators presented themselves as victims of the patriarchal and authoritarian family (Eigler 25). However, Ernestine Schlant has pointed out that the authors of *Väterliteratur* merely utilized the Holocaust to express their rage over childhood mistreatments, and to angrily accuse their parents:

> The novels as fictionalized autobiographies approach the Holocaust subjectively, through the narrator's attempts at conversations with their elders. But in almost all the situations depicted in these novels Jews are peripheral. The narrators see no inconsistency in attacking the parent for his role, no matter how grand or innocuous, in the Nazi regime and simultaneously *not* referring to the atrocities committed by the Nazi regime. Just like the term "fascist," the Nazi regime and the atrocities remain abstract concepts, devoid of personal meaning and personal investment, such as horror or shame or sorrow or even "consternation" (*Betroffenheit*). (92)[8]

Friederike Eigler, in *Gedächtnis und Geschichte in Generationsromanen seit der Wende*, has drawn attention to the genre of the metahistorical generational novel produced by writers of different postwar generations, which assumes a position of reflexivity and distance but also a readiness for empathy and affective rapprochement with one's forebears (25).[9] The willingness of German artists of different generations to imaginatively explore, research, and accept their family's responsibility in the Holocaust seems to stand in stark contrast to the findings of *Opa war kein Nazi*. The coming of age of the grandchildren of the war generation brought new approaches to their grandparents' Nazi past as well as the inadequacies in their parents' handling of this legacy. In the realm of literature, the grandchildren continue to explore this topic in generational novels consisting of largely fictional texts, and in contrast to *Väterliteratur*, these works are less confrontational and accusatory. Literary scholar Milena Ganeva compared the genres of *Enkelliteratur* and *Väterliteratur*, asserting that the former sets itself apart not only by the age of the writers "but also by their consciousness of an attitude towards the past and the specific position they occupy in the contemporary, postunification literary context" (151).[10] While their parents' generation revisited their elders' history in order to overcome it, the younger generation approaches the Nazi past and its memory as a lifelong project that will never be completed. Rather than through generational conflict or political agendas, "[t]hese relationships among the generations are now marked by the tendency to heal and to reestablish emotional ties rather than rupture them and by the desire to understand and accept one another rather than confront and disagree" (158). Thus the authors of *Enkelliteratur* are not so much interested in the results of their explorations as in the process (160). German psychologist Ulla Roberts has noted the same differences in intergenerational discourses about the Nazi legacy within the family: "Und manche Enkel sagen, die Eltern haben anklagend gefragt, worauf die Großeltern gar nicht hätten antworten können. Die Enkel fragen anders," she states, assigning a central role to the third generation when it comes to the breaking with traditional modes of behavior (14). Author and journalist Tanja Dückers, who is one of those granddaughters, explained this difference in approach as one that derives from the distanced position that the grandchildren occupy within the family:

> [I]ch glaube, dass meine Generation einen eigenen Beitrag leisten kann zu dieser Vergangenheitsbewältigung. Die 68er hatten doch ein emotional angestrengteres Verhältnis zu den Eltern, zu der Tätergeneration, da war eine Konfrontation von zwei Generationen, die beide den Krieg noch erlebt hatten. Meine Generation ist die erste, die einen nüchternen Blick auf dieses Thema wagen kann. […] Nicht umsonst ist die Protagonistin meines Romans Naturwissenschaftlerin, Metereologin. Ich wollte diesen forschenden Zugang. Es ging mir nicht darum, dass die Enkelin mit den Großeltern bricht. Die Großeltern sollten zum Erinnern bewogen werden. ("Der nüchterne Blick")

Other fictional works written from the point of view of the generation of grandchildren display this same inquisitive, probing examination of the family's history, although it should be noted that, not unlike in the works of *Väterliteratur*, the persecution and murder of Jews is hardly at the center of these narratives. In comparison, filmmakers Schanze and Ludin have approached this matter differently in their family documentaries, both of which made the cultural taboo that forbids speaking about one's family's Nazi legacy the center of focus.

In *2 oder 3 Dinge, die ich von ihm weiß*, filmmaker Malte Ludin discusses his own family's memories of his father, Hanns Ludin, in interviews with his mother and sisters, nieces and nephews, while at the same time documenting the father's participation in the Holocaust. With its confrontational stance and obvious aim to convince some of his interview subjects and his audience of his own perspective, Ludin's film resembles other works by children of the war generation. Although thematically related, the documentary *Winterkinder* by Jens Schanze has much in common with the works of *Enkelliteratur*, most notably its non-confrontational stance. Furthermore, his goal is not to overcome the past but rather to begin a process of retrieving lost memories, to voice that which has not been voiced thus far, and to accept and share it within the whole family. In contrast to Ludin's documentary, *Winterkinder* is not about a final result but rather presents itself as a project that establishes various lines of communication between mother, son and sisters, among the siblings, and between the parents. In conversations with each other they speak about the grandfather and his role during the Third Reich, but also about the mother's silence and its effects on her children.

At the center of *Winterkinder* is Jens's mother Antonie, who provided him and his sister with the picture of her "good father." The film documents the difficult task of the son to get his mother to speak more openly about her father, to acknowledge his role in the Holocaust in the face of incriminating evidence, and to doubt his "goodness." As Welzer noted, public acknowledgment of Germans as perpetrators does not easily lead to a private reconciling of family members' crimes:

> Denn hier haben wir es ja mit dem Phänomen zu tun, dass eine auf der Ebene der öffentlichen Erinnerungskultur als verbrecherisch markierte Vergangenheit mit einem Familiengedächtnis in Einklang gebracht werden muss, das unter den Erfordernissen von Kohärenz, Identität und wechselseitiger Loyalität jedes Mitglied dazu verpflichtet, die "gute Geschichte" der Familie aufrechtzuerhalten und fortzuschreiben. (24)

This familial bond that forms the basis of a family's memory narrative is at the center of Schanze's film, and his approach—embracing but also critiquing and contesting it—identifies his work as exemplary of the third generation.

In *Winterkinder*, the familial bond is always present as the loving son follows his mother to various places, asking questions about her relationship with, and view of, her father, and patiently waits for her answers. Their interactions lack any accusations or reproaches, but are rather defined by carefulness and civility. This accepting and respectful stance is established in the scenes in which the camera follows his parents as they perform everyday household chores such as preparing baked goods or lighting a fire in the wood stove. It is also apparent in the long still shots that focus on the interior of the house, such as the cozy living room and the various items on the mantelpiece. Schanze presents the viewers here with the sort of middle-class hominess that they may remember from their own houses, signaling that this is just a regular German family, perhaps not unlike their own.

Schanze's careful probing of the familial bond sets his film apart from *2 oder 3 Dinge, die ich von ihm weiß*. Like other artists of the second generation, Ludin, an established film director, critic, and author, made his film after his mother died. Nevertheless, she is a strong presence in the documentary, as he includes footage from old interviews that he had taped with her and that she had granted a journalist. She is a self-confident interviewee who answers questions with conviction and no sense of remorse and no second-guessing. She describes herself and her husband as unknowing bystanders to the Holocaust. Like Schanze, Ludin retrieves incriminating evidence from various archives that documents his father's active participation in, and approval of, the deportation of Slovak Jews. In Ludin's interviews with his sisters the conflicted relationships between family bond and factual knowledge about their father's deeds continuously clash in scenes that are often emotionally loaded with expressions of anger and contempt for one another. Like Antonie Schanze, Ludin's older sister Bärbel refuses to acknowledge her father's guilt. In her remarks, her own mother's narrative of the past shines through, presenting a clear example of Weigel's telescoping, of a trans-generational denial. We encounter Bärbel in her upper-class domestic surroundings and her artist's studio as an assertive, outspoken, and well-dressed middle-aged woman who is proud of her family and determined to protect her father's memory. In the very first scene, she is framed in a close-up, engaged in a conversation with her

brother whose voice off-camera attempts to interrupt her as she angrily states:

> Bärbel: Mein Recht ist es, meinen Vater
> Malte: (*interrupts*) … das voll zu erfassen…
> Bärbel: zu sehen, wie ich ihn sehen will, oder, wie ich ihn sehe, nicht wie ich ihn sehen will, wie ich ihn sehe. Und das ist mein Recht, das kannst du mir auch nicht nehmen. Du hast halt deine Sicht, und das tut mir Leid…
> Malte: Und so bleibt jeder mit seiner Sicht alleine.
> Bärbel: Ja, ja…. Und wenn du gedacht hast, dass du mit diesem Werk, … mit diesem Film äh... da irgendwas ändern kannst, das ist dann leider ein... ein Fehlschluss gewesen.

The contrast with the Schanzes could not be greater. While Ludin engages in conversations with Bärbel and other family members that highlight and solidify their disparate views of his parents, Schanze tries to understand the history and reasoning behind his mother's view of her father. At the beginning of *Winterkinder*, we see a sequence of shots of a German landscape of fields, trees, and a distant mountain, followed by the view of a suburban residential street, while we hear the voices of the filmmaker and his mother as they engage in the following exchange off camera:

> Jens: Ich möchte gern einen Film machen über unsere Familie und deinen Vater, und unsere Erinnerung an ihn. Und ich wollte dich fragen, ob du da mitmachen möchtest.
> Mutter: Ja, soweit meine Erinnerung das zulässt, mache ich da mit.

Using photos from the family album, Schanze creates a closeness to those viewers with similar backgrounds and life stories. Jens's grandfather can also be seen in some of these pictures, sometimes in the circle of the family, but also in SA-uniform. This is the filmmaker's strategy to show the two sides of the same man that are inseparable and undeniable. In the final scene, Schanze returns to the theme of the family picture: after the family has watched part of the documentary and discussed it, they pose for a family portrait. This shot could be seen as a document that indicates a closure or a finished process; however, considering that we saw many other such pictures in the Schanzes' album, it also represents continuity, and it can be interpreted as a preliminary station that allows everybody to take account, pointing toward the future.

Although the mother is clearly the main informant about the grandfather, Schanze presents the construction of the grandfather's story as a family project. This is apparent as he includes interviews with his father and sisters in the film. His story is thus not just one of mother, son and grandfather, but the whole family, and the various relationships among them. The silence is a family issue and will change only if the family as a group is involved. In one scene, both parents sit around the dining room table and answer the son's questions.

Here we learn that the Nazi legacy within the family was never an issue between the couple despite the husband's knowledge that his wife's father had had a prominent position in the Nazi party. He seems to have welcomed her silence and supported it just as much as he supports her in the present when she is committed to her son's film project. We see him accompany her on their travels to East Germany and Poland, wandering through the snow-covered landscape of Nova Roda. Schanze's sub-title, *Die schweigende Generation*, of course refers not only to his mother, but to his mother's generation, and his film points out that the silence of this generation did not only occur between the second and third generations, but also within the second generation, and furthermore characterized the relationship between the war generation and their children. For example, Antonie says that she never spoke to her own mother about her father's actions during the Nazi period because she felt that this would have been "unfair" to her mother. Here again, Schanze gives us a glimpse of the role of loyalty and identification with a parent or spouse that influences how a family constructs a narrative about itself.

Schanze presents his mother's narrative of the past as one that is made up of different strands, some of which put her in the position of a victim. The son is interested in how his mother remembers her childhood in Nova Roda and her flight from their home. In Antonie's recollections it is clear that this event traumatized the young child; she tells how she had to leave behind friends without saying good-bye, and how she did not know when she would see her father, who stayed behind. Their train trip took them through a country in turmoil where the possibility of being separated from each other loomed everywhere. The film later reveals that Antonie never talked about this past with her daughters, and they realize that it was a profound and traumatic experience for her.

Winterkinder thus reflects contemporary trends in the discourse about the past; it not only addresses the second generation's silence about the Nazi legacy, but it also creates a space in the family narrative for the trauma of expulsion. After unification and in the course of the globalization of Holocaust memory (Niven, "Globalisation"), it has become possible for Germans to highlight their own wartime suffering in narratives about the past. As the film progresses and the family travels to Nova Roda, it becomes clear that the stories of her father's involvement with the Nazis, and her flight from Nova Roda are inseparable; her silence had repressed memories of both. Schanze has found a way to interweave both narratives without creating a hierarchy, and without judging the mother. However, he does not allow the story of suffering to eclipse the need to investigate the grandfather's guilt, as some critics of the discourse on German suffering might suspect. Both strands become part of the family's narrative of the past.

Representing the voices of the third generation, Schanze's four sisters—Andrea, Bärbel, Annette, and Kerstin—present their views of how the family

handled their grandfather's memory. They address the consequences of their parents' silence for succeeding generations, and they also highlight the variety in the grandchildren's approaches to the past. Their comments reveal that they have been affected by the mother's silence in different ways. The oldest sister, Andrea, assumes a prominent role in the documentary despite her visual absence throughout much of it. The centrality and importance of Andrea's role as a family member and participant in the documentary becomes apparent in her story, which she tells off camera. As an adolescent, she was shocked to find out that her grandfather was connected to the Nazis and felt alienated by her parents because she did not get any answers when she questioned the portrait of her grandfather as a "good" person. Andrea describes having nightmares in which she shot somebody, but when she tried to talk to her father about this, he yelled at her. The young girl then resigned herself to the silence that the parents imposed. Andrea poses some important questions indicating that she is the sister who has struggled the most with the family's Nazi legacy. "Warum sind so ganz einfache Menschen von Anfang an gegen Hitler und andere eben nicht?" she wonders, a seemingly simple question that touches on the very complex issues that historians and social scientists have explored. "Gibt es ein instinktives Gutsein oder Schlechtsein?" she aks. The documentary film does not try to answer any of these profound questions; but we get the sense that the sister's questions might have inspired her younger brother to take on the film project. Andrea's visual absence from the documentary adds weight to her voice, giving her almost the role of a narrator. When she finally does appear for the reunion, she is a quiet onlooker in the circle of her family. Her absence, and final appearance, leave us wondering what her stance to the film project might be, to her mother's continued denial, and to her own role in this documentary. Schanze does not directly engage with these questions and therefore they remain unanswered.

Welzer's argument that one tends to construct a positive family narrative out of a sense of identity, coherence, and loyalty is directly addressed in Schanze's film, as it highlights not only the effects that the mother's denial has had on her children but also their self-reflexive approach to this aspect of their family history. Jens and his sisters struggle with the question why their mother kept her silence. Andrea identifies the familial bond between daughter and father that will prevent her mother from viewing her own father as a perpetrator. She remembers a conversation with an uncle that revealed to her that her grandfather must have been involved in the persecution of the Jews, although the uncle claimed that his father was not a "perpetrator" in the sense that he had actually killed somebody. "Mir war klar, das stimmt nicht, aber kein Kind kann ertragen, seinen Vater als Mörder zu sehen." Annette attempts to explain the mother's silence with a similar argument to Andrea's, although she seems much less certain about this: she believes her mother kept silent because she thought that talking about the past might be harmful to her own

children. Indeed, when asked, Antonie states as reasons for her silence the need to create a cheerful and happy atmosphere in which to raise her five children. The youngest sister, Kerstin, realizes that the mother's experience has transferred a certain fear of living onto her, a fear that she herself has to struggle with. Rather than the mother's silence about her father, she reacts to the traumatic experience of losing the childhood home and the flight. Her brother allows her to voice her fears without probing deeper to elicit a reaction to the family's Nazi legacy. Kerstin is an example of Weigel's "Verschachtelung," as the mother's denial has become her own. The filmmaker presents the variety of his sisters' responses to his questions without judging them, creating the sense for the audience that this is an ongoing dialogue, characterized by inclusiveness and acceptance.

Although *2 oder 3 Dinge, die ich von ihm weiß* is clearly about the quest of the son to challenge how his sisters remember their father, the third generation is not completely absent. In several scenes that depict Malte pouring over documents that implicate his father, he has his nephew Fabian by his side. Ludin also included interviews with Fabian and other nephews and nieces in which we learn that this generation has been affected in different ways by their grandfather's past and the family's subsequent silence. Some describe their own detachment from their parents' generation, as they analyze and criticize their parents' denial, identifying the constraints that family bonds place on children whose parents turn out to have had a criminal past. Some present themselves as distant onlookers who seem rather unaffected by, and even uninterested in, their family's legacy. A niece who lives in South Africa, however, points out that the third generation has learned a lesson from the mistakes of the older generation, as she did from her own father, who moved to South Africa as a young man and refused to speak to his daughter about his father's role in Nazi Germany. As a consequence, she vows to be more open with her own children so that they won't grow up and live with the same uncertainty she did. Her insights are connected to her awareness of her own country's history of apartheid, and the responsibility she feels to preserve the memory of that.

Both documentaries were co-produced by various TV stations and shown at national and international documentary film festivals, movie theaters, and on German television.[11] Both were well-received nationally and internationally.[12] Critics in general praised the filmmakers for courageously addressing a topic that was still considered a cultural taboo in Germany.[13] Although *Winterkinder* also screened at film festivals in Canada, France, and the Czech Republic, winning several awards, it did not receive the same international attention as did *2 oder 3 Dinge, die ich von ihm weiß*, which was celebrated by the media when it premiered in New York.[14] The negative media responses that criticized Schanze for not confronting his mother's denial more persistently, calling his film an "unhaltbarer Entschuldungsversuch" (Kühn), indicate that some critics brought different expectations to this film. Apparently they did

not notice that Schanze inserted his own critical view of his parents in subtle and unobtrusive, yet unmistakable, ways. One of his strategies is to allow the image of the "good man" to emerge through his mother's recollections and by means of various documents, but to offset this image with evidence about his involvement as a Nazi functionary. For example, he begins the film by characterizing the uncompromising aspects of his grandfather's person, before uncovering some truths about him that have remained a taboo. In one of the first scenes, we listen to Andrea's voice as she reports how their mother always spoke of their grandfather as "unser guter Vater." Then the camera zooms in on the personal items that the grandfather had left to his daughter and which she passed on to the grandson, among them a compass and binoculars. The filmmaker complements this positive memory of his grandfather within the family with his memorialization in a journal devoted to his field, the silicate industry. An obituary recounts the stations of his career, his studies at Freiberg in Saxony, his influential position as engineer in the coal mines of Neurode, Silesia, his captivity as a prisoner of war, and his struggle to start from scratch after the war. When the filmmaker asks his mother what her father might have thought of this film project about him, and why she has chosen to participate in the film and engage in an examination of his life, she says that her father would have been proud and willing to explain everything to his grandchild, but that she only agreed to participate because her children asked her to. The mother's answer sets the tone for the rest of the documentary as they reveal her attitude toward her own father, whom she admires and loves, and also her reluctance to share with her son what she knows.

Another way to contest his mother's denial is to expose the disparity between factual knowledge and the emotionally charged and motivated selectivity of an individual's memory, reflecting the findings of *Opa war kein Nazi* (9–10). Germans often remember their family members differently from their factual knowledge of them, and Schanze's film brings out this disparity. During a visit to the concentration camp Groß-Rosen, near Nova Roda, he reminds his mother that she had visited the camp before as an adult, and afterward she had felt the desire to ask her parents whether they had known about the existence of this camp during the war. At this point in the film, the mother begins to let down her otherwise composed manner and begins to cry: "Weil ich gern wissen wollte, ob sie das gewusst haben," she says. "Was glaubst du"? her son asks. "Dazu kann ich nichts sagen" she responds. His mother's refusal to consider that her parents knew about the concentration camps is offset in the same scene when the filmmaker's off-screen voice reads a letter written by his grandmother to her sister. Her letter indicates that she knew about the camp nearby and furthermore, that she held anti-Semitic views: "Vor allem haben sie da ein Lager in der Nähe mit 30,000 Juden, und sie meinten, wenn da mal Bomben reinfielen und die Juden frei würden, wärs fürchterlich." As viewers, we realize that Antonie is probably familiar with the content of this letter;

however, emotionally she rejects the idea that her parents might have known about the camp.

This disconnect between knowledge and emotional remembering can also be perceived in Antonie's assessment of her father's attitude toward the Jews. It is apparent in a scene after her son's archival research reveals that his grandfather gave a speech on the topic of England and the Jews, saying: "das scharfe Schwert der deutschen Wehrmacht würde dafür sorgen, dass in nächster Zeit diese Geißeln der gesamten Menschheit verschwänden." Here she asserts that she would like to believe that her father was not an anti-Semite:

> Das ist ganz schwierig. Das kann natürlich sein, dass ich für mich persönlich annehmen möchte, dass für ihn ein Jude genauso ein Mensch war, wie jeder andere, aber das sind eben meine Wünsche, die ich gern verwirklicht haben möchte, aber das geht ja nicht mehr und ich kann mit ihm darüber nicht sprechen.

Even though she has been confronted with evidence to the contrary, she still wants to hold on to her positive memory of her father. What makes this stance even more remarkable is her comment that directly follows: "Im Nachhinein weiß ich, dass die Studentenverbindung, in der er war, dass die sich ja eigentlich gegründet hat, dass an den Universitäten die Überzahl der jüdischen Professoren nicht überhand nahm." As the film progresses, Jens asks his mother if her view of her father is in any way changed by the information drawn from the archives, but she insists that she still loves him. "Es bleiben halt noch ganz viele Fragen offen," she maintains. Antonie does not want to acknowledge that her son's probing questions and research have already revealed some answers.

Although the son never openly criticizes his mother for her refusal to change her view of her father, his images do express his disapproval. The first scenes of this documentary are shot in front of the backdrop of snow-covered landscapes, reflecting the reserved, quiet and repressed stance of the mother when it comes to her father's past. Schanze comes back to this imagery when he directly asks his parents whether they would call their fathers Nazis.[15] After an initial silence, his father responds: "Ja, also ich meine formal natürlich ja, klar, aber…" Antonie, however, does not agree with the term Nazi and says that she would prefer the term "Nationalsozialist." In this short conversation, the camera focuses on Horst, the father, and after Antonie finishes her remark, the camera cuts to a snowglobe, depicting a snowman. Although the filmmaker lets this comment stand, his return visually to the film's overarching theme, the dark and cold season of winter, representing the silence and denial of his mother's generation, expresses his condemnation of his mother's statement. The snowglobe as an artificial object of kitsch depicting an encapsulated scene also seems to reflect Antonie's unchangeable view of her father. This cut is the "Widerwort" that some critics wished for in their reviews (Kühn). Welzer's study, of course, tells us that with her rejection of the word

"Nazi," Antonie is not so different from many of her compatriots who separate their own family members from "the Nazis" who were "the others" and the perpetrators (150–53).

The final scenes show the family gathering in the summer as they watch the first part of the documentary, offering comments and describing their experience as participants in this project. The change of season suggests that a significant shift has taken place. The images of a united family, whose members had thus far only been seen or heard separately or in smaller groups, give the viewer a sense of closure, although I would argue that they are at the same time offset by the mother's comment that this very private film only represented one family out of millions.[16] This remark and the whole scene serve as an invitation to other Germans to examine their own family's history more closely. It highlights that the family history is inseparably intertwined with the country's, but it also sheds light on the incompatibility of private and public memory. In another scene we see the whole family as they sit on garden chairs in a circle discussing the film project and its outcomes once more. The open, inviting, green landscape contrasts with the enclosed, dark spaces in which many of the previous interviews had taken place, as well as the recurring shots of white winterlands. It suggests that a thaw has taken place. In the next take the camera draws away as the family—including the filmmaker son—sits together and talks. The dialogue continues, even though the audience is no longer allowed to witness it. Ludin's film, by contrast, ends with the son's visit to his father's grave, suggesting that the film project has brought him to a place of silent but also lonely mourning. Although the third generation in Ludin's film has expressed new, more detached and even self-reflexive approaches to the family history that allow them to remember their grandfather's guilt in the Holocaust, the Ludins as a family do not come together in order to start a dialogue. In *Winterkinder*, the film's ending suggests that the family has reached a new level in their relationship, one that includes a more open discourse about their Nazi legacy. Although the end is produced as a sort of happy ending for the Schanze family, it is not a "Katharsis" as one film critic complained (Reichelt). Moreover, as viewers we can understand that it is also a comment on contemporary Germany's memory culture and the work that lies ahead. Although the film ends with a positive tone through the hope for change, it is primarily characterized by its persistent silences, gaps and open questions.

The third generation's non-confrontational and comparatively relaxed approach to dealing with its family's legacy of the Nazi past could be explained by this generation's lack of political motivation (Ganeva). Unlike the generation of 1968, they are not organized in any political groups with common ideologies and goals. It can also be seen as a consequence of the shift in the Holocaust discourse that has taken place not only in Germany but internationally. With the end of the Cold War and the crumbling of the Soviet bloc, a

global approach to the Holocaust has set in, facilitated by open access to archives and places in the East, resulting in an expansion and opening up of new lines of inquiry. Without the fall of the Wall, neither Schanze's nor Ludin's film would have taken the shape it did, for the filmmakers would not have had easy access to the places, local archives and interviewees that contributed to their films. For example, the trips to Poland play a crucial part in Antonie Schanze's readiness to share her memories of her father. In Ludin's film this global perspective is perhaps even more significant, as the end of the Cold War allowed the filmmaker to travel to Slovakia and meet his future wife, Iva Švarcová, who confronted him with the perspective of the victims. This then became an integral part of his documentary in the form of interviews with Jewish victims whose lives were directly affected by Hanns Ludin's actions. The multiple perspectives of the documentary make the film perhaps more accessible to an international audience than Schanze's *Winterkinder,* which revolves only around one German family's dilemma. The study of the Holocaust today includes an examination of a variety of victim groups, the history of the perpetrators, the history of various other groups such as collaborators, resisters, and bystanders, and it also allows Germans to discuss their own wartime suffering. As a course of this global inquiry, other countries and other groups have begun to examine their complicity in the Holocaust, and the weight of responsibilities and guilt has been shifted somewhat (Niven, "Globalisation"). Young Germans can thus feel some relief as their grandparents are no longer demonized the way they might have been during the first postwar decades.

Despite the differences in approach, Schanze's and Ludin's films have much in common. Both document visually the difficulty in contemporary German families to think and speak about one's parents and grandparents as Nazis or even perpetrators of the Holocaust. Despite the filmmakers' presentation of factual evidence, members of the respective families, most prominently Schanze's mother Antonie and Ludin's sister Bärbel, did not manage to confront the reality that their fathers were in favor of or complicit in the genocide of the Jews. The documentaries established that this denial is clearly a consequence of their parents' refusal to accept responsibility for their actions and to acknowledge their own guilt, and thus they visually demonstrate what Ralph Giordano called "die zweite Schuld." As these family members edit unwanted factual knowledge from their memories, they react with the same denial displayed by the interview subjects in Welzer's social study. The audiences of Schanze's and Ludin's films are left with the same realization that historian Bill Niven expressed with respect to Welzer's study: "the memory of German perpetration, guilt, and 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 ("Introduction" 20).

Both films impressively highlight the telescoping effect that allows for certain modes of denial to be passed on from the grandparents to the parents and to the grandchildren, making visual Weigel's understanding of generation as a category of memory rather than an age group. Certainly, one of the major achievements of these films is their exposing of the aftereffects on succeeding generations caused by such transferred silences and denials. Schanze's older sister Andrea clearly has suffered from her parents' refusal to speak openly about her grandfather, and so did some of Ludin's sisters and their children. The films thus expose what Erin McGlothlin described as "phantom pains," the sense of being marked by the legacy of the Holocaust and National Socialism, that children of both victims and perpetrators have in common:

> For the children of survivors, this experience is one of unintegrated trauma and rupture in familial continuity; for the children of perpetrators it is the family's unintegratable history of violation and brutality. The event that has marked the second generation of both legacies is inaccessible, yet the mark of that experience remains and, like the phantom pain, continues to haunt its bearer. (10)

The documentaries about the Nazi legacy within the family are evidence that these phantom pains continue for the grandchildren of the war generation. It remains to be seen what direction the familial discourse about the Nazi legacy will take in the future. For now, the documentaries by Schanze and Ludin and so many other biographical[17] and fictional works are exemplary of a willingness to break with the cultural taboos that *Opa war kein Nazi* highlighted.

Notes

[1] I am grateful to Janis Solomon for providing insightful feedback on an earlier version of this essay.

[2] In 1985, on the 40th anniversary of the end of the war, Chancellor Kohl invited U.S. President Ronald Reagan to visit the military cemetery at Bitburg, which contains graves of the Waffen-SS. Jewish communities and other groups in the U.S. and Germany protested the visit, and as a concession Kohl and Reagan laid a wreath at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp before going to Bitburg (Herf 351–54). In 1993, Kohl wanted the Neue Wache, a historic Berlin guardhouse, rededicated as a memorial to all victims of war and tyranny, including German soldiers and civilians. As a concession to those who protested that victims and perpetrators would be commemorated together, he had a bronze plaque added listing the various groups of victims (Ladd 217–24).

[3] Köppen and Scherper speak of "ein deutsches 'Wir' der Gedenkkultur, das die entlastende Indentifikation mit den Opfern sucht" (3).

[4] Michael Verhoeven's 2006 documentary *Der unbekannte Soldat* examines the German reaction to the first Wehrmacht exhibit, highlighting the Germans' refusal to acknowledge their elders' involvement in mass murder despite the photographic evidence. Many of the photos had been part of Germans' private photo albums.

[5] Filmmakers in other countries have taken an interest in this topic. In *The End of the Neubacher Project* (2007), American-born Austrian Michael Carney interviewed his

mother about his family's involvement with the Nazis. In 2008, the British director Tony Wilson released *Confessions of a German Soldier*, which tells the story of the German Lena Karsten, who, together with British historian Gabriel Fawcett, reconstructs her grandfather's story by reading his letters and traveling across Europe to find his grave.

[6] In an interview included with the DVD of the film, Schanze stated that he was inspired by the results of an opinion poll conducted in 2002 by the Emnid-Institut in Bielefeld. This poll, conducted by Welzer and his team and intended to be a quantitative supplement to the qualitative findings of the published study *Opa war kein Nazi*, found that nearly half of its German subjects believed that their relatives of the wartime generation had held negative views toward Nazism (Welzer 246).

[7] See also chapter 4 in *Genea-Logik: Generation, Tradition und Evolution zwischen Kultur-und Naturwissenschaften*.

[8] The authors discussed by Schlant in her chapter on *Väterliteratur* include but are not limited to: Peter Henisch, Elisabeth Plessen, Bernward Vesper, Peter Härtling, and Brigitte Schwaiger (85–95).

[9] Eigler discusses works by Zafer Senocak, Kathrin Schmidt, Monika Maron, and Stephan Wackwitz.

[10] Ganeva discusses novels by Tanja Dückers and Marcel Beyer, but she also mentions the works of Judith Kuckart, Stefan Wackwitz, Olaf Müller, Lena Kugler, Reinhard Jirgl, Thomas Medicus and Christoph Amend (150).

[11] Ludin marketed the DVD of his film, which includes subtitles in English, to an international audience, in contrast with Schanze, whose DVD is readily available in German stores, but for a subtitled version one has to inquire with the production company Mascha Film (www.maschafilm.de).

[12] The Deutsche Film- und Medienbewertung gave both documentaries the predicate of "besonders wertvoll."

[13] Examples of favorable media reviews of Schanze's film can be found in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Moorstedt) and *Berliner Zeitung* (Elstermann) and to Ludin's in the *Frankfurter Rundschau* (Segler) and *Berliner Zeitung* (Westphal). See also the film website (www.2oder3dinge.de), which offers links to and pdf files of film reviews.

[14] See for example the reviews in the *New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, and *Film Journal International*, posted on the film website.

[15] Jens Schanze's paternal grandfather had also been a member of the Nazi party.

[16] In an earlier scene at an archive, Schanze learns that the membership of the SA numbered 10 million.

[17] Examples are Alexandra von Senfft, *Schweigen tut weh. Eine andere Familiengeschichte* (2004), and Claudia Brunner, *Schweigen die Täter, reden die Enkel* (2007).

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