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**Coming to terms with the National Socialist Past in
teamWorx's TV Event Movies: *Dresden* (2006), *Nicht
alle waren Mörder* (2006) and *Die Flucht* (2007)**

Dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This thesis examines three made-for-television ‘Event Movies’ from the German production company teamWorx, made between 2006 and 2007 – *Dresden* (2006), *Nicht alle waren Mörder* (2006) and *Die Flucht* (2007) – within the context of contemporary debates of ‘Vergangenheitsbewältigung’ or ‘coming to terms with the past’ in Germany. It will deal with specific debates in memory of the National Socialist past, namely representations of Germans as victims of the Second World War and memory of the Holocaust. Although in recent years the importance of teamWorx’s television films has begun to be acknowledged by scholars in both Germany and the UK, this thesis represents the first attempt to analyse these three Event Movies as a unit and to explore in-depth the teamWorx company and its attitudes to historical film. As such, two interviews will be relied on throughout this thesis, with chairman of the board Nico Hofmann and *Die Flucht*’s director Kai Wessel.

In order to place the films within the context of contemporary debates on memory of the Nazi past in Germany, the thesis will undertake a filmic analysis of the Event Movies, supported by both the intentions of the filmmakers and critical responses in the contemporary press. Of primary importance for the thesis will be the twin concerns of the authenticity of teamWorx’s productions, as claimed by the filmmakers and the Event Movies’ borrowing of filmmaking devices from Hollywood genres, in particular the melodrama. Following this analysis it will be asked to what extent the Event Movies affect and reflect contemporary debates on the legacy of National Socialism and how these films contribute to the normalisation of the Nazi past in Germany.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Defining Terms

1.1: Introduction

Ever since their first Event Movie *Der Tunnel* was broadcast in 2001, the German production company teamWorx has been described as delivering “filmische Vergangenheitsbewältigung,”¹ and has become famous for portraying twentieth-century German history as big-budget, spectacular ‘Events.’ None of its films attracted so many viewers or provoked so much debate as teamWorx’s productions on the National Socialist past. This thesis intends to use three of these Event Movies as an optic through which to explore ‘Vergangenheitsbewältigung’ or coming to terms with the Nazi past in contemporary Germany. These are: *Dresden*, a love story between a German nurse and a British bomber pilot set against the backdrop of the bombing of the city; *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, a film based on the childhood memoirs of Jewish actor Michael Degen, who survived the Second World War by going underground in Berlin and being hidden by a series of sympathetic Germans and finally *Die Flucht*, on the flight of a German noble household from their home in East Prussia in 1945. It will investigate and analyse how these films affect and reflect changing memory of the Third Reich and how they contribute to debates on the National Socialist legacy. The thesis will consist of four chapters. Chapter One will provide an introduction to memory of the National Socialist past, including theories of memory, how present-day Germany remembers the Third Reich and an explanation and analysis of the term ‘normalisation’ as regards the Nazi past. It will furthermore provide an introduction to teamWorx and their attitudes towards filmmaking and history. Chapter Two will define some of the key terms which will assist in the analysis of the films, including the concept of ‘authenticity,’ especially with regards to historical film; an analysis of ‘Hollywood’ as a film genre and its relationship to German filmmaking and an exploration of the importance and dangers of television in communicating history. It will finish with an evaluation of the current literature on contemporary German film and the Nazi past, with a particular focus on the small amount of literature on teamWorx’s Event Movies. Chapters Three and Four will both revolve around a specific theme in memory of the National Socialist past: Germans as victims of the Second World War and the Holocaust respectively. They will provide a background on how these themes have been dealt with previously – particularly on

¹ Marcel Rosenbach, ‘Hofmanns Erzählungen’, in *Der Spiegel*, 17 January 2005. The unusual orthography of teamWorx with a lower case ‘t’ and upper case ‘w’ appears to be the most common in promotional material from the company so will be kept throughout this thesis.

film and television – and the current debates surrounding them, before analysing teamWorx’s films in the context of these debates: *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* relating to German victimhood, and *Nicht alle waren Mörder* to the Holocaust. These analyses will assist in concluding how teamWorx regards the past, how this is typical of contemporary efforts, whether this is found to be appropriate according to critics, viewers and commentators and finally what this reveals about contemporary Germany’s relationship to the National Socialist past.

1.2: Memory of the National Socialist past in contemporary Germany

The following section is intended to give an introduction to some of the trends and debates surrounding memory of the National Socialist past and ‘Vergangenheitsbewältigung’ in contemporary Germany. It will first look at a number of theories of memory and subsequently how these theories can be applied to memory of National Socialism and the Second World War. It will then detail the resurgence and relevance of memory of the National Socialist past in post-unification German society. It will also be investigated how memory of this past can be (and has been) instrumentalised for contemporary ends and explore in depth the term ‘normalisation’ as regards the Nazi past. This will provide a basic context for the analysis of how teamWorx’s Event Movies affect and reflect memory of the National Socialist past in contemporary Germany.

1.2.1: Theories of memory

Before any analysis can begin of the effect of teamWorx’s Event Movies on memory of the National Socialist past in Germany, it is necessary to ask what memory is and how it functions, on an individual and wider level, starting with some broad comments on the characteristics of memory. Firstly memories are possessed by one individual alone. They are taken from one person’s own standpoint and can belong to no-one else. Secondly memories are fragmentary, only gaining significance when they are placed within a narrative or a wider context. Thirdly, personal memory is always affected by later events and emotions. As Aleida Assmann formulates:

“Das Gedächtnis ist kein Apparat zum exakten Registrieren und Konservieren wie der Photoapparat. Eher lässt sich die immer neue Umschreibung und Anverwandlung der Erinnerungen mit der Praxis des Retouchierens vergleichen, die aus den Photographien

störende und zufällige Elemente herausfiltert und das, was im Fokus ist, verschönt, verstärkt, vergrößert und überhöht.”²

Memory then, is anything but completely reliable. Although memories are intrinsically individual, Maurice Halbwachs has developed a theory of ‘collective memory,’ which co-exists with individual memory. He used the term to describe various different phenomena including:

“The ways we use socially provided means and materials and forms for narrating our own pasts; [...] the ways in which individuals articulate their own pasts in relation to the history of their collectivities and see the history of their groups as parts of their own histories, and vice versa; [...] the processes – including rituals, commemorations, story-telling, reminiscence, and the like – through which the previous two sets of phenomena are activated, reproduced, and transmitted [and] the collective representations – the actual stories, images, terms, monuments, materials, and institutions – that form the shared inheritance of groups or societies.”³

Collective memories are therefore often defined by changes in generations. Everyone shares a certain amount of historical experience with the rest of his or her generation and this inescapably binds their collective memory together.⁴ So it is to be expected that groups can share similar, but not identical, ‘memories’ of the past. A dialectic of collective memory has been identified by Pierre Nora: “There are as many memories as there are groups, [...] memory is by nature multiple and yet specific; collective, plural, and yet individual.”⁵

Integral to the study of how film and television affect a society’s memories is the difference between communicative and cultural memory, theorised by Jan Assmann. His work was on the study of ancient societies, although many commentators have applied it to memory of the National Socialist past since it appears strikingly appropriate.⁶ Communicative memory can be defined as the ‘exchange of direct, biographical experience in the framework of the collective,’ which, after a certain period of time, fades into cultural memory. Cultural memory is non-direct, formal and structured and, importantly, requires props to keep it alive. These props can be books

² Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit: Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik* (Munich: Beck, 2006), p. 134.

³ Cited in Jeffrey K. Olick, ‘Turning Points and Myths of German Memory’, in *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History*, 5 (2008), <http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/16126041-Olick-3-2008>, p. 3. All websites accessed 5 September 2011 unless otherwise stated.

⁴ See Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, pp. 26-7.

⁵ Pierre Nora, ‘Between History and Memory: Les Lieux de Mémoire’, excerpted in Michael Rossington and Anne Whitehead (ed.), *Theories of Memory: A Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 146.

⁶ See Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich: Beck, 1999).

and films but also monuments and rituals, such as the commemoration of certain anniversaries.⁷ Importantly, cultural memory can be instrumentalised by elite groups in society, such as politicians, intellectuals and the media, who mould this memory to the needs of the present day. “What we remember and how we remember is largely determined by the exigencies of the present,” wrote Robert G. Moeller, adding that it is of utmost importance for those who make use of cultural memory to make explicit this link between the present and the past.⁸

The primacy of first-hand memory is often considered superior to and more ‘authentic’⁹ than these examples of cultural memory, which are wont to be changed and instrumentalised for present purposes. However, several commentators have noted how important these cultural artefacts, and especially the image and narrative film, can be in depicting memory. “Was in Worten nicht zu fassen ist, soll in Bildern gezeigt werden – Die Kamera als der Stumme Zeuge, der nicht lügen kann,” maintained Sam Fuller, an American director who shot documentary footage of concentration camps after their liberation.¹⁰ Despite the value of cultural memory artefacts in keeping memory alive it must also be noted that for many they represent a danger. While collective memory can change over time, cultural memory is in danger of being reified, ossified and made static: “In the enthusiasm to collect ‘memory,’ [...] we may quietly be conferring on our subject a thing-like character without ever stopping to ask whether this is justified.”¹¹ Similarly, the term ‘Vergangenheitsbewältigung’¹² can be attractive yet misleading, representing the danger of reified memory: “The past should not be ‘mastered.’ Rather [...] we should continue to ‘work through’ it. The process of *Aufarbeitung* is dynamic; the move towards closure, (*Schlußstrich*) or ‘mastery’ (*Bewältigung*) is not,”¹³ Moeller reminds us.

In this context, film and television are cultural memory props, affecting the memory of a much wider group, spanning families, nations and even, to a certain extent,

⁷ See Caroline Gay, ‘*Leidkultur* or *Leitverantwortung*? The Legacy of the Third Reich in the National Memory Narratives of the >Berlin Republic<’, in Herbert Hrachovec, Wolfgang Müller-Funk and Birgit Wagner (ed.), *Kleine Erzählungen und ihre Medien* (Vienna: Turia + Kant, 2004), p. 119.

⁸ Robert G. Moeller, ‘What Has “Coming to Terms with the Past” Meant in Post-World War II Germany? From History to Memory to the “History of Memory”’, in *Central European History*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (2002), p. 254.

⁹ This term will be discussed in detail in Section 2.1.

¹⁰ Gertrud Koch, ‘Film, Fernsehen und neue Medien’, in Volkhard Knigge and Norbert Frei (ed.), *Verbrechen erinnern* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2002), p. 413.

¹¹ James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 2.

¹² ‘Vergangenheitsbewältigung’ is usually translated as ‘coming to terms with the past,’ yet the German term ‘Bewältigung’ suggests mastery, accomplishment or completion.

¹³ Moeller, “‘Coming to Terms with the Past’”, p. 255. See also Charles S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (London: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 139.

generations.¹⁴ The media are integral to the shift from communicative to cultural memory, as theorised by Jan Assmann. “[Medien] erweitern drastisch den Radius der Zeitgenossenschaft [und sichern] den lebendigen Erinnerungen einen Platz im kulturellen Gedächtnis.”¹⁵ Film narratives have their root in oral history, which is a time-honoured and commonly accepted method of communicating memory. As mentioned above, memories are only imbued with significance when told in a narrative form: “Das Ereignis ist nicht das, was passiert. Das Ereignis ist das, was erzählt werden kann.”¹⁶ Indeed, as Harald Welzer, Sabine Moller and Karoline Tschuggnall discovered during their study *Opa war kein Nazi* – in which they interviewed family members from different generations about family memories of the Nazi past – the media can have an extremely direct effect on memory. The study found that when recounting their memories of past events, interviewees occasionally spoke of events taken from films or other sources, which they had appropriated as their own history.¹⁷ Similarly, the increasing use of fictional films in the classroom can increase their acceptance as historical fact.¹⁸ A further theory of memory relevant to the way in which the media affects memory has been developed by Alison Landsberg. What she terms ‘prosthetic memory’ has appeared since the development of mass culture. Generated by the mass media, it is the role of prosthetic memories to “bridge the temporal chasms that separate individuals from the meaningful and potentially interpellative events of the past. It has become possible to have an intimate relationship to memories of events through which one did not live.”¹⁹ Prosthetic memories allow the individual to experience the past vicariously, using his or her senses. As with cultural memory, prosthetic memories are available to a wider audience and are not bound by nation or race, helping to create a much wider community of memory – theoretically a global memory community – and enable the individual to make a “personal connection to an event they did not live through, to see through another’s eyes.”²⁰ These prosthetic memories “have the capacity to make possible alliances across racial, class and other chasms of difference.”²¹

¹⁴ See Harald Welzer, Sabine Moller and Karoline Tschuggnall, *Opa war kein Nazi: Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust im Familiengedächtnis* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2005), p. 13 & p. 23.

¹⁵ Karin Böhme-Dürr, ‘Wie vergangen ist die Vergangenheit? Holocaust-Erinnerungen in amerikanischen und deutschen Nachrichtenmagazinen’, in Jürgen Wilke (ed.), *Massenmedien und Zeitgeschichte* (Konstanz: UVK Medien, 1999), p. 249.

¹⁶ Welzer et al, *Opa war kein Nazi*, p. 128.

¹⁷ See Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁸ See Ibid., p. 129.

¹⁹ Alison Landsberg, ‘Prosthetic memory: the ethics and politics of memory in an age of mass culture’, in Paul Grainge (ed.), *Memory and popular film* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 148.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 156.

²¹ Ibid., p. 156. Examples of how Landsberg’s prosthetic memories function with particular reference to film and television will be explored in Section 2.4.2 in the context of the heritage genre.

One final point to take into consideration is that memory is not homogeneous, that there are always many different memories of the past: “A whole kaleidoscope of recollections of this period, which can be broadly divided into collective, individual and national narratives.”²² There are as many different strands of memory as there are groups; indeed, as there are individuals, all of which exist simultaneously. As Alfred Grosser writes: “Es gibt nicht *ein* deutsches Gedächtnis; es gibt verschiedene und gegensätzliche deutsche Gedächtnisse.”²³ Since unification there has been an increased interest in several different areas of memory of the National Socialist past, from learning more about the various crimes of the Nazis to researching the range of victims of the regime. Of utmost importance is an understanding of how these various, often conflicting, narratives can exist side by side in today’s Germany. Memory is, for this exact reason, often seen as existing in opposition to history. “Erinnerung und Gedächtnis waren die Widersacher des wissenschaftlichen Historikers,”²⁴ claimed Aleida Assmann. For this reason there can be a difference between a reasoned acceptance of the facts of history and an emotional response to it. For young generations of Germans there often exist two ‘spheres’ of memory: that about which they learn in school and that which they experience within their own family, yet importantly both of these spheres can exist simultaneously. This was one of the starting points for Welzer *et al*, which was summarised thus:

“Metaphorisch gesprochen, existiert neben einem wissensbasierten ‘Lexikon’ der nationalsozialistischen Vergangenheit ein weiteres, emotional bedeutenderes Referenzsystem für die Interpretation dieser Vergangenheit: eines, zu den konkreten Personen – Eltern, Großeltern, Verwandte – ebenso gehören wie Briefe, Fotos und persönliche Dokumente aus der Familiengeschichte. Dieses ‘Album’ vom ‘Dritten Reich’ ist mit Krieg und Heldentum, Leiden, Verzicht und Opferschaft, Faszination und Größenphantasien bebildert, und nicht, wie das ‘Lexikon,’ mit Verbrechen, Ausgrenzung und Vernichtung.”²⁵

So it is important to remember firstly that there is no one ‘authentic’ memory of the past and furthermore that many different versions of the past – emotional and rational – can exist side by side; that young Germans can remember both the crimes of Germany as a country and also the suffering of their grandparents without one necessarily cancelling out the other.

²² Caroline Pearce, *Contemporary Germany and the Nazi Legacy: Remembrance, Politics and the Dialectic of Normality* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), p. 8.

²³ Alfred Grosser, *Verbrechen und Erinnerung* (Munich: dtv, 1993), p. 97.

²⁴ Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, p. 47.

²⁵ Welzer et al, *Opa war kein Nazi*, p. 10.

1.2.2: The Post-unification resurgence of memory of the National Socialist past

The following section will detail the resurgence of memory of the National Socialist past in post-unification Germany, reasons for this resurgence and some of the memory trends which exist today. The fall of the Berlin Wall and subsequent German unification did not put an end to discussions on the Nazi past, nor relegate it to a part of the history of totalitarianism.²⁶ Indeed, unification helped put the National Socialist legacy back on the agenda. Previously, both of the separate German states could pass the buck of responsibility across the Wall. Memory of the past was instrumentalised, on both sides, in order to prove that they were the ‘better’ Germany and that the legacy of National Socialism was ‘owned’ by the other state, which provided each state with a positive founding myth. After unification, however, in order to create a shared future for Germany it was integral to concentrate on this shared German history, to accept that this difficult past is owned by all Germans.²⁷ Similarly, there had been suggestions that an end point to the ‘Vergangenheitsbewältigung’ of the Nazi past would finally be reached after unification. It was feared that this would occur in 1995, with the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war, although this was evidently not the case. Instead the anniversary sparked a new wave of interest in this history.²⁸ Since then the Nazi past has remained practically omnipresent in German society and culture, with anniversaries providing peaks of memory waves. New books are published, exhibitions opened, monuments and memorials erected and of course films and television programmes screened to large audiences. The omnipresence of the past in Germany today is represented by, amongst other examples: the ongoing debate over the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin and subsequently, after its unveiling, news of its fifth birthday;²⁹ the re-opening of Berlin’s ‘Topographie des Terrors’ exhibition, with an education centre; and finally the new exhibition ‘Hitler und die Deutschen,’ which opened in October 2010.³⁰

It has been noted that a generational shift, occurring around the time of unification, could be a further reason for a renewed interest in the Nazi past. Firstly, as those in government are the first German representatives not to have lived through the

²⁶ See Pearce, *Contemporary Germany and the Nazi Legacy*, p. 25 and Michael Wildt, ‘Die Epochenäsur 1989/90 und die NS-Historiographie’, in *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History*, 5 (2008), <http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/16126041-Wildt-3-2008>, p. 17.

²⁷ See Bill Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past: United Germany and the Legacy of the Third Reich* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 2.

²⁸ See Torsten Körner, ‘Viel Spaß mit Hitler’, in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 19 September 2004.

²⁹ See Julia Haak, ‘Respekt vor dem Stein’, in *Berliner Zeitung*, 5 May 2010. This will be discussed in detail in Section 4.1.2.4.

³⁰ See Nikolaus Bernau, ‘Trotz allem endlich fertig’, in *Berliner Zeitung*, 6 May 2010 and Author unknown, ‘“Topographie des Terrors” in Berlin eröffnet’, in *Berliner Zeitung*, 7 May 2010.

Third Reich, it is important for them to reaffirm the importance of a continued working through of the past, for “it would be dangerous to misconstrue this as a way out of our historical responsibility,” as Chancellor Schröder maintained in his inaugural speech of November 1998.³¹ With the death of the wartime generation, a new way of coming to terms with the Nazi past is in progress, one reliant on the distance of the third and fourth generations to this past.³² The second issue regarding the shift in generations is summarised by Norbert Frei: “Der Abschied von den Zeitgenossen der NS-Zeit [...] ist in seine Schlußphase getreten.” As such it is important to glean as much of their first-hand memories as one can while it is still possible. Frei continues: “Wen die Aura der Zeugenschaft umgibt, der ist jetzt interessant.”³³ This is one of the reasons for the recent explosion in memoirs, documentaries and interviews with those who lived through the Third Reich, whatever their role in it, as this could be the last chance to record this ‘first-hand’ history. The recording of experiences and memories is an important part of the way societies remember. Although these are ‘second-hand’ memory products they do retain a sense of validity, as Maurice Halbwachs theorised: “The only means of preserving such remembrances is to write them down in a coherent narrative, for the writings remain even though the thought and the spoken word die.” This perhaps lends weight to the argument for using film as a tool for preserving memories.³⁴

1.2.3: Uses and abuses of memory

Amidst this discussion of different types and strands of memory, one is forced to ask what purpose memory serves, in particular memory of the Third Reich, and why it is so hotly contested. Specific uses and abuses of memory of National Socialism regarding the main foci of the thesis – namely memory of German victimhood and the Holocaust – will be dealt with in detail later; this section intends to give a very brief introduction as to what purposes memory of the Nazi past can serve. It is important to acknowledge that, just as the present influences how the past is remembered, so does the past greatly influence the present.³⁵ In order to understand what it means to be German today, one is forced to seek answers to questions of guilt and responsibility and

³¹ Pearce, *Contemporary Germany and the Nazi Legacy*, p. 48.

³² See Claudia Brunner and Uwe von Seltmann, *Schweigen die Täter reden die Enkel* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2005), p. 14.

³³ Norbert Frei, ‘Geschichtswissenschaft’, in Volkhard Knigge and Norbert Frei (ed.), *Verbrechen erinnern* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2002), p. 370.

³⁴ Maurice Halbwachs, ‘The Collective Memory’, excerpted in Michael Rossington and Anne Whitehead (ed.), *Theories of Memory: A Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp. 139-40. See also Körner, ‘Viel Spaß mit Hitler’, Böhme-Dürr, ‘Wie vergangen ist die Vergangenheit?’, pp. 248-9 and Welzer et al, *Opa war kein Nazi*, p. 129.

³⁵ See Moeller, “‘Coming to Terms with the Past’”, p. 226.

to find a rational explanation for the ‘Zivilisationsbruch,’ the breakdown in civilisation during the Third Reich. Continuing to remember the period similarly has a didactic purpose, to ensure that such a regime should never be allowed to exist again.³⁶

Firstly, remembering and ‘working through’ the National Socialist past can be useful in coming to terms with this past and one’s own personal involvement or relationship to it. The use of terms such as ‘Erinnerungsarbeit’ (literally ‘memory work’) and ‘Vergangenheitsbewältigung’ suggests a conscious effort is required to work through this past in order to relieve any sense of trauma related to it. Herbert Prantl’s phrase “Erinnerung führt zur Befreiung”³⁷ has been quoted with regard to the ‘working-through’ of the National Socialist past. The psychiatrist Jürgen Müller-Hohagen noted many of his patients’ problems were related to elements of their past during the Third Reich, which they had not worked through sufficiently, whether they characterised themselves as victims or perpetrators. Müller-Hohagen even noted problems relating to patients’ parents’ or grandparents’ repression of this past. In every fifth family who came to him as a psychiatrist, relations to National Socialism reportedly played a role.³⁸

Understanding and accepting a shared past is integral in fashioning a sense of national identity. All countries’ identity is, to some extent, based upon part of their past. Halbwachs posited that it is through the reproduction of memories that identity is formed.³⁹ Paul Connerton, in his study of the importance memory plays in a society, maintained: “Participants in any social order must presuppose a shared memory.”⁴⁰ Jan Assmann furthermore defined national memory narratives as a version of the past which anchors that society’s “konnektive Struktur.”⁴¹ While most countries’ national identity is based upon a positive founding myth – some past victory, for example – Germany’s shared remembrance offers a “negative foil to Germany’s democratic national identity.”⁴² The country is able to define itself in opposition to the Third Reich, the fascist regime which stands for everything today’s Germany does not want to be. Germany’s current stance of fighting back against injustice, such as right-wing

³⁶ See Pearce, *Contemporary Germany and the Nazi Legacy*, p. 6.

³⁷ See Walter Hömberg and Christiane Reiter, ‘Die Wehrmachtsausstellung im Meinungskampf’, in Jürgen Wilke (ed.), *Massenmedien und Zeitgeschichte* (Konstanz: UVK Medien, 1999), p. 245. This could also be understood in a negative sense, since the term ‘Befreiung’ is ambiguous and suggests similar debates to the interpretation of ‘Vergangenheitsbewältigung’ as a ‘mastery’ or ‘completion’ of the past.

³⁸ See Jürgen Müller-Hohagen, *Verleugnet, verdrängt, verschwiegen: Seelische Nachwirkungen der NS-Zeit und Wege zu ihrer Überwindung* (Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 2005), p. 14.

³⁹ See Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 47.

⁴⁰ Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 3.

⁴¹ Cited in Gay, ‘*Leidkultur or Leitverantwortung?*’, p. 117.

⁴² Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past*, p. 5.

extremism and xenophobic violence, allows it to prove the past has influenced the country for the better.⁴³ A notable example was the use of the slogan ‘Nie Wieder Krieg’ by protestors against Germany’s involvement in the war in Kosovo in 1999. Such tendencies were first noted in the 1960s, as the left-wing ‘student generation’ exhibited a ‘repentance pride,’ known sarcastically as ‘Sühnestolz.’ The thoughts of this group were purportedly: “We went through the process of atoning for the past, and thus we can now show the rest of the world how it is done.”⁴⁴ Jeffrey K. Olick summarises this:

“For many theorists who share the perceptions of trauma culture and who seek a collective memory founded not on the celebration of heroic deeds but on the commemoration of atrocious misdeeds, nevertheless, this is a salutary development, something new in history. The past, in this light, serves as a warning rather than as a model, and can thus limit the more egregious excesses of power and demands a response, individual and collective, to atrocity.”⁴⁵

It has further been suggested that the Holocaust and the suffering of the Second World War, as Europe-wide events, could be integral in fashioning a European identity. This communal suffering is something which unites Europe. To define the modern Europe against the terrible crimes committed and the suffering endured – through the Holocaust, the battlefields, the bombing raids and the flight and expulsion of numerous peoples – could provide it with a collective identity. Aleida Assmann writes:

“Europa ist der transnationale Schauplatz einer unvorstellbaren Entfesselung extremer Gewalt und traumatischer Erfahrungen. Das Netz von Todes- und Arbeitslagern, das während der NS-Diktatur ganz Europa wie ein Ausschlag überzog, die Schlachtfelder der beiden Weltkriege von der Marne bis Stalingrad und die zerbombten Städte von Guernica über Coventry bis Dresden sind europäische <lieux de mémoire> geworden. Sie gemeinsam in einem transnationalen Rahmen zu erinnern ist eine europäische Aufgabe.”⁴⁶

As experts of coming to terms with its difficult past Germany could represent the centre of this community. During a speech commemorating the end of the Second World War, Chancellor Schröder “made explicit the link between German responsibility for the war and Germany’s willingness to work with its European partners for a better future.”⁴⁷ A closer connection with its European allies and its central role in the

⁴³ See Moeller, “‘Coming to Terms with the Past’”, p. 230.

⁴⁴ Olick, ‘Turning Points and Myths of German Memory’, p. 10. This ‘Sühnestolz’ again had certain negative connotations and the struggle to remember publicly was criticised from certain quarters.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 10.

⁴⁶ Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, p. 265. See also Wildt, ‘Die Epochenzüsur 1989/90’, p. 14.

⁴⁷ Stefan Berger, ‘Remembering the Second World War in Western Europe, 1945-2005’, in Małgorzata Pakier and Bo Stråth (ed.), *A European Memory?: Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), p. 119.

European Union are indeed some of the ways in which Germany has attempted to come to terms with its past, by defining itself against these negative beginnings. They are simultaneously a measure of its success.

1.2.4: Normalisation

In any discussion on memory of the National Socialist past in contemporary Germany, the concept of normalisation must be clearly defined. This term, in the context of coming to terms with the Nazi past, has been used to indicate several different approaches to remembering this legacy, from both sides of the political spectrum. Ever since the end of the war, normalisation has been something to which Germany has aspired. With a distance of several decades since the end of the Third Reich and with each year leaving fewer and fewer of the generation who had experienced it first hand, does it not follow that Germany should once again see itself as a ‘normal’ nation?⁴⁸ In order to answer to what extent teamWorx’s films represent the normalisation of the National Socialist past, it is integral to understand what this much-contested term has been used to mean throughout post-war history and how this reflects wider developments in German memory of the Third Reich.

In an interview for the *New York Times* in 1990, when asked what his chief goal for Germany was, Helmut Kohl replied: “That things will normalize. That’s the most important thing for us, that we become a wholly normal country, not ‘singularized’ in any question [...] that we simply don’t stick out. That’s the important thing.”⁴⁹ Indeed, Kohl’s chancellorship was characterised by attempts at normalisation through a focus on German successes to provide a positive national German identity.⁵⁰ Kohl, then, defined normality as ‘not sticking out.’ In his article “‘Normalization’: Has Helmut Kohl’s Vision Been Realized?,”⁵¹ Stephen Brockmann analyses whether Kohl was successful in his attempts to normalise the country by taking three indications of ‘not sticking out’: namely internal politics, foreign policy and the country’s relationship with the past. As regards the first two aspects, Brockmann maintains that Germany is indeed a ‘normal’ nation and, as regards the country’s enthusiastic membership of supra-national bodies, such as the European Union and the United Nations, it has achieved

⁴⁸ See Stuart Taberner and Paul Cooke, ‘Introduction’, in Stuart Taberner and Paul Cooke (ed.), *Beyond Normalization: German Culture, Politics, and Literature into the Twenty-First Century* (Suffolk: Camden House, 2006), pp. 4-11 and Stephen Brockmann, “‘Normalization’: Has Helmut Kohl’s Vision Been Realised?”, in Stuart Taberner and Paul Cooke (ed.), *Beyond Normalization: German Culture, Politics, and Literature into the Twenty-First Century* (Suffolk: Camden House, 2006), p. 18.

⁴⁹ Cited in Brockmann, “‘Normalization’”, p. 17.

⁵⁰ See Pearce, *Contemporary Germany and the Nazi Legacy*, p. 22.

⁵¹ Brockmann, “‘Normalization’”, pp. 17-29.

ultimate normality. By sacrificing its singularity and subsuming itself within a larger whole, Germany has secured that it will not ‘stick out’ compared to other countries.⁵² With regard to foreign policy, especially the deployment of German troops in Kosovo in 1999 and Afghanistan in 2002-2003, Germany seems to have achieved a certain degree of normalisation. As Martin Wagener writes: “Berlin can be fairly characterized as a ‘normal’ power if it utilizes its resources for [...] military operations under the auspices of the United Nations, [...] NATO or the European Union on even terms with Paris and London.”⁵³ For Germany to “pursue its interests through military means, as would any other middle power,” indicates a certain degree of normalisation.⁵⁴

Brockmann posits that Kohl had not achieved normalisation, however, with regard to Germany’s relationship with its own past. Two options were open to Kohl, which became apparent during the ‘Historikerstreit’ of 1986. The first option, and the path chosen by Kohl, was to attempt to create a conventional identity for Germany. This could either be based on a relativisation of the past, a position advocated by Ernst Nolte in his article ‘Die Vergangenheit, die nicht vergehen will,’⁵⁵ or on a focus on German suffering. The scandal surrounding President Reagan’s visit to the memorial of German soldiers in Bitburg in 1985 showed that the Chancellor was unsuccessful in his attempts to normalise Germany’s relationship to its past in this way. Similarly, according to Brockmann, the narrative of German victimhood proposed by Kohl was not taken up by the German population and failed to shift the dominant memory narrative of Auschwitz (although it will be questioned later whether these two narratives can indeed exist simultaneously). At the time this tendency towards normalisation was criticised, and it remains a difficult term today, because of fears that it would represent a forgetting of German crimes and a potential relapse into fervent nationalism. Brockmann concludes by suggesting that the creation of a post-conventional identity, as advocated by Jürgen Habermas in his reply to Nolte during the ‘Historikerstreit,’ where German identity is based predominantly on remembering the past than focusing on national pride, would have been the route to a genuine, successful normalisation.⁵⁶

⁵² See *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁵³ Martin Wagener, ‘Normalization in Security Policy? Deployments of Bundeswehr Forces Abroad in the Era Schröder, 1998-2004’, in Hanns W. Maull (ed.), *Germany’s Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), p. 79.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁵⁵ Published in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on 6 June 1986, this article, along with Jürgen Habermas’s reply and subsequent missives, began what came to be known as the ‘Historikerstreit.’

⁵⁶ See Brockmann, “‘Normalization’”, pp. 26-7, Taberner and Cooke, ‘Introduction’, p. 5 and Pearce, *Contemporary Germany and the Nazi Legacy*, pp. 23-4.

With the arrival of the Schröder government in 1998 came a new approach to normalisation. Despite the difference to Kohl's approach, the project of normalisation was still a discussion point during Schröder's time in office; in an interview in 1999 the Chancellor defined contemporary Germany as a normal nation,⁵⁷ breaking the tradition of the push for normalisation coming from the right wing.⁵⁸ The 'normality' of Germany seemed to have been deeply questioned just one year earlier by the furore surrounding Martin Walser's acceptance speech for the 'Friedenspreis des deutschen Buchhandels.' Walser refuted assertions that attitudes to the past had been normalised by asking the rhetorical question: "Aber in welchen Verdacht gerät man, wenn man sagt, die Deutschen seien jetzt ein normales Volk, eine gewöhnliche Gesellschaft?"⁵⁹ Walser claimed the Germans were being denied 'normality' by constant reminders of the past – in particular the 'Moralkeule' of Auschwitz – which were being instrumentalised for contemporary ends rather than for the sake of true remembrance. His speech was welcomed by certain parties, who applauded Walser for breaking taboos which were blocking a genuine debate on the past.⁶⁰ For others, Walser's speech represented leanings towards a 'Schlußstrich' and a forgetting of German crimes, particularly the Holocaust.

To return to Schröder's ideas of normalisation, the Chancellor's understanding of the term did not involve drawing a line under the past, but rather being able to remember the Third Reich without being fixated upon it. For Schröder, 'normality' and recollection could go hand in hand. He insisted that Germany could be normal despite the 'dreadful uniqueness' of its history.⁶¹ Schröder claimed:

"Even someone who considers the Germans to be a normal people and is ready, willing and able to interact with colleagues from other countries in a much less restricted way, is aware of this uniqueness. To this extent I feel that there is no contradiction between normality on the one hand and the readiness to remember on the other."⁶²

The Germany of the Berlin Republic, therefore, would be a state based on continuity with the past, not based on a 'Schlußstrich.' Something created by Schröder's normalising attitude is the so-called 'dialectic of normality,' theorised by Caroline

⁵⁷ See Pearce, *Contemporary Germany and the Nazi Legacy*, p. 50.

⁵⁸ See Taberner and Cooke, 'Introduction', p. 4.

⁵⁹ Martin Walser, *Erfahrungen beim Verfassen einer Sonntagsrede* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1998), p. 20.

⁶⁰ See Caroline Gay, 'On Pride and Other Pitfalls: Recent Debates on German Identity', in Stuart Parkes and Fritz Wefelmeyer (ed.), *Seelenarbeit an Deutschland: Martin Walser in Perspective* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), pp. 409-10.

⁶¹ See Pearce, *Contemporary Germany and the Nazi Legacy*, p. 48.

⁶² See *Ibid.*, p. 48.

Pearce. To summarise briefly, the more Germany becomes a normal nation, the more abnormal the atrocities of the past appear.⁶³ Despite this almost impossible situation, Schröder's normalisation has been applauded, not only by German citizens who felt a less burdened approach to the past but also by the international community. As an example of this, Schröder's invitation to Moscow to take part in the Russian commemoration of the end of the Second World War in 2005 was taken as a sign that Germany was becoming a normal nation in the eyes of the rest of the world.⁶⁴

Normalisation was seen as desirable for the German people for several reasons, not only in giving a definite, if post-conventional, identity to the country's citizens. Showing that the country had come (or was coming) to terms with its past would, theoretically, help remove hostility from other nations and even assist German companies in the global marketplace. Similarly, a healthy relationship with the past would help justify Germany's seat on the UN Security Council. Arguably, these advances have been achieved today. Of particular importance to this project, a further result of normalisation would be to "pave the way for German film [...] to find international success with virtuoso displays of a less burdened, more exuberant contemporary German culture."⁶⁵ The international aspect of normalisation, particularly as regards German film, has been noted by Paul Cooke, who suggests that the post-unification shift from New German Cinema to a cinema of consensus could be a result of normalising tendencies within memory discourse. He suggests that the return of apolitical and ahistorical genre cinema, as well as the move towards a Hollywood aesthetic, equates drawing a line under the past.⁶⁶ If this 'Schlußstrich' mentality of German cinema directly after unification corresponds to Kohl's version of normalisation then to what extent do teamWorx's films, with their willingness to tackle themes of German history through an internationalised style, represent the normalisation of the Schröder era and beyond? Normalisation will be a key concept in this thesis, and during the analysis of teamWorx's Event Movies it must be asked to what extent the devices used and themes covered within the films suggest a normalisation of the National Socialist past, according to the definitions above.

⁶³ See *Ibid.*, pp. 50-3.

⁶⁴ See Berger, 'Remembering the Second World War', p. 119.

⁶⁵ Taberner and Cooke, 'Introduction', p. 10.

⁶⁶ See Paul Cooke, 'Abnormal Consensus? The New Internationalism of German Cinema', in Stuart Taberner and Paul Cooke (ed.), *Beyond Normalization: German Culture, Politics, and Literature into the Twenty-First Century* (Suffolk: Camden House, 2006), p. 224. See Section 2.4.1 for more on this shift and on the cinema of consensus.

1.3: An Introduction to teamWorx

Before any analysis of the Event Movies can take place it is important to explore the teamWorx company in detail: what it is, what type of media it produces and what its aims and objectives are for its films. This section will outline the history and structure of the company itself, before focusing on its Event Movies and then exploring its attitudes to certain themes, including towards history and authenticity in their films. For this and the following sections an interview with Nico Hofmann himself will be referred to at length.⁶⁷

teamWorx has undoubtedly been one of the most important and influential television production companies in Germany over the last ten years. The company was founded in 1998 by executive director Nico Hofmann and producers Ariane Krampe and Wolf Bauer with a founding ethos: “Junge, kreative Talente zusammenzuführen und mit ihnen hochwertiges Fernsehen zu produzieren.”⁶⁸ It began life as a small satellite firm of ‘UFA Film & TV Produktion GmbH’ and remains strongly affiliated to this parent company.⁶⁹ The company is made up of five separate units, each presided over by a producer, who meet twice a year to discuss future productions and future directions.⁷⁰ As regards funding for individual (television) productions, the majority of financing comes from the television stations themselves (around 60%), and the remainder is provided by global sales and television sponsorship, although this can vary from film to film.⁷¹ As such, teamWorx works closely with television stations in developing each individual TV movie.⁷² teamWorx has made a variety of productions for a range of television channels, both public and private; it has made films for ARD, ZDF, Sat 1, Pro 7 and RTL, amongst others. The company produces series, one-off dramas (for example it produced an episode of the long-running crime drama series *Tatort* in 2009) and has recently branched out into cinematic features. Where teamWorx is best-known, however, is for its Event Movies, and it is teamWorx’s Event Movies which will be the focus of this thesis.

⁶⁷ See Appendix 1. In the interests of conserving space, footnotes will give the line numbers of the interview transcript, which will contain relevant information to each point discussed in the body of the thesis.

⁶⁸ Author unknown, ‘3 Fragen an Nico Hofmann’, in *UFAacts*, 75 (2008).

⁶⁹ See Martin Köhler, ‘An der Hauptstadtregion kommt kein Kreativer mehr vorbei’, in *Berliner Morgenpost*, 5 July 2000.

⁷⁰ See Interview with Nico Hofmann, 25 May 2010, lines 6-14, (see Appendix 1).

⁷¹ See *Ibid.*, lines 35-45.

⁷² See Erika Butzek, ‘Die Grenze zum Kino durchstoßen’, in *Medien Bulletin*, October 2005, p. 25.

1.3.1: What are Event Movies?

teamWorx's first Event Movie *Der Tunnel* was broadcast in 2001 on the private broadcast channel Sat 1 to great acclaim and was almost put forward for the category of Best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Awards that year.⁷³ Since then, around thirty Event Movies have been broadcast on a range of channels and on a range of topics, although the most popular theme by far for teamWorx's Event Movies is 20th Century German history.⁷⁴ teamWorx's Event Movie canon includes films on the GDR past, including: *Der Tunnel* (2001), *Die Mauer – Berlin '61* (2005), *Das Wunder von Berlin* (2008) and *Go West – Freiheit um jeden Preis* (2009); explorations of German terrorism, in *Mogadischu* (2007); historical biopics, including *Der Tanz mit dem Teufel – Die Entführung des Richard Oetker* (2001), *Der Mann aus dem Pfalz* (2009), on the life of Helmut Kohl, and *Dutschke* (2010), a docu-drama on the student leader. Other historical eras have also been represented, for example in *Der Geheimnisvolle Schatz von Troja* (2006), set in the 19th Century, which dealt with the story of Heinrich Schliemann and his search for the city of Troy; *Die Luftbrücke* (2005) on the Berlin airlift and *Die Sturmflut* (2006) on the flooding of Hamburg in 1962. There are furthermore numerous Event Movies on the National Socialist past, which will represent the core of this thesis. It will focus on three of teamWorx's Event Movies, broadcast between 2006-2007, namely *Dresden*, *Nicht alle waren Mörder* and *Die Flucht*. teamWorx's first film on the subject of National Socialism was *Stauffenberg – Der 20. Juli 1944* (2004) on the resistance hero and his assassination attempt on Hitler. While references to this film will be made throughout the thesis, the predominant focus will be on the other three Event Movies as they represent a clearer unit for analysis, being made within a two year period and sharing a greater number of thematic concerns and stylistic devices. Recently teamWorx has returned to the era of the Third Reich for its Event Movies, including *Hindenburg* (2011), a production for RTL on the eponymous airship disaster, *The Sinking of the Laconia* (2011), a co-production with the BBC on a U-Boot captain who risks his life to save British civilians aboard a torpedoed ship, and *Schicksalsjahre* (2011), a filming of Uwe-Karsten Heye's childhood memoirs. The temporal distance between these three films mentioned above and the later ones (all 2011) suggest a change may have taken place in teamWorx's approach to the National

⁷³ It failed due to rules about being previously screened on television. See KD, 'Sat.1 vereinbart weitere Projekte mit "Tunnel"-Produzent Nico Hofmann', in *Die Welt*, 29 January 2002. See also other articles on *Der Tunnel*, for example Meike Bruhns, 'Fast hundert Tage im Matsch', in *Berliner Zeitung*, 17 March 2000, and L.P., 'Studio Babelsberg: Durch den Tunnel nach West-Berlin', in *Berliner Morgenpost*, 17 March 2000.

⁷⁴ This figure was true as of May 2011.

Socialist past and also allows for a more comprehensive evaluation of critical and societal reactions to the earlier Event Movies.⁷⁵ As well as these historical features, teamWorx has produced a (relatively) small number of non-historical Event Movies, including the environmental drama *Geheimis der Wale* (2008), the crime drama *Die Patin* (2007) and the political ‘what if’ thriller *Die Grenze* (2009). In addition to this teamWorx has also made two disaster films for Pro 7 and RTL respectively: *Tornado: Der Zorn des Himmels* (2005) and *Vulkan* (2008).

Despite varying thematic concerns, teamWorx’s Event Movies often share a similar structure and style. This is defined by Erika Butzek as: “Anspruchsvolle Themen, große Emotionen, hoher Produktion-Value.”⁷⁶ The ‘classic’ teamWorx Event Movie defines itself by its strong melodramatic structure, often typified by a love triangle, against the background of an historical event: “Die Story über die Frau zwischen zwei Männern vor dramatischen zeitgeschichtlichen Hintergrund.”⁷⁷ Another facet of the typical teamWorx Event Movie lies in its use of Hollywood-style special effects. *Die Sturmflut*, for instance has been described as “Liebesdrama mit Actionelementen,”⁷⁸ an epithet which can be applied to the entire teamWorx Event Movie canon. teamWorx’s Event Movies have indeed been criticised for their unfailing use of a love triangle as the main narrative snare: “Intellektuelle Feuilletonisten könnten teamWorx-Events aber auch ein plumpes Erzählmuster vorwerfen: Zwar die Rahmenhandlung von einem anspruchsvollen Mythenthema mit Katastrophencharakter gesetzt, dann aber mit einer emotionalen Liebes- oder Familiengeschichte vermengt,”⁷⁹ writes Erika Butzek. Although Hofmann admits teamWorx’s productions have “eine ganz spezielle Handschrift,” he maintains each Event is a unique production for the television station, each with an individual aesthetic and style of direction.⁸⁰ The audience for teamWorx’s Event Movies is, according to Hofmann, predominantly the over 50s, especially for the Event Movies broadcast on the public channels ARD and ZDF. What is noticeable, however, is the large market share of younger people achieved by teamWorx’s Event productions, in comparison to the norm for these channel slots. Certain Events received 17-18% of the market share of younger viewers, which is

⁷⁵ The newer productions will be referred to in the thesis where appropriate and a more detailed analysis of these three films will take place in the Conclusion.

⁷⁶ Butzek, ‘Die Grenze zum Kino durchstoßen’, p. 22.

⁷⁷ Author unknown, ‘Nico Hofmann: Teamworx vor Neuausrichtung’, http://www.dwdl.de/story/13637/nico_hofmann_teamworx_vor_neuausrichtung/page_1.html.

⁷⁸ Rosenbach, ‘Hofmanns Erzählungen’.

⁷⁹ Butzek, ‘Die Grenze zum Kino durchstoßen’, p. 23.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 22.

exceedingly high.⁸¹ According to Hofmann, this is explained (at least partially) by the style of the films and their younger actors.

In order to analyse the three films to be dealt with in the thesis and their effect on the viewing public, it is necessary to define exactly what an Event Movie is. The term 'Event' has been used in recent debates on television to describe programmes watched by millions and often where an element of viewer interaction is involved. An example of an Event would be Germany's annual singing contest *Deutschland sucht den Superstar*, where viewers are urged to phone in to vote for their favourite contestant. Integral to an Event is that one must watch it when it is broadcast, as to miss the show would, in this case, prevent the viewer from voting and exclude him or her from subsequent 'water cooler' conversations the following day. As such the Event represents the last line of defence of traditional television against newer forms of media, such as on-demand services and the internet. In employing the English (and therefore supposedly trendy and media-savvy) term 'Event,' teamWorx is positioning itself as a trend-leader in the media world. In the company's own press release teamWorx describes itself as "europaweit Marktführer im Bereich Event-Produktionen."⁸² Indeed, for many, Hofmann and teamWorx are seen to be inventors of the genre of the Event Movie, as the following 2002 report from Michael Hanfeld in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* reveals: "Von und mit nichts anderem wollen Hofmann und [teamWorx Produzent Jan] Mojto handeln als dem Film, der Ereignis an sich ist. Im Produzenten- und Senderdeutsch heißt das 'Event' oder 'Event-Movie.'"⁸³ The slightly ungainly way in which Hanfeld refers to the Event Movie has since been completely replaced with an awareness, in media circles at least, of what constitutes an Event. Hofmann has defined the Event Movie thus:

"Ein Event gelingt nur, wenn das Thema [...] zwei, drei Tage lang die Leute beschäftigt, also das hat sehr viel zu tun mit Marketing, sehr viel zu tun mit Zeitgeist, es hat sehr viel zu tun, zum richtigen Zeitpunkt mit dem richtigen Stoff da zu sein. [...] Ein Event wird es erst eigentlich durch die öffentliche Aufmerksamkeit, durch das Zuschauerinteresse und durch die nationale Debatte, die man auslöst."⁸⁴

Events are created through a constellation of factors, but predominantly they are "Programme, über die Deutschland mehrere Tage spricht"⁸⁵ and which reach the consciousness of Germany as a nation. Hofmann gives the example of the first Event

⁸¹ See Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 472-4.

⁸² Author unknown, '11 Jahre teamWorx: Ein Rückblick', <http://www.teamworx.de/presse/downloads/allgemeine-infos.html>.

⁸³ Michael Hanfeld, 'Ein Caesar kommt selten allein', in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 21 June 2002.

⁸⁴ Interview with Nico Hofmann. See lines 289-97 for more on this.

⁸⁵ Bernhard Schlink, 'Laudatio für Nico Hofmann anlässlich der Verleihung des Schillerpreises der Stadt Mannheim am 23. Juli 2007', <http://www.teamworx.de/presse/downloads/allgemeine-infos.html>.

Movie *Der Tunnel*: “[*Der Tunnel*] erfüllte nicht nur die Vorgabe an Quoten und Marktanteilen, sondern bestimmte eine Woche lang die Schlagzeilen, nicht nur der Werbeplakate und Medienseiten. Solche Geschichten bleiben hängen im Bewusstsein selbst derer, die den Film gar nicht gesehen haben.”⁸⁶ For Hofmann, this has everything to do with the choice of topic, which should be an idea or issue which is currently *en vogue*, and in which there exists a depth of unexplored potential. He maintains: “Es funktioniert immer gut, wenn ein Thema ‘Bigger Than Life’ ist.”⁸⁷ The idea of an Event succeeding because it brings an issue to the fore which had previously been ignored, such as Hofmann claims is the case with *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*, both of which depict Germans as victims of the Second World War, will be important to the analysis of these films in a later chapter.

Of utmost importance to the success of an Event Movie is the amount of planning and preparation involved. For Hofmann the marketing is as important as the script, and he openly admits this: “Das ist immer eine Planung. [...] Aber in der Tat, du planst es schon, du planst es mit allen Marketing-Maßnahmen, planst du es zum Event zu schieben. Das ist mit einer riesigen Kampagne auch begleitet, *Dresden* auch und *Die Flucht* auch.”⁸⁸ The Event Movies are often supported by large advertising campaigns. For instance, in the week leading up to the broadcast of *Hindenburg*, posters of the Event Movie were present on almost every billboard and Morris column of Berlin. Similarly, the Event Movies receive cross-media support; their stars are often booked onto talk shows around the broadcast date to raise awareness of the film. So, for example, Maria Furtwängler, star of *Schicksalsjahre*, appeared on popular game show *Wetten, dass* the day before the first part of the Event Movie was shown. Historically themed films are often broadcast around the anniversary of a particular date (*Stauffenberg*, for example, was broadcast in the sixtieth anniversary year of the assassination attempt on Hitler) and are therefore able to attach themselves to surrounding press coverage and TV documentaries. All possible avenues of promotion are explored: before the screening of *Die Sturmflut*, for instance, shots of Nadja Uhl and other actresses in their ’60s retro costumes were published in glossy magazines such as *Gala*.⁸⁹ *Der Tunnel* tapped into the public consciousness of the fortieth anniversary of the building of the Berlin Wall to such an extent that Hofmann claims there were around

⁸⁶ Hanfeld, ‘Ein Caesar kommt selten allein’.

⁸⁷ Julia Jakob, ‘NDR Info – Der Talk’, 10 October 2010, <http://podster.de/episode/1596654>.

⁸⁸ Interview with Nico Hofmann. See lines 315-27. See also Michalis Pantelouris, ‘Das Stofftier’, in *GQ*, 2 February 2011.

⁸⁹ See Rosenbach, ‘Hofmanns Erzählungen’.

2000 press articles about the film.⁹⁰ As a further example, *Dresden* had:

“Vorinformationen, Ankündigungen, Präsentationen, Plakatkampagnen, Galas, Trailer, umfassende Crosspromotion” and much more.⁹¹ Each Event Movie therefore requires an enormous amount of work and preparation: “teamWorx führt für jeden Film und jede Serie akribisch Marktforschung durch, testet etwa die Erotik männlicher Darsteller, überprüft den Sympathiewert der Frauenrolle, achtet je nach Zielgruppe auf schnelle Schnittfolgen oder langsame, auf die passende Dramaturgie.”⁹² According to Hofmann, even the films’ soundtracks are composed in order to flow better into the commercial breaks, so as not to spoil the dramaturgy.⁹³

teamWorx has made clear the importance of high quality Event productions for the broadcasters. The company has criticised contemporary German television for its reliance on American programming and game shows.⁹⁴ teamWorx’s Event Movies would reportedly provide a creative highlight for each station. Hofmann commented: “Jeder Sender braucht zur Imagepflege und Zuschauerbindung mindestens zwei, drei kreative Leuchttürme im Jahr. [...] Programme, bei denen die Zuschauer nicht beim Vorbeizappen hängenbleiben, sondern die bewusst ansteuern.”⁹⁵ As well as improving the quality of television generally for the broadcasters, Hofmann and teamWorx are aware of the effect these Events have on the viewer and on society in general, a point to be explored in depth later. The relatively large number of reviews and comment pieces on teamWorx productions, even negative examples, further enhance the concept of the *Event Movie*, about which the whole of Germany is talking, and further proves the national importance of these films.

1.3.2: A Short biography of Nico Hofmann

No introduction to teamWorx can be complete without an investigation into its chairman of the board, founding member and driving force, Nico Hofmann. Hofmann has disputed the assertion that teamWorx equals Hofmann and vice versa: “teamWorx

⁹⁰ See Hannelore Crolly, ‘Lichtblick im Filmgeschäft’, in *Die Welt*, 5 October 2002.

⁹¹ Hans Janke, ‘EVENTuell: Über die Erfolgsbedingungen der Event-Produktion’, in Claudia Cippitelli and Axel Schwanebeck (ed.), *Fernsehen macht Geschichte: Vergangenheit als TV-Ereignis* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2009), p. 61.

⁹² Hannelore Crolly, ‘Der programmierte Erfolg’, in *Die Welt*, 9 October 2004.

⁹³ See Rainer Wirtz, ‘Bewegende Bilder: Geschichtsfernsehen oder TV-History’, in Albert Drews (ed.), *Zeitgeschichte als TV-Event: Erinnerungsarbeit und Geschichtsvermittlung im deutschen Fernsehfilm* (Pößneck: Evangelische Akademie Loccum, 2007), p. 44.

⁹⁴ See Christopher Keil, “‘Es gibt einen Run aufs Billige’”, in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 29 June 2002.

⁹⁵ Crolly, ‘Der programmierte Erfolg’.

ist keine Nico-Hofmann-Show.”⁹⁶ Yet his presence in the spotlight at media events, the innumerable interviews he gives surrounding each teamWorx production and his well-documented perfectionist and almost ‘control freak’ attitude (“Sie glauben gar nicht, wie oft ich im Schneiderraum sitze an dem Musikdesign arbeite, nur um den Film zu perfektionieren. Es gibt keine Zufälligkeiten”⁹⁷) suggest that it is Hofmann who shapes the company’s attitudes and direction more than any other individual.

Hofmann was born to journalist parents in Heidelberg in 1959 and, after an internship at the *Mannheimer Morgen* newspaper, studied at the ‘Hochschule für Fernsehen und Film’ in Munich, from which he graduated in 1984 with the film *Der Krieg meines Vaters*. Hofmann’s first commercial film was the partially autobiographical *Land der Väter, Land der Söhne* (1988), about the search of a young journalist for evidence of his father’s actions during the Third Reich. The film was very well received critically. It was awarded the ‘Deutscher Kritikerpreis’ in 1988 and a Bavarian Film award in 1989, leading Hofmann to be featured in a series of articles entitled ‘Hoffnung für den deutschen Film’ in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.⁹⁸ Despite this positivity, the film was an unmitigated failure at the box office.⁹⁹ Even at this early stage of his career, Hofmann’s interest in history was apparent and he claimed these early essays into his own past were necessary in moving forward to tackle other issues: “Die Beschäftigung mit meiner Geschichte war für mich eine Notwendigkeit. Erst jetzt bin ich in der Lage, mich mit fremden Stoffen auseinanderzusetzen.”¹⁰⁰

Hofmann moved into television directing, making a name for himself in the field of crime drama, directing *Der Sandmann* (1995), for which Hofmann received an ‘Adolf-Grimme-Preis,’ *Solo für Klarinette* (1998), as well as a 1991 episode of *Tatort* (*Der Tod im Häcksler*). Hofmann’s television career was praised by critics, who applauded him for managing to distinguish himself from the standard, low-quality, televisual fare: “Mit fast zwei Dutzend Krimis, Komödien, Serien und Fernsehspielen machte sich Hofmann einen Namen. Er versteht die Kunst mit schnellen Schnitten, mit präziser wie effektbewusster Schauspielerführung, das Publikum zu elektrisieren, ohne billige Effekthascherei zu betreiben, wie sie derzeit im kommerziellen TV-Movie-

⁹⁶ Tilmann Gangloff, ‘Wir machen keine Nico-Hofmann-Show’, in *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 4 December 2006.

⁹⁷ Barbara Nolte, “‘Ich vertraue den Regisseur das gemachte Bett an’”, in *Tagesspiegel*, 8 October 2004.

⁹⁸ See Hans-Dieter Seidel, ‘Aus dem Schatten der Väter’, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 27 April 1989.

⁹⁹ See Manfred Loimeier, “‘Das Ding liegt mir sehr im Magen’”, in *Tagesspiegel*, 15 June 1996.

¹⁰⁰ Seidel, ‘Aus dem Schatten der Väter’.

Geschäft üblich ist,¹⁰¹ wrote Doris Metz in a 1996 review. It was working on *Tatort*, however, which led Hofmann to a crisis in directing and which precipitated a move into production.

Since 1998 Hofmann has been executive director of teamWorx. Moving into production has allowed Hofmann greater creative freedom and also creative control. Hofmann is involved in every aspect of production. For *Die Sturmflut*, for instance, Hofmann chose each crew member: director, camera operator and so on, and even selected which stills from the film should be included in magazines. He is a notorious workaholic, using the hours he spends on aircraft or trains searching through newspapers and magazines, trying to identify the ‘next big thing.’¹⁰² He stays in the office until the early hours of the morning perfecting films and he is well-known for having no personal life to speak of – he is obsessed with his work. It seems his hard work and his attention to detail is paying off, as he is well respected by the television industry and the media at large: Hofmann is “Deutschlands wichtigster Fernsehproduzent,”¹⁰³ “Chef der Stars,”¹⁰⁴ and “Deutschlands bekanntester TV-Produzent.”¹⁰⁵ “Wer über Unterhaltung im deutschen Fernsehen spricht, der spricht über Nico Hofmann”¹⁰⁶ and finally: “Alle sind einig, dass Nico Hofmann die Maßstäbe setzt, dass kein Kreativer im deutschen Fernsehfilmbereich derzeit auch annähernd so einflussreich ist wie er.”¹⁰⁷ Hofmann has made a big impression and commands a great deal of respect, something which naturally reflects on teamWorx and its productions.

1.3.3: teamWorx and history

The vast majority of teamWorx’s Event Movies are dedicated to recent historical themes, see above for the list of historical Event Movies and compare this to the small number of non-historical Events. Ever since the release of *Der Tunnel*, it has been evident that the company is preoccupied with the past and, importantly, with a working-through of this past. “teamWorx steht für filmische Vergangenheitsbewältigung,”¹⁰⁸ wrote Marcel Rosenbach in *Der Spiegel* in 2005 and Hofmann himself explained:

¹⁰¹ Doris Metz, ‘Die Lust an der Angst’, in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 15 June 1996.

¹⁰² See Croll, ‘Der programmierte Erfolg’.

¹⁰³ Pantelouris, ‘Das Stofftier’.

¹⁰⁴ Croll, ‘Lichtblick im Filmgeschäft’.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Thomas Klingermaier, ‘Tunnel, Luftbrücke, Sturmflut und Dresden’, in *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 11 March 2006.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Rosenbach, ‘Hofmanns Erzählungen’.

“Nichts ist spannender als Geschichte.”¹⁰⁹ teamWorx then, is a company which prides itself on its ability to approach the past and has been celebrated for opening it up anew to the German public.¹¹⁰ Hofmann sees the past as a rich seam of storytelling just waiting to be mined – “Ein reicher Fundus für komplexe Geschichten”¹¹¹ – but is also aware of the power of film to ‘deal with’ this past, whether by illuminating hitherto unexplored facets of German resistance or colourfully illustrating the GDR past to those who have only read about it in books.¹¹² He is supported here by producer Jan Mojto, referring to the Germans’ past as “a tragic history but it also provides a wealth of dramatic material.”¹¹³ Hofmann has even been described as a modern historian, “der deutsche Geschichte mit populären Methoden der Massenkommunikation erzählt,” a label he does not deny.¹¹⁴ Despite this focus on history, Hofmann did admit it was coincidence that teamWorx’s first Event was an historical one, the success of which paved the way for more historically themed Event Movies. Although Hofmann maintains he has always possessed an interest in German history, it seems that if *Der Tunnel* had failed to secure viewers, teamWorx would not have continued down this route: “Das war am Anfang keine bewusste Entscheidung. Ich glaube es war der Erfolg von dem ersten Film, es war *Der Tunnel*. Wir [haben] gesehen [...], ok das funktioniert. Das hat sich eigentlich so geöffnet. Aber ich habe das in der Tat, die letzten Jahre, sehr bewusst auch betrieben.”¹¹⁵ In recent years there has been a trend in the German media towards historical programming and teamWorx has been both an instigator and benefactor of this trend. “Geschichte im Fernsehen ist sexy,” as Fritz Wolf puts it.¹¹⁶ Arguably, teamWorx’s focus on history is not merely a method of achieving ratings but rather is driven by an earnest desire to come to terms with the past. Hofmann has spoken of “Mythosthemen,” which can be communicated to audiences (for instance the bombing of Dresden), and of German heroes, who have received insufficient attention (such as Stauffenberg).¹¹⁷ Hofmann has mentioned the “politische Verantwortung”¹¹⁸

¹⁰⁹ Author unknown, “Exzellenz Wettbewerb”, in *epd Medien*, 60 (2007).

¹¹⁰ Schlink, ‘Laudatio für Nico Hofmann’.

¹¹¹ Matthias Gebauer, “Für uns lohnt sich Kino nicht”, in *Spiegel Online*, 3 August 2004, <http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/kino/0,1518,311418,00.html>.

¹¹² See Ibid.

¹¹³ Scott Roxborough, ‘German History Fuels Mini Boom’, in *Hollywood Reporter*, 22 March 2005, <http://www.allbusiness.com/services/motion-pictures/4904150-1.html>.

¹¹⁴ Butzek, ‘Die Grenze zum Kino durchstoßen’, p. 23.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 348-53. See also lines 353-60 for more details.

¹¹⁶ Fritz Wolf, ‘Geschichte wird Ereignis-TV’, in Claudia Cippitelli and Axel Schwanebeck (ed.), *Fernsehen macht Geschichte: Vergangenheit als TV-Ereignis* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2009), p. 79.

¹¹⁷ See Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 15-30.

¹¹⁸ Butzek, ‘Die Grenze zum Kino durchstoßen’, p. 23.

felt by teamWorx, as well as the “fachliche Debatte” caused by the company’s historical Event Movies.¹¹⁹

teamWorx’s approach to history divides the critics: “Die einen preisen, Hofmann bringe Hollywoods Souveränität im Umgang mit großen Gefühlen auf deutsche Mattscheiben. Die anderen murren, hier verseife einer konsequent die Realität,”¹²⁰ summarised Thomas Klingermaier in an article on the company. Hofmann’s retort is that Event Movies can both inform and entertain viewers simultaneously, citing in one example *Die Luftbrücke*, whose love story was criticised by many yet which, according to Hofmann, had many strands based in historical fact, all of which were remembered by the viewers. Importantly, many of these viewers stayed tuned to watch the accompanying documentary on the Berlin airlift afterwards.¹²¹ Indeed, Hofmann has repeatedly claimed that history through the lens of an emotional, dramatic and fictionalised story is a perfectly valid way of understanding historical issues; that his films are not documentaries and should not be taken as such. As an illustration of this difference, he has compared himself to historical documentary-maker Guido Knopp in the following way: “Knopp macht das Gegenteil von mir. [...] Ich möchte aber, dass unsere Filme völlig verschieden sind.”¹²² Hofmann sees the difference between documentary and drama thus:

“Du kannst einfach im Spielfilm..., du bist viel freier, du kannst natürlich eine ganz andere dramaturgische und auch emotionale Zuspitzung mit den Themen machen. [...] Das Hauptthema ist die Emotionalisierung. Das Hauptthema ist wirklich, welche Emotionen es frei setzt. Und die Emotionalisierung, gerade bei *Dresden*, die ging halt eben dann auch wirklich nur mit Mitteln des Spielfilms.”¹²³

Although teamWorx has undoubtedly profited from the trend towards historical programming, there appears to be an awareness that it will not last forever. Although in an interview in 2001, Hofmann claimed: “Der Trend [of historical film] sieht schon fast wieder zu Ende,”¹²⁴ less than six months later, when asked: “Ist die Zeitgeschichtswelle nicht langsam ausgereizt?” Hofmann answered: “Nein, diese Stoffe sind spannender denn je,”¹²⁵ revealing a certain amount of confusion surrounding the issue. Nevertheless,

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 23.

¹²⁰ Klingermaier, ‘Tunnel, Luftbrücke, Sturmflut und Dresden’.

¹²¹ Jan Freitag, “Ich stehe zum Massenfernsehen”, in *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 1 November 2006.

¹²² Nolte, “Ich vertraue den Regisseur das gemachte Bett an”. The documentaries of Guido Knopp will be explored briefly in Section 2.3.1.

¹²³ Interview with Nico Hofmann. See lines 508-23 for more details.

¹²⁴ Barbara Bückmann, “Es muss Emotionalität drinstecken”, in *Berliner Morgenpost*, 10 June 2001.

¹²⁵ Mareike Knoke, “Es ist schlimmer denn je”, in *Berliner Morgenpost*, 23 March 2002.

Hofmann has expressed a desire to expand teamWorx's portfolio and perhaps move away from history to a certain extent.¹²⁶ When asked about this Hofmann answered:

“Ich werde auch sagen, dass die Zeit ändert sich aber auch, also [...] du kannst es nicht ewig weitermachen. Also ich sehe im Moment dieses Interesse an diesen ganzen Geschichtsstoffen runtergehen, das ist nicht auf der Intensität mal wie vor fünf Jahren. [...] Der Zeitgeist ändert sich auch, du kannst nicht dein Leben lang deutsche Geschichte machen. Das hat sich jetzt zu tun mit einem Momentum dieser letzten fünf, sechs, sieben Jahren in Deutschland.”¹²⁷

teamWorx also has a great interest in the National Socialist period in particular. From Hofmann's early works *Der Krieg meines Vaters* and *Land der Väter, Land der Söhne*, it seems that his interest in the period is genuine and not merely a result of market research.¹²⁸ Hofmann has said, on the personal relevance of *Land der Väter, Land der Söhne*: “Es war eine Art Dammbbruch. Mich hat unheimlich interessiert, wie sich die Lebensläufe meiner Eltern durch den Zusammenbruch geändert haben,”¹²⁹ and has further spoken on the attitudes of his parents towards memory of the Third Reich.

With regard to the Event Movies' contribution to 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung,' or coming to terms with the past, Hofmann has defined the term thus:

“Dass es meines Erachtens große Themen gibt in Deutschland, die jahrelang emotional besetzt waren aber nicht besprochen worden sind, auch nicht in Familien besprochen worden sind. Ich nehme mal sowas wie Flucht und Vertreibung, [fast jede deutsche Familie] hat einen Fall von Flucht und Vertreibung innerhalb der eigenen Familiengeschichte, teilweise auch sehr schmerzhaft, es sind auch Geschichten dabei von Müttern die vergewaltigt worden sind, auf der Flucht. Also das sind ganz viele Tabuthemen in den Familien. Und das dann zu zeigen und darüber zu reden, das meine ich mit Vergangenheitsbewältigung, das ist ein bisschen wie filmische Psychoanalyse, dass du anhand von der filmischen Figurenkonstellation eine Emotionalisierung dazu kommst, dass Leute einen Film anschauen und sich selbst öffnen, und in der Lage sind, emotional darüber zu reden.”¹³⁰

So in this respect Hofmann feels his Event Movies perform the function of coming to terms with the past. Indeed, he regards teamWorx as an active proponent of the most recent National Socialist memory wave, breaking taboos (for example with *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*) and dealing with long overdue subjects (for example *Stauffenberg* and *Nicht alle waren Mörder*). Asked about this memory wave, Hofmann responded: “Wir sind schon verantwortlich, weil wir ja die Welle mit angestoßen

¹²⁶ See Butzek, 'Die Grenze zum Kino durchstoßen', p. 26.

¹²⁷ Interview with Nico Hofmann. See lines 102-11 for more details.

¹²⁸ See Klingermaier, 'Tunnel, Luftbrücke, Sturmflut und Dresden'.

¹²⁹ Hans-Georg Rodek, 'Geschichte muss Gefühle transportieren', in *Die Welt*, 7 November 2006, http://www.welt.de/kultur/article92925/Geschichte_muss_Gefuehle_transportieren.html.

¹³⁰ Interview with Nico Hofmann. See lines 365-84 for more details. Other definitions and the changing interpretations of the term 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung' will be discussed elsewhere.

[haben]. Wir haben sie nicht danach gemacht, wir waren aktive Treiber.”¹³¹ Returning to the question of whether teamWorx is using history to get ratings, or dealing with history for its own sake, Hofmann maintains that teamWorx’s Event Movies on the National Socialist past receive such high viewing figures precisely because they deal with history in a way never previously attempted, that they portray issues which for many viewers and their families have simply not been explored publicly before. Again, it is worth reproducing Hofmann’s words on the subject at length:

“Dass es national funktioniert, hängt damit zusammen, dass es halt Themen sind, die jahrelang eigentlich in Familien existieren, auch in Gesprächen mit Familienmitgliedern existieren, es gibt eigentlich keinen Film dazu. [...] Aber, dass die Themen so wichtig waren, hat zu tun mit einer deutschen Identitätssuche der letzten zehn Jahre, weil die Deutschen haben die letzte zehn Jahre angefangen, sich sehr, sehr viel stärker mit ihrer eigenen Identität zu beschäftigen. Sie haben sich viel offener mit ihrer eigenen Geschichte beschäftigt. Also, da hat sich ein anderes Nationalitätsgefühl, ein anderes nationales Identitätsgefühl bei den Deutschen eingestellt, ohne dass es revanchistisch ist, ohne dass es irgendwie ein falscher Nationalstolz wird. [...] Diese gigantische Zuschauerzahl, gerade bei *Dresden* und bei *Flucht* [...] ist nur erklärbar, weil sowohl Dresden als auch [...] Flucht und Vertreibung in Deutschland große, große Tabuthemen waren, große, nationale Mythosthemen waren, die eben seit Jahren, [...], nicht bearbeitet worden sind. Also emotional nicht abgearbeitet worden sind.”¹³²

As with history in general, Hofmann does not hesitate in applying a sell-by date to Nazi features. This is despite the large number of films dealing with the National Socialist past in the teamWorx back catalogue, not to mention in that of German and international cinema of recent years, as well as the assertion that there are many aspects of the Third Reich yet to be explored. Hofmann predicted in an interview in 2004: “Allerdings wird das Thema Drittes Reich irgendwann ausgereizt sein – ich schätze, etwa in vier bis fünf Jahren”¹³³ and this was reiterated in 2010: “Ich glaube es [Thema Drittes Reich] ist auserzählt.”¹³⁴ According to Hofmann, as the temporal distance grows larger, themes such as the separation of Germany and its subsequent reunification will come to the fore, as well as more recent historical themes.¹³⁵ In this vein Hofmann mentioned his company’s film *Willkommen zuhause* (2008) about a Bundeswehr soldier’s return from Afghanistan.¹³⁶ In investigating teamWorx’s efforts dealing with the National Socialist legacy it will therefore be important to ask whether the company’s films over the last five years are an end point to 65 years of memory discourse (which seems to be the implication of his statements on the subject), and whether this

¹³¹ Ibid., line 163.

¹³² Ibid. See lines 68-100 for Hofmann’s response in full.

¹³³ Gebauer, “Für uns lohnt sich Kino nicht”.

¹³⁴ Jakob, ‘NDR Info – Der Talk’.

¹³⁵ See Rodek, ‘Geschichte muss Gefühle transportieren’.

¹³⁶ ‘TeamWorx vor Neuausrichtung’.

‘Vergangenheit’ has forever been ‘bewältigt.’ When the question of whether the Third Reich as a topic was ‘ausgereizt’ was put to Hofmann he replied: “Das stimmt ja, so ist es auch,” before qualifying this answer: “Es ist nicht ausgereizt, aber es ist nicht mehr die Intensität dahinter wie vor fünf Jahren.”¹³⁷ Hofmann was then pressed to offer an explanation for this, as to suggest an end to this topic would possibly suggest that Germany is comfortable with its National Socialist past and has even achieved a degree of normalisation in relation to it. Hofmann replied:

“Die Deutschen haben unheimlich lange gebraucht, um ihre eigene nationale Identität überhaupt anzunehmen, und auch überhaupt mit dem Dritten Reich umzugehen, und sich nicht nur permanent schuldig zu fühlen. Das hat Generationen gebraucht, [...] die Generation meiner Eltern war noch in einem totalen Schuldgefühl – zurecht ja? – also Schuldgefühl gegenüber Drittem Reich, Hitler, Judenvernichtung, das ist ein nationales Trauma, was über Generationen in Deutschland weitergegeben worden ist.”¹³⁸

Finally Hofmann concluded: “Stolz sind die Deutschen lang noch nicht. [...] Es hat eine Diskussion möglich gemacht und wir sind nach wie vor in einem Prozess, der ist also nicht abgeschlossen.”¹³⁹ It was after a period of around seven years from 2004, however, when teamWorx began to broadcast new Event Movies on the National Socialist past, including *Hindenburg*, *Schicksalsjahre* and *The Sinking of the Laconia*. According to Hofmann, even more are planned, including the filming of Julia Franck’s best-selling novel *Die Mittagsfrau* and Hofmann’s next major Event Movie *Unsere Mutter, Unsere Väter*, which has recently begun production and will reportedly be Hofmann’s last attempt at coming to terms with this period of history.¹⁴⁰ Given the similarities in the title to the film with which Hofmann began his career, this could very likely be Hofmann’s defining Event Movie on this topic.

1.3.4: Hollywood, globalisation and international influences

Of vital importance to the teamWorx project and how it deals with Germany’s history is the company’s relationship to Hollywood and American filmmaking.¹⁴¹ teamWorx has cited Steven Spielberg’s US production company ‘DreamWorks’ as a model for their success: “We will be the DreamWorks of Europe,”¹⁴² claimed Mojto. The common capitalisation of the ‘W’ in both names further makes this relationship

¹³⁷ Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 115-16.

¹³⁸ Ibid. See lines 127-34 for more details.

¹³⁹ Ibid., lines 153-5.

¹⁴⁰ See Ibid., lines 588-94 and Jakob, ‘NDR Info – Der Talk’.

¹⁴¹ An in-depth exploration of the terms ‘Hollywood’ and ‘American filmmaking,’ as well as their relationship to supposed ‘German’ filmmaking will take place during Section 2.2.2.

¹⁴² Cited in Paul Cooke, ‘Dresden (2006), Teamworx and Titanic (1997): German Wartime Suffering as Hollywood Disaster Movie’, in *German Life and Letters*, 61:2 (2008), p. 282.

clear. teamWorx is inspired by American productions to some extent; Hofmann has admitted to watching all the latest American drama series for inspiration.¹⁴³ He also ascribes much of the popularity of teamWorx's films to the adoption of a Hollywood 'look.' In order for German television productions to be accepted by a younger audience they need to conform to a 'globale Ästhetik,'¹⁴⁴ which comes from America and has been disseminated across the world by the internet and the large number of US TV programmes constantly broadcast internationally and especially in Germany. "Die deutsche Realität ist nicht sexy genug,"¹⁴⁵ claims Hofmann. teamWorx productions use "klassischen cineastischen Mittel"¹⁴⁶ and "Hollywood-Moments von großen Bildern."¹⁴⁷ The special effects used in teamWorx's Event Movies are explicitly employed because of the viewers' expectations from watching Hollywood blockbusters.¹⁴⁸ Even when dealing with German history, teamWorx turns to Hollywood traditions of historical storytelling. Bernhard Schlink maintained that Hofmann "erzählt nicht nur Geschichten, sondern Mythen, läßt nicht nur Personen auftreten, sondern Helden, spitzt nicht nur zum Drama zu, sondern zum Melodrama. So werden zeitgeschichtliche Stoffe zu Events."¹⁴⁹ Hofmann reportedly brought the very concept of the Event Movie back to Germany after his time studying at the University of Los Angeles.¹⁵⁰

Importantly, Hofmann denies directly drawing influence from Hollywood blockbusters for teamWorx's Event Movies, but does relate to certain American films and television series, not in terms of spectacle but in capturing authenticity and emotion. He claims:

"Hollywood ist zu allgemein, das hat einen Einfluss aber keinen Einfluss auf mich wie..., ich könnte jetzt Filme sagen, die ich sehr mag, die mich in meinem Leben beeinflusst haben, das hat keinen Einfluss... Was einen Einfluss hat, sind Arbeiten, die in Amerika gerade bei HBO beispielsweise entstanden sind, ich nehme mal sowas wie jetzt eine Serie wie *Pacific*, die Spielberg gemacht hat, oder *Band of Brothers* ist das beste Beispiel [...] *Band of Brothers* hat mich sehr beeinflusst in der Modernität, in der Authentizität wo [man] mit historischen Stoffen umgehen kann, wie modern man damit umgehen kann, also das würde ich sagen, sind Einflüsse, ja?"¹⁵¹

Hofmann and teamWorx's relationship with Hollywood and American moviemaking is, therefore, a complicated one. This relationship – and how it can affect

¹⁴³ See 'TeamWorx vor Neuausrichtung'.

¹⁴⁴ "Exzellenz Wettbewerb".

¹⁴⁵ 'Teamworx vor Neuausrichtung'.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ See Butzek, 'Die Grenze zum Kino durchstoßen', p. 27.

¹⁴⁹ Schlink, 'Laudatio für Nico Hofmann'.

¹⁵⁰ See Croll, 'Lichtblick im Filmgeschäft'.

¹⁵¹ Interview with Nico Hofmann. See lines 222-44 for more details.

memory of the past depicted by the films – will be returned to later. All of this raises important questions as to whether the use of a Hollywood model to explore themes of German history is now a necessary evil (both terms should be questioned) in order to deal with this history, or whether this history is in some way trivialised by being forced into an American mould.

Paradoxically, perhaps, this submission to an American style of filmmaking seems to have, at least to some extent, the objective of promoting German media. Hofmann has given teamWorx the task of heralding “das Comeback der deutschen Serie,”¹⁵² specifically through the adoption of a global (American) aesthetic. Similarly, in teamWorx’s early days, the company was praised for being able to measure up to the high production values of America.¹⁵³ Hofmann also claims that in the field of Event Movies not even America can come up to the standard of teamWorx productions, a case of being *plus royaliste que le roi*, perhaps.¹⁵⁴ Where teamWorx’s Event Movies differ from anything produced by Hollywood, as regards films about National Socialism and other German history, is that they are made in Germany, which supposedly imbues them with a “shocking air of authenticity not available to a Hollywood production.”¹⁵⁵ Part of the films’ success is that they are German productions presenting a period of history usually seen from the point of view of the Allies, something which purportedly confronts the “last great historical taboo.”¹⁵⁶ Hofmann agrees that a film made in Germany about Germany in the Second World War is more ‘authentic’ than a Hollywood production. In the following interview excerpt he compares teamWorx’s *Stauffenberg* to the Hollywood-produced *Valkyrie* (2009) from director Bryan Singer, made five years later:

“Ich glaube schon, dass es authentischer ist. Ich glaube, dass ein deutscher Film mit deutschen Schauspielern über Stauffenberg authentischer ist. [...] Es geht schon mit den Schauspielern los, einfach ein Unterschied ob Sebastian Koch spielt oder ob ein amerikanischer Schauspieler spielt. [...] Ich finde’s definitiv authentischer. Das hat zu tun mit der Historie und der Vita und auch der Beschäftigung aller, die da am Set stehen. Jo Baier hat den Film gemacht, der hat sich wahnsinnig stark in das Thema reingearbeitet, also [...] ich finde wichtig, dass deutsche Themen erstmal von Deutschland aus auch erzählt werden.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² “‘Exzellenz Wettbewerb’”.

¹⁵³ See Hanfeld, ‘Ein Caesar kommt selten allein’.

¹⁵⁴ ‘Teamworx vor Neuausrichtung’.

¹⁵⁵ Cooke, ‘German Wartime Suffering as Hollywood Disaster Movie’, p. 283.

¹⁵⁶ Allan Hall, ‘Bombing of Dresden retold as a love story’, in *Sunday Express*, 19 February 2006. Cited in Cooke, ‘German Wartime Suffering as Hollywood Disaster Movie’, p. 283.

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Nico Hofmann. See lines 458-67 for more details.

Notable of teamWorx's Event Movies, in comparison to other German film and particularly television productions, is that they enjoy a not inconsiderable amount of success on the world market. *Dresden*, for example, has been sold to over 100 countries worldwide and teamWorx's other Event Movies have won prizes at numerous international award ceremonies. *Der Tunnel* was the best-received German film in America since Wolfgang Petersen's *Das Boot*.¹⁵⁸ One reason for the international success of the Event Movies is certainly the employment of teamWorx's 'global aesthetic' as described above (as was the case for the two disaster movies *Tornado* and *Vulkan*), but importantly international buyers also appreciate the German touch for German history. Hofmann explains:

“Ich habe immer die Erfahrung gemacht in den letzten Jahren, dass ein starkes nationales Produkt aus Deutschland, was authentisch erzählt, ist am Weltmarkt am besten verkaufbar. [...] Wir haben immer gesagt, das Programm muss in Deutschland erst mal stimmen, es muss für Deutschland ernsthaft wahr genommen werden, man muss es als authentisch empfinden und dann hast du eine Chance auf dem Weltmarkt.”¹⁵⁹

So again it is a combination of internationally accessible style and 'authentic,' identifiably German story which makes teamWorx's Event Movies so appealing.

Integral to teamWorx's 'signature,' and relating to the melodramatic aspects of their Event Movies, is the omnipresence of emotion. Even when the films are dealing with 'serious' history, a melodramatic, emotional love story can often be found. Take, for example, the existence of a love triangle in the company's Event Movies on disparate themes: *Dresden*, *Die Flucht*, *Die Sturmflut*, *Die Luftbrücke* and *Die Grenze* all feature one woman who must decide between two potential suitors. It is partly through his emotional approach that Hofmann differentiates his historical films from the work of documentary-maker Guido Knopp.¹⁶⁰ Hofmann claims audiences want “mehr Gefühl” in their programming and has said he only makes historical programmes, “wenn eine große Emotionalität drinsteckt.”¹⁶¹ Such emotionalisation has not escaped the critics, one interviewer asking Hofmann: “Herz und Schmerz, Leiden und Wahrheit. Das neue deutsche Fernsehen?”¹⁶² while another was even so bold as to ask him: “Herr Hofmann, hören Sie daheim beim Küssen stets laute Geigenmusik?”¹⁶³ referring to the omnipresent layer of heart-stirring music in teamWorx's Event Movies.

¹⁵⁸ See Michael Hanfeld, 'Im Land der Söhne', in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 5 October 2002.

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Nico Hofmann. See lines 389-411 for more details.

¹⁶⁰ See Rodek, 'Geschichte muss Gefühle transportieren'.

¹⁶¹ Nils Floreck, 'Die Leute wollen wieder mehr Gefühl', in *Neues Deutschland*, 7 October 2003. See also Bückmann, “Es muss Emotionalität drinstecken”.

¹⁶² Thomas Eckert and Joachim Huber, “Spekulativ ist da gar nichts”, in *Tagesspiegel*, 14 January 2001.

¹⁶³ Freitag, “Ich stehe zum Massenfernsehen”.

Despite certain criticisms of the use of emotion to convey serious history (specific examples of which will be dealt with later in the context of an analysis of the Event Movies), Hofmann maintains that using emotion is a valid way to explore history and indeed can aid a coming-to-terms with this history. Hofmann has said of historical film, using the example of *Der Untergang* (2004): “Die Zuschauer haben ein Bedürfnis, sich mit deutscher Geschichte zu beschäftigen. Aber so ein Film funktioniert nur, wenn der Stoff mit dem Zeitgeist in Verbindung steht. Man muss zum Zeitpunkt der Ausstrahlung einen bestimmten emotionalen Kern treffen.”¹⁶⁴ This trend in historical programming which evokes an emotional reaction from viewers has been noted by other commentators, in relation to the Event Movies specifically. For instance, Fritz Wolf suggests that after *Der Tunnel*: “Geschichte sollte nicht mehr dem Publikum vorgesagt, sondern von ihm nacherlebt werden.”¹⁶⁵ This relates to a current trend of the use of ‘prosthetic memory’ within historical film, a theory developed by Alison Landsberg; an example of how using emotion to draw the viewer into the narrative can increase his or her understanding of history.¹⁶⁶ Hofmann has similarly claimed the utmost importance of the emotional in teamWorx’s productions:

“Ich glaube, es geht überhaupt nur über Emotionalisierung. [...] Es wurde ja ständig vorgeworfen, es wird immer gesagt, es ist die gleiche Figurenkonstellation, [...] es wird immer gesagt, es ist zu verkitscht, zu emotional, aber der Erfolg, die riesigen Zuschauermengen kommen natürlich auch über die Emotionalisierung. [...] Die ganzen Geschichten sind so aufgebaut, dass sie sich dann quasi in das eigene historische Drama reinführt und du das Drama miterlebst über die Figuren, so sind die Filme alle gebaut.”¹⁶⁷

So, as will become evident later in the thesis, emotionalising history is not only a useful tool in securing a wider audience (and therefore communicating one’s message more effectively), but also in allowing these viewers to ‘experience’ the history portrayed.

1.3.5: ‘Quote’ and ‘Qualität’

One of teamWorx’s primary objectives is to make quality films and for this quality to be recognised. Hofmann’s ethos of “Qualitätsfernsehen made in Germany,”¹⁶⁸ further makes this clear. teamWorx aims to make an impact in Germany’s media world; the company’s own press release claims: “[teamWorx hat] wichtige Trends gesetzt und

¹⁶⁴ Nolte, “Ich vertraue den Regisseur das gemachte Bett an”.

¹⁶⁵ Wolf, ‘Geschichte wird Ereignis-TV’, p. 76.

¹⁶⁶ As mentioned in Section 1.2.1 and as will be discussed later in Section 2.4.2.

¹⁶⁷ Interview with Nico Hofmann. See lines 181-202 for more details.

¹⁶⁸ Gebauer, “Für uns lohnt sich Kino nicht”.

die deutsche Fernsehlandschaft maßgeblich geprägt.”¹⁶⁹ teamWorx is indeed a heavyweight in its field, producing big-budget, spectacular TV movies, which reach wide audiences both domestically and abroad. Hofmann has maintained that the only way to achieve this international success and impressive ratings is through the quality of teamWorx’s productions: “Eine Stoffbewältigung auf sehr hohem ästhetischen Niveau.”¹⁷⁰ Hofmann has criticised the current televisual landscape in Germany – “Der Markt für Qualitätsfernsehen [wird] enger”¹⁷¹ – and has inferred that teamWorx differentiates itself from this norm with the high quality of its productions. Hofmann wants to cross boundaries with his films and for teamWorx to distinguish itself from “mittelmäßigen Produkten.”¹⁷² “Qualitätsfernsehen ist Fernsehen, das etwas riskiert,”¹⁷³ Hofmann claims. Quality is suggested not only by the large viewing figures received by each Event Movie but more importantly by the way in which the Event Movies affect these viewers, remaining in their consciousness for days and weeks after broadcast.¹⁷⁴ Importantly, Hofmann sees the role of ‘Qualitätsfernsehen’ as having a concrete effect on society and even politics, quoting two recent examples of teamWorx’s films, *Bis nichts mehr bleibt* (2010) and *Willkommen zuhause*, both of which reportedly dealt with contemporary political themes and, in the case of the latter, led to a hearing in the ‘Bundestag’ on traumatised ‘Bundeswehr’ soldiers.¹⁷⁵ From this, it is clear that teamWorx’s Event Movies can and do have an effect on memory and memory politics in German society.

Despite this apparent focus on the quality of their productions, teamWorx has been accused of acting solely in order to increase its viewing figures and therefore its revenue. Although the unashamed chasing of ratings is something denied by Hofmann, viewing figures do play an important role. During the course of a one-hour interview, Hofmann referred to viewing figures no less than twelve times and was able to quote exact audience shares without recourse to notes. Hofmann is exceedingly aware of ratings: how to achieve them and the implications of failure. As such, he pays great attention to increasing target markets (particularly younger viewers)¹⁷⁶ and is able to alter programmes to appeal to these viewers: “Mit Erfahrung kann man jedes Programm

¹⁶⁹ ‘11 Jahre teamWorx’.

¹⁷⁰ “‘Exzellenz Wettbewerb’”.

¹⁷¹ Johannes Ritter, “‘Der Markt für Qualitätsfernsehen wird enger’”, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7 October 2002.

¹⁷² Metz, ‘Die Lust an der Angst’. See also Croll, ‘Lichtblick im Filmgeschäft’.

¹⁷³ Frank Olbert, ‘Qualität und Quote’, in *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, 28 June 2010.

¹⁷⁴ See Gangloff, ‘Wir machen keine Nico-Hofmann-Show’.

¹⁷⁵ Jakob, ‘NDR Info – Der Talk’.

¹⁷⁶ See Freitag, “‘Ich stehe zum Massenfernsehen’”.

so designen und schneiden, dass es die richtige Zielgruppe anspricht und erreicht.”¹⁷⁷

One example of this, or more precisely of how this failed, was the beginning of *Mogadischu*, which featured in the first five minutes a character speaking Arabic, with subtitles, and a distinct lack of action or even exposition. In these first five minutes over a million viewers switched off, leaving Hofmann aware of the fickle nature of the viewers he is trying so hard to capture.¹⁷⁸

For some purists and critics, there seems to be a truism that if a film is popular and attracts viewers, it cannot be of artistic merit – and vice versa. This is something which has plagued teamWorx throughout its existence. Hofmann agrees that there is a mistrust of popular forms of entertainment in Germany.¹⁷⁹ He has quoted the case of *Dresden*, which was originally written about positively by critics, but after the Event Movie was broadcast and the viewing figures came in, the critics made a u-turn and criticised it heavily for its populism. Hofmann commented: “Es ist interessant wie Zuschauerzuspruch die Gunst des Feuilletons verändert. Wenn du einmal 12 Millionen Zuschauer hast, kann’s eigentlich nicht gut sein.”¹⁸⁰ Another case Hofmann speaks of is *Dutschke*, an Event Movie which uses a mixture of documentary (mostly talking-heads’ eyewitness statements) and dramatic reconstruction to depict the life of the student leader. This was, in teamWorx’s terms, a total flop, receiving only 1 million viewers (although this could partially be blamed on its scheduling opposite the Champions League final featuring Bayern Munich). Although Hofmann found the film ‘künstlerisch extrem gelungen’ its poor viewing figures made it doubtful teamWorx would produce a similar ‘docu-drama’ film again.¹⁸¹

There is a school of thought, however, led by Hofmann himself, that quality and ratings are not necessarily mutually exclusive and even that one is necessary for the other. teamWorx is known for its combination of quality and popularity and Hofmann sees himself as both ‘Künstler’ and ‘Kaufmann.’¹⁸² During his speech awarding the ‘Schillerpreis der Stadt Mannheim’ to Hofmann, Bernhard Schlink described him thus: “Er insistiert auf der Freiheit, mal auf Quote und mal auf Kunst zu setzen und mal mit Kunst Quote zu machen.”¹⁸³ This position is something often reiterated by teamWorx:

¹⁷⁷ Crolly, ‘Der programmierte Erfolg’.

¹⁷⁸ See Pantelouris, ‘Das Stofftier’. See also Martin U. Müller and Thomas Tuma, ‘Letzlich geht es nie um Größe’, in *Der Spiegel*, 26 April 2010.

¹⁷⁹ Interview with Nico Hofmann. See lines 280-2.

¹⁸⁰ Freitag, “‘Ich stehe zum Massenfernsehen’”.

¹⁸¹ See Olbert, ‘Qualität und Quote’. See also Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 586-9.

¹⁸² Jakob, ‘NDR Info – Der Talk’.

¹⁸³ Schlink, ‘Laudatio für Nico Hofmann’.

“Quote und Qualität müssen sich also nicht ausschließen”¹⁸⁴ and “Qualitätsfernsehen muss nicht unbedingt Quotenfernsehen sein, aber es schließt dies auch nicht aus.”¹⁸⁵ teamWorx maintains that its productions receive so many viewers specifically because these productions are of high quality and engage with historical, political and societal issues, not because – as some critics would have it – they appeal to the lowest common denominator, with special effects and kitschy love stories.¹⁸⁶

1.3.6: ‘Kino fürs Fernsehen’¹⁸⁷

Despite the Event Movies’ big budgets, feature length and Hollywood-esque filmic devices, teamWorx is a television company first and foremost. However, its filmmakers are keen to point out that these television movies are of no less quality or importance than cinematic efforts. Indeed, numerous producers have claimed teamWorx makes ‘Kino fürs Fernsehen.’ Hofmann has explained his understanding of the term thus:

“Kino fürs Fernsehen hat damit zu tun, dass du mit einem gewissen Aufwand drehst, bei der Kamera, bei der Ausstattung, dass du im Grunde genommen einen selben Aufwand betreibst, wie du auch ihn für einen Kinofilm betreiben würdest. Und das sieht man den Filmen auch an, im Unterschied zu normalen Fernsehspielen sind sie extrem aufwändig produziert. [...] Einmal liegt es den Themen nah, weil du kannst einen Film wie *Dresden...* Wenn du 90-Minuten Bombennacht inszeniert willst, kannst du nicht billig inszenieren. Wenn das eine Wahrhaftigkeit haben soll, dann musst du das wie eine bestimmte Dimension auch produzieren. Und der zweite Punkt ist ganz wichtig, dass die Filme auf dem Weltvertrieb nur funktionieren, wenn sie dieses Cineastische, dieses Kinohafte haben, also dieses Kinohafte hat viel zu tun mit der Gesamtverwertung der Film im Ausland.”¹⁸⁸

There are numerous reasons why teamWorx has chosen to produce predominantly television films. Firstly, the choice of TV over cinema may be a wise one for economic reasons. Due to funding structures in Germany a film made for television will usually receive a considerably higher amount of funding than one made for the cinema. *Der Untergang*, for example, produced by Hofmann’s former colleague, Bernd Eichinger, was originally made for German television as a two-part drama, then later sold as a cinematic feature. If it had been made exclusively for cinema release it would not have received a fraction of the financial backing it did.¹⁸⁹ In addition to these

¹⁸⁴ Floreck, ‘Die Leute wollen wieder mehr Gefühl’.

¹⁸⁵ Olbert, ‘Qualität und Quote’.

¹⁸⁶ See Freitag, “‘Ich stehe zum Massenfernsehen’”.

¹⁸⁷ See ‘Teamworx vor Neuausrichtung’ and L.P., ‘Studio Babelsberg’.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Nico Hofmann. See lines 49-62 for more details.

¹⁸⁹ See Eckhard Fuhr and Hans-Georg Rodek, “‘Kino und Fernsehen brauchen einander’”, in *Welt Online*, 6 February 2009, http://www.welt.de/welt_print/article3156510/Kino-und-Fernsehen-brauchen-

economic reasons, Hofmann feels that there is more freedom working for television than for cinema. He finds TV “spannender und innovativer als das Kino”¹⁹⁰ and that “im Moment können die Filmemacher im TV sehr viel geschützter und mit deutlich weniger kommerzieller Marktkontrolle als im Kino arbeiten.”¹⁹¹ One clear reason for the choice of TV over cinema relates to viewing figures: television productions receive far more viewers than their cinema counterparts, so in terms of reaching audiences and therefore having an effect on the population, TV movies are far in advance of cinema films.

Despite this choice of medium, teamWorx maintains that its films are equal to cinematic features, something reinforced by Hofmann, who speaks out against the denigration of television: “Es ärgert mich, wenn so getan wird, als würden vom Fernsehen quasi als der untersten Etage des deutschen Kulturlebens die Regisseure verdorben”¹⁹² and has similarly opined: “Ich glaube, dass das Fernsehen schwer unterschätzt wird. Im Fernsehen sind jede Woche hochkünstlerische Filme zu entdecken.”¹⁹³ In terms of style, teamWorx’s Event Movies are perhaps closer to cinematic features than television programmes. Hofmann commented: “Wir versuchen immer mehr, die Grenze zum Kino durchstoßen. Bei *Dresden* gibt es praktisch keinen Unterschied mehr zum Kinofilm.” He continued: “Die Annäherung zwischen TV-Event und Kinofilm ist definitiv da. Bei *Dresden* empfinde ich deutlich, dass der Film, auch in der Besetzung, ins Kino passt. *Der Tunnel* ist bereits im Ausland sehr erfolgreich im Kino gelaufen.”¹⁹⁴ Kai Wessel, who has directed for both cinema and television has also spoken on the differences between the two media. For Wessel there is no difference in terms of the quality of production: “Erstmal, [...], unterscheidet sich für mich Kino und Fernsehen nicht dadurch, dass ich den Eindruck habe, bei Kino muss man noch einen besseren Film machen als bei Fernsehen, alle Filme macht man so gut man kann.”¹⁹⁵ Where the main difference lies, according to Wessel, is that in the cinema one has the viewer’s undivided attention, whereas TV movies are at the mercy of the remote control; the medium requires regular peaks of interest to prevent the viewer from losing interest and changing channels:

[einander.html](#). See also Nina Rehfeld, “Weniger Filme, mehr Serien”, in *Berliner Zeitung*, 26 March 2002.

¹⁹⁰ Gebauer, “Für uns lohnt sich Kino nicht”. See also Keil, “Es gibt einen Run aufs Billige”.

¹⁹¹ Gebauer, “Für uns lohnt sich Kino nicht”.

¹⁹² Fuhr and Rodek, “Kino und Fernsehen brauchen einander”.

¹⁹³ Floreck, ‘Die Leute wollen wieder mehr Gefühl’.

¹⁹⁴ Butzek, ‘Die Grenze zum Kino durchstoßen’, p. 22 & p. 28.

¹⁹⁵ Interview with Kai Wessel, 2 September 2010, lines 375-7, (See Appendix 2). As with the Nico Hofmann interview, in the interests of conserving space, footnotes will give the line numbers of the relevant sections.

“Beim Fernsehen muss man halt immer ein bisschen diese Fernbedienung beachten, das ist natürlich der Feind jeder Erzählung, dass heißt da muss man immer ein bisschen gucken, dass man in der Fläche [...] immer auch unterhaltsamer ist, [...], wenn sonst zulange keine, [...], Energie... das kann ja alles Mögliche sein, Autounfälle, nackte Frauen, egal was, ja? Wenn zu lange nichts passiert, dann schalten die Leute halt um.”¹⁹⁶

These demands have an undeniable effect on the style, narrative and pacing of a television film and must be considered during the later analysis of the Event Movies.

As will be discussed later, in recent years the relationship between television and cinema in Germany has become more fluid. There has been a rise in the number of so-called ‘amphibious’ productions, destined for both television and cinema, such as *Der Untergang*. teamWorx’s producers wanted to be more involved in this type of production, with *Der Tunnel* already having been shown in certain cinemas.¹⁹⁷ teamWorx’s parent company UFA has recently decided to concentrate its efforts on cinema films, despite its previous successes with television productions,¹⁹⁸ and teamWorx has expanded its portfolio to include a number of cinematic features, such as *Dschungelkind* (2011) and *Das Lied in Mir* (2011), with more in the pipeline.

1.3.7: teamWorx’s influence

When analysing teamWorx’s films and the effect they have, it is necessary to take into consideration the importance of the company within Germany’s current media landscape and its place in the country’s national consciousness. teamWorx is notable for a number of reasons, the first of these perhaps being the success it enjoys with viewers and reviewers. “Wenn Erfolg sexy macht,” wrote Julian Hanich in 2002, “dann ist die Firma teamWorx zurzeit einer der aufreizendsten Darlings der deutschen Filmproduktionsbranche.”¹⁹⁹ The company’s films have, on the whole, been extraordinarily successful. *Dresden*, for example, received a first night audience of 12.7 million (32.6% of the viewing public). This was almost three times the number of people who went to see *Der Untergang* during its cinematic release, again demonstrating the power of television over its supposedly privileged rival, cinema. Hofmann explains the consistently high viewer ratings for teamWorx productions by identifying a trend towards quality: “Der deutsche Zuschauer wird vom passiven Konsumenten zum aktiven

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. See lines 375-92 for more details.

¹⁹⁷ See Fuhr and Rodek, “Kino und Fernsehen brauchen einander”. See also Julian Hanich, ‘Das Lächeln des Gewinners’, in *Tagesspiegel*, 28 July 2002 and Katharina Dockhorn, ‘Es herrscht eine Stimmung wie in New York vor 15 Jahren’, in *Die Welt*, 18 December 2000.

¹⁹⁸ See Hans-Georg Rodek, ‘Ufa kehrt zu großen Kinoproduktionen zurück’, in *Welt Online*, 17 December 2007,

http://www.welt.de/kultur/article1468666/Ufa_kehrt_zu_grossen_Kinoproduktionen_zurueck.html.

¹⁹⁹ Hanich, ‘Das Lächeln des Gewinners’.

Trüffelschwein. [...] Er findet Qualität, wo Qualität geboten wird.”²⁰⁰ teamWorx films have also been successful at award ceremonies, both at home and abroad. Four teamWorx productions have won the ‘Bester Film’ category at the prestigious ‘Deutscher Fernsehpreis,’ (*Der Tunnel*, *Der Tanz mit dem Teufel – Die Entführung des Richard Oetker*, *Stauffenberg* and *Dresden*), as well as many other national and international awards.²⁰¹

Following teamWorx’s international success, several other countries have begun to emulate some of the company’s productions.²⁰² Nowhere, however, has this been more prevalent than in Germany itself. Although instigator and prime exponent of the genre, teamWorx is not the only production company to produce Event Movies; a great number of band-wagon jumping, melodramatic, historical two-parter Events have been broadcast in Germany in recent years. A remake of 1959 anti-war film *Die Brücke* was broadcast on Sat 1 in 2008, the same year that the divided Germany melodrama *Wir Sind das Volk – Liebe kennt keine Grenzen* was aired on Pro 7, starring Felicitas Woll, the female lead in teamWorx’s *Dresden*. Further fulfilling teamWorx’s Event Movie criteria was Joseph Vilsmaier’s *Die Gustloff* (2008) – ‘made by UFA Film- und Fernsehproduktion’ – a melodramatic, disaster-movie two-parter, which managed to channel the interest in the sinking of the ‘Wilhelm Gustloff’ ship in Germany at the time and was screened amidst several other programmes on the topic, including a Guido Knopp documentary. This historical Event format created by teamWorx seems now to be a permanent part of the televisual landscape in Germany. Gaining imitators, awards, a great number of vocal supporters and critics, as well as millions of viewers, there can be no doubt teamWorx’s productions have had and will continue to have a considerable effect on the German national consciousness.

²⁰⁰ ‘Teamworx vor Neuausrichtung’.

²⁰¹ See ‘11 Jahre teamWorx’ for more on this.

²⁰² See ‘Teamworx vor Neuausrichtung’.

Chapter 2: Defining Terms

This chapter will introduce and define some of the key terms and concepts of the thesis which will provide a context for the analysis of teamWorx's Event Movies *Dresden*, *Nicht alle waren Mörder* and *Die Flucht* in later chapters. It will firstly deal with the concept of authenticity, asking how the term has been defined by teamWorx and others and the advantages and dangers of terming historical Event Movies authentic. The second section will give an introduction to Hollywood and how teamWorx's Event Movies have been influenced by its styles and genres. The following section will give a brief analysis of historical television in Germany, with particular importance given to current trends in depicting history on TV as well as a comparison between television and cinema film. The chapter will end with a Literature Review focusing on academic writings on trends in post-unification German film dealing with the National Socialist past, with particular reference to works dealing with teamWorx's Event Movies.

2.1: Authenticity

'Authenticity' is a key component of teamWorx's Event Movies. The company has claimed in much of its promotional material that its films portray history in an 'authentic' way. When asked how important authenticity is for teamWorx, Hofmann replied: "Das ist extrem wichtig. [...] Also, die Verantwortung, dass es authentisch ist und dass es in sich stimmt, die ist enorm groß. Es muss einfach authentisch stimmen. Du kannst es nicht erfinden. [...] Wir geben uns einfach extrem Mühe."¹ Authenticity and historical accuracy are at the forefront of the teamWorx project. For teamWorx, the 'authentic' history they portray has many educational (and also commercial) possibilities. For instance, a special educational pack including the DVD of *Dresden* was sold to schools. Hofmann has underlined the importance of realism and has spoken about the introduction of "eines neuen Realismus"² into teamWorx's Event Movies, which depict "gelebte Geschichte basierend auf wahren Geschichten."³ Hofmann has further claimed: "Ich engagiere mich tausend Mal lieber für Produktionen mit realem

¹ Interview with Nico Hofmann. See lines 205-17 for more details.

² For example in 'Teamworx vor Neuausrichtung' and Alexander Maschewski, 'Eine deutsche Heldengeschichte', in *Welt Online*, 11 December 2007, http://www.welt.de/welt_print/article1449553/Eine_deutsche_Heldengeschichte.html.

³ 'Teamworx vor Neuausrichtung'.

Hintergrund als für reiende Fiktion.”⁴ An understanding of authenticity then will be integral for the analysis of teamWorx’s films. This analysis will predominantly rely on teamWorx’s own claims and definitions of authenticity for each Event Movie. It will be evaluated whether the films achieve this authenticity, as defined by teamWorx and ultimately what effect this has on the viewers’ understanding of the history involved. While it is not the intention of this thesis to analyse and debate the many theories of authenticity, a brief exploration of some definitions and particularly of the problematic aspects of authenticity will be important in providing a context for later film analyses.

2.1.1: Theories of authenticity

Authenticity is an extremely difficult concept to define and it is problematic to describe anything as ‘authentic,’ in terms of history and memory.⁵ Indeed, Geoffrey Hartmann has described authenticity as an “illustrious superstition,” suggesting something never quite achievable.⁶ As discussed in the above introduction to memory, there can be no one authentic version of history. There are as many authentic versions as there are people who witnessed it. History is created by memories, so therefore an ‘objective’ version of history could not be said to exist.⁷ Even personal memories cannot be understood as authentic. Studies have shown that witness statements, for example, become less reliable the more time that elapses between the event and the recounting of it.⁸ A further problem with historical memory and experience is typified by aspects of Holocaust memory. The paradox affecting Holocaust witnesses is that the truest, most authentic witnesses are those who died; those who survived were unrepresentative and therefore did not have access to the range of experience required for ‘true, authentic’ Holocaust memory, something suggested by Primo Levi in *The Drowned and the Saved*.⁹ Similarly, the nature of the Holocaust was such that if the victims did survive, their witnessing would be an ‘impossible’ act, since no-one would believe them.¹⁰ Authenticity in Holocaust film, therefore, is similarly impossible, it “positions the spectator as a false witness, one who can slip in and out of the witnessing

⁴ Eckert and Huber, “‘Spekulativ ist da gar nichts’”.

⁵ Due to the problems of defining anything as ‘authentic,’ from this point on one should read the terms ‘authentic’ and ‘authenticity’ as in inverted commas. The term authenticity will most often be used in order to describe what teamWorx or others believe to be authentic and should not be understood as an endorsement of this viewpoint by the author.

⁶ Geoffrey H. Hartman, *Scars of the Spirit: The Struggle against Inauthenticity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), p. 65.

⁷ See Bhme-Drr, ‘Wie vergangen ist die Vergangenheit?’, p. 249.

⁸ See Hartman, *Scars of the Spirit*, p. 92.

⁹ See *Ibid.*, p. 86.

¹⁰ See *Ibid.*, p. 88.

position at will without having to experience the existential consequences of this act, one who can master the Holocaust as a spectacle.”¹¹

Further questioning the possibility of historical authenticity is the post-modernist school of thought. In *The Postmodern Condition*, Jean-Francois Lyotard defined post-modernism as “an incredulity towards meta-narratives,” bringing into doubt that there can ever be one authentic version of historical events.¹² Lyotard writes: “Where, after the metanarratives, can legitimacy reside? The operativity criterion is technological; it has no relevance for judging what is true or just.”¹³ Who then, is to decide what is authentic and what is not? Any such decision must be made from within a subjective sphere of experience and is therefore, from a post-modernist perspective, null and void. This is particularly important in understanding history and historiography. From a post-modernist perspective: “Historiography [...] is no longer considered the objective and disinterested recording of the past; it is more an attempt to comprehend and master it by means of some working [...] model that, in fact, is precisely what grants a particular meaning to the past.”¹⁴ So history as we understand it is only created through an external effort. As such, there cannot exist such a thing as authentic history. The creation of history is in fact an ideological process and it is the illusion of authenticity which makes it appear unideological and natural. When analysing teamWorx’s claims of authenticity and evaluating whether the Event Movies live up to these claims, it must be asked what ideological implications these claims of authenticity have.

A complex relationship exists between authenticity and film. It has been claimed that modern media productions have lost sight of the authentic and the real, a position heavily influenced by the works of Walter Benjamin. Benjamin’s widely-respected work *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*, amongst other writings, dealt with questions of authenticity and what he terms ‘aura’ with regards to art. Although Benjamin questioned the status of photography as art -“Mit der technischen Reproduzierbarkeit schwindet die Sphäre der Echtheit. Insbesondere durch die Fotografie können Reproduktionen von Kunstwerken an jedem Ort und zu jeder Zeit betrachtet werden”¹⁵ – for him film is a much more ambiguous medium. Taking Benjamin as a starting point, Rüdiger Görner has claimed that the focus of modern

¹¹ Joshua Hirsch, *Afterimage: Film, Trauma and the Holocaust* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), p. 21.

¹² Jean-Francois Lyotard, translated by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. xxiv.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. xxiv-xxv.

¹⁴ Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1989), p64.

¹⁵ Sven Kramer, *Walter Benjamin – zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius, 2004), pp. 93-4.

media is not on the ‘original experience’ but rather on the technical skill required to recreate it. “Techno-artistic originality,” he maintains, “is mainly a question of producing ‘sensational’ spectacles.”¹⁶ According to Benjamin, film could, however, be considered as artwork, predominantly due to its use of montage: “Das Kunstwerk entsteht hier erst auf Grund der Montage.”¹⁷ Yet paradoxically, the more film attempts to achieve authenticity, through use of classical realism for example, the further from an authentic artwork it becomes.¹⁸ Although this use of the term authenticity, to refer to the innate ‘aura’ of an artwork, is extremely different to how it has been defined above to refer to the concept of ‘historical authenticity,’ Benjamin’s analysis helps us to understand the artificiality of film as a technique. It can create its own artistic authenticity (unlike photography) but can never recreate an authentic moment. The dangers of this are implicit. Benjamin writes: “In dem Augenblick aber, da der Maßstab der Echtheit an der Kunstproduktion versagt, hat sich auch die gesamte soziale Funktion der Kunst umgewälzt. An die Stelle ihrer Fundierung aufs Ritual tritt ihre Fundierung auf eine andere Praxis: nämlich ihre Fundierung auf Politik.”¹⁹ In this way Benjamin identifies the potential of film to be exploited for ideological instrumentalisation. Again, this will be integral to the later analysis of how teamWorx attempts authenticity and what ideological impetus this reveals.

2.1.2: The Perils of history on film

In order to understand the challenges faced by teamWorx’s films on the Third Reich, it is necessary to explore how history has been depicted previously on screen, historical film having existed practically since the birth of the medium. It will also be important to identify the difficulties involved in portraying historical events in a commercial entertainment product, such as the feature film or Event Movie. In 1908 a French drama critic set out what he believed the aspirations of historical film should be, namely to “animate the past, to reconstruct the great events of history through the performance of the actor and the evocation of atmosphere and milieu.”²⁰ Importantly, this definition gives more emphasis on evoking the feel of the past than presenting a

¹⁶ Rüdiger Görner, *Homunculus in the Age of Simulation: Thoughts on Authenticity in Contemporary German Literature* (London: University School of Advanced Study, 1999), p. 22.

¹⁷ Kramer, *Walter Benjamin*, p. 95.

¹⁸ See Graeme Gilloch, *Walter Benjamin: Critical Constellations* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), p. 187. See Section 2.1.2 for more on classical realism in film.

¹⁹ Walter Benjamin, ‘Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit’, in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, Jh. 5 (1936), found at: <http://walterbenjamin.ominiverdi.org/wp-content/kunstwerkbenjamin.pdf>.

²⁰ See Robert A. Rosenstone, *History on Film – Film on History* (Harlow: Pearson, 2006), p. 11.

faithful reproduction of real-life events. Perhaps the first work of historical filmmaking was produced in 1915: D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*. The film detailed the American Civil War and its aftermath and was described by Robert A. Rosenstone as:

“[A] ‘realistic’ (melo)drama that depicts the plight of heroes, heroines and villains caught up in the sweep of huge historical events, men and women whose stories show both the impact of such events on individual lives and, through the figure we know as synecdoche, serve to exemplify larger historical themes.”²¹

This definition could be applied to popular historical film today, not least teamWorx's Event Movies. In some respects there are certain similarities between the demands placed on the historian and the filmmaker. According to Rosenstone both must place individuals at the centre of the historical process, they must tell a story with a beginning, middle and end, and these stories often include the presence of a “strong moral flavour.”²²

In very general terms, the style favoured in depicting history on film, especially the Holocaust, is that of ‘classical realism.’ This was the dominant form of cinema developed in Hollywood in the 1910s and, as the name suggests, one which aims “to give the spectator the sense of experiencing not a particular narrative construction of reality but its authentic reproduction.”²³ The classical realist mode attempts this by making itself as ‘invisible as possible.’²⁴ As detailed in the previous section on Hollywood ideology, disguising the artificial nature of film helps the viewer to believe they are seeing an authentic reflection of the past, not an interpretation of it. There are a number of integral problems with the portrayal of history on screen. If, as discussed above, authenticity in memory and indeed history is an illusion, then there can be no such thing as authenticity in a filmed version of events. Rosenstone summarises these implicit problems by asking rhetorically:

“Can we really represent the past, factually or fictionally, as it was, or do we always present only some version of the way it possibly was or may have been? And in our representations, don't we inevitably alter the past, lose some of its meaning to itself, that is, to its historical actors, and at the same time impose other meanings (our meanings) upon events and moments that those who lived through them might have great difficulty in recognizing?”²⁵

²¹ Ibid., p. 14.

²² See Ibid., pp. 15-17.

²³ Hirsch, *Afterimage*, p. 4.

²⁴ See Hartman, *Scars of the Spirit*, p. 67.

²⁵ Rosenstone, *History on Film*, p. 135.

This captures the dominant problem with historical film: that it must reconstruct historical events. Film is indeed the closest medium to reality in that the viewer (supposedly) sees and hears what they would if they were in the position of the camera. When reading a history book, by comparison, the reader is forced to imagine events and characters. However, film's veneer of reality (particularly in the classical realist mode) masks its artificiality. It cannot show the real past and is therefore forced to provide something else, something constructed. Furthermore, the great number of people who are involved in artistic decisions during the filmmaking process further compound this artificiality. Even if a film is based on one person's memoirs, that a film must be the product of a number of people's creative concepts suggests it cannot be described as authentic.

According to Rosenstone it is the very *raison d'être* of historical film to add "movement, colour, sound, and drama to the past."²⁶ This is not only because a film aims at commercial success, although this is one reason, but rather because the medium demands it. In order for a film to function as a film it must include this movement, colour, sound and drama. The devices used by mainstream Hollywood historical features, as identified by Rosenstone, include: a traditional narrative structure, with beginning, middle and end, which leaves some kind of moral message and uplifting feeling; a focus on the story of an heroic individual or individuals, the presentation of the story as a definitive version of events, not leaving any room for alternative theories (as would be possible in an academic history book); the personalisation, dramatisation and emotionalisation of the past; and a focus on the 'look' of the past above all else.²⁷ Indeed, there seems to be an innate contradiction between the demands of the Hollywood historical film and the demands of 'serious' history, a category in which the Third Reich and the Holocaust can without doubt be placed. One example of this is the 'happy end' demanded by mainstream historical film (as well as other mainstream film genres), providing narrative closure and leaving the audience with an uplifted feeling. In films about the Holocaust, however, closure "would represent an obvious avoidance of what remains indeterminate, elusive and opaque."²⁸ In real life there can be no closure where the Holocaust is concerned. The worst case scenario, posits Rosenstone, is one in which the "fascinating characters, exotic locales, emotional highs, and (often) happy endings" would provide only entertainment and no sense of information, education,

²⁶ Ibid., p. 37.

²⁷ See Ibid., pp. 47-8.

²⁸ Saul Friedländer, 'Trauma, Memory and Transference', in Geoffrey H. Hartman (ed.), *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 261.

analysis or motivation to work through the past.²⁹ A further problem with presenting reconstructed history on screen under the guise of authenticity is the risk that the fictional version of events will supersede the actual historical events themselves. In any mainstream historical film, the multitude of different viewpoints which make up historical memory must be replaced by one supposedly definitive version. This is believed to have occurred with the history of the Holocaust as depicted in Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993), which for many (in the USA at least) represents the image of the real Holocaust.³⁰

2.1.3: Authenticity on television

While all of this holds true for television as well as cinema films, there are several trends regarding authenticity in television history programmes which need to be discussed in further detail in order to understand the context surrounding teamWorx's Event Movies. It is also important here to recognise the role documentary television films or series play in coming to terms with the past and the similarities and differences between them and fiction films. Firstly, it is necessary to explore the varied methods employed by television productions to create what they would term authenticity. History on television often uses "die originalen Bild- und Tonaufnahmen, der Originalschauplatz, das Zeigen von Dokumenten, Archivmaterialien und Quellen sowie [...] Zeitzeugen."³¹ Indeed, the eyewitness, almost omnipresent in the works of Knopp for example, is often paraded in front of the camera as an absolute proof of authenticity, "so ist es gewesen" they seem to suggest.³² Although teamWorx, along with other historical dramas, does not use eyewitnesses,³³ it does conform to many of the trends mentioned above. In addition to this teamWorx also often uses an historian on set as historical advisor for many of its Event Movies, something teamWorx claims aids historical authenticity in its films.³⁴ (The illusion of) authenticity can perform numerous functions in television productions. Firstly, suggesting to the viewer that the story they are witnessing is authentic and that it really happened increases the programme's

²⁹ Rosenstone, *History on Film*, p. 150.

³⁰ See Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, *Erinnerung im globalen Zeitalter: Der Holocaust* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2001), p. 157.

³¹ Edgar Lersch and Reinhold Viehoff, *Geschichte im Fernsehen: Eine Untersuchung zur Entwicklung des Genres und der Gattungsästhetik geschichtlicher Darstellungen im Fernsehen 1995 bis 2003* (Düsseldorf: LfM, 2007), p. 247.

³² See *Ibid.*, p. 249.

³³ 2010's *Dutschke* being a notable exception.

³⁴ See Rainer Wirtz, 'Das Authentische und das Historische: Die Dehnbarkeit eines Begriffs', in Claudia Cippitelli and Axel Schwanebeck (ed.), *Fernsehen macht Geschichte: Vergangenheit als TV-Ereignis* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2009), p. 16.

emotionalising effect, and allows for a greater identification between viewer and protagonist. Authenticity, it seems, is the key for not only historical but also dramatic credibility. At the ‘Kieler Historikertag’ in 2004 Heinrich Breloer maintained: “Bilder funktionieren nur, wenn ihre Betrachter an die Echtheit dessen glauben, was dargestellt wird.”³⁵ For many, authenticity is the sign of a quality production. It is a “Qualitätsmarke,”³⁶ “ein Zauberwort, das [...] die Grenze zwischen billigen Trend und echten Werten markiert.”³⁷

There are some, however, who claim that television can never achieve authenticity and that the demands of the medium and the demands of authenticity are too far apart. “Fernsehen heißt Fälschen und Fehlgehen,”³⁸ claims Lorenz Engell, who cites the current popularity of so-called ‘scripted reality’ shows – such as *Lenßen und Partner*, *Zwei bei Kallwass*, *Familien in Brennpunkt*, *Mitten im Leben* and many more – as proof that television is grossly abusing the term authenticity.³⁹ What is referred to as authenticity by the makers of these programmes is actually the illusion of authenticity, the veneer of reality with none of its substance. The viewer is given the position of an eyewitness or a privileged central character and therefore believes what they are experiencing is authentic. It must here also be considered that the viewer’s impression of historical authenticity, against which they measure other television programmes, is predominantly based on previous depictions of history from other film and television programmes. The viewer is therefore complicit in demanding the illusion of authenticity.⁴⁰ Eventually these new high-definition and colour images can eventually replace documentary images and historical record, as they appear more authentic, more true to life than grainy black-and-white archive footage, or the impression one gets from reading a history book.⁴¹ In today’s media-centred world, television functions for some as a dominant reality; the history depicted on screen is, for many viewers, more ‘real’

³⁵ Ibid., p. 23.

³⁶ Rainer Wirtz, ‘Das Authentische und das Historische’, in Thomas Fischer and Rainer Wirtz (ed.), *Alles authentisch?: Popularisierung der Geschichte im Fernsehen* (Konstanz: UVK, 2008), p. 199.

³⁷ Beate Schlanstein, ‘Echt wahr! Annäherungen an das Authentisch’, in Thomas Fischer and Rainer Wirtz (ed.), *Alles authentisch?: Popularisierung der Geschichte im Fernsehen* (Konstanz: UVK, 2008), p. 206.

³⁸ Lorenz Engell, “‘Virtual History’: Geschichte als Fernsehen”, in *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History*, 6 (2009), <http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/16126041-Engell-3-2009>, p. 1.

³⁹ See Ibid., p. 3.

⁴⁰ See Wirtz, ‘Die Dehnbarkeit eines Begriffs’, p. 17 & p. 23, Wolf, ‘Geschichte wird Ereignis-TV’, p. 78, Martin Zimmerman, ‘Der Historiker am Set’, in Thomas Fischer and Rainer Wirtz (ed.), *Alles authentisch?: Popularisierung der Geschichte im Fernsehen* (Konstanz: UVK, 2008), p. 141 and Tilmann Gangloff, “‘Helden wie wir’: Zeitgeschichte im Fernsehfilm”, in Claudia Cippitelli and Axel Schwanebeck (ed.), *Fernsehen macht Geschichte: Vergangenheit als TV-Ereignis* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2009), p. 40.

⁴¹ See Wirtz, ‘Die Dehnbarkeit eines Begriffs’, p. 17.

than the history itself. This can be seen in the way film and television have taken over from historians and history books as the main way in which the history of the Third Reich and Holocaust are transmitted to the public.⁴² However, there are claims that television does not need to be historically authentic and that inauthentic depictions of the past would not harm the understanding of history. Alexander Coridaß argues that audiences are intelligent enough to know what they are seeing is not authentic history but rather an approximation of it, and furthermore that they are able to distinguish between the fictional and real historical elements within a film. Furthermore, Knopp argues that television is not an academic piece and should not have to define itself in this way: “Ein Fernsehfilm ist keine Doktorarbeit, und er hat auch keine Fußnoten.”⁴³ It is important to remember that all representations of the past, whether in film, on television, in books or even memories are constructions and are imbued with the demands of the present. No reconstruction can ever be fully authentic.⁴⁴ This impossibility of authenticity must be kept in mind during the later analyses of teamWorx’s Event Movies. What is important is how teamWorx claims and attempts to achieve this elusive authenticity and what this can reveal about the company’s attitude to memory of the National Socialist past.

2.2: Hollywood

With teamWorx drawing a certain amount of influence from American filmmaking, (as discussed above and which will become evident during the close analysis of the Event Movies), and with constant criticism of the ‘Americanisation’ and ‘Hollywoodisation’ (which are often used interchangeably) of German cinema,⁴⁵ it is necessary to define what Hollywood actually is, how it relates to German national cinema and how Hollywood cinema functions on an ideological level. This will all assist in the analysis of teamWorx’s films and what they suggest about current ‘Vergangenheitsbewältigung’ in Germany.

⁴² See Lawrence Baron, *Projecting the Holocaust into the Present: The Changing Focus of Contemporary Holocaust Cinema* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), p. 6.

⁴³ Guido Knopp, ‘Zeitgeschichte im ZDF’, in Jürgen Wilke (ed.), *Massenmedien und Zeitgeschichte* (Konstanz: UVK Medien, 1999), p. 312.

⁴⁴ See Astrid Erll, ‘Erinnerungskultur und Medien’, in Albert Drews (ed.), *Zeitgeschichte als TV-Event: Erinnerungsarbeit und Geschichtsvermittlung im deutschen Fernsehfilm* (Pößneck: Evangelische Akademie Loccum, 2007), p. 16.

⁴⁵ See for example Eric Rentschler, ‘From New German Cinema to the Post-Wall Cinema of Consensus’, in Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie (ed.), *Cinema and Nation* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 260-77.

2.2.1: What is Hollywood?

The term ‘Hollywood’ is often used to refer to an extremely amorphous group of productions and so attempting to define such a slippery notion as Hollywood is filled with pitfalls. Whereas other film groups (the New German Cinema for example), can be defined as a small number of individuals making films over a limited time period,⁴⁶ Hollywood is a commercial behemoth with supra-national concerns which has existed for almost a century, producing thousands of films made by hundreds of filmmakers. The difficulties of surmising a ‘Hollywood style’ or ‘Hollywood ideology’ thus seem almost insurmountable. Some may suggest that ‘Hollywood cinema’ should in fact be treated simply as a collection of technical devices. These ‘Institutional Modes of Representation’ are characteristics of classical filmmaking, which viewers have internalised and have come to expect from a mainstream Hollywood movie. These are devices such as: “The 180-degree system, the preservation of spatial continuity, the principle of actors not looking at, nor talking directly to the camera, realistic and linear storylines, and the prevalence of the establishing shot and shot/reverse-shot editing.”⁴⁷ Indeed, there did exist a tangible, if flexible, set of guidelines, developed at the very beginning of Hollywood movie-making, for the classical Hollywood narrative system, which was intended to foster a unified style.⁴⁸ So, although there may be some devices which most, or at least a number of Hollywood movies share, the term is used to refer to much more than that.

It must be questioned here whether it is problematic to compare teamWorx films to Hollywood movies as the media of television and cinema are different. The comparison, however, is indeed valid: teamWorx’s claim of making ‘Kino fürs Fernsehen’ typifies its attitude that its made-for-TV movies are, essentially, cinematic features, which just happen to be shown on television. Therefore comparisons between them and Hollywood pictures in terms of style, scale and narrative development will be useful in the analysis of the Event Movies. Furthermore, the institutions of Hollywood and television have always been related, ever since the latter medium’s inception. As early as the 1920s, Hollywood studios wanted to “control the development and

⁴⁶ There still exists much dispute about the consistence of style, format and ideology within these schools, however.

⁴⁷ See Jennifer Marston William, ‘Images of Europe from Abroad: The Pleasures and Pitfalls of Teaching German Cinema in America’, in *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German*, Vol. 39, No. 1/2 (2006), p. 94.

⁴⁸ Kristin Thompson, *Storytelling in the New Hollywood: Understanding Classical Narrative Technique* (London: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 10.

implementation of television technology.”⁴⁹ Later, when the Hollywood studios’ sound stages were rented to make television productions, the best facilities were always reserved for making movies, thus leading to the impression of television as cinema’s poorer cousin.⁵⁰ Even during the 1960s and 1970s, Hollywood studios aimed to dominate the market in ‘made-for-television movies.’⁵¹ In Germany today there exists a greater fluidity between television and cinema, with “the increased role of television as a source of financing,” “the increased presence of television officials on film boards” and “new arrangements between film schools and television” attesting to this.⁵² There are naturally differences in the modes of spectatorship regarding cinema and television: cinema enjoys the audience’s undivided attention for the length of the film, whereas there is always the risk television audiences will change channels, be distracted by the telephone, or go off to make a cup of tea. In the cinema all attention is focused on an extremely enlarged image, the lights are dimmed and the audience has no choice but to watch. The television image is much smaller and must compete with a range of different stimuli. Despite these minor differences, however, it will be valid to explore the use of Hollywood devices in teamWorx’s Event Movies, which would have roughly the same effect on cinema and television audiences. Occasionally it will be necessary to make reference to the specificities of television reception.

2.2.2: Breaking down the Hollywood/German dichotomy

Much criticism of German populist movies which borrow from Hollywood traditions centres around the accusation of ‘Hollywoodisation’ or ‘Americanisation’, setting Hollywood cinema and German cinema apart as two very rigid and separate frameworks. From Hollywood’s beginnings its global reach was criticised because of the “standardized entertainment” it offered and it was widely feared that “the American ‘hick’ [would be] arbiter of taste who dictates the fashions of Hollywood.”⁵³ Indeed, an article from 1926 in the *Berliner Zeitung am Mittag* attributed Hollywood’s global success to “the country bumpkin and rural idiocy.”⁵⁴ In analysing teamWorx’s movies, which could be said to deal with German history in an ‘American’ or ‘Hollywood’ way,

⁴⁹ Eileen R. Meehan, ‘Ancillary Markets – Television: From Challenge to Safe Haven’, in Paul McDonald and Janet Wasko (ed.), *The Contemporary Hollywood Film Industry* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), p. 107.

⁵⁰ See *Ibid.*, p. 107.

⁵¹ See *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁵² Randall Halle, ‘German Film, Aufgehoben: Ensembles of Transnational Cinema’, in *New German Critique*, 87 (2002), pp. 17-18.

⁵³ John Trumbour, ‘Hollywood and the World: Export or Die’, in Paul McDonald and Janet Wasko (ed.), *The Contemporary Hollywood Film Industry* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), p. 209.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

it is important to break down this dichotomy, to reveal that there has been much interplay between Hollywood and Germany over the past century and to remember that the cinema's transnational influence is not a one-way street.

German influence on Hollywood was to be found at the very beginning of the Hollywood story with Carl Laemmle (or Karl Lämmle, as he was previously known), who co-founded Universal Pictures, one of Hollywood's largest and most famous and influential studios, after emigrating to America in 1884. Laemmle also worked closely with Austrian émigré Erich von Stroheim who directed many of Universal's first silent movies.⁵⁵ The influence of German cinema on Hollywood can be seen very early in the twentieth century. Émigrés such as Fritz Lang helped to bring expressionism to Hollywood, which had a profound influence on several popular movie genres, such as film noir and horror, and on directors such as Alfred Hitchcock and even Tim Burton today.⁵⁶ As the Nazis rose to power the list of émigrés to America grew and would expand to include the directors Billy Wilder, G.W. Pabst, Douglas Sirk (or Detlef Sierck, as he was formerly known), Wilhelm Thiele and Max Ophüls, as well as a number of actors and other skilled technical film-workers. Conversely, Hollywood influences abounded in Germany during this period, even during the years of the Third Reich, when German national cinema was employed as a tool of propaganda to bolster a rigid sense of German national identity. Influences could be found in Nazi cinema's reliance on genre films and stars and similarly in terms of "gender representations, film aesthetics, and modes of audience address."⁵⁷ It seemed that "exceptional familiarity with Americanism [...] was not considered antithetical to forming a self-consciously nationalist mass culture."⁵⁸ This link between popular cinema and the explicitly nationalist caused a "tendency among intellectual and cultural elites to equate mass entertainment with nationalistic manipulation."⁵⁹ As such there still remains a suspicion of popular, mass culture forms of entertainment in Germany to this day.

Perhaps one of the most prominent examples of the influence of American culture on Germany (including American cinematic culture) was directly after the war when Hollywood films were used in the US Army's 're-education' of the (West) German population. While at once providing a fresh audience for Hollywood exports,

⁵⁵ Christine Haase, *When Heimat meets Hollywood: German Filmmakers and America, 1985-2005* (Woodbridge: Camden House, 2007), p. 15.

⁵⁶ William, 'Images of Europe', p. 93.

⁵⁷ Haase, *When Heimat meets Hollywood*, p. 26.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 26. Indeed it could be that the Nazis borrowed so heavily from Hollywood cinema because it taught valuable lessons in the invisible conveyance of ideology. See Section 2.2.3 for more on this.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

also important was the communication of “democratic principles” and “Truth, Justice, and the American Way,” which would hopefully be transmitted to the German viewers.⁶⁰ Another rise in German/American cinema relations occurred in the 1970s, not least due to the New German Cinema’s love/hate relationship with Hollywood and America. Thomas Elsaesser claimed “Hollywood stands at the very heart of the New German Cinema becoming a national cinema.”⁶¹ From the 1970s onwards, American imports dominated the German box office and have never disappeared, while conversely, German investors also began providing finance for Hollywood productions around this time. The death of Fassbinder in 1982 – symbolic for some of the death of the New German Cinema and the ideals it represented – provoked a shift change in German cinema. It appeared that Hollywood’s dominance over Germany was complete.⁶²

The situation regarding German national cinema over the past two decades is a complex one. On the one hand, the importance of a national cinema in defining a national culture has been reinforced. Film in Germany, according to Martin Conboy, has “provided a useful means of articulating national aspirations and mood of the country” and is “an important means of expressing a specifically German identity.”⁶³ Similarly, in 1996 a statement from the Ministry of the Interior claimed that: “Film is the expression of the cultural identity of a country vis-à-vis its own citizens as well as foreign countries. German film reflects the individuality of our culture and society.”⁶⁴ Yet on the other hand, recent decades have seen the increasing internationalisation of German cinema, leading to a rising number of co-productions with other countries, particularly within Europe, due to “intensifying globalization and dissolving cultural and economic borders.”⁶⁵ Along with an increasing readiness to work with their European neighbours, since the 1980s German cinema has moved to reject its existing focus on “modernist aesthetics and major *auteurs*,” and to adopt more of an American

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 27.

⁶¹ Cited in Ibid., p. 42. There is not scope here for a full analysis of the New German Cinema’s relationship to America. For more on this see: Thomas Elsaesser, ‘American friends: Hollywood echoes in the New German Cinema’, in Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and Steven Ricci (ed.), *Hollywood and Europe: Economics, Culture, National Identity 1945-95* (Bury St. Edmunds: Bfi Publishing, 1998), pp. 143-54, Timothy Corrigan, *New German Cinema: The Displaced Image* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 1-9 and Julia Knight, *New German Cinema: Images of a Generation* (London: Wallflower Press, 2004), pp. 73-80.

⁶² See Randall Halle and Margaret McCarthy, ‘Introduction’, in Randall Halle and Margaret McCarthy (ed.), *Light Motives: German popular film in perspective* (Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2003), p. xi.

⁶³ Haase, *When Heimat meets Hollywood*, p. 1.

⁶⁴ Halle, ‘German Film, Aufgehoben’, p. 13.

⁶⁵ Haase, *When Heimat meets Hollywood*, p. 197.

model.⁶⁶ This has been described (and lamented) by a number of critics, including Eric Rentschler.⁶⁷ Even funding structures in Germany have shifted to follow a more American schematic; there currently exists more of a focus on profit and a dominance of “private interest and big capital.”⁶⁸

However, as German cinema arguably becomes more internationalised, so is the definition of Hollywood as a specific geographical location becoming less rigid in a globalised world. Hollywood is becoming more transnational. In recent years the markets outside of America have been increasingly lucrative – since 1994 the majority of Fox’s and Columbia’s video sales (and presumably later DVD sales) have been outside the US – which means Hollywood must take into consideration the needs of these spectators.⁶⁹ Indeed, since the 1970s Hollywood corporations have taken into account the importance of Germany especially as a market for their movies, since Hollywood features count for between 80-90% of the overall box office takings there. It has therefore been suggested that, due to Hollywood’s current global outlook, it is not the American hick, but rather the demands of the German spectator which exert a considerable influence over Hollywood fare.⁷⁰ The content of Hollywood movies is therefore designed with an international audience in mind, especially the blockbuster, the Hollywood genre *par excellence*, with its focus on action, music, effects and spectacle, all of which travel with ease to viewers around the world. Spectacle is a winner because it “sells particularly well abroad, in markets where nuances of plot and dialogue might be lost in translation.”⁷¹

Perhaps the most notable exchange between Germany and Hollywood within the last two decades is the number of German directors who have made a name for themselves in Hollywood. Although much has been written on the cultural exchanges between Hollywood and Germany of the Weimar era or of the New German Cinema, for example, the fates of these particular German directors, although achieving resounding box office successes, have been ignored by many commentators.⁷² Not only have directors, such as Sönke Wortmann, Peter Sehr and Uwe Boll, gone to America but also German actors – Til Schweiger, Franka Potente and Daniel Brühl amongst

⁶⁶ See *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁶⁷ See Rentschler, ‘Cinema of Consensus’, pp. 260-77. See Section 2.4.1 for a detailed analysis of this article.

⁶⁸ Halle, ‘German Film, Aufgehoben’, p. 11.

⁶⁹ See *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷⁰ See Peter Krämer, ‘Germany: Hollywood and the Germans – A Very Special Relationship’, in Paul McDonald and Janet Wasko (ed.), *The Contemporary Hollywood Film Industry* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 241-2.

⁷¹ Geoff King, *New Hollywood Cinema: An Introduction* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2005), p. 179.

⁷² Haase, *When Heimat meets Hollywood*, pp. 2-4.

them – have gained some success in mainstream Hollywood movies. Furthermore, German investment has funded a number of Hollywood films such as *Mission: Impossible 2*, *Gangs of New York*, and *Austin Powers*,⁷³ and similarly Berlin's Babelsberg studios have provided studio space for a number of blockbusters in recent years; such as *The Bourne Identity* (2002) and its sequels as well as, more recently, *Valkyrie* and *Inglourious Basterds* (2009). The studio chief Christoph Fisser explained: "We're back on the radar of the big American film producers."⁷⁴ It is also worth noting that, like teamWorx, there exist companies in Germany whose directors do not wish to head to America at the first chance, but who are intent on balancing box office and critical success, balancing the demands of an international film market and remaining true to their national roots. One example of this is the film production company X-Filme, set up by producer Stefan Arndt and director Tom Tykwer. The company has enjoyed success internationally with *Lola Rennt* (1998), *Good Bye Lenin!* (2003) and *Das weiße Band* (2009), amongst others. X-Filme rejected the wave of cinema of consensus comedies of the early 1990s and instead decided to make auteur films "more in the tradition of the American independents" but ones which would tackle "really authentic German stories that are set in Germany and are about Germany."⁷⁵ It is evident that in order to achieve success in an increasingly globalised marketplace the twin demands of Hollywood and Germanness must be finely balanced, and that teamWorx is not alone in their mixing of the two schools, dealing with subject matter which is rooted in German experience and claimed to be authentic, yet simultaneously employing Hollywood filmmaking practices and stylistic devices.

Due to this globalisation and indeed the success of Germany's relationship with Hollywood, German cinema has developed a much more 'transnational' perspective and tends to favour films which are able to succeed internationally and yet do not lose national specificity, as teamWorx aims. Along with an increased look to Hollywood, it is important to remember that since German unification links to other European filmmaking nations have been strengthened.⁷⁶ The adoption of a transnational perspective is the only way in which companies can ensure profitability: "European filmmakers cannot afford to produce films solely for Europeans in the way that

⁷³ Randall Halle, *German Film after Germany: Towards a Transnational Aesthetic* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 2008), p. 2.

⁷⁴ Merlijn Schoonenboom, 'Legendarische grond', in *De Volkskrant*, 5 February 2010, pp. 18-19. Translation is my own.

⁷⁵ Cited in Halle, 'German Film, Aufgehoben', p. 43.

⁷⁶ See Halle, *German Film after Germany*, p. 7.

Hollywood can still produce films for the US market.”⁷⁷ Similarly, a focus on specific national themes, such as national mythic heroes, for example, would potentially alienate the rest of the (indispensable) European market.⁷⁸ Although it may seem counter-intuitive then, narratives of the Second World War have proven the perfect material for these transnational films, perhaps because of the scope of the conflict itself and that most nations worldwide have some relationship to the event.⁷⁹ Randall Halle has identified the recent German films *Downfall*, *Der neunte Tag*, *Napola* and *Sophie Scholl* as examples of ‘transnational’ films.⁸⁰ These are perhaps also popular because of the scope war films provide for ‘visual opulence,’ including “big battle scenes, carefully reconstructed settings, large casts and so on.”⁸¹ However, in transforming these national stories into transnational narratives there is a danger of losing specificity, or eroding “national myths.”⁸² Many of Germany’s post-unification transnational historical films featured more universal concerns, including “love, family, lesbianism, cancer and youthful rebellion.”⁸³ However, they are still able to focus on specific German stories, while at the same time using “the language of popular world cinema,” familiar with international audiences, to tell these stories.⁸⁴ Furthermore, that these stories come from Germany, the perpetrator nation, imbues them with an extra sense of interest and with a ‘unique selling point,’ in today’s commercial language. These films are able to focus on national themes, safe in the knowledge that due to their use of international filmic devices, they will not alienate viewers as well as knowing that, due to their central role in the Second World War, many ‘German’ themes of this period would be familiar to a wider European audience.⁸⁵

2.2.3: Hollywood ideology

It is important at this juncture to explore how Hollywood cinema functions in terms of ideology. Although often seen as an apolitical cinematic tradition, Hollywood movies are able to expertly convey a concrete ideology. Understanding how they do this will assist in analysing how teamWorx’s Event Movies rely on Hollywood, not only in terms of style but in the way they communicate ideological standpoints. Hollywood’s

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 93.

⁷⁸ See Ibid., p. 93.

⁷⁹ See Ibid., p. 96.

⁸⁰ See Ibid., p. 112.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 96.

⁸² See Bruno De Wever, ‘Prologue: Historical Film as Palimpsest’, in Leen Engelen and Roel Vande Winkel (ed.), *Perspectives on European Film and History* (Ghent: Academia, 2007), p. 7.

⁸³ Halle, *German Film after Germany*, p. 96.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 112.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 112.

position has traditionally always been a conservative one and, critics suggest, its movies are employed to reinforce the status quo. They “legitimate dominant institutions and traditional values,” including individualism, capitalism, patriarchy and even racism, amongst others.⁸⁶ The movies’ method of “mapping [...] personal life stories over structural social issues like war and crime makes the existing order seem moral and good.”⁸⁷ They present social values and institutions as if they were unchangeable and wholly natural, a self-evident framework within which the characters must operate. In this way they encourage the viewer to accept the existing social order. The Hollywood staple of the ‘happy end’ returns characters to the status quo and suggests nothing could (or should) ever change.⁸⁸ This reinforcement of societal norms is something criticised by Adorno in *The Culture Industry*. He argues: “The culture industry misuses its concern for the masses in order to duplicate, reinforce and strengthen their mentality, which it presumes is given and unchangeable. How this mentality might be changed is excluded throughout.”⁸⁹ Adorno contrasts the workings of the culture industry to ‘art,’ which strives to overcome its predetermined nature, whereas mass culture simply rejoices in its own predetermination. The blanket rejection of all forms of popular film by the Frankfurt School, preferring high culture and art films, has remained predominantly unquestioned until relatively recently.⁹⁰ Adorno argues that the ‘repetitive and formulaic character’ of mass culture goods (Hollywood movies as a prime example), fulfils the individual’s need for security and creates a cosy, reassuring world which is never questioned.⁹¹

For Adorno the culture industry in this respect is a tool of capitalism *par excellence*, transforming the population into dependent and conformist consumers, undermining all responsibility and autonomy and therefore reducing the ability of any subject to change their own social world.⁹² Similarly, “the repetitiveness, the selfsameness, and the ubiquity of modern mass culture tend to make for automatized reactions and to weaken the forces of individual resistance.”⁹³ From Adorno’s viewpoint, Hollywood blockbusters exert a numbing effect on the audiences, at once reasserting the validity of the status quo and removing the individual’s capability or

⁸⁶ Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner, *Camera Politica: The Politics and Ideology of Contemporary Hollywood Film* (Bloomington and Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 1.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁸⁸ See *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁸⁹ Theodor W. Adorno, *The Culture Industry* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 86.

⁹⁰ See Halle and McCarthy, ‘Introduction’, p. x.

⁹¹ See Robert W. Witkin, *Adorno on Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 5.

⁹² See *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁹³ Adorno, *The Culture Industry*, p. 138.

desire to do anything about it. Much of the power of Hollywood lies in the way it achieves these aims; Hollywood movies, while appearing non-ideological, communicate this ideology invisibly and therefore more effectively. This insidious conveyance of social norms is something which characterises Hollywood movie-making. Adorno criticised film and television for this reason, for their ‘pseudo-realism,’ for claiming to show the world as it is yet actually (as is unavoidable) depicting it through a subjective lens.⁹⁴ Many of Hollywood’s technical and narrative devices – seamless editing, covert narration, causal logic and other examples of its ‘Institutional Modes of Representation’ – are designed specifically in order to “divert the spectator’s attention away from themselves as mechanisms of the illusion,” to create the fallacy of objective reality.⁹⁵ This allows the ideological standpoint depicted in Hollywood films to appear natural – a universal truth – instead of painstakingly artificially constructed.

It must be mentioned, however, that the description of Hollywood ideology stated above is a greatly disputed one. Adorno’s criticism of film and television has been similarly questioned, appearing to some as “neither particularly sophisticated nor refined as method.”⁹⁶ Indeed, little or no allowance is given for the power of the spectator to exert their own influence on their understanding of the movie, and Adorno does not allow for different methods of spectatorship, such as critical viewing: “There are always other ways of using the material on offer that the audience can seize upon,”⁹⁷ argues Robert W. Witkin. Similarly, such criticism treats Hollywood movies as a singular mass and does not allow for any variation in ideological standpoint within their range. Although this may have been (more) true during the classical Hollywood years, an evolution of varying ideological standpoints in Hollywood occurred during the late 1960s, when more counter-establishment voices began to be heard. Along with this, the demise of the studio system allowed filmmakers more control over their product and allowed for a heterogeneous selection of movies; including socially critical and innovative films.⁹⁸

An integral part of this study will relate to the extent to which teamWorx uses the styles and conventions of Hollywood in order to depict German history in its Event Movies. The history of Hollywood/German relations and the current trends of

⁹⁴ See Witkin, *Adorno on Popular Culture*, p. 137.

⁹⁵ See Richard Maltby, *Harmless Entertainment: Hollywood and the Ideology of Consensus* (London: Scarecrow Press, 1983), p. 197. See also Ryan and Kellner, *Camera Politica*, p. 1 and David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (London: Routledge, 1985), p. 24 & p. 30.

⁹⁶ Witkin, *Adorno on Popular Culture*, p. 143.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁹⁸ See Ryan and Kellner, *Camera Politica*, p 6.

international co-operation in a global cinematic landscape, as detailed above, will help to provide a context for teamWorx's borrowing of a Hollywood style. This could also perhaps help to defend its films against accusations of contributing to the 'Hollywoodisation' of German cinema, since the two are not separate entities, rather there has been constant interplay between the two filmmaking traditions. Furthermore, detailing how Hollywood may function in an ideological sense will assist with later analyses of the teamWorx films in terms of how they communicate their ideological standpoint on the National Socialist legacy: namely how it is approached in present-day Germany and to what extent the view of history through a Hollywood lens points to a normalisation of the Nazi past.

2.3: Television

There has been much written on the ways in which cinema film deals with history, but in order to understand how teamWorx's attempts to come to terms with the National Socialist past in their Event Movies are shaped by the specific medium in which they operate, the trends, uses and dangers of history on television need to be explored and evaluated. History on television as a theme has often been ignored by previous scholars, suggesting the importance of this thesis in advancing this debate. The following section will deal briefly with current trends regarding history on television and how TV can be extremely useful in communicating historical themes and creating historical consciousness. Finally there will be an exploration of the dangers of shaping history to fit a televisual mould.

2.3.1: Trends in historical television

In order to provide a context for the analysis of teamWorx's Event Movies, this section will briefly examine current trends in historical programming in Germany and the critical attitudes which have been adopted towards them. One of the major developments in the German media of the last few decades, and one which naturally shaped the media landscape inherited by teamWorx, was the introduction of private broadcast channels, such as RTL and Sat 1, in 1984. Funded by advertising and therefore reliant on viewer ratings, in order to make a profit these channels needed to attract as many viewers as possible. The public channels ARD and ZDF, who up until then had enjoyed a monopoly on viewer attention, were forced to fight back by using the same methods of attracting viewers. This was criticised by many at the time as a

“Konvergenz nach unten,”⁹⁹ with much of the more ‘worthy’ and ‘niche’ programming, including prime-time history coverage, being shed in the desperate competition for ratings.¹⁰⁰ It was at this point that the idea of an emotional melodrama as the weekly TV movie came about and was taken on board by the public channels. Often scheduled on a Wednesday evening, opposite the football on the other channel, these TV movies were most definitely aimed at women and were the forerunners of teamWorx’s Event Movies today.

History on German television is currently enjoying a golden age, in quantity if not quality. “So viel Geschichte war im Fernsehen nie,”¹⁰¹ wrote Fritz Wolf. Unlike in the early days of public television, history programmes are a ratings winner: “Geschichte im Fernsehen ist ein Quotengarant geworden,”¹⁰² claims Claudia Cippitelli, with programmes regularly attracting millions of viewers. For example, the series *Das Dritte Reich in Farbe* (1998), broadcast on the small satellite channel Vox, received at times a market share of almost 10%.¹⁰³ Furthermore, as the previous example testifies (known as *The Third Reich in Colour* in the UK), history programmes generally sell well abroad. They are ‘Exportschlager.’¹⁰⁴ This interest in historical television even led to the publication of a magazine by ZDF called ‘History,’ by the setting-up of a dedicated history channel, ‘Discovery Geschichte,’ in 2005 and by an increase in historical media resources.¹⁰⁵ This increased popularity of history could be related to a change in the way it is communicated. Fritz Wolf commented that today: “Geschichte im Fernsehen ist sexy.”¹⁰⁶ Historical programmes include entertainment, emotion and drama, with an increasing emphasis on entertainment.¹⁰⁷ There has similarly been a change in the target (and actual) audience of history programming. Whereas previously this had been the preserve of the over-50s, especially on ARD and ZDF, younger viewers, particularly those in the 14-29 age range (regarded as the most lucrative to

⁹⁹ Lersch and Viehoff, *Geschichte im Fernsehen*, p. 12.

¹⁰⁰ See Wulf Kansteiner, *In Pursuit of German Memory: History, Television, and Politics after Auschwitz* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2006), p. 111.

¹⁰¹ Fritz Wolf, ‘Der Weitererzähler: Fernsehen und Geschichtserzählung’, in Andreas Grübel et al (ed.), *Jahrbuch Fernsehen 2004* (Cologne: DruckZentrum KölnWEST, 2004), p. 28.

¹⁰² Claudia Cippitelli, ‘Fernsehen macht Geschichte’, in Claudia Cippitelli and Axel Schwanebeck (ed.), *Fernsehen macht Geschichte: Vergangenheit als TV-Ereignis* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2009), p. 8.

¹⁰³ See *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁴ Claudia Cippitelli and Axel Schwanebeck, ‘Vorwort’, in Claudia Cippitelli and Axel Schwanebeck (ed.), *Fernsehen macht Geschichte: Vergangenheit als TV-Ereignis* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2009), p. 5.

¹⁰⁵ See Cippitelli, ‘Fernsehen macht Geschichte’, p. 10.

¹⁰⁶ Wolf, ‘Geschichte wird Ereignis-TV’, p. 79.

¹⁰⁷ See Wolf, ‘Der Weitererzähler’, p. 30 and Cippitelli and Schwanebeck, ‘Vorwort’, p. 5.

advertisers) are now being targeted, and often the style of the programmes reflects this.¹⁰⁸

Perhaps the most noticeable development in historical television in recent years is the rise of so-called ‘Histotainment,’ a response to the twin demands of education and emotion as well as the need to capture a younger audience. The word ‘Histotainment’ is a portmanteau from the English words ‘history’ and ‘entertainment’ and is used to describe film or television productions where “historische Inhaltsfragmente werden auf unterhaltsame Art miteinander verbunden und präsentiert.”¹⁰⁹ Typifying this genre for many are the documentaries of Guido Knopp, who over many years has presented history in an emotionally arresting and sensationalising way, for example in *Holokaust* (2000), *Die große Flucht* (2001), *Die Stunde der Offiziere* (2004) and *Das Drama von Dresden* (2005). Knopp describes ‘Histotainment’ thus: “Es gilt, Qualität und Quote, Anspruch und Zuspruch, Markt und Marke miteinander zu verbinden. Seriöse Dokumentation darf spannend wie ein Thriller sein – wenn die Ereignisse so spannend, so erschütternd sind, dass sie dies zulassen.”¹¹⁰ Integral to the genre of ‘Histotainment’ is the personalisation, emotionalisation and sentimentalisation of history.¹¹¹ Thomas Bellet, programme director at ZDF has commented: “[Es] gehört [...] zu unseren Aufgaben, Geschichte nicht nur wahrhaftig, sondern auch spannend, eindringlich und emotional bewegend zu erzählen,”¹¹² conforming to these above definitions of ‘Histotainment.’ One of the ways in which the personalisation of history in contemporary TV programmes is achieved, is through the constant use of eyewitnesses, particularly in Knopp’s works. Similarly, a personalising effect is created in teamWorx’s Event Movies, which focus solely on the experiences of one character, which has the effect of allowing the viewer to identify more closely with the history being shown.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ See Fabio Crivellari, ‘Lernort Sofa: Vom Nutzen und Nachteil des Geschichtsfilms für die Bildung’, in Albert Drews (ed.), *Zeitgeschichte als TV-Event: Erinnerungsarbeit und Geschichtsvermittlung im deutschen Fernsehfilm* (Pößneck: Evangelische Akademie Loccum, 2007), pp. 154-5 and Gangloff, “‘Helden wie wir’”, p. 29.

¹⁰⁹ Thomas Wagner, ‘Aktuelle Geschichtsforschung mit neuen Medien: Der 46. Historikertag in Konstanz’, *dradio.de*, 21 September 2006, <http://www.dradio.de/dlf/sendungen/studiozeit-ks/546327/>.

¹¹⁰ Knopp, ‘Zeitgeschichte im ZDF’, p. 311.

¹¹¹ See Michael André, ‘Archetypen des Grauens: Über die Sentimentalisierung und Dramatisierung von Geschichte im Fernsehen’, in Claudia Cippitelli and Axel Schwanebeck (ed.), *Fernsehen macht Geschichte: Vergangenheit als TV-Ereignis* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2009), p. 45.

¹¹² Gangloff, “‘Helden wie wir’”, p. 30.

¹¹³ See Wolfgang Hardtwig, ‘Personalisierung als Darstellungsprinzip’, in Guido Knopp and Siegfried Quandt (ed.), *Geschichte im Fernsehen: Ein Handbuch* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988), p. 235.

One of the major trends in German historical programming of recent years is the rise of the ‘Event.’ teamWorx does lay claim to the introduction of historical Event Movies, and is the most obvious proponent of this form, although it has undoubtedly influenced many other productions which could be described as Event Movies.¹¹⁴ These historical Events have been described by the media journalist Tilmann Gangloff thus: “Die Event-Formel einiger Fernsehproduzenten geht auf: Stars multipliziert mit Zeitgeschichte macht Quote.”¹¹⁵ As with other ‘Histotainment’ features these are characterised by emotionalisation, personalisation and sentimentalism, and are accompanied by documentaries and online resources around the theme.¹¹⁶ Even the earlier works of Guido Knopp could be described as forerunners of the Event Movie. He designated his documentary series *Hitler – Eine Bilanz* (1995) und *Vatikan – die Macht der Päpste* (1997), amongst others, as “Zuschauerereignisse”¹¹⁷ and the name ‘Guido Knopp’ has become a brand name for a huge media operation, producing television series, DVDs, books and multi-channel marketing.¹¹⁸ A final trend in historical television is the rise in ‘amphibious productions,’ films which begin life as television films, often two-parters and which go on to cinema release, as was the case for *Der Untergang*.¹¹⁹ This can allow the film to receive the funding from television companies yet also the prestige of a cinema release.

2.3.2: Dangers of historical television

Certain commentators believe that television is an unsuitable medium for dealing with history and that to attempt to portray historical themes and issues through the distorting lens of television is tantamount to its trivialisation. Numerous critics doubt that modern television is capable of having a positive effect on society. Georg Diez’s criticism of contemporary German television suggests such a viewpoint:

“Das deutsche Fernsehen ist mutlos, planlos und dumm, es versteckt sich hinter alten Klischees, hinter alten Gesichtern, hinter alten Strukturen und Denkweisen, es hat Angst vor Widersprüchen, es hat Angst vor Kompliziertem, es hat Angst vor der Wahrheit. Es

¹¹⁴ See Section 1.3.7.

¹¹⁵ Cited in Wirtz, ‘Die Dehnbarkeit eines Begriffs’, p. 16.

¹¹⁶ See Fritz Raff (ed.), *ARD Jahrbuch 08* (Hamburg: Hans-Bredow-Institut, 2008), p. 292 & p. 469, Wirtz, ‘Die Dehnbarkeit eines Begriffs’, p. 16 and Gangloff, “Helden wie wir”, p. 31.

¹¹⁷ Knopp, ‘Zeitgeschichte im ZDF’, p. 310.

¹¹⁸ See Fabio Crivellari, ‘Das Unbehagen der Geschichtswissenschaft vor der Popularisierung’, in Thomas Fischer and Rainer Wirtz (ed.), *Alles authentisch?: Popularisierung der Geschichte im Fernsehen* (Konstanz: UVK, 2008), p. 180.

¹¹⁹ See Section 1.3.6 for more on this.

ist von einem Medium aus der Mitte der Gesellschaft zu einem Sanierungsfall geworden.”¹²⁰

The difficulties of portraying history on television have been blamed on the extremely disparate aims of the historian and the filmmaker, both of whom “folgen den Gesetzen und Regeln der eigenen Zunft.”¹²¹ It is argued that where historians are motivated by the search for truth and authenticity, the television producer is simply motivated by the search for ratings.¹²² An example of how television and the need to keep the viewer interested dictates content and pacing of television films was given by Kai Wessel, director of *Die Flucht*, who speaks on the importance of including regular moments of ‘energy’ in order to keep the viewers’ attention.¹²³ Wessel further concedes that these constant demands for attention unavoidably affect the programme’s portrayal of history.¹²⁴

Certain recent trends in historical programming, such as personalisation and emotionalisation, are for some guilty of trivialising the history they portray. There are many critics of ‘Histotainment,’ who claim its emotionalised history, though masquerading as historical document, is artificial and constructed.¹²⁵ The ‘Zeitgeschichtssymposium’ in Dachau in 2009 dealt with the topic of ‘Histotainment’ and the dangers to which it could lead, especially the fear that ‘Geschichte’ would become ‘Geschichte light.’¹²⁶ Critics claimed these programmes depict an image of history focused exclusively on ‘Macht, Sex [und] Geld,’ filled with ‘schöne Momente’ and ‘schöne Frauen,’ and are guilty of ‘Geschichtsklitterung.’¹²⁷ There is also the suggestion that the constant portrayal of the Third Reich as a daily soap, without any historical analysis, is incapable of delivering any kind of history lesson and therefore the programmes’ function as ‘Histotainment’ is damaged irreparably.¹²⁸ Many see the personalisation of history in these productions as representing reductionism, reducing the historical complexity of the programme until it is virtually worthless.¹²⁹ The practice

¹²⁰ Georg Diez, ‘The End of Television: Das deutsche Fernsehen ist tot. Und niemand soll sagen, er habe nichts davon gewusst’, in Andreas Grübel et al (ed.), *Jahrbuch Fernsehen 2005* (Essen: DZE, 2005), p. 15.

¹²¹ Wolf, ‘Der Weitererzähler’, p. 36.

¹²² See Cippitelli, ‘Fernsehen macht Geschichte’, p. 9, Gangloff, “‘Helden wie wir’”, p. 29 and Wirtz, ‘Bewegende Bilder’, p. 34.

¹²³ Interview with Kai Wessel, lines 385-92. See also Section 1.3.6.

¹²⁴ See Ibid., lines 393-7.

¹²⁵ Wagner, ‘Aktuelle Geschichtsforschung mit neuen Medien’.

¹²⁶ See Author unknown, ‘Dachauer Zeitgeschichtssymposium: Kritik am “Holotainment”’, in *merkur-online*, 11 October 2009, <http://www.merkur-online.de/lokales/nachrichten/dachauer-zeitgeschichtssymposium-kritik-holotainment-490568.html>.

¹²⁷ Wagner, ‘Aktuelle Geschichtsforschung mit neuen Medien’.

¹²⁸ See Ibid.

¹²⁹ See Hardtwig, ‘Personalisierung als Darstellungsprinzip’, p. 235.

of conflating the lives of many different personages into one character (as was the case for *Die Flucht*, for example) has been criticised for reducing complexity and providing a skewed vision of history.¹³⁰ A further criticism of history on television is the commercialisation of history. TV uses history as a ratings-grabber, often with scant regard for education or analysis, but rather transforming this history into a commodity.¹³¹ Examples of this are the numerous DVDs and books which accompany many of the Guido Knopp series and also teamWorx's Event Movies. The novelisation of *Dresden* was sold soon after broadcast and the DVD of *Hindenburg* was available in shops shortly after the film went out. Fritz Wolf offers one final criticism, namely that television is limited to performing the role of the 'Weitererzähler.' It can carry on existing debates, begun by historians, in the press, through the publication of books and so on, but not create them.¹³² This would be heavily disputed by teamWorx, which claims it is an active proponent of memory waves and that the company's Event Movies are able to create a great deal of debate in German society.¹³³

2.3.3: Uses of historical television

Despite these criticisms, many have argued that history on television can serve an important function in society. Perhaps the most important weapon in television's arsenal is its viewing figures. With historical programmes regularly receiving audience figures numbering into the millions, it arguably reaches more of the population than any other medium, allowing for a much wider dispersal of historical information and historical debates.¹³⁴ "Aufklärung braucht Reichweite,"¹³⁵ as Guido Knopp has written, or to put it another way: "Ein Geschichtsbuch, das keiner liest, kann [...] keine Erinnerungskulturen mitformen."¹³⁶ Television can function as a kind of gateway, arousing an interest in a specific historical subject and encouraging the viewer to find out more about it in other ways.¹³⁷ Similarly, and as teamWorx maintains, television can

¹³⁰ See Wirtz, 'Die Dehnbarkeit eines Begriffs', p. 24. See Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 187-95.

¹³¹ Cippitelli and Schwanebeck, 'Vorwort', p. 5. See also Crivellari, 'Das Unbehagen der Geschichtswissenschaft', p. 178. For more on this see Section 4.1.2.4 on the commodification of the Holocaust and critical reaction to it.

¹³² See Wolf, 'Der Weitererzähler', pp. 36-7.

¹³³ See Section 1.3.3 for more on this.

¹³⁴ See Alexander Coridaß, 'Fernsehen trifft Geschichte: Anmerkungen zu einem effektiven Miteinander', in Claudia Cippitelli and Axel Schwanebeck (ed.), *Fernsehen macht Geschichte: Vergangenheit als TV-Ereignis* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2009), p. 103.

¹³⁵ Knopp, 'Zeitgeschichte im ZDF', p. 316.

¹³⁶ Erl, 'Erinnerungskultur und Medien', p. 21.

¹³⁷ See Stefan Brauburger, 'Fiktionalität oder Fakten?: Welche Zukunft hat die zeitgeschichtliche Dokumentation?', in Claudia Cippitelli and Axel Schwanebeck (ed.), *Fernsehen macht Geschichte: Vergangenheit als TV-Ereignis* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2009), p. 88.

facilitate discussion on historical topics with viewers' own friends and families. It can influence inter-generational historical discussions in a way that no other medium could.¹³⁸ Another benefit of television is that it reaches a much younger demographic than other historical sources and can present history in a much more interesting and attractive way than in school.¹³⁹ "Das Fernsehen ist das Medium, das als häufigst und wichtigste Informationsquelle für zeitgeschichtliche Themen dient – und dies trifft auf alle Altersgruppen gleichermaßen zu,"¹⁴⁰ commented Walter Klingler, Andreas Grajczyk and Gunnar Roters.

One explanation for the popularity of television in comparison to the printed media is that it communicates history 'three-dimensionally.' The viewer does not read about history but rather 'experiences' it for him or herself: "Der Geschichtsfilm zeigt dann zu recht all das, was die Geschichtswissenschaft und ihre mediale Umsetzung, die wissenschaftliche Publikation in Buch und Zeitschrift, nicht leisten kann: Stimmungen, Emotionen, Eindringlichkeit, Zeitkolorit, Atmosphäre,"¹⁴¹ noted Rainer Wirtz. It is the elements which have been criticised for trivialising history – so personalisation, dramatisation and emotionalisation – which allow television to do this.¹⁴² Through the eyes of a single character, the viewer can experience the sights, sounds and emotions of history in a three-dimensional landscape, allowing them, in the words of Knopp: "Geschichte *sinnlich* zu erfahren."¹⁴³ Television also performs an important function in society in that it stores images and memories and passes them on to the next generation: "Fernsehen verwandelt nicht nur Geschichte in Gegenwart, es speichert und schafft auch das Bildgedächtnis aus dem sich die nächsten Generationen bedienen werden,"¹⁴⁴ Fritz Wolf commented. Historical TV programmes which include archive material and the voices of eyewitnesses is one of the ways in which history can be stored for the next generation to discover, so that memory of the crimes of National Socialism and the horrors of the Holocaust, for example, will not be forgotten.¹⁴⁵ Television's role as 'Weitererzähler' is important in this respect, ensuring that first-hand memory of the past does not disappear along with those who experienced it. It has been noted that television adopts the way in which families transmit memory in order to communicate history to

¹³⁸ See Raff (ed.), *ARD Jahrbuch 08*, p. 469.

¹³⁹ See Knopp, 'Zeitgeschichte im ZDF', pp. 311-12.

¹⁴⁰ Walter Klingler, Andreas Grajczyk and Gunnar Roters, 'Fernsehen und unser Erinnerungsinteresse an zeitgeschichtlichen Ereignissen', in Jürgen Wilke (ed.), *Massenmedien und Zeitgeschichte* (Konstanz: UVK Medien, 1999), p. 318.

¹⁴¹ Wirtz, 'Bewegende Bilder', p. 49.

¹⁴² See Brauburger, 'Fiktionalität oder Fakten?', p. 86.

¹⁴³ Knopp, 'Zeitgeschichte im ZDF', pp. 315-16.

¹⁴⁴ Wolf, 'Der Weitererzähler', p. 28.

¹⁴⁵ See Knopp, 'Zeitgeschichte im ZDF', p. 316.

the viewer: focusing on one personal story, and using emotion to shape the next generation's ideas of the past.¹⁴⁶ It has even been suggested that television itself functions as a 'lieu de mémoire.' In this respect, television can be understood as performing a similar function to memorials and monuments; it strengthens collective memory of the past.¹⁴⁷ Television can indeed be useful in creating and supporting collective memories of the past. According to Wolf, it is "eine der wichtigsten gesellschaftlichen Agenturen" for forming historical consciousness.¹⁴⁸ The very concept of the *Event Movie* and the way it is marketed points to the creation of a collective experience and a collective understanding of history. These images therefore become part of the nation's historical consciousness and their collective memory.¹⁴⁹ Finally, television is gradually beginning to be taken more seriously as a medium by historians themselves.¹⁵⁰ So although the capabilities of television to do justice to serious historical topics are championed by some and questioned by others – which gives us an insight into the critical context in which teamWorx's *Event Movies* find themselves – there is no doubt it is one of the most important media in communicating history to a wide audience.

2.4: Literature Review

The following section will focus on trends in memory of the National Socialist past on film and television from unification up to the present day. It will deal with general trends in German historical cinema and television and then concentrate on two particular strands of memory – German victimhood and the Holocaust – which will provide a framework for the analysis of *Dresden*, *Die Flucht* and *Nicht alle waren Mörder*. It intends to investigate these trends through exploring and evaluating the academic literature dedicated to post-unification film and the Nazi past, which, in contrast to the large amount of material on the New German Cinema, for example, remains relatively small. There will also be a focus on literature dealing specifically

¹⁴⁶ See Tobias Ebbrecht, 'History, Public Memory and Media Event: Codes and Conventions of Historical Event Television in Germany', in Siân Nicholas, Thomas O'Malley and Kevin Williams (ed.), *Reconstructing the Past: History in the Mass Media 1890-2005* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 112.

¹⁴⁷ Engell, "'Virtual History'", p. 11. See also Section 1.2.1, and Nora, 'Les Lieux de Mémoire', pp. 144-9.

¹⁴⁸ Wolf, 'Der Weitererzähler', p. 30.

¹⁴⁹ See Crivellari, 'Das Unbehagen der Geschichtswissenschaft', p. 172 & pp. 176-9 and Ebbrecht, 'History, Public Memory and Media Event', p. 103.

¹⁵⁰ See Peter Steinbach, 'Zeitgeschichte und Massenmedien aus der Sicht der Geschichtswissenschaft: Debatten über die Zeitgeschichte – mehr als ein Medienereignis' in Jürgen Wilke (ed.), *Massenmedien und Zeitgeschichte* (Konstanz: UVK Medien, 1999), p. 50.

with teamWorx's productions, although there has been relatively little academic response to this phenomenon, suggesting the importance of this thesis.

2.4.1: Post-wall cinema

One of the reasons so little has been written on post-unification film compared to other periods of German cinematic history is suggested in Eric Rentschler's article 'From New German Cinema to the Post-Wall Cinema of Consensus.'¹⁵¹ Although the article does not focus on depictions of the Nazi past specifically, it is extremely important to include it in this literature review as it remains one of the most influential pieces for discussions on contemporary German film, against which several articles and debates on the subject continue to define themselves. In the article, Rentschler criticises post-unification German cinema as a "cinema of consensus,"¹⁵² consisting of "a formula-bound profusion of romantic comedies, crude farces, road movies, action films and literary adaptations."¹⁵³ He cites the comedies *Abgeschminkt* (1993), *Stadtgespräch* (1995) and *Das Superweib* (1996) as prominent examples. According to Rentschler, the cinema of consensus is a cinema which wants to "engross and accommodate,"¹⁵⁴ to appeal to as wide an audience as possible and in doing so "systematically skirt[s] the 'large' topics and hot issues."¹⁵⁵ It lacks a political impetus and does not dare to provoke. Rentschler further criticises modern German filmmakers for looking to Hollywood for inspiration and for their reliance on Hollywood conventions, which he believes reveals a refusal to adopt a national voice, compared to the filmmakers of the New German Cinema.¹⁵⁶

Indeed, one of the issues with Rentschler's article is the overarching sense of loss regarding the New German Cinema; that it would be infinitely preferable – for Rentschler at least – if the *Autorenkino* were still alive and well, and furthermore, still producing films which were well-received by the critics but which very few people actually saw. Regarding the 'look to Hollywood,' Rentschler resolutely ignores the New German Cinema's (occasionally troubled but ever-present) relationship with America.¹⁵⁷ Similarly, despite bemoaning the film funding situation in unified Germany, which prevents such auteur films from being produced, Rentschler does not

¹⁵¹ Rentschler, 'Cinema of Consensus', pp. 260-77.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 260.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

¹⁵⁶ See *Ibid.*, p. 266 & pp. 274-5.

¹⁵⁷ See Section 2.2.2 for sources on the New German Cinema and its relationship to America.

make it clear where this comes from, or how post-wall German filmmakers could attempt to escape the constraints of these funding regulations. Despite Rentschler's criticisms, at the very end of his article he lists no less than eighteen 'exceptions to the rule' of cinema of consensus filmmakers, including Christoph Schlingensiefel, Rosa von Praunheim, Wolfgang Becker, Thomas Arslan, Tom Tykwer, Hans-Christian Schmid and Fatih Akin.¹⁵⁸ Such filmmakers have kept the "incendiary potential" of the New German Cinema, according to Rentschler, although these are apparently a minority, "existing in the shadows of the more prominent Cinema of Consensus."¹⁵⁹ Looking at a more recent image of German cinema, however, the films which sell well at home and internationally are a world away from the apolitical, ahistorical consensus films Rentschler criticised. Since his article was published, two German films have won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film – *Nirgendwo in Afrika* (2003) and *Das Leben der Anderen* (2007) – both dealing with 'serious' historical issues. Indeed, serious history has returned with a vengeance with numerous German productions hailed for their representations of the Third Reich, in particular.¹⁶⁰ Similarly, *Das Leben der Anderen* has begun what is seen as a more earnest appraisal of the GDR past, while directors such as Fatih Akin have, to great acclaim, explored issues of multiculturalism in modern Germany. Furthermore, directors belonging to the 'Berliner Schule,' such as Christian Petzold and Thomas Arslan, have widely been hailed with continuing the auteur tradition of the New German Cinema. Although extremely influential and important in characterising certain aspects of the cinematic landscape since unification, such as the changes in film funding, Rentschler's arguments seem to have been somewhat neutralised by the recent socially engaging yet popular German cinematic efforts.

It is worth considering at this point how teamWorx's Event Movies may conform to Rentschler's hypothesised cinema of consensus. In some respects the company's films appear to be typical examples of consensus cinema. teamWorx indeed wants to "engross and accommodate"¹⁶¹ and is not shy of chasing audiences, using high-profile advertising campaigns to create a hype around its Event Movies. Similarly, teamWorx certainly "believe[s] in Spielberg,"¹⁶² using Spielberg's production company

¹⁵⁸ See Rentschler, 'Cinema of Consensus', p. 275.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 275.

¹⁶⁰ Such as Oliver Hirschbiegel's *Der Untergang* and Austrian/German co-production *Die Fälscher* (2007), from director Stefan Ruzowitzky.

¹⁶¹ Rentschler, 'Cinema of Consensus', p. 264.

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 266.

DreamWorks as a model and looking to America for inspiration.¹⁶³ Rentschler's criticism of the cinema of consensus for "skirt[ing] large topics" however, cannot readily be applied to teamWorx's historical features. The company is well-known for portraying and attempting to come to terms with difficult histories in its productions, priding itself on their ability to communicate history and to promote understanding of the past to the German public. teamWorx is also making waves outside Germany, something which the cinema of consensus never achieved and, contrary to that cinema's lack of national voice, teamWorx is proud its productions transmit an image of Germany which is comfortable with its past. What must be asked throughout this thesis, then, is whether teamWorx is using certain tools of the cinema of consensus in order to allow its historically-engaged films to reach a wider audience or whether the company is merely using complex histories as a source of raw material for its melodramatic, conventional narratives; exploiting the Nazi past not out of any desire to come to terms with this past, but merely to gain larger audience figures. It must further be asked whether these two viewpoints can ever be separated – or even if they need to be – and whether this dichotomy can ever truly be resolved.

Some of the issues identified with Rentschler's article above, namely how the recent spate of modern filmmakers focusing on (often historical) issues tends to disprove his blanket criticism of post-wall cinema, have also been remarked upon by other commentators. One of these is Paul Cooke who takes Rentschler to task in his article 'Abnormal Consensus?: The New Internationalism of German Cinema.'¹⁶⁴ Although admitting that the popularity of American film in Germany is undeniable, Cooke identifies a "renaissance of international interest in German film," since 1998.¹⁶⁵ The article cites three main examples of this renaissance, beginning with the Sundance award-winning *Lola Rennt* from director Tom Tykwer. This film was denounced as an example of the cinema of consensus by Rentschler, aesthetically borrowing from 'American' genres, such as the music video or video game, and perhaps too apolitical for his tastes. Cooke maintains, however, that the film goes against the post-unification trend of consensus and suggests that Tykwer is instead continuing the auteur tradition of the New German Cinema.¹⁶⁶ According to Cooke, Tykwer "attempts to walk a fine line between the imperatives of artistic creativity and the constraints of the market that

¹⁶³ See Chapter 1.3.4 for more information.

¹⁶⁴ Cooke, 'Abnormal Consensus?', pp. 223-36.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 223.

¹⁶⁶ See Ibid., p. 226.

require a film to find a mainstream audience.”¹⁶⁷ The other two films which Cooke analyses in-depth are Wolfgang Becker’s *Good Bye Lenin!* and Oliver Hirschbiegel’s *Der Untergang*, both of which gained success in Germany and overseas but which also dealt head-on with historical issues – German unification and the rise of ‘Ostalgie’ and the recent German victimhood debate respectively. Cooke suggests that these films are marketable precisely because they deal with specifically German issues. He ends the article with the following thought: “It is this same history that [...] seems to remain one of the best ways of securing international market share.”¹⁶⁸ So instead of being “too German and yet not German enough,”¹⁶⁹ like the cinema of consensus’s films, this new breed of German historical feature appears to be ‘German and yet not too German,’ dealing with issues specific to Germany but in terms the rest of the world can understand. This is an area into which teamWorx films fit perfectly, as the company claims the authenticity of its productions, partially by virtue of being made in Germany, and similarly takes pride in their ‘global aesthetic,’¹⁷⁰ which allows them to sell well internationally. What Cooke’s article fails to answer is whether there is an implicit contradiction in using a global/American aesthetic to deal with German history.

Cooke does deal briefly with these issues, bringing in the concept of normalisation but only, one feels, as something of an afterthought in order to better relate the article to the volume in which it appears. He first evokes Rentschler’s suggestion that the “shift towards a ‘cinema of consensus’ could also be read as ‘an emanation of an over-determined German desire for normalcy,’”¹⁷¹ though only at the very end does he return to this idea, claiming that this “aesthetic normalization of German cinema” could be due to the “internalization [...] of German normalization.”¹⁷² This link between recourse to Hollywood aesthetics for German subjects and the normalisation of the National Socialist past in post-unification Germany is one which will be explored later in the thesis, specifically whether borrowing not just aesthetics but generic conventions, narrative devices and more from Hollywood in order to depict Germany’s troubled past is not, in fact, the final phase of such normalisation.

2.4.2: The Holocaust on film

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 228.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 234.

¹⁶⁹ Rentschler, ‘Cinema of Consensus’, p. 275.

¹⁷⁰ Discussed previously in Section 1.3.4.

¹⁷¹ Cooke, ‘Abnormal Consensus?’, p. 224.

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 234.

Much academic writing on post-unification German cinema has focused on films dealing with the Holocaust and this literature review will focus firstly on material evaluating recent developments in representing the Holocaust on film. One of the most influential articles on this subject is Lutz Koepnick's 2002 article 'Reframing the Past: Heritage Cinema and Holocaust in the 1990s.'¹⁷³ In it, Koepnick deals with developments in depicting the Holocaust in post-unification cinema, including one particular development which is one of the most relevant for approaching teamWorx's films on the Nazi past: the rise of the heritage cinema. The German heritage film, Koepnick asserts, ties into a greater European tradition of heritage cinema, British and French examples (such as period dramas) being the best-known. As with these other national features, German heritage films depict their own country's history, reinterpreting the past for modern-day needs. Unfortunately, Koepnick never investigates the inherent problem in using a European mode, previously employed to explore the (arguably) much less difficult and problematic histories of Britain and France, to deal with Germany's own troubled past. Importantly, Koepnick characterises German heritage features as post-memory texts: "They address viewers whose entire knowledge of these events is based on various media of cultural transmission: on printed texts and memoirs, on public monuments, on photographs, and last but not least on cinematic representations."¹⁷⁴ This creative investment in the past enables the heritage film to turn "bad history into a good story,"¹⁷⁵ something relevant for all teamWorx's Nazi features, which tell classic (often romantic) narratives against the backdrop of 'bad history,' times of horrific crimes and extreme hardship. Vital to the concept of heritage films is that they "transform the past into an object of consumption" and "present the texture of the past as a source of visual attractions and aural pleasures."¹⁷⁶ There is a focus on the minutiae of the past where meticulous attention to historical detail – set design, costume, even hairstyles – is privileged over any form of historical analysis. Rather, heritage films "invite viewers to experience the German past with their own bodies."¹⁷⁷ The danger with this is self-evident, that "instead of producing new knowledge about the Holocaust, [heritage cinema] converts Nazi history into a theme park."¹⁷⁸ Koepnick even makes a nod towards Rentschler's cinema of

¹⁷³ Lutz Koepnick, 'Reframing the Past: Heritage Cinema and Holocaust in the 1990s', in *New German Critique*, No. 87 (Autumn, 2002), pp. 47-82.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

consensus, suggesting “the heritage films envision history, including its violent struggles and repressions, from a consensus oriented perspective, one that can gratify diverse audiences and offer something to everyone.”¹⁷⁹ Koepnick neglects, however, to fully explore what problems such heritage cinema might encounter when dealing with issues such as the Holocaust in, on the one hand, an extremely authentic way, but taking enormous liberties with the historical facts on the other.

Despite the risk of turning the Holocaust into an object of consumption, portraying it with superficial cinema of consensus devices, Koepnick suggests that Holocaust heritage cinema may have positive effects, evoking Alison Landsberg’s theory of ‘prosthetic memories,’¹⁸⁰ which allow the viewer to “live through the past” and to “establish empathetic relations to the victims of the Holocaust.”¹⁸¹ Similarly, Koepnick elsewhere maintains that heritage film sets up “a framework in which the Holocaust produces something good and meaningful,”¹⁸² allowing the viewer to draw positive lessons from a terrible past. Importantly for analysis of teamWorx productions, Koepnick identifies the undeniable commercial aspect of the German heritage film:

“German filmmakers suddenly returned to the Nazi period not only in order to pay respect to those who had given their lives to German history, but also to explore this past as a commercially viable showcase of spectatorial attractions – as a heritage value bestowing German cinema with a sense of high quality craft, with international visibility, profitable marketing tie-ins, and consumable star images.”¹⁸³

These last few descriptions could indeed be applied to the teamWorx project and when analysing the company’s films it is important to keep in mind Koepnick’s concept of heritage cinema, its relation to ongoing memory debates and, importantly, its relation to the economic demands of filmmaking.

Koepnick’s theory is relied upon heavily in Daniela Berghahn’s analysis of contemporary Holocaust films: ‘Post-1990 Screen Memories: How East and West German Cinema Remembers the Third Reich and the Holocaust.’¹⁸⁴ Berghahn begins with a brief analysis of film on the Third Reich within divided Germany and then moves on to the subsequent situation after the fall of the Wall. She concludes with an assertion that the West’s view of the past is the only one which continued into the 1990s, as old DEFA directors were increasingly unable to find funding for their films in reunified

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 78.

¹⁸⁰ See Landsberg, ‘Prosthetic memory’, pp. 141-61. See also Section 1.2.1.

¹⁸¹ Koepnick, ‘Reframing the Past’, p. 77.

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 72.

¹⁸³ Ibid., pp. 54-5.

¹⁸⁴ Daniela Berghahn, ‘Post-1990 Screen Memories: How East and West German Cinema Remembers the Third Reich and the Holocaust’, in *German Life and Letters*, 59:2 (2006), pp. 294-308.

Germany. This divided past, which is Berghahn's area of expertise,¹⁸⁵ is the focus of a significant portion of the article, the importance of which is only tenuously linked to the post-unification films Berghahn deals with later on. She does, however, explicitly link the move towards a normalisation discourse within Germany, towards "a German national identity unencumbered and unburdened by a Nazi past,"¹⁸⁶ with the rise of so-called 'Nazi-retro' films, providing nostalgic images of the past, which are prime examples of heritage pictures. Nazi-retro film "points to the nostalgic allure of the past for those who lived through it and for the post-war generations who did not. It suggests history shot through a coloured lens, showing the period not as it was but as the audience would like to remember it."¹⁸⁷ This nostalgia, she argues, is only permissible because of modern Germany's 'uninhibited' relationship with its past. Furthermore, Berghahn argues even more so than Koepnick that these films' contribution to the discourse of normalisation is of utmost importance and does not necessarily trivialise the past. For the final section of the article, Berghahn notes a number of trends in recent German Holocaust film, which perhaps only became viable through the use of the optic of Nazi-retro. Amongst these trends are 'narratives of miraculous Jewish survival,' of which Berghahn gives the examples of *Hitlerjunge Salomon* (1990) and *The Pianist* (2002), and similarly 'Narratives of German-Jewish solidarity and love,' examples being *Aimée & Jaguar* (1998) and *Rosenstraße* (2003). The latter theme is developed intensively in an article by Stuart Taberner on 'Philo-Semitism in recent German Film: *Aimée und Jaguar*, *Rosenstraße* and *Das Wunder von Bern*.'¹⁸⁸ The article expands Berghahn's observation of the trend of images of German/Jewish solidarity and symbiosis within recent Holocaust films. Taberner suggests that since unification "things Jewish have been very much in fashion in Germany,"¹⁸⁹ yet notes that this fascination with Jewish life "risks turning into a Disneyworld media spectacle."¹⁹⁰ The crux of Taberner's article is his assertion that this depiction of a special German/Jewish relationship, especially through film, reveals an agenda: "[*Aimée und Jaguar* and *Rosenstraße*] demonstrate the manner in which a 'principled' philo-Semitism may, in its narrativisation of German-Jewish fates, simultaneously tell the

¹⁸⁵ A topic she dealt with in-depth in her monograph: Daniela Berghahn, *Hollywood behind the Wall: The cinema of East Germany* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

¹⁸⁶ Berghahn, 'Post-1990 Screen Memories', p. 300.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

¹⁸⁸ Stuart Taberner, 'Philo-Semitism in recent German film: *Aimée und Jaguar*, *Rosenstraße* and *Das Wunder von Bern*', in *German Life and Letters*, 58:3 (2005), pp. 357-72.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 357.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 360.

story of a *German* desire for redemption and rehabilitation.”¹⁹¹ In his analysis of the films, Taberner observes that *Aimée und Jaguar* uses Hollywood conventions of “narrative perspective and viewer identification” in order to create a sense of empathy for ‘ordinary’ Germans, who are distinct from the ‘Nazis brutes’ featured.¹⁹²

Rosenstraße, meanwhile, focuses on a narrative of hope, concentrating on the positive story of those who managed to survive, while ignoring the fates of the much greater number who did not.¹⁹³ This trend provides a context for analysing teamWorx’s films, especially *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, which, as the title suggests, could be read equally as a narrative of redemption for the German people as well as a story of survival.¹⁹⁴

Taberner’s final point is innovative and original, yet remains somewhat underdeveloped in this article and potentially rather questionable. He suggests that these films which depict idealised images of pre-Holocaust German/Jewish solidarity aim to allow the German people to view themselves as victims of the Holocaust, since it destroyed this intimate relationship forever, linking this to the recent resurgence of depictions of German suffering in recent film.

2.4.3: German victimhood on film

Writing on representations of German suffering will be the focus of the next section of this literature review. Much less has been written about film relating to post-unification depictions of German suffering than the subject of the Holocaust for example, not least because this debate only came to the fore of public consciousness relatively recently. Much of the academic material on this subject concentrates on Oliver Hirschbiegel’s Oscar-nominated 2004 film *Der Untergang*. One of the most significant examples of such an article is ‘*Der Untergang* (2004): Victims, Perpetrators and the Continuing Fascination of Fascism,’ by Paul Cooke, which explores many of the main aspects of the German victimhood debate.¹⁹⁵ In his article, Cooke places *Der Untergang* within the context of contemporary debates on German victimhood, including questions of whether the film did indeed break a taboo. On this issue, Cooke

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 361.

¹⁹² Ibid., pp. 362-3. The term ‘ordinary’ German is meant to refer to German citizens who were not soldiers or party members. Due to the insidious nature of National Socialism and the (at least tacit) support shown by most sections of the population this term is highly problematic and should be understood as such throughout the rest of this thesis.

¹⁹³ Taberner’s analysis of *Das Wunder von Bern* (2003) seems somewhat separate from the main points of the article, so this is why I have not commented on it.

¹⁹⁴ See Section 4.2.4 for an in-depth discussion of this issue.

¹⁹⁵ Paul Cooke, ‘*Der Untergang* (2004): Victims, Perpetrators and the Continuing Fascination of Fascism’, in Helmut Schmitz (ed.), *A Nation of Victims?: Representations of German Wartime Suffering* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 247-61.

concludes that depictions of German suffering and indeed depictions of Hitler himself had appeared in German cinemas long before Hirschbiegel's film, such as in G.W. Pabst's *Der letzte Akt* (1955). Cooke furthermore compares the effects of *Der Untergang* with aspects of the immediate post-war cinema, in particular the concept that the Germans were victims twice over, "of the Hitler dictatorship on one hand and of the Allied campaign on the other."¹⁹⁶ Cooke also sets out the wide range of critical reaction to the film. Some saw the film as proof that Germany was finally forgiving Hitler and there were suggestions – from New German Cinema filmmaker Wim Wenders, among others – that the film represented a trivialisation of history. Other commentators, however, considered the film as a "Zeichen der Emanzipation," allowing the Germans to look Hitler in the eye, a viewpoint Cooke does not hesitate to relate to the rising normalisation discourse discussed previously.¹⁹⁷

Cooke continues his exploration of depictions of German victimhood with his article 'Dresden (2006), TeamWorx and Titanic (1997): German Wartime Suffering as Hollywood Disaster Movie,' one of the first academic articles published on the subject of any teamWorx film.¹⁹⁸ Despite its importance within Germany's televisual landscape and the arguably revolutionary effect its Event Movies have had on historical programming, teamWorx has been practically ignored by commentators on German film. This could be for a number of possible reasons: the supposed lesser significance of television as a medium, the films' dismissal as cinema of consensus or for the simple fact that they are relatively recent. Cooke's article was indeed perhaps the first to explore the teamWorx company in-depth and to illuminate its attitudes towards making historical features. The crux of the article is a comparison between the narrative development of *Dresden* and that of the American blockbuster disaster movie *Titanic* (1997). Although the parallels Cooke draws are very persuasive and occasionally extremely illuminating (as an example, Cooke reads both films to suggest that Dresden needs to burn just as Titanic needs to sink, in order to usher in a new world order),¹⁹⁹ the most tantalising question Cooke poses – "How does the translation of German history into an American idiom shape, or perhaps constrain, the story that is told?"²⁰⁰ – is never satisfactorily answered. This will be of utmost importance for this thesis, since teamWorx's films indeed use Hollywood narratives (not always, but often, the disaster

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 252.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 249-50.

¹⁹⁸ Cooke, 'German Wartime Suffering as Hollywood Disaster Movie', pp. 279-94.

¹⁹⁹ See Ibid., pp. 289-91.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 283.

movie template) in order to depict German history. Once again, Cooke explores both positive and negative reactions to the Event Movie and manages to situate *Dresden* and, crucially, its critical reception, within the context of the victimhood debate.

Another early academic response to teamWorx's films was a film review, again focused on *Dresden*, written by David F. Crew.²⁰¹ The article, 'Sleeping with the Enemy?: A Fiction Film for German Television about the Bombing of Dresden,' identifies many of the film's main discussion points. Crew firstly identifies *Dresden* as an example of 'heritage cinema,' as defined by Koepnick, and similarly maintains, in contrast to Rentschler's argument, that 'Going Hollywood' does not necessarily result in the loss of a film's German identity (something reinforced by teamWorx itself).²⁰² Crew also situates *Dresden* within the debate on German victimhood, reporting, although never questioning, the idea that teamWorx's film broke a taboo with regards to depictions of German suffering in general and the bombing of Dresden specifically. Crew goes further into this debate, and questions the relativisation of the Holocaust through representing Germans as victims within the film, suggesting: "German memories of the bombing have served as 'screen memories,' literally blocking the horrors of the Holocaust from German view."²⁰³ This is a view which, although it once may have been the case, rather loses its pertinence within current debates on the subject. Crew also alights momentarily on the subject of authenticity, a main focus point of this thesis, reporting the occasional documentary feel of the film and noting the irony that: "Only in a fiction film has it been possible graphically to simulate horrors that were left to the imagination before."²⁰⁴ As a final verdict on the film Crew notes some of the problems inherent in using the genre of heritage film to deal with such a serious topic, namely that "seeing" and "feeling" the past is not the same as understanding it, describing this attitude as "history light."²⁰⁵ Finally he opines that despite attempts to offer a balanced view of victimhood, the film "does not succeed in its attempt to show German guilt while at the same time depicting German suffering."²⁰⁶

Again focusing on *Dresden*, Stephan Jaeger's 'Visualizations of the Bombing of Dresden: The Efforts of German Television to Capture History,'²⁰⁷ deals in-depth with

²⁰¹ David F. Crew, 'Sleeping with the Enemy? A Fiction Film for German Television about the Bombing of Dresden', in *Central European History*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (2007), pp. 117-32.

²⁰² See *Ibid.*, p. 119. See also Section 1.3.4 for teamWorx's attitudes to this.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

²⁰⁷ Stephan Jaeger, 'Visualizations of the Bombing of Dresden: The Efforts of German Television to Capture History', in *seminar*, 45:4 (2009), pp. 407-20.

the issue of authenticity, alluded to in Crew's review. In it, Jaeger compares and contrasts *Dresden* with the documentary effort *Das Drama von Dresden*, directed by Sebastian Dehnhardt under the supervision of Guido Knopp, and screened on ZDF in 2005. Jaeger argues that both productions strive for authenticity in different ways and attempt to allow the audience to "enter into the experience of something that seems unique and fully accessible only to survivors who experienced the bombings."²⁰⁸ While the documentary links eyewitness testimony with docu-drama re-enactments, *Dresden* must rely on creating empathy with the main characters to draw the audience into the experience, creating an 'emotional resonance.' Jaeger warns, however, that this striving for the 'simulated authentic experience' (this term is never satisfactorily explained) requires the suspension of ethical questioning. He similarly rejects the praise *Dresden* received for depicting Germans as victims, maintaining the film attempts to reconcile all perspectives, ultimately achieving none. According to Jaeger this leads to what he sees as understandable accusations of trivialisation, for example trivialising the Holocaust, through equating German and Jewish suffering.²⁰⁹ Jaeger ultimately concludes that both television programmes fall short of meeting the ethical challenge presented by any representation of Dresden's destruction.²¹⁰ Further focus on *Dresden* was undertaken by Tobias Ebbrecht in his chapter of the edited volume *Reconstructing the Past: History in the Mass Media 1890-2005*. With the article 'History, Public Memory and Media Event: Codes and Conventions of Historical Event Television in Germany,' Ebbrecht provides a passable introduction to the area of Event Movies and some of the main themes of *Dresden*.²¹¹ He introduces the term 'Event,' detailing the hype created around the film, as well as, importantly, the value of the television Event in communicating cultural memory, focusing more on the teamWorx company and the importance of television than many of the other contributions dealt with here. He also identifies *Dresden*'s emotionalisation of history and its relation to American filmmaking, comparing it to the genre of melodrama and Hollywood blockbuster through its use of visual effects. Although Ebbrecht touches on issues related to representations of German suffering, his assertion that viewer identification with this suffering – through the film's use of emotional devices – automatically suggests revisionism, is not wholly convincing.

Recently, academics have begun to acknowledge the importance of teamWorx and the Event Movie in dealing with the National Socialist past, in particular relating to

²⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 407.

²⁰⁹ See Ibid., p. 417.

²¹⁰ See Ibid., p. 418.

²¹¹ See Ebbrecht, 'History, Public Memory and Media Event', pp. 101-14.

debates on German victimhood. This is illustrated by the edited volume *Screening War: Perspectives on German Suffering*,²¹² published in 2010, which features contributions from many of the most respected authorities on contemporary German historical film. The volume promises to tackle the subject of on-screen depictions of German suffering comprehensively. Although the back cover makes reference to contemporary German film such as *Downfall*, *Rosenstraße* and teamWorx's own *Dresden*, much of the book focuses on narratives of victimhood in pre-unification film. These are nevertheless enlightening and do help to provide a context for post-war cinematic efforts. Jennifer M. Kapczynski contributes an illuminating chapter on 1950s war films and the volume includes a number of chapters on East German features (from Daniela Berghahn and Sabine Hake), as well as some sideways interpretations of the term 'victimhood,' such as Erica Carter's contribution on the Austrian *Sissi* trilogy. What is particularly notable in this volume are the numerous references to teamWorx's Event Movies. All three films in this thesis are mentioned, yet this is most often as part of a comparative study, as a foil to explorations of victimhood in other areas and the importance of teamWorx as a company in this area is never fully acknowledged. A prime example of this is Manuel Köppen's chapter 'The Rhetoric of Victim Narratives in West German Films of the 1950s,' into which he brings the latest swathe of television films – including *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* – almost as an afterthought. He characterises these recent films as 'remakes' of the 1950s films he discusses earlier. In some cases this is literally true, such as the 2008 remake of Bernhard Wicki's *Die Brücke*, but the link to teamWorx's Event Movies is tenuous. Köppen does, however, note that one of the major differences between post-war and present efforts is a shift from dealing with specific questions of guilt towards a more universalised understanding of suffering, which is a well-observed detail. Tim Bergfelder's chapter on narratives of flight and expulsion features one of teamWorx's Event Movies more prominently. Bergfelder compares *Die Flucht* to the television documentaries of Volker Koepp, remarking upon the different visions of lost 'Heimat' through nostalgia and on questions of European identity. *Nicht alle waren Mörder* is briefly mentioned in David Clarke's contribution on images of Christianity and resistance. His is an innovative and well-argued chapter in which he offers an innovative and insightful (if fleeting) reading of teamWorx's film. A number of other references to the Event Movies in the volume appear, however, to be 'shoehorned' in, artificially inserted in order to bring a modern relevance to a less than contemporary

²¹² Paul Cooke and Marc Silberman (ed.), *Screening War: Perspectives on German Suffering* (New York: Camden House, 2010).

topic and to bring the chapter into line with the rest of the volume. One potential example of this is Johannes von Moltke's chapter on Alexander Kluge's use of emotion, which is interesting and well-argued. The final section on the use of emotion in *Dresden*, and the conclusion that the structure of sympathy in the film suggests a universalisation of suffering is also logical, yet there seems to be little or no relation between the analyses of the works. Overall it is certainly a positive development that the subject of victimhood in film is being considered in such an academic text, and it is certainly telling that teamWorx's features are at the forefront of this. Due to the refusal to give sufficient attention to the contemporary features, (including teamWorx's Event Movies), it represents something of a missed opportunity to get to grips with the themes and problems of portraying victimhood in contemporary German film.

Further proof of the growing awareness of teamWorx's Event Movies and their relationship to visual culture has indeed been evident in British academia, represented by a recent issue of the *New German Critique* which featured two articles on the subject of teamWorx films: Susanne Veas-Gulani's 'The Ruined Picture Postcard: Dresden's Visually Encoded History and the Television Drama *Dresden*' and Elke Heckner's 'Televising Tainted History: Recent TV Docudrama (*Dresden*, *March of Millions*, *Die Gustloff*) and the Charge of Revisionism.'²¹³ Veas-Gulani's article compares the use of images of Dresden in teamWorx's Event Movie to 'before and after' images of the city in picture postcards and records of the city's destruction. Much of the body of the article focuses on various images of the city of Dresden which are unrelated to the film, yet Veas-Gulani suggests that in both cases, the existence of these 'before' images implies a nostalgia for this lost past, and the lost innocence of this past, as well as creating an icon for collective identity. Her comparison between the photographs of the city's ruins and certain tableaux in the second part of the film was enlightening, as was her suggestion that the film aims in this way to build up a new communal library of images relating to the destruction. Heckner's article meanwhile deals with *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* (known as *March of Millions* on the international market) as well as the non-teamWorx Event Movie *Die Gustloff*. It reads as a response to an earlier article by Bill Niven entitled 'The Good Captain and the Bad Captain: Joseph Vilsmaier's *Die Gustloff* and the

²¹³ Susanne Veas-Gulani, 'The Ruined Picture Postcard: Dresden's Visually Encoded History and the Television Drama *Dresden*', in *New German Critique*, 112, Vol. 38, No. 1 (2011), pp. 85-113 and Elke Heckner, 'Televising Tainted History: Recent TV Docudrama (*Dresden*, *March of Millions*, *Die Gustloff*) and the Charge of Revisionism', in *New German Critique*, 112, Vol. 38, No. 1 (2011), pp.65-84.

Erosion of Complexity,²¹⁴ which, as the title suggests, focuses on the non-teamWorx film and as such *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* are somewhat sidelined in Heckner's analysis. Although Heckner does touch on the question of authenticity and attempts to question the effect of these movies on memory in Germany, her focus on the 'disidentification processes' in the Event Movies, which would stop accusations of revisionism and therefore adoption by right-wing and Neo-Nazi groups, is somewhat unnuanced and a little hard to swallow. However, the use of teamWorx's features as supporting material for such disparate foci suggests there is more to these films than some critics would claim and that they have had a concrete effect on academic responses to memory debates in Germany.

2.4.4 Response from Germany

It is noticeable that much of the above comment and response comes from the UK (or from German writers working in Anglo-Saxon academia), from cultural historians who are predominantly Germanists. In Germany, however, academic response to teamWorx and the trends of contemporary history on film have been mostly supplied by media studies or cultural studies departments. These therefore have a different focus, predominantly on viewer numbers, funding structures and many of the more practical issues associated with television production. As such, this review section will end with two edited volumes dealing with the current trend in German TV history towards 'Histotainment' and history as Event, as typified by teamWorx. These are: *Fernsehen macht Geschichte: Vergangenheit als TV-Ereignis* and *Zeitgeschichte als TV-Event: Erinnerungsarbeit und Geschichtsvermittlung im deutschen Fernsehfilm*,²¹⁵ published in 2009 and 2007 respectively. The editors readily acknowledge teamWorx's productions as being an integral part of this trend. In the introduction to his volume, Albert Drews identifies six Event Movies which are typical of this trend, namely *Dresden*, *Die Sturmflut*, *Das Wunder von Lengede* (2003), *Die Mauer* and *Die Flucht*, as: "Medienereignisse, die das Bild deutscher Zeitgeschichte nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg nachhaltig beeinflussen."²¹⁶ Five of these six are from teamWorx,²¹⁷ yet no

²¹⁴ See Bill Niven, 'The Good Captain and the Bad Captain: Joseph Vilsmaier's *Die Gustloff* and the Erosion of Complexity', in *German Politics and Society*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (2008), pp. 82-98.

²¹⁵ See Claudia Cippitelli and Axel Schwanebeck (ed.), *Fernsehen macht Geschichte: Vergangenheit als TV-Ereignis* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2009) and Albert Drews (ed.), *Zeitgeschichte als TV-Event: Erinnerungsarbeit und Geschichtsvermittlung im deutschen Fernsehfilm* (Pöbneck: Evangelische Akademie Loccum, 2007).

²¹⁶ Albert Drews, 'Vorwort', in Albert Drews (ed.), *Zeitgeschichte als TV-Event: Erinnerungsarbeit und Geschichtsvermittlung im deutschen Fernsehfilm* (Pöbneck: Evangelische Akademie Loccum, 2007), p. 5.

²¹⁷ *Das Wunder von Lengede* was not produced by teamWorx.

attempt is made to analyse the company in detail or to make a more than superficial comparison between its own Event Movies, which will be the task of this thesis. These volumes are nevertheless useful in setting out what an Event Movie is and how the format has been criticised, as well as confirming that television is one of the dominant methods for communicating history in today's society.

In *Fernsehen macht Geschichte*, Cippitelli, Schwanebeck *et al* note many of the main pre-occupations of this thesis. Cippitelli's chapter deals with the history of historical television and explains how this recent trend came about. Rainer Wirtz writes on the authenticity of TV Events, how this authenticity is attempted and the problems it causes. The newspaper critic Tilmann Gangloff (who has written many newspaper reviews of teamWorx's films) questions the authenticity of Event Movies and charges them with the de-politicisation and the de-historicisation of the history they portray. Michael André's chapter is important in identifying the influence of melodrama on the Event Movies as well as questioning the effect the sentimentalisation and emotionalisation of history has on the understanding of this history. ZDF's programme director Hans Janke contributes a chapter defining Event Movies and Fritz Wolf's chapter makes the most specific reference to teamWorx, mentioning *Der Tunnel*, *Die Flucht* and *Hindenburg*, amongst others. Finally Alexander Coridaß claims Germany should be proud of its ability to film its own history and that this trend towards Event Movies is a positive development. Similar concerns shape Drews's volume, with a number of chapters deserving special mention. These include Astrid Erll's contribution on how TV films have become 'Leitmedien der Erinnerungskultur' and their importance for cultural memory and Fabio Crivellari's chapter 'Lernort Sofa: Vom Nutzen und Nachteil des Geschichtsfilms für die Bildung,' on the use of TV Events for learning about the past. These examples show a varied response to this trend of 'Histotainment' and a much more positive one than can be found elsewhere. They have identified many of the key themes of this thesis, including the problems of authenticity, the uses and dangers of emotionalisation and melodrama and the struggle between quality and ratings. But due to their predominant background in television studies these volumes never venture into any specific historical debates and their associated trends and problems, which is the basis for this thesis's analysis of teamWorx's films. Again, although teamWorx are mentioned by name and identified as one of the leading exponents of this Event Movie trend, little effort is made to delve deeper into the aims and values of the company itself, which this thesis will aim to rectify.

As is evident from the above, in the past few years academic response to teamWorx's Event Movies has grown, particularly regarding *Dresden*, which has been associated with the burgeoning debate on the representation of Germans as victims. In the UK, teamWorx's films are associated much more with debates on the history and memory of National Socialism. Academics are aware the Event Movies and the developments in historical television they represent are important, yet their responses do not focus sufficiently on how the teamWorx company and its Event Movies function, which can reveal much more. Despite this, many of the most important themes for teamWorx, namely the influence of Hollywood and the problems associated with the quest for authenticity, have been identified. The German tradition, however, focuses much more on the Event Movies as television productions, yet ignores their specific effect on memory of the National Socialist past and does not link them to contemporary historical debates. This thesis intends to unite these two schools, focusing on teamWorx's Event Movies within the context of current television programming, yet it will also place them concretely within the debates and trends of memory and coming-to-terms with the Nazi past.

Chapter 3: Germans as Victims: *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*

This chapter will focus on the debates surrounding memory and representations of German suffering during the Second World War. It will detail the rise of the German victimhood discourse at the beginning of the twenty-first century, asking for what ends the characterisation of the German people as victims can be and have been instrumentalised. It will question the concept of a taboo on depictions of German suffering and explore how this issue has been approached from the end of the war up until the present day. This will provide a context for the analysis of teamWorx's Event Movies *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*, which focus on various themes of German suffering, questioning how these films portray victimhood, whether this conforms to recent trends, and finally what effect this has on German 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung.'

3.1: Background to the Germans as Victims Debate

3.1.1: Rise in the victimhood discourse

Memory of German suffering during the Second World War has experienced an enormous resurgence in 21st century Germany, in particular since 2003.¹ Expulsion from the East, Allied bombing of German cities and the mass rape of German women at the end of the war have all become themes for discussion by politicians as well as in literature, film and popular history. This section will begin with a brief investigation into the rise of memory of flight and expulsion in recent years; indeed, there have been many attempts to deal with this topic over the last decade. The subject entered (or re-entered) the public consciousness around this time, perhaps most notably due to Günter Grass's novella *Im Krebsgang* (2002), which is often credited with breaking a taboo on representing German victimhood in general terms and representing flight and expulsion specifically. In 2001, a year before Grass's novella was published, Guido Knopp's documentary *Die Große Flucht* dealt with the issue on-screen, followed by the children's docu-drama *Die Kinder der Flucht* (2006), made by ZDF with assistance from Knopp.² As well as teamWorx's own *Die Flucht*, another television film conforming to the Event Movie format, *Die Gustloff*, was broadcast in 2008, on the

¹ Identified by Aleida Assmann in: Aleida Assmann, 'On the (In)compatibility of Guilt and Suffering in German Memory', in *German Life and Letters*, 59:2 (2006), p. 188.

² See Helmut Schmitz, 'Introduction: The Return of Wartime Suffering in Contemporary German Memory Culture, Literature and Film', in Helmut Schmitz (ed.), *A Nation of Victims?: Representations of German Wartime Suffering from 1945 to the Present* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 1-2.

subject of the ‘Wilhelm Gustloff’ ship, sunk by a Russian torpedo while transporting German expellees from the East. The topic of flight and expulsion was furthermore taken up by *Der Spiegel*, with a series on ‘Flucht und Vertreibung der deutschen aus dem Osten’ from March 2002 and a book, *Die Flucht*, from its own publishing house, also released in 2002.³ Even more recently *Der Spiegel Geschichte* magazine featured an issue entitled *Die Deutschen im Osten*, which included a number of pieces on flight and expulsion but within the historical context of a German presence in the East throughout previous centuries, Hitler’s invasion of Eastern regions and the experiences of German minority communities in these regions today. As well as these historicising tendencies, the issue features many shocking and disturbing stories and images related to the plight of the expellees.⁴ This sustained focus on expellees has also expanded to investigate their problems in settling in post-war Germany, these forced settlers having been described as ‘Hitlers letzte Opfer.’⁵ Directly after the war the issue was suppressed by the respective German governments in order to facilitate integration and to avoid nostalgic feelings towards the period of National Socialism. So in the GDR any link to the ‘alte Heimat,’ then under Soviet control, could have caused a degree of ill-feeling between the citizens of East Germany and their new allies. Meanwhile in the FRG, successful integration was widely celebrated (although this was in fact a fallacy) and any lingering issues related to the trauma of the treks were ignored.⁶ Flight and expulsion has featured in a number of temporary exhibitions in recent years, including the *Erzwungene Wege* exhibition in 2006-2007, which began in Berlin and toured other German cities, as well as the exhibition *Flucht – Vertreibung – Integration* at the ‘Deutsches Historisches Museum’ in 2006. The ‘Bund der Vertriebenen,’ chaired by CDU politician Erika Steinbach, has continued campaigning for a centre in Berlin to document the fate of German expellees.⁷ The centre was intended “in Berlin ein sichtbares Zeichen zu setzen, um an das Unrecht von Vertreibungen zu erinnern und

³ See Torben Fischer and Matthias N. Lorenz (ed.), *Lexikon der “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” in Deutschland: Debatten- und Diskursgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus nach 1945* (Wetzlar: Transcript, 2007), pp. 352-3.

⁴ See Christian Habbe, ‘Die Zeit der Abrechnung’, in *Der Spiegel Geschichte: Die Deutschen im Osten: Auf den Spuren einer verlorenen Zeit*, Nr 1 (2011), pp. 100-7.

⁵ Norbert F. Pötzl, ‘Hitlers letzte Opfer’, in *Der Spiegel Geschichte: Die Deutschen im Osten: Auf den Spuren einer verlorenen Zeit*, Nr 1 (2011), p. 119.

⁶ See *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁷ See Stefan Berger, ‘On Taboos, Traumas and Other Myths: Why the Debate about German Victims of the Second World War is not a Historians’ Controversy’, in Bill Niven (ed.), *Germans As Victims* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), pp. 211-12 and Pearce, *Contemporary Germany and the Nazi Legacy*, p. 210.

Vertreibung für immer zu ächten.”⁸ Despite claiming the proposed centre would place German expulsion in an historical context, also detailing Polish and Czech expulsion,⁹ the constant debate surrounding the centre and the ‘Bund der Vertriebenen’ itself suggests that this topic has not been worked through satisfactorily and still has the ability to provoke debate. One example of this was the debate surrounding Steinbach’s potential seat on the advisory board for the proposed centre, which led to complaints from several Polish politicians to Chancellor Angela Merkel, threatening that Steinbach’s presence would harm German-Polish relations.¹⁰ Steinbach’s response to this was to accuse Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle of ignoring the victims of German expulsion, remarking that neither he nor any other German Foreign Minister “an den Massengräbern der Opfer von Flucht und Vertreibung auch nur einen Kranz niedergelegt [hat].”¹¹ This far-reaching debate suggests that memory of flight and expulsion is certainly present in current political discourse and still has the power to offend certain groups. Some final examples of the growing presence of memory of flight and expulsion in the German national consciousness include the existence of the ‘Preußische Treuhand,’ an organisation aiming to claim reparations or compensation for lost land in the East, as well as the increasing visibility of the annual ‘Tag der Heimat,’ run by expellee organisations, at which Angela Merkel has spoken and for which Pope Benedict XVI has sent his support.¹²

A further focus of the victimhood discourse was on the Allied bombing war against Germany, which was brought (back) into German national consciousness with the publication of Jörg Friedrich’s *Der Brand: Deutschland im Bombenkrieg 1940-1945* in 2002. The work, followed by the book of photographs *Brandstätten* in 2003, detailed the bombing campaign in an emotional way and was an immediate bestseller, selling

⁸ Author unknown, ‘Vertriebenenzentrum: Bundesregierung benennt Stiftungsrat’, in *Junge Freiheit*, 8 April 2009, [http://www.jungefreiheit.de/Single-News-Display.154+M55e67e0304f.0.html?&tx_ttnews\[swords\]=Steinbach](http://www.jungefreiheit.de/Single-News-Display.154+M55e67e0304f.0.html?&tx_ttnews[swords]=Steinbach), accessed 5 September 2010.

⁹ See Moritz Schwarz, ‘Meckel hat Ängste geschürt’, in *Junge Freiheit*, 19 September 2003, <http://www.jf-archiv.de/archiv03/393yy09.htm>, accessed 5 September 2010.

¹⁰ See Author unknown, ‘Polen sieht sich im Streit um Steinbach als Sieger’, in *Junge Freiheit*, 18 February 2009, [http://www.jungefreiheit.de/Single-News-Display.154+M5b6d650d695.0.html?&tx_ttnews\[swords\]=Steinbach](http://www.jungefreiheit.de/Single-News-Display.154+M5b6d650d695.0.html?&tx_ttnews[swords]=Steinbach), accessed 5 September 2010 and Author unknown, ‘Polen verlangt von Bundesregierung Verzicht auf Steinbach’, in *Junge Freiheit*, 27 February 2009, [http://www.jungefreiheit.de/Single-News-Display.154+M5e7911fda3d.0.html?&tx_ttnews\[swords\]=Steinbach](http://www.jungefreiheit.de/Single-News-Display.154+M5e7911fda3d.0.html?&tx_ttnews[swords]=Steinbach), accessed 5 September 2010.

¹¹ Author unknown, ‘Vertriebenenzentrum: Steinbach kritisiert Westerwelle’, in *Junge Freiheit*, 13 November 2009, [http://www.jungefreiheit.de/Single-News-Display.154+M5de3997585c.0.html?&tx_ttnews\[swords\]=Steinbach](http://www.jungefreiheit.de/Single-News-Display.154+M5de3997585c.0.html?&tx_ttnews[swords]=Steinbach), accessed 5 September 2010.

¹² See Christian Dorn, ‘Der lange Weg der Erinnerung’, in *Junge Freiheit*, 14 August 2007, <http://www.jf-archiv.de/archiv07/200735082418.htm>, accessed 5 September 2010.

hundreds of thousands of copies.¹³ Excerpts from the book were serialised in the *Bild* newspaper, fulfilling Friedrich's desire to reach "breite Leserkreise."¹⁴ *Der Brand* received an award from the 'Erich-und-Erna-Kronauer Stiftung,' reportedly having "eine Lücke im Gedächtnis der Deutschen geschlossen."¹⁵ The book also paved the way for further representations and discussions of the bombing campaign, including a *Spiegel* series: *Der Bombenkrieg gegen die Deutschen*, and book, *Als Feuer vom Himmel fiel*, in 2003. The documentary *Der Bombenkrieg* was screened on ZDF in February 2003 and the theme was taken up by Spiegel TV a few months later. Continuing the exposition of the subject on television was Guido Knopp's contribution, *Das Drama von Dresden* in 2005 and of course teamWorx's own *Dresden* in 2006. These efforts have sparked (or at least coincided with) new historical interest in the subject, including a new report finding that a maximum of 25,000 people were killed in the Dresden attacks (compared to 35,000 as was previously claimed), which was presented at the 'Deutscher Historikertag' in 2008.¹⁶ Furthermore, an article was published in the *Bild* newspaper suggesting the British Queen should apologise for the bombing of Dresden during a state visit in 2004.¹⁷ Debate in Germany has led to an interest in and discussion of the bombings in Britain, with books on the subject being published by, amongst others, Frederick Taylor (*Dresden: Tuesday, 13th February, 1945* (2005)) and Giles MacDonogh (*After the Reich: From the Liberation of Vienna to the Berlin Airlift* (2008)). The theme of the mass rape of German women was brought into the public realm by the republishing of *Eine Frau in Berlin* in 2003, an anonymous woman's diaries of the post-war period, which was filmed by Max Färberböck in 2008, to many positive reviews.¹⁸ As well as these examples, there has been a wave of so-called 'Leidensgeschichten,' autobiographical writings from 'ordinary' Germans on their experiences of the war.¹⁹ These complement the recent spate of (semi-)autobiographical novels on, most notably, the subject of flight and expulsion, such as Uwe Karsten-Heye's childhood memoir *Vom Glück nur ein Schatten*, published in 2004

¹³ See Torben Fischer and Lorenz (ed.), *Lexikon der "Vergangenheitsbewältigung"*, p. 348.

¹⁴ Horst Boog, 'Ein Kolossalgemälde des Schreckens', in Lothar Kettenacker (ed.), *Ein Volk von Opfern?: Die neue Debatte um den Bombenkrieg 1940-45* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2003), p. 131.

¹⁵ Author unknown, 'Jörg Friedrich erhält Historiker-Preis', in *Junge Freiheit*, 18 February 2010, [http://www.jungefreiheit.de/Single-News-Display-mit-Komm.154+M5d70b107415.0.html?&tx_ttnews\[swords\]=bombenkrieg](http://www.jungefreiheit.de/Single-News-Display-mit-Komm.154+M5d70b107415.0.html?&tx_ttnews[swords]=bombenkrieg), accessed 5 September 2010.

¹⁶ See Author unknown, 'Untersuchung: Maximal 25.000 Luftkriegsopfer in Dresden', in *Junge Freiheit*, [http://www.jungefreiheit.de/Single-News-Display-mit-Komm.154+M5d048d90757.0.html?&tx_ttnews\[swords\]=bombenkrieg](http://www.jungefreiheit.de/Single-News-Display-mit-Komm.154+M5d048d90757.0.html?&tx_ttnews[swords]=bombenkrieg), accessed 5 September 2010.

¹⁷ See Pearce, *Contemporary Germany and the Nazi Legacy*, p. 204.

¹⁸ The film was entitled *Anonyma: Eine Frau in Berlin* (2008). See, for example, Evelyn Finger, 'Flieh, wenn du kannst!', in *Die Zeit*, 23 October 2008.

¹⁹ See Schmitz, 'Introduction', p. 2.

and filmed in 2011 by teamWorx as *Schicksalsjahre*, as well as Teja Fiedler's account of his father's experiences during this time in *Die Zeit ist aus den Fugen* in 2010. Added to this is the international success of the Oscar-nominated *Der Untergang*, detailing the chaos of the final days of the war from the viewpoint of Hitler's secretary but also focusing on various 'ordinary' Berliners, which combine to make this surge in representation of German suffering, in one mode or another, the "greatest shift in German memory discourse since 1979."²⁰

There have been many suggested reasons for the increased presence of the German victimhood debate in current memory discourse. The end of the Cold War and German re-unification certainly provides some explanation; during Germany's separation the theme of German suffering was heavily instrumentalised for political ends. In the East, the bombing of Dresden was of great symbolic importance; GDR citizens were encouraged to view this as "symptomatic of the destructive force of Western imperialism,"²¹ but public memory discourse was silent on the mass rape of German women committed by the Red Army in 1945, since this did not fit in with the official state narrative of the Soviets as liberating heroes. Conversely, on the other side of the Wall, the crimes of the Red Army were more prominent in public discourse, whereas blaming the Western Allies for the bombing war may have damaged international relations with the USA. With the end of the Cold War, remembrances of German suffering became less politicised. Official memory discourse, freed from having to serve a specific purpose, was able to accommodate more personal remembrances, resulting in a resurgence of personal stories and family narratives.²²

A further reason for this rise, postulated by Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich in their book of 1967, *Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern*, was that the forced confrontation with the crimes of the National Socialists after 1945 caused a traumatic shock, creating an image of Germans as perpetrators which had all but completely prohibited any consideration of German experience as victims of the war.²³ This focus on Germans as perpetrators was continued by the '68 generation who questioned their parents' involvement in the Third Reich and who had little time for empathy with the suffering they may have experienced.²⁴ Furthermore, it has been suggested that it is only in old age that those who experienced the horrors of bombing and expulsion first-hand,

²⁰ Ibid., p. 2.

²¹ Bill Niven, 'Introduction: German Victimhood at the Turn of the Millennium', in Bill Niven (ed.), *Germans As Victims* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), p. 2.

²² See Ibid., p. 4 and Berger, 'On Taboos', p. 213.

²³ See Schmitz, 'Introduction', p. 8.

²⁴ See Ibid., p. 11.

often as children, can begin to work through this trauma.²⁵ It is only recently with the rise of the third generation,²⁶ who have a greater distance to that time period, and the acknowledgement of the '68ers that other aspects of the Third Reich should be explored, that the subject has been allowed to rise to the surface of public memory and that the Mitscherlichs' 'inability to mourn' has, arguably, been overcome.²⁷ Similarly, as the wartime generation fades away, the present period represents the last chance to hear their stories and the new generation, unfettered by the trauma of the previous generations, is ideally placed to do so.²⁸ This conforms to the memory theories of Jan and Aleida Assmann, as many commentators are identifying the present time as a transition period from communicative to cultural memory.²⁹ The recent publication of a multitude of biographies, memoirs, letters and diaries of the period attests to this.³⁰ Conversely, it has also been argued that the death of the generation of perpetrators allows for freer discussion of their crimes, without necessitating personal involvement.³¹

The rise in remembering the suffering of the Germans during and after the Second World War coincides with an 'emotionalisation' of history in both popular and historiographical discourse; a shift from a focus on facts to a focus on human interest and emotion has taken place.³² Norbert Frei has described this personalisation of history thus: "Täter, Opfer, Mitläufer, sowohl in der historiographischen als auch der medialen Vergegenwärtigung vor allem als Kollektivsubjekte present, bekamen Gesichter."³³ The heart-wrenching, real-life stories of individual Germans' suffering during the war offer perfect material for this new emotional and personal approach to history. Frei has criticised this development, for its creation of a "fahrlässige Opferperspektive" and for turning history into 'Histotainment'.³⁴ This emotionalised approach to history similarly

²⁵ See Annette Grossnongardt, 'Neue Schlüssel zur Geschichte', in *Der Spiegel Geschichte: Die Deutschen im Osten: Auf den Spuren einer verlorenen Zeit*, Nr 1 (2011), p. 15.

²⁶ The term 'third generation' is ordinarily used to refer to the grandchildren of those alive during the Third Reich.

²⁷ See Stuart Taberner, 'Representations of German Wartime Suffering in Recent Fiction', in Bill Niven (ed.), *Germans As Victims* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), p. 169.

²⁸ See *Ibid.*, p. 171.

²⁹ See Gerd Wiegand, 'Familiengeschichte vor dem Fernseher: Erinnerter NS-Geschichte in den Dokumentationen Guido Knopps' in Michael Klundt (ed.), *Heldenmythos und Opfertauel: Der zweite Weltkrieg und seine Folgen im deutschen Geschichtsdiskurs* (Cologne: PapyRossa, 2004), p. 82. See Section 1.2.1 for more on communicative and cultural memory.

³⁰ See Taberner, 'Representations of German Wartime Suffering', p. 171.

³¹ See Michael Klundt, 'Die Nation im Helden- und Opfertauel – Geschichtspolitische Debatten und Tendenzen seit 1989', in Michael Klundt (ed.), *Heldenmythos und Opfertauel: Der zweite Weltkrieg und seine Folgen im deutschen Geschichtsdiskurs* (Cologne: PapyRossa, 2004), p. 158.

³² See Schmitz, 'Introduction', pp. 5-6.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6. For an introduction to the term 'Histotainment' see Section 2.3.1.

coincides with the phenomenon of the globalisation of memory regarding the Second World War and particularly the Holocaust.³⁵ If, due to this globalisation of the Holocaust, Germany can see itself as merely ‘one nation among many’ as opposed to a pariah nation, perhaps less focus can be given to the Holocaust (as it is split between several countries) and more to a uniquely German issue, that of German suffering.³⁶ Globalisation may also have had further-reaching effects on the boom in popularity of the German victimhood trope. Globalisation and the move towards a ‘post-modern’ society may cause a cynicism with regard to ideology and master-narratives, therefore privileging the ‘authentic,’ individual, personal narrative over an official public discourse, which can be seen in the number of personal memoirs being published.³⁷

Several other trends in memory and representation of the Third Reich may help to explain the rise of German victimhood in public discourse. It has been suggested that the number of autobiographical writings published by Jewish authors, such as Victor Klemperer and Ralph Giordano, detailing their experiences during the Third Reich – for example Klemperer’s experiences of the bombing of Dresden – may have facilitated ‘German’ suffering narratives.³⁸ This occurs firstly since these accounts provide reference points and common experiences for the German civilian population and secondly, if German suffering is seemingly ‘validated’ by a Jewish writer then accusations of revisionism can potentially be countered. Certain trends in historical media, as typified by Guido Knopp’s documentaries, may also help to provide an entry point to the acknowledgement and exploration of German suffering. Knopp’s fetishisation of the eyewitness and his equal treatment of the statements of both victim and perpetrator, help to remove (or at least muddy) this distinction in the viewer’s mind.³⁹ Similarly, Knopp’s series on Hitler and those around him (*Hitler – Eine Bilanz*, *Hitlers Helfer* (1996), *Hitlers Helfer II* (1998), *Hitlers Krieger* (1998) and *Hitlers Frauen* (2001)) suggest a separation of the ‘ordinary’ German people and Adolf Hitler as the ultimate perpetrator. In Knopp’s documentaries it appears as if Hitler and the small group around him are the sole perpetrators, allowing the rest of the German people to assume the role of victims.⁴⁰ Integral in this shift towards narratives of German victimhood is the normalisation of other aspects of the National Socialist past

³⁵ See Section 4.1.2.4 for more on the globalisation of the Holocaust.

³⁶ See Schmitz, ‘Introduction’, p. 6.

³⁷ See Taberner, ‘Representations of German Wartime Suffering’, p. 171. See Section 2.1.1 for more on authenticity and its relationship to personal memories as well as the significance of post-modernism.

³⁸ This is used here to refer to non-Jewish Germans.

³⁹ See Torben Fischer and Lorenz (ed.), *Lexikon der “Vergangenheitsbewältigung”*, p. 343.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 343.

and the successful integration of Germany within a European framework.⁴¹ The success of Friedrich's book was ascribed to the good relationship between Germany and the rest of Europe, that Germany has accepted its guilt to such an extent that it can now explore its suffering at the hands of its neighbours, without these neighbours immediately crying foul.⁴² However, the response from Poland to the ongoing debate on the 'Zentrum gegen Vertreibungen' does somewhat call this into question.⁴³ Similarly, it has been suggested that as German guilt is no longer questioned, since no-one denies the centrality of Auschwitz in memory of the Second World War, other approaches to other areas of suffering should be permissible as this would not necessarily lead to revisionism.⁴⁴

3.1.2: Uses and abuses of the victimhood discourse

The most prominent question related to the victimhood debate is one asked by Lothar Kettenacker in his introduction to the volume *Ein Volk von Opfern?* (2003): "Dürfen sich auch die Deutschen als Opfer betrachten angesichts des Unheils, das sie über die Welt gebracht haben?"⁴⁵ Much of the actual debate surrounding German victimhood is not about whether Germans suffered but how to balance the two strands of German victimhood and German perpetration during the Third Reich and whether these two strands are necessarily contradictory. Martin Walser has criticised the constant focus on the Germans as a 'Tätervolk' and complained that the official public memory discourse throughout most of the Federal Republic's history did not reflect many private or family memories. He reported that many Germans felt victims 'twice over,' firstly as victims of the war and secondly of a 'politically correct' memory discourse which did not allow them to come to terms with this memory.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, in a speech in Vilnius in October 2000, Grass claimed that after numerous successive memory waves, the Germans were still waiting in line to be acknowledged as victims:

"Merkwürdig und beunruhigend mutet dabei an, wie spät und immer noch zögerlich an die Leiden erinnert wird, die während des Krieges den Deutschen zugefügt wurden. Die Folgen des bedenkenlos begonnenen und verbrecherisch geführten Krieges, nämlich die

⁴¹ See Section 1.2.4 for a discussion of normalisation, with particular reference to foreign policy and European integration.

⁴² See Lothar Kettenacker, 'Vorwort des Herausgebers', in Lothar Kettenacker (ed.), *Ein Volk von Opfern?: Die neue Debatte um den Bombenkrieg 1940-45* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2003), p. 12 and Martin Walser, 'Bombenkrieg als Epos', in Lothar Kettenacker (ed.), *Ein Volk von Opfern?: Die neue Debatte um den Bombenkrieg 1940-45* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2003), p. 130.

⁴³ See, for example, 'Polen verlangt von Bundesregierung Verzicht auf Steinbach' and 'Polen sieht sich im Streit um Steinbach als Sieger'.

⁴⁴ See Heribert Seifert, 'Rekonstruktion statt Richtspruch', in Lothar Kettenacker (ed.), *Ein Volk von Opfern?: Die neue Debatte um den Bombenkrieg 1940-45* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2003), p. 153.

⁴⁵ Kettenacker, 'Vorwort des Herausgebers', p. 11.

⁴⁶ See Niven, 'Introduction', pp. 10-11.

Zerstörung deutscher Städte, der Tod Hunderttausender Zivilisten durch Flächenbombardierung und die Vertreibung, das Flüchtlingselend von zwölf Millionen Ostdeutschen waren nur Thema im Hintergrund. [...] Ein Unrecht verdrängte das andere. Es verbot sich, das eine mit dem anderen zu vergleichen oder gar aufzurechnen.”⁴⁷

There have been suggestions that acknowledgement of these German victims may represent the final step of ‘Vergangenheitsbewältigung,’ the ultimate ‘normalisation’ of the Nazi past and similarly that the removal of the simplistic binary perpetrator/victim discourse is something to be welcomed.⁴⁸ While Aleida Assmann has identified a widening of perspectives in which victimhood and perpetration can exist simultaneously, albeit in an hierarchical structure, opponents of this memory shift, amongst them Norbert Frei and Harald Welzer, argue that the representation of Germans as victims may dehistoricise the past, simply replacing perpetrators with victims.⁴⁹ The resurgence of memory of German suffering, for some, threatens to challenge the primacy of memory of the Holocaust.⁵⁰ One example of this was Helmut Kohl’s policy of ‘universalising’ victimhood, represented by the debate surrounding the dedication of the ‘Neue Wache’ memorial in 1994. The dedication seemed to suggest that Germans were the first victims to be remembered and that the Jews and other victims came later.⁵¹ This approach may seem to continue into the present day in certain areas. The planned ‘Zentrum gegen Vertreibung’ in Berlin focuses on German expellees from the East, yet according to critics fails to contextualise the expulsions by explaining the preceding Nazi crimes.⁵² This is reinforced by the comments of Mark Prawda, Polish ambassador to Germany, who suggests it is: “Problematisch, wenn man aus der Kette der humanitären Katastrophen des Zweiten Weltkriegs nur einen Bestandteil herausnimmt und dies zur Grundlage einer europäischen Erinnerung macht.”⁵³ Those behind the new centre, however, claim that through exploring German expulsion it would “auch die Augen für die europäische Dimension des Problems [öffnen].”⁵⁴

One accusation against those who would focus on German victims of the Second World War is that of relativisation, that the purpose of such claims is to lessen the guilt

⁴⁷ Günter Grass, ‘Ich erinnere mich’, cited in Aleida Assmann, ‘On the (In)compatibility of Guilt and Suffering’, p. 188.

⁴⁸ See Cooke, ‘German Wartime Suffering as Hollywood Disaster Movie’, pp. 280-1 and Schmitz, ‘Introduction’, p. 17.

⁴⁹ See Schmitz, ‘Introduction’, p. 14 and Aleida Assmann, ‘On the (In)compatibility of Guilt and Suffering’ pp. 199-200.

⁵⁰ See Niven, ‘Introduction’, pp. 4-5.

⁵¹ See Ibid., p. 6. For more on this see Pearce, *Contemporary Germany and the Nazi Legacy*, pp. 142-3.

⁵² See Niven, ‘Introduction’, p. 15.

⁵³ Author unknown, ‘Vertriebene fordern Ende der Angriffe gegen Steinbach’, in *Junge Freiheit*, 26 February 2009, [http://www.jungefreiheit.de/Single-News-Display.154+M5306ef03ac1.0.html?&tx_ttnews\[swords\]=Steinbach](http://www.jungefreiheit.de/Single-News-Display.154+M5306ef03ac1.0.html?&tx_ttnews[swords]=Steinbach), accessed 5 September 2010.

⁵⁴ Schwarz, ‘Meckel hat Ängste geschürt’.

of the German population for the crimes committed in their name during this time, not least the crimes of the Holocaust. This was perhaps an aim directly after the war: Bundespräsident Theodor Heuss compared victims of the bombing war to Jewish victims of the Nazis. Similarly, the ‘Charta der deutschen Heimatvertriebenen,’ drawn up in 1950, reads: “Die Völker der Welt sollen ihre Mitverantwortung am Schicksal der Heimatvertriebenen als der vom Leid der Zeit am schwersten Betroffenen empfinden.”⁵⁵ This evocation of German suffering and direct comparison with Jewish suffering of the Holocaust was intended to affect Germany’s ‘Schuldkonto,’ increasing the perceived importance of German suffering and therefore supposedly decreasing the perceived importance of German guilt.⁵⁶ This motif can still be noted today: in Knopp’s commentary for his documentary *Die große Flucht* he speaks the line: “Die Ausgrenzung, die wenige Jahre zuvor den Juden wiederfahren war, fiel auf die Deutschen zurück.”⁵⁷ Similarly the NPD caused controversy in 2005 in Dresden by referring to the bombings as a “Bombenholocaust,” something which found approval within certain parts of the population: a poll by the *Welt am Sonntag* found that 27% of Germans under 30 thought the use of this term to be acceptable.⁵⁸ Similar use of language in Friedrich’s *Der Brand*, to compare the Allied bombings with the Holocaust, has been noted and commented on extensively. Friedrich invokes Holocaust imagery: referring to air raid shelters as “Krematorien,” bombing victims as “Ausgerottete,” Bomber Group Number 5 as an “Einsatzgruppe” and the air war as a “Vernichtungskrieg,” amongst other examples.⁵⁹ Friedrich was further criticised for his highly emotional style, designed to speak directly to the sympathies of the reader, as well as for exaggeration, distortion and at times a willing ignorance of certain facts.⁶⁰ That even over 60 years after the event, Germans can still not be regarded as victims without overshadowing any other victims of the regime suggests a lack of normalisation of these topics. It must be asked how the teamWorx films *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*

⁵⁵ Klundt, ‘Die Nation im Helden- und Opfertaumel’, p. 160.

⁵⁶ See Wolfgang Sofksy, ‘Die halbierte Erinnerung’, in Lothar Kettenacker (ed.), *Ein Volk von Opfern?: Die neue Debatte um den Bombenkrieg 1940-45* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2003), p. 125.

⁵⁷ Cited in Wiegel, ‘Familiengeschichte vor dem Fernseher’, p. 93.

⁵⁸ See Christian Volkery, ‘A War of Words’, in *Spiegel Online*, 2 February 2005, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,339833,00.html>.

⁵⁹ See Torben Fischer and Lorenz (ed.), *Lexikon der “Vergangenheitsbewältigung”*, p. 348, Boog, ‘Ein Kolossalgemälde des Schreckens’, p. 133 and Hans-Ulrich Wehler, ‘Wer Wind säht, wird Sturm ernten’, in Lothar Kettenacker (ed.), *Ein Volk von Opfern?: Die neue Debatte um den Bombenkrieg 1940-45* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2003), p. 143.

⁶⁰ See Boog, ‘Ein Kolossalgemälde des Schreckens’, pp. 132-3, Fischer and Lorenz (ed.), *Lexikon der “Vergangenheitsbewältigung”*, p. 348 and Willi Winkler, ‘Nun singen sie wieder’, in Lothar Kettenacker (ed.), *Ein Volk von Opfern?: Die neue Debatte um den Bombenkrieg 1940-45* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2003), p. 104-5.

depict the delicate balance between perpetrator and victim and how (or whether) they manage to avoid accusations of revisionism or relativisation.

In contrast to the problematic aspects relating to memory of German victims, awareness of German suffering can, arguably, have positive effects for society. Maintaining a focus on one's own victims can allegedly increase empathy towards others. Such sentiments have been expressed by the 'Bund der Vertriebenen': "Ein Land, das unfähig ist, über eigene Opfer zu trauern, wird nicht ehrlich Anteil nehmen an den Leiden anderer Völker,"⁶¹ as well as Peter Schneider, who writes: "[Memory of German suffering] schärft den Blick und die Empathie für die Vernichtungen, die die Nazi-Deutschen über andere Völker gebracht haben."⁶² Similarly, Bernd Ulrich writes in *Die Zeit*: "Die Erinnerung an eine eigene deutsche Opfergeschichte könnte also die Opferbereitschaft auch der heutigen Gesellschaft stimulieren."⁶³ Furthermore, a focus on historical suffering can make one more aware of current comparable suffering elsewhere in the world, for example learning of the horrors of the bombing war can affect one's opinions on the use of bombing as a weapon of war today in places such as Afghanistan.⁶⁴ Finally, there are claims that memory of German suffering can assist a kind of rehabilitation of present-day German society. Without losing sight of the historical realities of war, Germans are potentially able to appreciate the suffering experienced by both sides and are able to approach these topics without the limitations which existed previously. For example, uninhibited memory of pre-war German settling in Eastern regions allows Germans to remember positive associations with these former German areas, without necessarily wishing for a return to these times. Many famous German artists and intellectuals were born in those Eastern regions lost at the end of the war, such as Immanuel Kant, Käthe Kollwitz and Arthur Schopenhauer, and with a normalisation of this memory these positive German role models can once more be celebrated without any ill-feeling.⁶⁵ However, in the same way, focusing on a continuum of victimhood could risk the loss of any identifiable perpetrators. This is similar to attitudes noted at the end of the war, as in this example from war reporter

⁶¹ Author unknown, 'Bund der Vertriebenen zieht Steinbach zurück', in *Junge Freiheit*, 4 March 2009, [http://www.jungefreiheit.de/Single-News-Display.154+M5ca72def1a7.0.html?&tx_ttnews\[swords\]=Steinbach](http://www.jungefreiheit.de/Single-News-Display.154+M5ca72def1a7.0.html?&tx_ttnews[swords]=Steinbach), accessed 5 September 2010.

⁶² Peter Schneider, 'Deutsche als Opfer? Über ein Tabu der Nachkriegsgeneration', in Lothar Kettenacker (ed.), *Ein Volk von Opfern?: Die neue Debatte um den Bombenkrieg 1940-45* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2003), p. 165.

⁶³ Klundt, 'Die Nation im Helden- und Opfertaumel', p. 175.

⁶⁴ See Moritz Schwarz, "'Warum nicht ein Tribunal von Dresden?'"', in *Junge Freiheit*, 10 February 2009, [http://www.jungefreiheit.de/Single-News-Display-mit-Komm.154+M58b5ddfdad.0.html?&tx_ttnews\[swords\]=bombenkrieg](http://www.jungefreiheit.de/Single-News-Display-mit-Komm.154+M58b5ddfdad.0.html?&tx_ttnews[swords]=bombenkrieg), accessed 5 September 2010.

⁶⁵ See Grossnongardt, 'Neue Schlüssel zur Geschichte', p. 18.

Martha Gellhorn: “Niemand ist ein Nazi. Niemand ist je einer gewesen. Es hat vielleicht ein paar Nazis im nächsten Dorf gegeben, und es stimmt schon, diese Stadt da, zwanzig Kilometer entfernt, war eine regelrechte Brutstätte des Nationalsozialismus.’ Natürlich waren alle dagegen, im zumindest inneren Widerstand und auf jeden Fall Opfer.”⁶⁶ This loss of perspective can be seen in the way in which certain commentators may ignore historical causality when dealing with victims. In *Der Brand*, Friedrich rejected the suggestion that German attacks on Rotterdam and Coventry were perhaps provocation for Churchill’s bombing campaign: “Vermütlich wäre alles sowieso passiert,”⁶⁷ he writes. Similarly, there have been suggestions from certain quarters that the expulsion of Germans from the East was not a punishment for the crimes of the Nazis, but rather that the collapse of the German state provided an excuse for these countries to undertake what they had been planning to do anyway: create an ethnic national state.⁶⁸ So in these ways, focusing too closely on victims can lead to an historical myopia with regards to the perpetrators of these crimes.

3.1.3: Taboos on memory of German victimhood

The recent boom in memory of German wartime suffering has been described by some commentators as breaking a taboo. In 2003 *Der Spiegel* magazine claimed the themes of German suffering during the bombing war and expulsion from the East were ‘no longer taboo’⁶⁹ and several creative efforts of this time were hailed as having broken a taboo in depicting Germans as victims of the Second World War, for example Grass’s *Im Krebsgang* and Oliver Hirschbiegel’s *Der Untergang*.⁷⁰ Regarding the bombing war specifically, Friedrich’s *Der Brand* was hailed as breaking the silence on the Allied bombing campaigns, reinforced by a 1997 essay *Luftkrieg und Literatur*, in which W.G. Sebald wrote of “an almost perfectly functioning mechanism of repression” regarding memories of the bombings.⁷¹ There exist many reasons why such memories were not able to enter public discourse until so recently. Firstly, and along with many other aspects of suffering during the war, the trauma of these bombing raids left those who survived unable to voice their experiences of it, once more invoking the Mitscherlichs’

⁶⁶ Cited in Winkler, ‘Nun singen sie wieder’, p. 103.

⁶⁷ Cited in Ralph Bollmann, ‘Im Dickicht der Aufrechnung’, in Lothar Kettenacker (ed.), *Ein Volk von Opfern?: Die neue Debatte um den Bombenkrieg 1940-45* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2003), p. 139.

⁶⁸ See Moritz Schwarz, “Vertreibung ist ein Verbrechen”, in *Junge Freiheit*, 22 July 2005, <http://www.jf-archiv.de/archiv05/200530072209.htm>, accessed 5 September 2010.

⁶⁹ See Niven, ‘Introduction’, p. 21.

⁷⁰ See Schmitz, ‘Introduction’, p. 7 and Cooke, ‘*Der Untergang*’, p. 249.

⁷¹ W.G. Sebald, translated by Anthea Bell, ‘Air War and Literature: Zürich Lectures’, in W.G. Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2003), p. 12.

theorised ‘Unfähigkeit zu trauern.’⁷² Furthermore, anyone who wished to claim victim status feared this would be seen as relativising the suffering of victims of German crimes: “Angesichts der Millionenzahlen des Holocaust und des antislawistischen Vernichtungskriegs gab es eine tief sitzende Scheu, diese deutsche Leidensgeschichte zu schreiben,” suggested historian Hans-Ulrich Wehler.⁷³ Finally, there was the fear in the FRG that thematising the British and American air attacks against Germany would have a negative effect on post-war alliances.⁷⁴ Similar claims of taboo exist for the issues of flight and expulsion, characterised by an oft-repeated quote from Grass’s *Im Krebsgang*: “Niemals [...] hätte man über soviel Leid [...] schweigen [...] dürfen.”⁷⁵ Erika Steinbach agrees there was a taboo on discussions of flight and expulsion (despite the work of the ‘Bund der Vertriebenen’), yet according to her this was broken by Otto Schily during his speech celebrating the 50th anniversary of the German ‘Grundgesetz’ in 1999, in which he spoke about the mistakes made with regard to the historical treatment of the expellees. Steinbach maintains this taboo-break has had an effect on public discourse, citing examples of articles in newspapers which 15 years previously would have been unthinkable.⁷⁶ The existence of a taboo on acknowledging the victims of flight and expulsion was already suggested during the beginnings of the FRG, where a report into the expellees’ experiences during the treks westward was not published by the newly-formed Bonn government so as not to cause ‘unerwünschte Aufrechnung’ in Germany.⁷⁷ Similarly, there seemed to be no place there for nostalgic and sentimental feelings about one’s lost homeland: “Man wolle nicht zurückschauen auf die ‘Topografie des Verlustes,’ [...] sondern Neues aufbauen.”⁷⁸ This taboo was reportedly a ‘voluntary taboo,’ at least partially, in that citizens of the new FRG felt there was no need to keep raking over this difficult past; that ultimately it would not be of any use to anyone, but rather damage new relationships with other countries.⁷⁹ Finally, the issue of mass rapes experienced by women on the treks and in the final days of the war were similarly ignored by the German governments. Many young women remained silent out of shame and the fear of being stigmatised. No counselling or therapy was made available as the new country decided to ignore the issue and (attempt to) move on.⁸⁰

⁷² See Wehler, ‘Wer Wind säht’, p. 140.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 140. See also Kettenacker, ‘Vorwort des Herausgebers’, p. 10.

⁷⁴ Schwarz, “Warum nicht ein Tribunal von Dresden?”.

⁷⁵ Cited in Torben Fischer and Lorenz (ed.), *Lexikon der “Vergangenheitsbewältigung”*, p. 350.

⁷⁶ See Schwarz, ‘Meckel hat Ängste geschürt’.

⁷⁷ See Habbe, ‘Die Zeit der Abrechnung’, p. 105.

⁷⁸ Grossnongardt, ‘Neue Schlüssel zur Geschichte’, p. 17.

⁷⁹ See Ibid., p. 18.

⁸⁰ Habbe, ‘Die Zeit der Abrechnung’, p. 105.

However, the notion of ‘taboo’ remains mysterious: by whom was it imposed and did it supposedly pertain to both public and private memory discourses? In order to understand the importance of this resurgence in memory of German victimhood and to understand the historical context of teamWorx’s films in which it plays a role, it is necessary to further explore the concept of a taboo and evaluate the memory and representations of German suffering which did exist from the end of the war up until the present day.

Many historians agree that after the end of the Second World War the first reaction of the Germans was to identify themselves as victims. This victim syndrome allowed Germans to “dismiss charges of ‘collective guilt’” and even “claim the status of ‘heroic survivors’” by telling stories of their own harsh realities.⁸¹ Feelings of guilt, shame and a culpable conscience were noticeably absent. Contradicting the idea of taboo, it has been remarked that issues of victimhood and suffering were constantly discussed in post-war Germany, but only of German victims. This concentration on their own suffering not only allowed Germans to get on with their own lives but was also integral in creating a usable past for Germany’s two embryonic nation states. For the Federal Republic, the stories of the German POWs and expellees became the stories of all West Germans and helped to create a positive founding myth for the state, since “nothing unites as much as the historical trauma of a collective experience as victims.”⁸² This point of view was reinforced by the Nuremberg trials, in which the guilty were punished, thereby perhaps removing a sense of guilt from the German civilian population and subsequently allowing Germans to revel in their status as victims.⁸³ The bombings and expulsions also provided a useful foil against accusations of German guilt and responsibility. Germans could point to the suffering they endured at the hands of the Allies, which was even occasionally suggested as a moral equivalent to the Holocaust.⁸⁴

These attitudes are explored in a number of examples of literature from the post-war period, perhaps questioning Sebald’s assertion of a taboo. The following works were written on the air war alone: *Sterbende Jagd* (1953) by Gerd Gaiser, Gert Ledig’s *Vergeltung* (1956) and Wolfgang Koeppen’s *Tauben im Gras* (1953). Numerous works were also devoted to experiences of flight and expulsion, such as Jürgen Thorwald’s

⁸¹ Ruth Wittinger, ‘Taboo or Tradition?: The ‘Germans as Victims’ Theme in the Federal Republic until the mid-1990s’, in Bill Niven (ed.), *Germans As Victims* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), p. 63.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁸³ See *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁸⁴ See Berger, ‘On Taboos’, p. 214.

epic *Die große Flucht* (1949-50), E.J. Reichenberger's *Ostdeutschen Passion* (1948), Johannes Kaps's *Trilogie des Schlesischen Schicksals* (1950-54), Edwin Erich Dwinger's *Wenn die Dämme brechen* (1950) and Erich Kern's *Das andere Lidice* (1950).⁸⁵ Similarly, representations of German victimhood abounded in films of this period. The post-war 'Trümmerfilme' or 'rubble films' quite explicitly set 'ordinary' Germans apart from the criminals who were responsible for the crimes of the Third Reich, allowing these 'ordinary' Germans to be exonerated and highlighting the suffering they endured.⁸⁶ *Die Mörder sind unter uns* (1946) is a prime example of this, the final scene being a call for the German people to find the murderers among them and bring them to justice. The film also equates Germans who suffered at the hands of the Allies with those who suffered from German crimes, universalising victimhood, while apportioning blame to a select few. A number of films were made in the 1950s which include representations of Germans as victims and therefore question the concept of a taboo on such representations. As examples, *Hunde, wollt ihr ewig leben* (1959) and *Der Arzt von Stalingrad* (1958) portray the Wehrmacht as victims of Hitler and of the Russian army to a greater extent than as perpetrators of war crimes.⁸⁷ Other military films of the period, such as the *08/15* (1954) trilogy and *Haie und kleine Fische* (1957) depict, as argued by Jennifer M. Kapczynski, the damaged agency of the German soldier and construct him as a victim.⁸⁸ Similarly, *Nacht fiel über Gotenhafen* which depicted the sinking of the 'Wilhelm Gustloff' ship, was released in 1959, more than 40 years before Grass's novella on the subject. Also in 1959, Bernhard Wicki's *Die Brücke* sympathetically portrays the efforts of a number of young recruits to hold off the Allies at the end of the war. This taboo-break regarding issues of German victimhood is seen by some as a 'revival,' in which the themes and messages of post-war Germany are repeated, yet with a subtle shift in representation. This can be seen in the republishing of memoirs and reports from the time such as Nossack's *Der Untergang*, first printed in

⁸⁵ See David Oels, "'Dieses Buch ist kein Roman': Jürgen Thorwalds "Die große Flucht" zwischen Zeitgeschichte und Erinnerungspolitik', in *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History*, 6 (2009), <http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/16126041-Oels-3-2009>, p. 5.

⁸⁶ See Paul Cooke, 'The Continually Suffering Nation?: Cinematic Representations of German Victimhood', in Bill Niven (ed.), *Germans as Victims* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), p. 79. For more on the 'Trümmerfilme' in general and *Die Mörder sind unter uns* specifically see Robert R. Shandley, 'Rubble Canyons: Die Mörder sind unter uns and the Western', in *The German Quarterly*, Vol. 74, No. 2 (2001), pp. 132-47 and Heide Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), pp. 59-62 & pp. 148-9.

⁸⁷ See Helen Wolfenden, 'The Representation of Wehrmacht Soldiers as Victims in Post-war West German Film: *Hunde, wollt ihr ewig leben?* and *Der Arzt von Stalingrad*', in Helmut Schmitz (ed.), *A Nation of Victims?: Representations of German Wartime Suffering* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), p. 77.

⁸⁸ See Jennifer M. Kapczynski, 'Armchair Warriors: Heroic Postures in the West German War Film', in Paul Cooke and Marc Silberman (ed.), *Screening War: Perspectives on German Suffering* (Suffolk: Camden House, 2010), pp. 17-35.

1948 as well as *Eine Frau in Berlin*. Similarly, Manuel Köppen has characterised the recent trend in films depicting German suffering as ‘updates’ or ‘remakes.’ Köppen names *Der Untergang*, *Die Gustloff* and also *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* as conforming to this trend. Although Köppen does report a shift in the construction of victimhood between the films of the two eras, his categorisation of teamWorx’s Event Movies as ‘remakes’ is highly disputable.⁸⁹

In the 1960s, memory discourse shifted from a focus on Germans as victims and the suffering they endured to one on Germans as perpetrators and the crimes they committed. In the Federal Republic, questions of guilt and responsibility were being asked in earnest and there appeared to be no place within public discourse for Germans to be acknowledged as victims. At this time, the victimhood discourse “came to be regarded with suspicion and was left increasingly to the right-wing fringe.”⁹⁰ There were numerous reasons for this shift, among them was the ‘Ostpolitik’ of Chancellor Willy Brandt at this time: over the course of the 1960s relations between the East and West began to thaw and a focus on instrumentalising the expulsions, for example, for Cold War ends began to lose currency.⁹¹ Similarly, the rising student movement, particularly after 1968, forced its parents’ generation to reappraise their attitudes towards their own history and instigated a focus on the crimes of the Germans during the Third Reich. Within this new official discourse, there was little room for representations of the Germans as victims in any form. This new German-as-perpetrator-centred discourse appeared during this period and remained dominant, in one form or another, until unification and the development of the current memory trend, leading to claims of a taboo being broken.

Despite this supposed disappearance of German victimhood during the 1960s and its replacement by a perpetrator-centred discourse, it has been noted that a counter-discourse existed during this time, keeping the Germans as victims theme alive through “official documentations, academic as well as literary works and representations in the media.”⁹² A number of reports and diaries on the bombing campaign were published during this period, from Ursula von Kardorff, Hans Georg von Studnitz and Marie Wassiltschikov, amongst others. Furthermore, the magazine *Quick* published a series of articles on German POWs in the Soviet Union, while the TV programmes *Flucht und*

⁸⁹ See Manuel Köppen, ‘The Rhetoric of Victim Narratives in West German Films of the 1950s’, in Paul Cooke and Marc Silberman (ed.), *Screening War: Perspectives on German Suffering* (Suffolk: Camden House, 2010), pp. 56-77. See also Section 2.4.3.

⁹⁰ Berger, ‘On Taboos’, p. 216.

⁹¹ See Wittinger, ‘Taboo or Tradition?’, pp. 70-1.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 73.

Vertreibung and *Das deutsche Nachkriegswunder: Leid und Leistung der Vertriebenen* were broadcast in 1981 and 1985 respectively, as well as the five-part series *Der Krieg der Bomber* (1985) on the use of aerial bombing throughout World War Two, which culminated in a programme on Dresden. That all of these appeared many years before Friedrich's book points to some existence of the topic in the public realm.⁹³ The bombing raids continued to be remembered, above all at a regional level. Local studies were carried out from the 1970s onwards on the topic of the Allied bombing campaign and its effects on German cities, and it remained an integral part of the memorial culture of Hamburg, for example, until into the 1980s.⁹⁴ The theme which refused to be ignored perhaps most of all was flight and expulsion. Despite the gradual demise of expellee organisations from the 1960s onwards, academics and historians have found numerous examples of literature and other sources on the topic between then and the present day. At a conference organised by the 'Stiftung Ostdeutscher Kulturrat' in 2003 it was noted that around 100 German authors had dealt with the subject in novels, stories, short stories, poems and plays.⁹⁵ The genre of the 'Heimatbuch,' expellee publications about their lost homeland, remained popular, with nearly 500 published in the Federal Republic between 1945 and 2000.⁹⁶ Similarly, a bibliography published by Gertrud Krallert Sattler in 1989 counted nearly 5000 titles on the topic of expulsion, all of which hardly suggests a taboo on the subject.⁹⁷

Although it appears that the Germans as victims theme was notoriously absent from the films of this period, in an article on the subject Paul Cooke argues that several films of the New German Cinema acknowledge German wartime suffering to some extent.⁹⁸ He suggests that Fassbinder's *Die Ehe der Maria Braun* sees the need for the population to accept the trauma they suffered as well as accepting their guilt for the past.⁹⁹ Similarly, Helma Sanders-Brahms's *Deutschland, bleiche Mutter* uses a female character as allegory for the German nation and features many images of the trials she faced during the war.¹⁰⁰ There is even the suggestion that the younger generation of Germans had become victims of the Nazis (and perhaps even taken over the role of the Jews). For Cooke this can be seen in von Trotta's *Die bleierne Zeit* in which the twin

⁹³ See *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁹⁴ Berger, 'On Taboos' pp. 213-14.

⁹⁵ See Wittinger, 'Taboo or Tradition?', p. 72.

⁹⁶ See *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁹⁷ See *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁹⁸ See Cooke, 'The Continually Suffering Nation?', pp. 76-92. For more on the New German Cinema and their relationship with the Nazi past, see Julia Knight, *New German Cinema*, pp. 62-73 and Thomas Elsaesser, *New German Cinema: A History* (London: MacMillan Press, 1989), pp. 239-78.

⁹⁹ See Cooke, 'The Continually Suffering Nation?', pp. 84-5.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

sisters Marianne and Julianne are shown to be suffering from the National Socialist authoritarianism of their father and simultaneously from the burden of guilt and responsibility passed down to them by their parents' generation.¹⁰¹

Although often ignored in debates on taboos of German suffering, the situation in the GDR was extremely different to the FRG. Although public discourse on the issue of flight and expulsion was not forthcoming, for obvious political reasons, memory of the bombing war was rife: "Jeder Schulatlas verzeichnete die zerbombten Städte samt exaktem Zerstörungsgrad, bei jeder Stadtbesichtigung wurden Fotos der zerbombten Kunstdenkmäler vorgezeigt, in jeder Familie wurde wieder und wieder von den Bombennächten erzählt."¹⁰² The attack on Dresden was characterised as an "Akt imperialistischer Kriegsbarbarei" and featured in the school syllabus from 1951 up until the dying days of the GDR.¹⁰³ In East Germany, at least, there existed no such taboo. These subtle acceptances that Germans perhaps were, and continue to be, victims of the past question the concept of taboo and help provide a context for the analysis of the supposed taboo-breaking German victimhood films of the present day and in particular teamWorx's Event Movies dealing with this issue.

3.1.4.5: The victimhood discourse in families

Although representations of German suffering were absent from the official, public memory discourse from the 1960s onwards, many historians claim this theme was kept alive in private memory. It seemed to be quite possible for German public memory to be dominated by Nazi crimes and a Germans-as-perpetrators discourse while simultaneously German private memory held experiences of suffering, hardship and even heroism.¹⁰⁴ In the prolonged study by Harald Welzer *et al* on how memory of the Third Reich was conveyed from generation to generation, the researchers remarked at how dominant a role was played by the construction of the speaker as victim and furthermore how easily these constructions were accepted by the younger listener.¹⁰⁵ In a study of 182 interviews and family conversations, Welzer *et al* recorded 1130 stories in which the witness constructed themselves as a victim in various ways: of poverty and hardship (in 95 stories), of rape and violence by Russian soldiers (130), as refugees

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 88.

¹⁰² Bollmann, 'Im Dickicht der Aufrechnung', p. 139.

¹⁰³ Kurt Pätzold, 'Auch die Geschichte kennt ihre Zahltag – Die Debatte über den "Bombenkrieg"', in Michael Klundt (ed.), *Heldenmythos und Opfertaumel: Der zweite Weltkrieg und seine Folgen im deutschen Geschichtsdiskurs* (Cologne: PapyRossa, 2004), p. 17.

¹⁰⁴ See Schmitz, 'Introduction', p. 4.

¹⁰⁵ See Welzer et al, *Opa war kein Nazi*, p. 82.

(72), as potential concentration camp victims (101), and as victims of the war on the home front and of the bombing war (147).¹⁰⁶ Similarly, Volker Ulrich has claimed that the eyewitnesses of the bombing raids told stories ‘gern und ausgiebig’ to their families or school classes.¹⁰⁷ There is the suggestion, however, that although these stories are told by the older generation, the younger generation refuses to listen, rejecting the stories as “nur die Geschichte von Oma oder Opa,” not allowing it to become part of the family identity.¹⁰⁸ This is reflected in *Die Flucht*’s director Kai Wessel’s own family experiences. His grandmother had to leave her home in the East at the end of the war, and although she reportedly told stories about her experiences to the young Wessel, he did not listen: “Es hatte mit meinem Leben nichts zu tun. [...] Ihr Leben war ihrs und mein Leben war meins.”¹⁰⁹

Thomas W. Neumann has posited that the reason for the absence of acknowledgement of victimhood in public discourse is due to a post-traumatic stress syndrome: “Most people stayed alone with their experiences or privatised them in small circles of family and close friends. Their silence [...] was a sign of deep insecurity and real helplessness,”¹¹⁰ again relating to the Mitscherlichs’ study mentioned previously. These family narratives were even used as a form of self-therapy; repeatedly communicated and transformed into a social event, it was a way Germans could come to terms with the suffering they endured during the war.¹¹¹ These social events, however, never passed into public discourse until the present day. This may be why the current boom in victimhood discourse has been predominantly led by the mass media, literature and film rather than by historians, since the former are more adept at communicating personal experiences than the fields of politics or historiography.¹¹² So the answer to whether there has been a taboo on German victimhood is yes and no. Although supposedly disappearing from public discourse from the 1960s onwards it occasionally resurfaced in the form of a counter-discourse of memory. Meanwhile, the personal and family- or community-orientated experiences which remained in the realm of the private never disappeared, and it is only during the last decade, with the fading of the last of the generation who actually experienced this suffering, that such memory has broken through into public discourse so markedly.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 86.

¹⁰⁷ Klundt, ‘Die Nation im Helden- und Opfertaumel’, p. 179.

¹⁰⁸ Grossnongardt, ‘Neue Schlüssel zur Geschichte’, p. 18.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Kai Wessel, lines 59-60.

¹¹⁰ Berger, ‘On Taboos’, p. 211.

¹¹¹ See Aleida Assmann, ‘On the (In)compatibility of Guilt and Suffering’, pp. 189-90.

¹¹² See Berger, ‘On Taboos’, pp. 222-3.

3.2: *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*

The above exploration of how German victimhood has been represented (or ignored) since the end of the Second World War and the debates surrounding the issue will provide a context for the following analysis of teamWorx's two Event Movies dealing with the theme of German suffering. These are *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*, which thematise the bombing war and flight and expulsion respectively. This section will firstly examine how the filmmakers claim the productions to be authentic and ask whether these claims are vindicated by the films themselves. It will then evaluate the similarities between these Event Movies and Hollywood productions, with particular reference to the genres of the melodrama and the disaster movie, asking what effect these similarities may have on the way history is conveyed. It will then analyse how these Event Movies conform to current trends on representing the bombing war and flight and expulsion respectively, asking how the films affect and reflect recent debates on these issues. Finally it will evaluate a selection of the criticism, positive and negative, levelled at the two Event Movies and attempt to conclude what these films and the reaction to them can reveal about how Germany regards memory of Germans as victims of the Second World War.

3.2.1: Introduction to the films

Dresden was broadcast over two nights, on Sunday, 5th and Monday, 6th March 2006 at 8.15pm on ZDF. Although planned for broadcast closer to the anniversary of the bombings on 13th and 14th February, this was impossible due to the screening of the Winter Olympics on ZDF over those dates.¹¹³ It received 12.68 million viewers for the first part (representing a 32.6% audience share) and 11.25 million for the second (31.2%). No other ZDF TV movie received such large viewing figures and caused such hyperbole from the filmmakers and broadcaster: "Einen solchen Zuspruch für einen Fernsehfilm hat es seit Beginn der kommerziellen Konkurrenz nicht gegeben," claimed ZDF.¹¹⁴ *Dresden* represented an important film in teamWorx's portfolio, gaining the highest viewing figures of any of its Event Movies thus far, and proving that its combination of history and love story continued to be successful: "[*Dresden*] beweist,

¹¹³ See Helmut Ziegler, 'Zwischen Kitsch und Kunst', in *Berliner Zeitung*, 4 March 2006.

¹¹⁴ Jana Heinrich, Barbara Walter and Rudolf Gültner (ed.), *ZDF Jahrbuch 2006* (Mainz: Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen, 2007), p. 125.

dass das Erfolgskalkül von teamWorx wieder glänzend aufgegangen ist,”¹¹⁵ wrote Sybille Simon-Zülch. These figures were especially impressive given that the first part of *Dresden* was competing against the ever-popular *Tatort* on ARD (which received 6.2 million viewers), as well as the premiere of the Hollywood blockbuster *Spider-Man* on Pro 7 (3.27 million).¹¹⁶ Many viewers tuned in from Dresden and the surrounding area, around 1 million of them reportedly being from the state of Saxony, of which Dresden is the state capital.¹¹⁷ Although the average audience of ZDF Sunday night movies is made up of older viewers, around a quarter of the audience was under 50, which was a higher proportion than usual.¹¹⁸ Nico Hofmann reported that both *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* achieved around a 17-18% market share of younger viewers (although he did not give exact age ranges), much higher than usual for this slot.¹¹⁹ teamWorx sold the film to around 95 countries worldwide, such as Italy, France, Benelux, Japan, Poland, Greece, Thailand, Serbia and, importantly, Britain.¹²⁰

Dresden was a typical Event Movie, described as: “[Das] Fernsehfilm-Ereignis des Jahres,”¹²¹ and was marketed as such, with an enormous advertising campaign. ZDF’s website offered extra information on the film, interviews with the cast and crew, and background historical information on the bombing raids. Similarly, it was broadcast alongside other programmes, such as Guido Knopp’s two-part documentary *Der Feuerstorm*, which went out a week before and a day after *Dresden*.¹²² As with teamWorx’s previous Event Movies, *Dresden* dominated many television award ceremonies, winning ‘Bester Fernsehfilm/Mehrteiler’ at ‘Der deutsche Fernsehpreis 2006,’ ‘Bestes TV-Movie’ at the ‘DIVA’ awards 2007 and ‘Bester TV-Film’ at the ‘Jupiter’ awards 2007, amongst others.¹²³ At the heart of *Dresden* is a love story between the German nurse Anna Mauth and the British bomber pilot Robert Newman, who is shot down over Magdeburg before finding his way to the Dresden hospital where Anna works. Anna begins to fall in love with this mysterious stranger and grows apart from her emotionally distant fiancé, the German doctor Alexander. The film simultaneously depicts the situation in Britain, showing the steps leading up to Bomber Command’s decision to bomb the city of Dresden. The majority of the film’s second

¹¹⁵ Sybille Simon-Zülch, ‘Quote und Qualität’, in *epd medien*, 4 March 2006.

¹¹⁶ See miha, ‘12,68 Millionen’, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7 March 2006.

¹¹⁷ See miha, ‘Trennkost’, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 8 March 2006.

¹¹⁸ See Ibid.

¹¹⁹ See Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 473-83.

¹²⁰ See miha, ‘Trennkost’.

¹²¹ Heinrich et al (ed.), *ZDF Jahrbuch 2006*, p. 14.

¹²² See Ebbrecht, ‘History, Public Memory and Media Event’, p. 111.

¹²³ See ‘11 Jahre teamWorx’.

half is dedicated to events during the bombing itself, from the vantage point of the civilians on the ground and the British bomber pilots. For the producers, the aim of the film was: “Dieses heikle Stück deutscher Zeitgeschichte, das so viele Menschen anging, in einer populären fiktionalen Form zu erzählen, nämlich als Antikriegsfilm mit melodramatischem Kern.”¹²⁴ Hofmann described *Dresden* as: “Eine Reise durch die Apokalypse, eine Herausforderung, eine sehr reinigende Herausforderung.”¹²⁵

Dresden was the latest collaboration between Hofmann and the director Roland Suso Richter. Richter directed teamWorx’s first Event Movie *Der Tunnel* to great acclaim in 2001 and worked with the company after *Dresden* on other Event Movies, such as *Das Wunder von Berlin*, *Mogadischu* and *Die Grenze*. *Dresden* was not Richter’s first foray into the Third Reich, having directed *Nichts als die Wahrheit* in 1999, a hypothetical version of events where Josef Mengele is put on trial and attempts to justify his actions in court. *Dresden*’s script was written by Stefan Kolditz, who up until that point was best known for having written a number of episodes of crime drama series *Polizeiruf 110*.¹²⁶ Kolditz is to work again with teamWorx and Hofmann as he is writing the script for teamWorx’s upcoming Third Reich epic *Unsere Mütter, unsere Väter*. Integral to the attraction of *Dresden* was the film’s female lead Felicitas Woll who plays Anna. Up until that point Woll was best known for playing the central character of Lolle in the youth drama series *Berlin, Berlin*, which ran for four series on ARD between 2002 and 2005, following Lolle’s adventures in the German capital as she tries to find love and fulfil her dream of drawing comics. Although claiming *Dresden* was the first time Woll had found such a large audience, Hofmann also agrees she helped in securing a much younger audience for the Event Movie.¹²⁷ The British actor John Light, who plays Anna’s love interest was, according to Hofmann, well-known in the UK, although he had up until then enjoyed success only in a small number of television and film bit parts. Heiner Lauterbach, who plays the role of Carl Mauth, Anna’s father, has appeared in a number of teamWorx productions, both before and since *Dresden*, including *Die Sturmflut*, *Vulkan* and *Hindenburg*. The Event Movie was co-produced with ZDF and EOS Entertainment and received financial backing from the

¹²⁴ Heinrich et al (ed.), *ZDF Jahrbuch 2006*, p. 125.

¹²⁵ Michael Hanfeld, ‘Eine Reise durch die Apokalypse’, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 4 March 2006.

¹²⁶ See F. B. Habel, ‘Liebe Pflicht’, in *Neues Deutschland*, 4 March 2006.

¹²⁷ See Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 504-6.

usual smorgasbord of funding companies: FFF Bayern, Filmstiftung NRW, Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung MDM and Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg.¹²⁸

Die Flucht was broadcast on ARD on Sunday, 4th March and Monday, 5th March 2007 at 8.15pm. With record-breaking viewing figures of 13.55 million (29.5% audience share) for part one and 12.16 million (20.7%) for part two, *Die Flucht* was: “Der erfolgreichste Film im ersten Programm seit zehn Jahren,”¹²⁹ as well as the most successful TV film shown on German television that year.¹³⁰ Continuing the success of *Dresden* among younger audiences, *Die Flucht* gained an audience share of 10-13% of viewers aged 14-29.¹³¹ The Event Movie was sold to 41 countries worldwide.¹³² As with *Dresden*, *Die Flucht* had an enormous advertising campaign and was billed as: “Das Fernsehereignis 2007.”¹³³ The screening of *Die Flucht* was accompanied by a number of documentaries, including *Die Flucht der Frauen* and *Hitlers letzte Opfer*, both broadcast in March 2007. These documentaries also proved extremely popular with the public, attracting audiences of around 6-7 million.¹³⁴ Furthermore, many local public stations screened programmes on local issues relating to flight and expulsion, which was the case in North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria and Saxony.¹³⁵ *Die Flucht*’s online presence was also significant. The ARD website offered: “Ausführliche Onlinedossiers zum Film und zum zeitgeschichtlichen Hintergrund” and the website also allowed viewers to record their own personal experiences of flight and expulsion, in the form of a guestbook.¹³⁶ *Die Flucht* similarly won numerous awards and prizes, including ‘Bestes TV-Movie’ at the ‘DIVA’ awards 2008, ‘Nebenrolle’ for Gabriela M. Schmeide (who played Babette), and ‘Musik’ for Enjott Schneider at the ‘Deutscher Fernsehpreis’ 2007, for example.¹³⁷ *Die Flucht* tells the story of Lena Gräfin von Mahlenberg, who returns to her ancestral home in East Prussia in 1944, at the behest of her sickly father. The first part of the film focuses on Lena’s attempt to heal the rift with her father, for the sake of her daughter Vicky, and also on her engagement with the military judge Heinrich von Gernstorff, to whom she was betrothed before her departure for Berlin. Meanwhile, a romantic relationship develops between Lena and the French prisoner of

¹²⁸ See ‘11 Jahre teamWorx’.

¹²⁹ Joachim Huber and Carolin Jenkner, ‘Krieg ohne Ende’, in *Tagesspiegel*, 6 March 2007.

¹³⁰ See Daland Segler, ‘Engel der Gestrandeten’, in *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 2 March 2007.

¹³¹ See Raff (ed.), *ARD Jahrbuch 08*, p. 27.

¹³² See ‘11 Jahre teamWorx’.

¹³³ Raff (ed.), *ARD Jahrbuch 08*, p. 274.

¹³⁴ See *Ibid.*, p. 469.

¹³⁵ See Kurt Pätzold, ‘Die Flucht – besonders vor einigen Wahrheiten’, in *Freitag*, 16 March 2007.

¹³⁶ See Raff (ed.), *ARD Jahrbuch 08*, p. 469. See also Author unknown, ‘Die Flucht’,

<http://www.daserste.de/dieflucht/gaestebuch.asp>.

¹³⁷ See ‘11 Jahre teamWorx’.

war, Francois, who is working on the estate. The second part of the film details the hardships of the group as they make their way across East Prussia towards Bavaria, including freezing weather conditions, attacks from fighter aircraft and rape by Soviet soldiers.

Die Flucht is the first and only teamWorx Event Movie from director Kai Wessel. He has directed television and cinema productions including the teen comedy *Das Jahr der ersten Küsse* (2002) and family drama *Alles Liebe* (2010), as well as a number of productions on or featuring aspects of the National Socialist past, including the comedy *Goebbels und Geduldig* (2001); a television adaptation of Victor Klemperer's diaries: *Klemperer – Ein Leben in Deutschland* (1999); and the filming of Hildegard Knef's autobiography, *Hilde* (2009), which features a number of scenes set during the Third Reich and its immediate aftermath. The star of *Die Flucht*, Maria Furtwängler, is one of Germany's most popular television actors, having appeared in the Hanover version of *Tatort* since 2002; indeed Furtwängler's debut was the most popular *Tatort* episode of that year.¹³⁸ The importance of Furtwängler for the success of *Die Flucht* was something commented upon by both Hofmann and Wessel.¹³⁹ Furtwängler has since taken another starring role in a teamWorx Event Movie: *Schicksalsjahre*.¹⁴⁰ Funding came from a number of sources, including the arts station arte, with which the film was co-produced, and also from various regional broadcasters, such as Bayerischer Rundfunk, Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Südwestrundfunk, Hessischer Rundfunk, and Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg.¹⁴¹

3.2.2: Authenticity

The following section aims to detail the claims of authenticity made by the filmmakers of *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*, asking whether and how they believe their films create an authentic picture of history.¹⁴² It will then evaluate these authenticity claims, using an analysis of the films to reveal whether they correspond to the definitions of authenticity set out by the filmmakers. It will attempt to understand what effect this authenticity (or indeed the lack of authenticity) has on the history being portrayed. In general terms the importance of authenticity and the authentic qualities of both *Dresden*

¹³⁸ See Klaudia Wick, 'Ein Star auf der Flucht', in *Berliner Zeitung*, 2 March 2007.

¹³⁹ See Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 500-2 and Interview with Kai Wessel, lines 419-20.

¹⁴⁰ See Conclusion for a brief discussion of this more recent Event Movie.

¹⁴¹ Raff (ed.), *ARD Jahrbuch 08*, p. 274.

¹⁴² For more on the debates surrounding the term authenticity which provide a context to this discussion, see Section 2.1. As before, the term authenticity is used here to reflect the opinions of the filmmakers and others and therefore should not be taken as an endorsement by the author.

and *Die Flucht* have been emphasised by the filmmakers. Hofmann sets out the importance of authenticity for both films thus:

“Die Verantwortung, dass es authentisch ist und dass es in sich stimmt, die ist enorm groß. Es muss einfach authentisch stimmen. Du kannst es nicht erfinden. Das geht auch für *Die Flucht*, das muss an jedem Detail, ob es für die Ausstattung ist, alles, was Geld kostet, muss genau stimmen. Wir geben uns einfach extrem Mühe.”¹⁴³

For *Dresden* it was remarked that Stefan Kolditz’s script had a high regard for the authenticity of historical fact.¹⁴⁴ A similar attention to authenticity was an integral part of *Die Flucht*; in the ‘Making Of’ documentary accompanying the film the filmmakers speak at length on the importance of the authentic. Hofmann claims: “Die oberste Weichenstellung ist ganz sicher die Authentizität. Es muss stimmen. Es muss wahrhaftig sein. Es muss historisch belegbar sein.”¹⁴⁵ Producer Gabriela Sperl maintains that even in a fictionalised representation of events it was important “eine fast dokumentarische Authentizität zu bewahren.”¹⁴⁶ Even Maria Furtwängler offered her opinion on this issue, referring to Wessel as a “Wahrhaftigkeitsfanatiker.”¹⁴⁷ Wessel himself gives a more nuanced view on authenticity and how achievable authenticity is in a fiction film with a fictional narrative:

“Ich glaube, dass [...] Wahrhaftigkeit noch realer ist als authentisch. Ich habe das Gefühl, authentisch kann etwas sein, was auch in einer Atmosphäre ist, und man sagt, das ist eine authentische Atmosphäre, die [...] den Kern trifft, und dennoch ist es nicht wahr. Es ist nicht passiert, es ist keine wahre Geschichte, eine authentische Geschichte.”¹⁴⁸

This represents a much more realistic approach to historical filmmaking. While it is impossible to recreate characters and events from history, especially through film, film is able to provide a general sense of how things may have been, to recreate a realistic if not authentic atmosphere. The filmmakers furthermore appeared to recognise the importance of balance, that authenticity was not the only consideration in making an historical Event Movie. Joachim Kosack admits the main task of *Die Flucht* was to tell the story as “spannende Geschichte” for teenagers, yet also to do this in an historically correct way.¹⁴⁹ Similarly, Heike Hempel and Günther van Endert of ZDF claimed that *Dresden* “hat mit der Attraktivität eines Fernsehfilms Geschichte wahrheitsgetreu

¹⁴³ Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 213-17.

¹⁴⁴ See Heinrich et al (ed.), *ZDF Jahrbuch 2006*, p. 125.

¹⁴⁵ *Die Flucht: Making Of*, dir. Thomas Ruge, teamWorx, 2007, (0:03).

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, (0:03).

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, (0:15).

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Kai Wessel, lines 260-4.

¹⁴⁹ See *Die Flucht: Making Of*, (0:02).

dargestellt und erlebbar gemacht,¹⁵⁰ suggesting both entertainment and authenticity are achievable simultaneously and indeed that *Dresden* achieves this.

One of the ways in which teamWorx tries to achieve authenticity in its productions is the amount of research which goes into each Event Movie. During the making of *Dresden*, the crew spent months researching the theme of the bombings and Richter reportedly went through a large amount of historical material. This led British historian Richard Overy, who was working as one of the film's historical advisors, to claim: "The film production team have made a huge effort to ensure they provide a convincing historical picture."¹⁵¹ The makers of *Die Flucht* went through a similar research process for the sake of authenticity. Wessel himself looked through many different sources of information on the issue of flight and expulsion, from history books through to private accounts of the period.¹⁵² All of the main and supporting characters in the film were based on one or a composite of several real-life figures, which were researched intensively,¹⁵³ and furthermore all the events occurring to the refugees in the film could be supported by genuine reports from witnesses, lending a sense of plausibility to the story.¹⁵⁴

Further supporting claims of historical authenticity is the well-documented use of historical advisors during filming. The renowned historian Peter Steinbach of the 'Gedenkstätte deutscher Widerstand' acted as advisor on *Die Flucht. Dresden*, meanwhile, benefited from the advice of military expert Manfred Messerschmidt and that of Overy, who was able to confirm the accuracy of the historical details regarding the British bombing campaign. As well as using historians as advisors, a number of eyewitnesses, people who had lived through the bombing of the city, were present both as extras during the bombing scenes and as 'authenticity advisors.' At various stages of production, even during the editing of the film, this group of survivors were consulted as to 'how it really was.' Hofmann reported:

"Bei *Dresden* waren über dreißig Menschen aus Dresden, die uns quasi ihre eigene Lebensgeschichte erzählt haben, diese Bombengeschichte erzählt haben. Und denen haben wir den Film auch vorgeführt, also während des Drehs und auch im Schneiderraum. Wir haben viele Dinge auch verändert, bis dann wirklich auch dreißig Leuten, die das erlebt haben, sagen, ja, das stimmt, so war's."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ Thomas Götz, 'Bauchschuss eben', in *Berliner Zeitung*, 8 March 2006.

¹⁵¹ *Das Making Of Dresden*, dir. Gwendolin Szyszkowitz, teamWorx, 2006, (0:03).

¹⁵² See Interview with Kai Wessel, lines 122-6.

¹⁵³ See Interview with Nico Hofmann. See lines 188-95 for more details.

¹⁵⁴ See Interview with Kai Wessel, lines 310-21 & 489-501.

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 207-12.

Another aspect of authenticity is allegedly provided by the personal involvement of the filmmakers with the history portrayed on screen, further highlighting the importance of the filmmakers' German nationality to the Event Movies' sense of authenticity. Relatives of Felicitas Woll lived through the bombing of Dresden and it was apparently discussed openly in her family. Woll confirms that this personal involvement allowed her to become closer to the role of Anna, and imbued her performance with an extra level of authenticity.¹⁵⁶ Hofmann meanwhile took the image his mother had given him of the destruction of post-war Mannheim and used this as a basis for *Dresden*. Similarly, for *Die Flucht*, Wessel had a personal connection to the issue of flight and expulsion through his grandmother, who came from West Prussia and left at the end of the war (although she was not forced to flee).¹⁵⁷

As well as the amount of research undertaken before production, teamWorx also claims that the material elements of filmmaking – the locations, props and costumes – are integral in portraying an authentic picture of history. Hofmann maintained the cost of the production (*Dresden* had a record-breaking budget of €10 million) is important in creating this 'Wahrhaftigkeit',¹⁵⁸ and much was made of the unparalleled efforts to recreate the horrific firestorm: 22 building facades were built to withstand temperatures up to 3000 degrees, out of which jets of flame were shot up to six metres high.¹⁵⁹ On 68 days of shooting 1600 extras were used throughout the film.¹⁶⁰ The filmmakers further attempted to recreate the past through filming at the original locations. These included inside Dresden's Frauenkirche, which was being rebuilt and was not yet open to the public, and parts of Dresden's Old Town, which the crew were forced to close off in order to film there. Even the costumes were reconstructed to look authentic, down to the smallest detail; members of the wardrobe department spent hours artificially distressing the clothes so they looked authentically worn and battered for filming.¹⁶¹ Richter went to extreme lengths to create an authentic atmosphere during the bombing scenes by playing recorded bombing sounds from around two hundred aircraft to the cast through a 15,000-watt speaker system. This led him to claim: "Die Vibrationen fuhr den

¹⁵⁶ See Michael Hanfeld, 'Dresden, brennende Stadt', in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 11 March 2005, Author unknown, 'Dresden ist weiblich', in *Der Spiegel*, 9 January 2006 and Cornelia Wystrichowski, "'Die Leute haben geweint'", in *Berliner Zeitung*, 27 February 2006.

¹⁵⁷ See Interview with Kai Wessel, lines 53-62.

¹⁵⁸ Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 53-57.

¹⁵⁹ See Author unknown, 'Dresden', in *TV Movie*, 24 April 2010 – 7 May 2010 and Christopher Keil, 'Krieg und Frieden', in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 4 March 2006.

¹⁶⁰ See Keil, 'Krieg und Frieden'.

¹⁶¹ See *Das Making Of Dresden*, (0:08).

Schauspielern in die Glieder, die Angst, die sie spielen, konnten sie spüren.”¹⁶² *Die Flucht* featured similar efforts to capture the authenticity of the period through costumes, props and locations. Much was made of the attention to detail of the set, and Wessel reportedly got goose bumps seeing the trek for the first time as it “wirkte [...] so wahrhaftig.”¹⁶³ Indeed, it led one reviewer to claim: “Der authentische Drehort hilft dem Realismus.”¹⁶⁴ In the pursuit of authenticity, Wessel was reticent in using CGI, as was prevalent in other teamWorx Event Movies (such as *Die Sturmflut*). The scenes of the expellees trekking across the frozen wastelands of East Prussia were therefore reproduced physically in painstaking detail, in order to produce a more authentic performance from the cast members.¹⁶⁵ Hofmann even went as far as to claim that due to the conditions on set matching the harsh realities of the actual period, they could feel what it must have been like back then: “Dass man wirklich gespürt hat, was die Menschen damals erlebt hatten.”¹⁶⁶ Despite this, CGI was indeed used in *Die Flucht*, to extend the trek a little and to add other features (as detailed in the ‘Making Of’ documentary). Similarly, although CGI was used extensively in *Dresden*, particularly for shots of the bomber aircraft, it was commented that much more was physically reconstructed than would have been in an American production, for example. To the filmmakers, this further suggests authenticity.¹⁶⁷ As above, Wessel has maintained the importance of the smaller material aspects in contributing to the authenticity of the whole film: “Bis ins kleinste Abzeichen dürfte eigentlich keine Uniform ein Fehler sein, kein Fahrzeug dürfte eigentlich falsch sein,” these smaller aspects being symbolic of the film’s attempt to give an authentic picture of the time.¹⁶⁸

As well as the filmmakers themselves, the films starring actors were also charged with conveying a sense of historical authenticity to the viewer. Hofmann says of Felicitas Woll: “[Sie] hat eine unglaubliche Authentizität”¹⁶⁹ and Woll herself understood the importance of an authentic performance: “Ich wusste, dass ich dem, was damals passiert ist, gerecht werden muss. Einem Schicksal, das viele tausend Menschen betraf.”¹⁷⁰ Further contributing to the authenticity of the film was the use of British actors to play the British roles, however small, apparently proving: “Authentizität bis in

¹⁶² Michael Hanfeld, ‘In der Wut des Feuersturms’, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20 February 2006.

¹⁶³ *Die Flucht: Making Of*, (0:00).

¹⁶⁴ Jan Freitag, ‘Rote Wangen, weiße Hölle, braune Tupfer’, in *Neues Deutschland*, 2 March 2007.

¹⁶⁵ See Interview with Kai Wessel, lines 267-94.

¹⁶⁶ *Die Flucht: Making Of*, (0:21).

¹⁶⁷ See Keil, ‘Krieg und Frieden’.

¹⁶⁸ See Interview with Kai Wessel, lines 316-18.

¹⁶⁹ Hanfeld, ‘Eine Reise durch die Apokalypse’.

¹⁷⁰ Wystrichowski, “Die Leute haben geweint”.

die kleinste Geste.”¹⁷¹ This was in contrast to *Die Luftbrücke*, which featured German actor Heino Ferch as the US General Philipp Turner, who, along with all the other American characters, spoke German. However, for the broadcast of *Dresden*, the British actors were dubbed by German voice artists. For the DVD release, the original soundtrack was subtitled, leading many reviewers to claim the DVD was ‘more authentic.’¹⁷² Similarly, Maria Furtwängler felt a sense of responsibility for authenticity in her portrayal of Lena in *Die Flucht*: “Das waren Momente, in denen mir der Riesenunterschied bewusst wurde zwischen dem Erzählen einer rein fiktionalen Geschichte und einem Film, der das Schicksal von Millionen Deutschen erzählt. Ich spürte, welche Verantwortung das mit sich bringt.”¹⁷³ Furtwängler was interested in the subject of flight and expulsion for a long time before the film and had researched the role thoroughly.¹⁷⁴

Although set against the backdrop of real historical events, the central characters and the main narrative of both *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* were completely fictional. However, the filmmakers maintained even these had a basis in reality. Despite seeming somewhat implausible, there was reportedly a real example of a couple – a British pilot and a German nurse – who met during the war and later settled in Cologne.¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, the subplot featuring the Jewish character Simon Goldberg bears a certain similarity to the story of Victor Klemperer, who survived the bombing of Dresden and wrote about it in his diaries. Added to this, much of the preamble to the attack on the British side, featuring Sir Arthur ‘Bomber’ Harris of the Royal Air Force Bomber Command, was based on historical record. The character of Lena Gräfin von Mahlenberg in *Die Flucht* was reportedly based on the writer Marion Gräfin Dönhoff, who was forced to flee her home in East Prussia at the end of the war. Indeed, during the planning stages of the Event Movie, teamWorx originally wanted to make a straight biopic of Dönhoff, although this ran into trouble since teamWorx’s demand for a love story did not fit well with historical fact. Although the final character differed somewhat from Dönhoff, Wessel maintains: “Diese Lena [...] hat Dönhoffsche Züge, dieses stark

¹⁷¹ *Das Making Of Dresden*, (0:06). See also Luke Harding, ‘Critics savage unlikely tale of love among Dresden raids’, in *The Guardian*, 4 March 2006.

¹⁷² See Author unknown, ‘Kundenrezension: Dresden’, Amazon.de, http://www.amazon.de/product-reviews/B000EBGC52/ref=cm_cr_dp_all_summary?ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=1&sortBy=bySubmissionDateDescending.

¹⁷³ Maria Furtwängler, ‘Maria Furtwängler über “Die Flucht”’, http://www.daserste.de/dieflucht/allround_dyn~uid,y8f7ilkkcleuj748~cm.asp.

¹⁷⁴ See Freitag, ‘Rote Wangen’.

¹⁷⁵ See Kyle James and Michele Norris, ‘Movie About Dresden Stirs Criticism in Germany’, ‘All Things Considered’, (Transcript), 9 March 2006, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5254860> and Harding, ‘Critics savage unlikely tale’.

preußische Element, [...] da sind immer natürlich auch Einflüsse von der Dönhoff.”¹⁷⁶

That these films are based, to a greater or lesser extent, on real existing figures and events, reportedly help to reinforce the idea of their authenticity, allowing the viewer to extend the implication of this to assume everything seen in the film actually happened.

This next section will deal with how the authenticity of each Event Movie is suggested within the film itself, using a variety of methods. The first device to be dealt with here is the use of documentary footage. This is intended to give an illusion of realism, which the viewer may extend to the rest of the film. This effect is particularly prevalent in *Dresden*. “Die immer wieder eingeblendeten Dokumentaraufnahmen verfehlen nicht ihre Wirkung,” writes one reviewer.¹⁷⁷ Indeed, *Dresden* uses a combination of newsreel footage from both Nazi and Allied sources, as well as other stock footage, including some from an instructional video for tram drivers.¹⁷⁸ The film’s opening credits appear over grainy monochrome footage of pre-war Dresden, featuring shots of the Frauenkirche standing proudly across the river and people going about their daily business. The melancholy music which accompanies these images accentuates the sense of loss, offering a ‘before’ image to the later images of death and destruction.¹⁷⁹ Beginning with documentary footage further reminds the viewer that what will be witnessed in the next three hours actually happened and happened to real people. This suggestion is continued by the use of a monochrome, grainy effect laid over the first ‘film’ images: a shot of the Martin Luther hospital where Anna works, underscoring that everything the viewer is about to see is real, even the fictional story of a fictional couple. This is an example of how the constant drive for authenticity can actually work against viewers’ understanding of the past: fact and fiction are subsequently confused in the viewers’ minds. Nevertheless, this effect continues throughout the film, including a great deal of stock footage of British pilots – preparing to fly, in their aircraft, and during the bombing raids themselves – often featuring shots from the perspective of the planes during the bombing raids. These are edited in liberally with the film footage, giving at times a documentary feel to the images, particularly since these sections deal almost exclusively with historical aspects of the narrative. This stock footage returns during Anna and Robert’s walk through the city the morning after the bombings, where they encounter the destruction the bombs have wrought. Footage shows, amongst other things, a woman’s burned body, which reinforces – should the viewer need reminding at

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Kai Wessel, lines 25-7.

¹⁷⁷ Daland Segler, ‘Engel des Lebens im Reich des Toden’, in *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 6 March 2006.

¹⁷⁸ See Veas-Gulani, ‘The Ruined Picture Postcard’, p. 106.

¹⁷⁹ See *Ibid.*, pp. 87-103.

this point – the real-life horror of what he or she has just seen. A further use of documentary images occurs only once, during a scene in which Anna’s father Carl is listening to the radio. As the radio report continues non-diegetically, images from the Yalta conference as well as other images related to the war appear, giving the impression of a documentary, yet detracting from the film’s main narrative in a distracting way. The incessant use of documentary images in order to enhance authenticity is a questionable device for a number of reasons. In filmic terms it detracts from the narrative, especially the extended sequences at the British base at Morton Hall, instantly reducing the audience’s emotional involvement with the (fictional) characters Anna and Robert, in Germany. This is especially the case when the documentary images do not appear to correspond to the fiction, as is the case with footage from the tram drivers’ instructional video, which depicts everyday life in Dresden and which is obviously filmed in summer. At one point in the film this contrasts with a subsequent scene of cold shivering refugees trudging over the city’s bridge in the snow. This fetishisation of realism can also be seen in the opening sequence as, over the images of pre-war Dresden, recordings of speeches made by Hitler and ‘Bomber’ Harris are played. Although a German voice-over drowns out Harris’s words, a subtitle informs the viewers that this is the ‘Originalton.’ This precedes numerous examples in the film of radio announcements, which, due to the precedent set in the opening sequence, are to be understood as genuine, authentic recordings. *Die Flucht*, meanwhile, despite claims of the importance of authenticity, does not employ such filmic devices.

One of the effects of depicting supposedly authentic history is its importance for educational purposes, something highlighted by teamWorx, as the release of a special DVD of *Dresden* for schools suggests. This is reflected in the slight documentary feel of the films. Facts and statistics about the wider implications of the war are conveyed to the audience in a way which is completely superfluous to the melodrama. If these were merely love stories, then these instances where the historical context is acknowledged and which do not necessarily impact on the protagonists, could be ignored. The opening titles of *Dresden* are an example of this. They consist of four separate title screens, which give the state of the war thus far and provide a context for the story the viewer is about to see. As well as dramatic foreshadowing – ‘Die amerikanische und britische Luftwaffe beherrschen unangefochten den deutschen Luftraum. Mittlerweile können die britischen Bomber jede deutsche Stadt angreifen’¹⁸⁰ – these titles also paint a wider picture of the downfall of the Third Reich, which acts as a backdrop to *Dresden*: ‘Im

¹⁸⁰ *Dresden*, dir. Roland Suso Richter, teamWorx, 2006, Part 1, (0:00).

Osten hat am 12. Januar die Rote Armee mit ihrer entscheidenden Großoffensive begonnen. Zwei Wochen später wird sie das KZ Auschwitz befreien.¹⁸¹ In *Die Flucht* the inclusion of such details is far less marked, yet the historical progression of the war is referred to, most often in Lena's voiceovers. At one point in the film she reports: "Als im Herbst die Rote Armee zum ersten Mal auf deutschem Boden stand und wir die grausame Wirklichkeit dieses Krieges zum ersten Mal mit eigenen Augen zu sehen bekamen."¹⁸² Lena later remarks: "Die Großoffensive der Roten Armee begann am 12. Januar. Die deutsche Wehrmacht hatte nichts mehr entgegenzusetzen. Sie wurden zerschlagen und überrollt. Und plötzlich war die Front ganz nah."¹⁸³ Similarly, one of her final voiceovers reports Hitler's suicide. These moments serve to increase dramatic tension, but also help to remind the viewer of the wider development of the war and place the unfolding action within an historical context with which they would most probably be familiar. Meanwhile, *Dresden's* focus on history and military history in particular can be seen most clearly in the scenes set at Morton Hall. These feature numerous conversations regarding the choice of Dresden as a military target and then on the specific details of the bombing raid. At times the dialogue sounds as if it has been lifted directly from a documentary voiceover, revealing the distance to Dresden, flying times, the number of aircraft involved and the specific tactics involved in the raid.¹⁸⁴ This is further reinforced by the use of subtitles recording the date and location of certain scenes, particularly during the final bombings, where the time is recorded down to the minute. Although these scenes and devices arguably serve valid narrative and ideological functions,¹⁸⁵ for instance they create dramatic tension before the film's climax, they do seem somewhat separate from the main (melo)dramatic impetus of the film and therefore serve to underscore the authenticity of the Event Movies and their serious approach to the educational aspects of history.

One final authenticity claim from *Dresden* is its final scene, which takes documentary images from the rededication of the Frauenkirche in October 2005 and which comes directly after a scene in which Robert surveys the (CGI) ruins of the church the morning after the bombings. Through the inclusion of this footage, the viewer is reminded that the destruction and terror they have witnessed on screen over the past two nights actually happened and indeed bears some relevance to their modern-

¹⁸¹ Ibid., Part 1, (0:00).

¹⁸² *Die Flucht*, dir. Kai Wessel, teamWorx, 2007, Part 1, (0:46).

¹⁸³ *Die Flucht*, Part 1, (1:12).

¹⁸⁴ *Dresden*, Part 2, (0:28).

¹⁸⁵ The ideological importance of these sequences regarding debates on memory of German suffering will be explored in-depth in Section 3.2.4.

day life (the footage must have been recorded just months before the broadcast of the film). More questionable, however, is the way in which this final section suggests to the viewer that the entirety of the film should be understood as historical fact. Over this footage a voiceover from Anna is played, which begins: “Es ist schwer zu begreifen, was damals in ’45 passiert ist...”¹⁸⁶ which immediately links in the present-day reality of memory of the bombings with the fictional character of Anna and by implication her relationship with Robert. Similarly, as the film cuts between close-ups of elderly faces in the gathered crowd, many of whom presumably lived through the bombing of the city, the viewer cannot help but ask themselves whether these people were perhaps the children featured in the film, blurring the lines between the real and the fictional.

There have been some suggestions, however, that *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* are not perhaps as authentic portrayals of history as the filmmakers, and certain filmic devices, would like to suggest. Much criticism, of *Dresden* at least, relates to the gap between attempted authenticity and what is achieved: “Aiming for authentic, settling for schlock,”¹⁸⁷ as David Crossland puts it. As with any other historical film, some of the criticism of inauthenticity regarding *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* was merely minor nitpicking.¹⁸⁸ Viewers commented that refugees were not arriving on foot in Dresden at that time and that there would have been no swastika banners to welcome them.¹⁸⁹ Regarding *Die Flucht*, it was commented that life on such an estate during the late stages of the war would have been very different to how it was portrayed in the film and that it would have been very unlikely for the group of refugees to stay together for the entirety of the journey.¹⁹⁰ This can be a significant problem with depictions of history, in that no two authentic experiences of any historical event are alike, so there can never be one defining authentic version of events with which everyone agrees. This furthermore reveals a significant problem in using eyewitnesses as ‘authenticity advisors,’ since they can only provide their own personal experiences which cannot be extended to the rest of the population. Although it is difficult to see how these minor quibbles would affect the viewers’ impressions of history or enjoyment of the plot, when claims of authenticity and extraordinary attention to detail are made so often by the filmmakers, criticism of this nature is only to be expected. The filmmakers

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., Part 2, (1:26).

¹⁸⁷ David Crossland, ‘German Film Recalls Dresden Bombing’, in *Spiegel Online International*, 13 February 2006, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,400691,00.html>.

¹⁸⁸ See Jaeger, ‘Visualizations of the Bombing of Dresden’, p. 415.

¹⁸⁹ Friedrich Karl Fromme, ‘In den Kellern der brennenden Stadt: Ich war dabei’, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 4 March 2006.

¹⁹⁰ See Edo Reentz, ‘Es schien aussichtslos, fortzukommen’, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 5 March 2007.

themselves have at some points recognised the difficulty of portraying these histories completely authentically, although these instances are very few compared to their claims of authenticity. Richter admits that historians only had an extremely vague understanding of the reality of people's last moments in the air raid shelters, since those who experienced it were not alive to tell the tale, and so this required some creative input from the filmmakers themselves.¹⁹¹ Similarly, Woll admits: "Wir können nur errahnen, wie es gewesen ist. Ich konnte mich in diese Zeit zurückversetzen, aber es ist etwas ganz anderes, sie wirklich erlebt zu haben."¹⁹² This is the paradox of fictionalised historical programming: "Only in a fiction film has it been possible to graphically simulate horrors that were left to the imagination before." Nothing which could have captured such scenes of destruction, the like of which were depicted in *Dresden*, could have escaped unharmed, and there exists no authentic memory of the intense bombings, since no-one who experienced the full terror of the firestorm could have survived.¹⁹³ To recreate – in a necessarily fictional, yet arguably probable way – the last moments of victims of the bombings can be a useful tool in providing a three-dimensional experience of this historical catastrophe, yet claims that the entire film is authentic are certainly questionable because of this. Ultimately the filmmakers' habitual claims of authenticity threaten to detract from the nuanced contribution to debates on representations of German victimhood. Since everything in the film is to be understood as similarly authentic, the fictional love stories of the film are placed on the same level as the rest of the suffering depicted, which is based on real historical accounts. *Dresden* for instance does not distinguish between the reality of the bombing campaign and the fiction of Anna and Robert's love story. Asking the viewer to empathise with the latter at the same time as the former smacks of tastelessness. Finally, presenting everything in the film as authentic suggests that it should be understood as gospel truth and any ideological slant given to the debates by the filmmakers is underplayed. In this way, ideological messages can be communicated without the viewer's knowledge, which could be indeed dangerous for the audience's understanding of history.

3.2.3: Hollywood and international influences

The following section will explore the use of various devices from mainstream entertainment films in *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*, such as the genres of melodrama and

¹⁹¹ See *Das Making Of Dresden*, (0:22-0:23).

¹⁹² 'Dresden ist weiblich'.

¹⁹³ Crew, 'Sleeping with the Enemy?', p. 127 & p. 129.

the Hollywood blockbuster, and analyse how this affects the story and history conveyed by the Event Movies. It will firstly focus on the genre of melodrama, as it is perhaps the genre to which these films most noticeably conform and much criticism and comment surrounding the films revolves around their use of melodrama. Melodrama has been defined as: “Popular romances that depicted a virtuous individual (usually a woman) [...] victimized by repressive and inequitable social circumstances,”¹⁹⁴ simultaneously requiring “sensational situations with exaggerated power to affect the plot actors and [...] acute conflict,”¹⁹⁵ definitions which can be applied to both *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*. The filmmakers themselves have highlighted the importance of the emotional in these two films. Hans Janke, head of television drama at ZDF described *Dresden* as: “[Ein] zu Herzensverstand gehender Film,” a film showing “[dass] in einem Bombardement doch auch die Liebe zwischen die Menschen findet.”¹⁹⁶ This was reinforced by Felicitas Woll who claimed: “Das schöne daran: Da sind Völker, die gegeneinander kämpfen, aber auch in der Lage sind, sich zu lieben.”¹⁹⁷ Similarly, Wessel wanted to make a film that moves people and Maria Furtwängler praised cameraman Holly Fink for attempting to strengthen the emotions of a scene through his camerawork.¹⁹⁸ Many critics have remarked upon the films’ use of melodrama in a less than positive manner. Christian Buß disparagingly described *Die Flucht* as a “Vertriebenen-Melodram”¹⁹⁹ and *Dresden* was similarly criticised for using devices of soaps and telenovelas in order to reach the same audiences as these genres.²⁰⁰ Critics have referred to *Dresden* as a “Schmonzette,” a “zuckersüße Liebesgeschichte” and manipulative cinema, criticising the artificial love story.²⁰¹ *Die Flucht*, meanwhile, was similarly compared to the kitschy, saccharine style of Rosamunde Pilcher TV romances. The important question raised by some of these critics is whether treating the themes of German suffering – whether bombing raids or flight and expulsion – as soap opera and melodrama was appropriate, given the horrific realities of these events.²⁰² There were worries that the emotional aspects of the storyline would smother the delicate debates

¹⁹⁴ Thomas Schatz, *Hollywood Genres* (Austin: McGraw Hill, 1981), p. 222.

¹⁹⁵ Elizabeth Cowie, ‘Storytelling: Classical Hollywood cinema and classical narrative’, in Steve Neale and Murray Smith (ed.), *Contemporary Hollywood Cinema* (Guildford: Routledge, 1989), pp. 186-7.

¹⁹⁶ Marit Hoffmann, ‘Make Love Not War’, in *Konkret*, 1 March 2006.

¹⁹⁷ ‘Dresden ist weiblich’.

¹⁹⁸ See *Die Flucht: Making Of*, (0:18).

¹⁹⁹ Christian Buß, ‘Go West Gräfin’, in *Der Spiegel*, 2 March 2007.

²⁰⁰ See Habel, ‘Liebe Pflicht’.

²⁰¹ See Hoffmann, ‘Make Love Not War’, Evelyn Finger, ‘Der englische Pilot’, in *Die Zeit*, 2 March 2006 and Harding, ‘Critics savage unlikely tale’.

²⁰² See Amory Burchaud, “‘Ein starker Erinnerungstopos’”, in *Tagesspiegel*, 6 March 2007.

within the films and muddy the historical image being portrayed.²⁰³ This is something to bear in mind when analysing the melodramatic properties of both films.

Perhaps the most obvious way in which both films conform to the genre of melodrama is the inclusion of a love story, especially the trope of a love triangle, which in both cases features elements of the ‘forbidden love’ paradigm. Both films’ love story narrative furthermore conforms to the ‘unlikely couple’ motif prevalent in many melodramas.²⁰⁴ In the first scene of *Dresden* the viewer is introduced to both Anna and her fiancé Alexander. While Anna is represented as a forthright, independent and essentially modern young woman – defying Alexander’s commands to go to the hospital’s air raid shelter, taking his cigarette after the operation, and being seen drinking and listening to jazz music – Alexander is old-fashioned, formal and staid. This is reflected in the crisp, clinical whiteness of his doctor’s uniform and of the operating theatre in which he works. This difference between the couple is epitomised in the scene where Alexander proposes to Anna. He has discussed it previously with her parents and begins his proposal with: “Auf jeden Fall, ich finde, es ist an der Zeit...”²⁰⁵ Anna, meanwhile, forces Alex to go down on one knee and recite poetry to her. From this early point it is obvious to the audience that this couple are not destined to be together. Anna’s relationship with Robert, however, is completely different: they communicate mostly in silence (since Robert dare not give himself away by revealing his English accent), which lends a more physical aspect to the relationship. This is further highlighted by Robert’s rugged good looks as well as the couple’s physical contact: Anna dresses Robert’s wounds and Robert tenderly brushes Anna’s face with his hand. The editing in the first scenes of their meeting underscores their attraction to one another: cutting between close-ups of the two of them. Subsequent editing further highlights the relationship between them; despite being at different locations the film cuts between shots of Robert and Anna – for example, shots of Robert shaving and Anna in front of a mirror – symbolising that they belong together. Robert is romantic, making Anna a flower out of wax, and importantly he is presented as a sexual being. The smouldering tension between the couple builds up to a frankly implausible scene in which Anna and Robert consummate their relationship in the hospital ward, surrounded by other patients. As with a typical melodrama, there are many obstacles to their love: firstly Robert is captured and imprisoned by Anna’s father and Alexander. After the

²⁰³ See Evelyn Finger, ‘Die Ohnmacht der Bilder’, in *Die Zeit*, 1 March 2007.

²⁰⁴ See Ebbrecht, ‘History, Public Memory and Media Event’, p. 108.

²⁰⁵ *Dresden*, Part 1, (0:22).

couple are briefly reunited during the firestorm, a cave-in in an underground tunnel forces Anna to make a final decision between the two men. She eventually chooses Robert, even though it would probably mean her death. Anna's voiceover at the end of the film informs the viewer that Robert made it back to Britain, yet died as his aircraft crashed on its way to visit Anna and their daughter, conforming to the trend of tragic endings in melodrama. While it has been suggested that the melodramatic development of the relationship between Anna and Robert is simply "Vorspiel für das Finale"²⁰⁶ (namely the horror of the bombings), it could conversely be argued that the bombing itself is merely an engine for the melodramatic narrative, that its existence is to provide obstacles and, ultimately, a resolution to their love story.

Die Flucht similarly adopts a love triangle narrative, something criticised by many critics, as this was the latest in a long line of teamWorx productions to feature this particular narrative device.²⁰⁷ As with *Dresden*, *Die Flucht*'s is an unlikely love story. Lena is torn between the French prisoner of war, Francois, who is tempestuous and passionate, and the Nazi judge Heinrich, to whom she had previously been betrothed and who is formal, obedient and unemotional. Lena's relationship with Heinrich seems to have been organised by their parents and would take place for the benefit of the families, rather than for reasons of love. Heinrich's brother Ferdinand suggests Heinrich and his father "können endlich wieder alte Pläne schmieden,"²⁰⁸ now that Lena has returned. Similarly, it is clear that this marriage is Lena's duty as part of the von Mahlenberg family. As she tells her father: "Du hast immer gesagt, eine Liebesheirat ist ein Luxus, das man sich versagen muss."²⁰⁹ Conversely, Lena's relationship with Francois is at first one of conflict and passion. Francois refers disparagingly to Lena as 'Comtesse,' and tells his fellow prisoners of war: "Es gibt von diesen Aristokraten keine Solidarität zu erwarten!"²¹⁰ This attitude is only enhanced by the supposed betrayal of Lena and her father and then the murder of his friends by the German army. However, despite these beginnings and despite their differences, Lena and Francois begin to fall in love. When Lena visits him in his quarters, although they are only talking, she wears a guilty expression when she is 'caught' by Heinrich entering the room. Similarly, there is a stand-off between Francois and Heinrich as Lena falls down a snowy hill with her horse and both men rush to help her up. The *mise-en-scène* of the shots – Lena is shown

²⁰⁶ Ziegler, 'Zwischen Kitsch und Kunst'.

²⁰⁷ See Michael Hanfeld, 'Ostpreußens Gloria geht grausam zu Ende', in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 March 2007 and Segler, 'Engel der Gestrandeten'.

²⁰⁸ *Die Flucht*, Part 1, (0:11).

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Part 1, (0:39).

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Part 1, (0:27).

in a two-shot with Francois, while Heinrich is pictured alone – suggests that Lena truly belongs with Francois. Their relationship begins to blossom as they ride out together to look for Babette. Lena’s body language as the two of them share a simple meal – conforming to the classic symbolism of eating as a sensual activity – suggests a romantic relationship and her feelings for Francois become clearer, to her and to the viewer, throughout the course of the trek. She disappointedly mistakes the Russian Alexei for Francois and her desperate reaction when she believes Francois has drowned underneath the ice reveals her true feelings for him. Knowing their relationship would be frowned upon she sends Francois away, for his own safety, after sharing a kiss. Lena eventually tells Heinrich she does not love him and that they could never be together, Heinrich’s decision to have the deserters shot acting as a catalyst for this. Towards the end of the film Francois reappears, leading to scenes of the couple walking through lush, verdant meadows, and kissing under a tree, sheltering from the rain. The bittersweet ending once again separates the lovers, with the promise they will be reunited at a later date.

A major aspect of melodrama is that it revolves around women as central characters, and this is certainly applicable to *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*, both of whom have a female central protagonist. *Dresden*’s Anna is a strong woman, as the scenes of her smoking, dancing and taking the upper hand in her and Alexander’s relationship goes to show. She ultimately breaks away from the demands of her family and makes her own decisions about her life in extraordinary circumstances. Similarly, Lena is unquestionably the head of the Mahlenberg household and the central figure for identification in the film. The importance of women in the film is undeniable: “Es ist die Stunde der Frauen,”²¹¹ Lena’s father maintains, as he tells her she must lead the trek. As well as a focus on women, melodrama is very much organised around the family unit, which can clearly be seen in both of the Event Movies. In *Die Flucht*, Lena’s relationship with her father and also with her daughter Vicky are explored and are integral to the narrative. The film begins with the separation of Lena and Vicky, as the latter is sent away from Berlin and Vicky’s disappearance from the Mahlenberg estate provides an extra sense of melodramatic tension for the film’s second part. Lena’s difficult relationship with her father is hinted at throughout the first part of the film, because of her perceived rebellion against him and his way of life. This only finds resolution at the end of the film’s first half as her father tells Lena he is proud of her, before she leaves to lead the trek and he kills himself before the arrival of the Russians.

²¹¹ Ibid., Part 1, (1:22).

Even the relationship between Vicky and her grandfather is explored in an extended scene, in which he delivers various platitudes about life: “Wenn das Leben nicht hält, was es verspricht, wenn man zu oft enttäuscht wird, wenn man [...] nie gelernt hat, zu lieben, dann wird man sehr einsam,” to which Vicky replies: “Dann bist du also nur einsam Großvater und nicht böse.”²¹² Elsewhere there are several other family constellations through which various issues are explored, such as the relationship between Babette and her son Fritz as well as that between Heinrich and his brother Ferdinand and their differing relationships with their parents. Heinrich acts almost exclusively to please his parents and tries desperately, if unsuccessfully, to win back his mother’s love after his brother’s suicide. At the very end of the film a new, if unorthodox, family unit is created. This consists of Francois, Lena, Vicky and the boy Wilhelm, whose mother died during the trek, proving that the family, however unorthodox, is of utmost importance. *Dresden* too revolves around the concept of family, in that it is Anna’s family who control her life, and against whom she must rebel and escape. At the beginning of the film she loves her family very much, yet as the film progresses and as she grows up she must begin to make her own decisions and find her own way in the world. Her discovery of her father’s crimes (stealing morphine from the hospital) acts as a catalyst for this transformation. As in *Die Flucht*, Anna experiences a final reconciliation with her father before he is killed.

Both *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*, as two-parters, also feature a cliff-hanger, a device usually found at the end of a daily soap or telenovela. In *Dresden* both the love story and bombing narratives are set up for the second part: Robert reveals to Anna that he is a bomber pilot, not a spy, after which she runs away. In the next scene, set at British Bomber Command, it is finally revealed that Dresden has been chosen as the target for the attack. Meanwhile, in *Die Flucht*, the Soviets arrive at the Mahlenberg estate, Lena realises her daughter is missing and the trek westwards begins in earnest. Although arguably a necessity for any multi-part production to secure an audience for its second part, the use of the cliff-hanger regarding such sensitive historical matters could be seen to be in bad taste. Deliberately giving the viewer a small taste of a juicy historical titbit, promising there will be more tomorrow, smacks of exploitation of the historical suffering of many. *Dresden*’s final scene in Bomber Command reminds the viewer that the city will be bombed tomorrow and that they should not miss the amazing spectacle, and similarly the final scene of *Die Flucht*’s first part depicts the arrival of the

²¹² Ibid., Part 1, (0:44).

Soviet army. There are tanks, grenades, shootings and suicide at the end of part one, suggesting there will be more of the same in part two.

Although it could be argued that the melodramatic elements detract from the realism of the films, melodrama can be a useful tool in communicating difficult historical issues to an audience. Many commentators, including Hofmann himself, have invoked the historical precedent of the 1978 American mini-series *Holocaust* as an example of how melodrama can be used to approach the past. Hofmann maintained: “Einer der ersten Riesenerfolge war die amerikanische Holocaust-Serie. Sie war heftig umstritten in der Kritik, aber hatte gigantische Einschaltquoten gehabt, weil sie hochemotional war und durch diese Emotion eine nationale Debatte möglich gemacht hat und das ist bei *Der Flucht* und das ist bei *Dresden* genauso gelungen.”²¹³ According to Hofmann, there is no contradiction in using an emotional style to convey real history and furthermore the emotionalisation of history allows the viewer to open themselves up to the story and be truly affected by it.²¹⁴ Hofmann’s entry point into any story is the deep emotional core of the historical event, through which the event itself can begin to be understood.²¹⁵ For *Dresden*, melodrama was reportedly the only viable model for dealing with such a sensitive theme.²¹⁶ According to teamWorx then, melodrama can function as a tool for engaging with serious history and does not necessarily have to stand in contradiction to it.

Having explored the genre of melodrama, which is based around the family unit and uses a love story to engage with history, the films will now be compared to the conventions of a Hollywood blockbuster, a film format traditionally privileging audience figures and spectacle over historical realism or artistic merit. Although teamWorx’s Event Movies are television productions, they do share certain similarities with Hollywood blockbuster films. teamWorx’s concept of ‘Kino fürs Fernsehen’ suggests teamWorx looks towards cinema for inspiration.²¹⁷ This is evident not least in the marketing for the Event Movies, such as the large scale advertising campaigns and in particular that both films had a cinematic premiere.²¹⁸ One of the most noticeable aspects of Hollywood blockbuster at work in these two Event Movies is the importance of spectacle, which occasionally appears to be of greater significance than history or

²¹³ Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 136-41. An in-depth exploration of *Holocaust* and its relationship to history and teamWorx’s Event Movies will be undertaken in Section 4.1.2.3.

²¹⁴ See Ibid., lines 182-7 & 201-3.

²¹⁵ See Bückmann, “‘Es muss Emotionalität drinstecken’”.

²¹⁶ See Crew, ‘Sleeping with the Enemy?’, p. 119.

²¹⁷ See Section 1.3.6 for more on this.

²¹⁸ See Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 376-7.

dramatic narrative. For blockbuster movies the visual is everything, it exists to amaze, impress and delight viewers and also allows for ease of sale abroad. The importance of spectacle in *Dresden* is undeniable and is something reinforced by the filmmakers, who have described it as a “Fernsehfilmproduktion der Superlative,”²¹⁹ mentioning the thousands of props used in the films, the great number of extras and the scale of its special effects: “Nie würde für eine deutsche Produktion so ein gigantisches Feuer entfacht,” for instance.²²⁰ These special effects impressed the critics to such an extent that one wrote: “Die Szenen des Bombenangriffs beweisen, dass Spezial- und Pyro-Effekte aus Deutschland mittlerweile jedem internationalen Vergleich standhalten,”²²¹ perhaps suggesting *Dresden* is more akin to a Hollywood production than to the average German TV film. In contrast to Wessel’s rejection of CGI for *Die Flucht*, *Dresden*’s filmmakers were proud of their use of computer-generated effects, claiming: “Ohne Digitaltechnik ist ein historischer Film wie *Dresden* nicht möglich.”²²² Over a year was spent on programming the digital images for the film.²²³ Also reinforcing the Hollywood aspirations of both *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* is the use of composer duo Harald Kloser and Thomas Wanker to provide the soundtrack. The pair are best known for their work on the Hollywood disaster movies of German émigré Roland Emmerich, such as *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004), *10,000 B.C.* (2008) and *2012* (2009).

Watching *Dresden*, teamWorx’s desire for spectacle is immediately apparent. The images of the bombing raid are intended to impress and can be compared to Hollywood productions. The many sequences featuring the CGI aircraft again highlight the work and expense lavished on the effects and the bombastic military soundtrack from Kloser and Wanker reinforces this sense of spectacle. Their soundtrack for *Die Flucht* caused consternation amongst a large number of critics, Kerstin Decker writing: “Dass diese sämige Moll-Soße [the soundtrack] noch in jeder Ritze dringt und fast jeden (!) Dialog verklebt – das ist vom ersten Augenblick an jenseits der Grenze des Erträglichen. Was für ein Misstrauen in den eigenen Film und die Schauspieler liegt darin.”²²⁴ Although less spectacular than *Dresden*, *Die Flucht* does focus on the visual to some extent. One suspects that the numerous shots of the caravan of women and children trekking across the snowy landscape exist at least partially to show off the

²¹⁹ See Hoffmann, ‘Make Love Not War’.

²²⁰ *Das Making Of Dresden*, (0:09).

²²¹ Stephan A. Weichert (ed.), *Jahrbuch Fernsehen 2007* (Cologne: Piepers, 2007), p. 72.

²²² *Das Making Of Dresden*, (0:18).

²²³ See *Ibid.*, (0:18).

²²⁴ Kerstin Decker, ‘Frau Gräfin, die Russen sind da’, in *Tagesspiegel*, 2 March 2007. See also Habel, ‘Liebe Pflicht’ and Peter von Becker, ‘Die Flucht vor uns selbst’, in *Tagesspiegel*, 6 March 2007.

great efforts gone to in order to construct such an image. Similarly, the scene in which the trek is attacked by fighter aircraft, where CGI is most definitely used, has the frenetic camera work and special effects of a Hollywood action film. A further example of spectacle in *Die Flucht* is the film's second scene, where Lena arrives in East Prussia and is met from the station by Fritz and Francois, before riding back to Schloss Mahlenberg. This is all filmed in one continuous shot, without cuts, which intends to draw the viewer into this world.²²⁵ It also has the result, should the viewer notice this, of showcasing this feat of filmmaking, which may in fact detract from the narrative. The main problem with the use of Hollywood spectacle for such sensitive subjects as the bombing war or flight and expulsion, is that there is an emphasis on 'showing' instead of 'explaining.' The extended bombing sequences of *Dresden* could arguably exist less to give the viewer an impression of the atrocities of war, but rather to showcase the film's large budget and the skill of the effects team. This is something remarked upon by certain critics, including Helmut Ziegler: "All der gute Willen, all die guten Schauspielerleistungen, sie gehen unter im Krakeelen jenes Event- und Action-Kinos, das nur ein 'Boah, ey!' beim Zuschauer auslösen möchte. Erst kommt das Spektakel, dann kommt die Moral."²²⁶

Another aspect of the Hollywood blockbuster, particularly the action movie mode, is the insertion of suspense into the narrative in order to keep the viewer's interest. Even the threat/promise of the bombing raid in the second half of *Dresden* is apparently not enough to secure the viewers' interest, so at strategic points in the narrative artificial moments of suspense are introduced. These revolve mostly around whether Robert will be discovered or not: firstly by Anna in the hospital, then by the Gestapo, and later in an exciting sequence where Anna helps him to avoid capture by hiding in the Frauenkirche. This motif is repeated in the film's second half; Robert is nearly discovered in Anna's house by Gauleiter Mutschmann and Anna and Robert are eventually located in the attic by Alexander and Dr Mauth. At several points the artificial insertion of suspense becomes obvious, leading the viewer to ask themselves what narrative purpose these sequences serve. A main example of this is when Simon momentarily loses Maria during the bombing raids (as Simon mistakes another woman for his wife) before quickly finding her again. *Die Flucht* similarly features numerous moments of suspense, such as Vicky stowing away with the prisoners of war, leading Lena to go off in search of her, the discovery of the prisoners of war by German soldiers

²²⁵ See *Die Flucht: Making Of*, (0:18).

²²⁶ Ziegler, 'Zwischen Kitsch und Kunst'.

or when Babette and Frau Meister are found by the Soviets. In these scenes, classic Hollywood camera and editing is used: freezing the camera when the character has walked out of shot, to suggest there is someone hiding in the distance, (a classic technique in the horror genre), as well as the quick panning and cutting used in action sequences. This serves to increase the tension and excitement for the viewer, yet is a questionable technique when dealing with such a sensitive subject as the rape of women by the Red Army. The pleasure felt by the viewer due to the construction of suspense and its eventual resolution is incompatible with a sensitive exploration of these issues.

Dresden and *Die Flucht* are furthermore comparable to other Hollywood movie genres and specific films. Tobias Ebbrecht has compared *Dresden* to contemporary war films such as *Saving Private Ryan* through their use of camera angles and techniques, as well as their focus on ‘ordinary’ people.²²⁷ Similarly, although Hofmann denies that he is influenced by the Hollywood mainstream, he claims he looks more towards independent American cinema, such as Kathryn Bigelow’s *The Hurt Locker*, for examples of how to create authenticity through camera work.²²⁸ Hofmann denied any inspiration from Hollywood by asking the rhetorical question: “Was soll ich denn von *Avatar* lernen?”²²⁹ Despite this humorous response, on closer inspection *Dresden*’s narrative does bear striking similarity to *Avatar*’s (2009). It is a love story between a soldier and a young woman during a war between their two peoples, where the woman must submit to the wishes of her family and the man they have chosen for her, or choose to follow her heart. Furthermore, the dénouement occurs during an attack by the soldier’s people, which forces a decision from the woman. Although there are many ways in which *Avatar* and *Dresden* differ from one another, and while such a simplistic narrative reading may be applied to a great number of films, this suggests that comparisons between teamWorx and Hollywood are undeniable, despite what Hofmann may claim. Underscoring this is Paul Cooke’s comparison of *Dresden* to James Cameron’s earlier film *Titanic*, where Cooke convincingly compares the Event Movie to the Hollywood blockbuster in terms of narrative structure, character, and ideological impact.²³⁰ *Die Flucht* has even been compared to the Western genre, as commented by Christian Buß: “Da erinnert der Frauenwestern ‘Die Flucht’ mit seinen Planwagen und noblen Kämpferinnen auf einmal an einen Indianerfilm. [...] Statt der Rothaut ist es hier

²²⁷ See Ebbrecht, ‘History, Public Memory and Media Event’, p. 108.

²²⁸ See Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 236-40.

²²⁹ Ibid., lines 247-8.

²³⁰ See Cooke, ‘German Wartime Suffering as Hollywood Disaster Movie’, pp. 279-94.

der Rotarmist, der als Wilder an sich alles Zivilisatorische in Frage stellt,”²³¹ further suggesting something of a link between teamWorx and Hollywood cinema.

One final movie genre with which *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* share similarities is the disaster movie, a comparison acknowledged by Hofmann.²³² One can compare these two films to the two ‘pure’ disaster Event Movies produced by teamWorx – *Tornado* and *Vulkan* – CGI-heavy two-parters depicting the imagined effects of a tornado hitting Berlin and a volcanic eruption in Germany’s Eifel region respectively. Similarly, they can also be compared to the modern Hollywood disaster movie, typified by Roland Emmerich’s efforts, such as the recent *2012*, and not only since they share the same soundtrack composers. In this format, the first part of the film is spent arranging character constellations, while the second part ignores narrative nuance and relies on representation: they feature large-scale, impressive images of destruction. This is true of both *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*, whose first halves introduce the characters and conflicts and foreshadow the disaster which will occur in the second. In *Dresden* this is achieved by the discussions at Morton Hall on choosing Dresden as a target, culminating in the cliff-hanger’s final decision. *Die Flucht* meanwhile, conforms to a classic disaster movie. Its first half is rife with other treks arriving at Schloss Mahlenberg, reporting on the invasion by the Soviets, which are met with disbelief by many of the characters, including Lena’s father. It is down to Lena herself to convince the others of the veracity of these claims: “Diese Menschen werden vertrieben!” she exclaims passionately.²³³ This bears similarity to the roles of Jan Berger and Daniela Eisenbach in *Tornado* and *Vulkan* respectively, who have to convince a sceptical public of the impending disaster. The second half of both films is when the disaster strikes, namely the bombing raid and the trek itself. There is a marked difference between the style of each part. During the disaster there is a focus on displaying images, often long shots (particularly in *Die Flucht*), without dialogue, allowing the viewer to appreciate the scope of the destruction and suffering in visual terms. Conforming to the framework of the disaster movie, all the characters (who survive) learn lessons about themselves and any conflicts are resolved. The problems with dealing with the National Socialist past using the framework of a disaster movie are twofold. The first is that treating the bombing of Dresden and expulsion from the East by the Red Army as equivalent to ‘natural’ disasters ignores the question of historical responsibility. It refuses to acknowledge that

²³¹ Buß, ‘Go West Gräfin’.

²³² Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 540-62.

²³³ *Die Flucht*, Part 1, (0:25).

these events were in retaliation for crimes of the Nazis, suggesting they were as unavoidable as a tornado, or volcano, and therefore avoiding issues of guilt entirely. The second problem is the disaster movies' approach to death and victimhood. Traditionally, the victims of the disaster are either the films' antagonists or martyrs, who perish saving other people; the virtuous couple will (nearly) always survive the disaster. So in *Dresden*, most of the film's central characters survive the bombing, including the central couple Anna and Robert. The only central character who perishes is Anna's father, evidently in order to atone for his sins during the film (namely smuggling morphine from the hospital) and also in order to allow Anna freedom in her new life. This refutes the claims of scriptwriter Stefan Kolditz, who claimed that his script wanted to show that bombing "demokratisiert das Sterben."²³⁴ In *Die Flucht*, the death of Heinrich's father, Rüdiger von Gernstorff and Lena's father – as Dr Mauth's in *Dresden* – represent a symbolic death of the older generation and old way of life. Within this framework, the rape of Babette is extremely problematic, in that it comes seemingly as punishment for her fervent support of Hitler and the Nazis, even when everyone else at the estate has turned their back on them. This disaster movie structure is highly questionable given that it appears to suggest that those who perished during the disasters of the last days of National Socialism were somehow deserving and that those who survived were therefore virtuous and guilt-free, which could act against any nuanced discussions of victimhood to be found elsewhere in the film.

Another movie genre to which *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* conform is that of the heritage film, a more 'European' mode of filmmaking. This follows the recent trend of heritage pictures in German historical cinema, as detailed in Lutz Koepnick's article 'Reframing the Past: Heritage Cinema and Holocaust in the 1990s.'²³⁵ Heritage features "transform the past into an object of consumption" and "present the texture of the past as a source of visual attractions and aural pleasures."²³⁶ They allow the viewer to enter into the world of the film and to experience the past vicariously. *Dresden* could certainly be categorised as an example of Koepnick's heritage cinema.²³⁷ Director Richter strived for the look and feel of the past, to make "palpable to viewers how it must have been."²³⁸ Similarly Stephan Jaeger claims the task of the filmmaker is to "find representations that allow their audience to enter into the experience of something

²³⁴ Hoffmann, 'Make Love Not War'.

²³⁵ Koepnick, 'Reframing the Past', pp. 47-82, as discussed in Section 2.4.2.

²³⁶ Ibid., p. 50.

²³⁷ See Crew, 'Sleeping with the Enemy?', p. 118.

²³⁸ Ibid., p. 129.

that seems unique and fully accessible only to survivors who experienced the bombings.”²³⁹ The importance of experience and feeling is reinforced by Hofmann’s words on the subject: “In *Dresden* ist es dann der zweite Teil, wo du die Bombardierung eben dann 45-Minutenlang auch siehst und spürst. Die ganzen Geschichten sind so aufgebaut, dass sie sich dann quasi in das eigene historische Drama reinführt und du das Drama miterlebst über die Figuren.”²⁴⁰ Gabriela Sperl further noted that the ‘große Bilder’ of *Die Flucht* help to involve the viewer in the film: “Wir wollten [...] dieses Gefühl – man verliert seine Heimat – das wollten wir irgendwie sinnlich und erfahrbar machen.”²⁴¹ This focus on material elements is integral in creating a fully liveable version of the past into which the viewer can insert themselves. The Event Movies’ use of the heritage mode can most clearly be seen in the ballroom scenes in both films – Anna’s engagement party in *Dresden* and Lena’s ‘Polterabend’ in *Die Flucht*. Both of these scenes take place in opulent surroundings, feature sumptuous period dress and a rich musical soundtrack. These sequences are extended far beyond their narrative importance and feature many shots of guests dancing, drinking and enjoying themselves in order to place the viewer within the scene. In *Die Flucht*, this sense is also assisted by the camerawork, which features a 360-degree pan around Lena and her father dancing together, taking in the guests in the background. This focus on the material aspects, as discussed previously with regard to authenticity, also helps to create a well-defined sense of the historical period which the audience can share. In common with many British heritage films, there is a certain fascination with period dress: both films show the central characters trying on their dress for the party in a mirror. Similarly, there is also a fascination with stately homes, as in *Die Flucht*, where there are several sequences focusing on the material aspects of the nobility: maids cleaning the silverware and chandeliers at Schloss Gernstorff and Babette wrapping up and hiding the family’s valuable possessions at Schloss Mahlenberg. Indeed there is at times an ‘Upstairs, Downstairs’ feel to the film, as it cuts between the opulence of the stately homes and the harsh realities of life in the kitchens. For German viewers there will also be a reminder of the daily soap *Verbotene Liebe*, which is set in a stately home and currently portrays the lives and loves of the von Lahnstein family as well as their

²³⁹ Jaeger, ‘Visualizations of the Bombing of Dresden’, p. 407.

²⁴⁰ Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 199-202.

²⁴¹ *Die Flucht: Making Of*, (0:19).

staff.²⁴² The later meeting of the refugees at the ‘Lahnstein’ estate is surely a coincidence of nomenclature, although certainly helps to cement the link in the mind of the German viewer. As well as these more classic examples of heritage, the bombing scene in *Dresden* also serves to place viewers in the centre of the action. The 360-degree set, shown through a number of sweeping pans, gives the viewer a sense of claustrophobia and empathy with the characters in its midst. Allowing the audience to experience the past in this way not only helps them empathise with the narrative developments of the film, but also the emotional suffering of the characters and allows them to gain a feel and understanding for the history portrayed. How this is achieved can be explained by referring to Alison Landsberg’s theory of ‘prosthetic memories.’²⁴³ These films can provide memories which “bridge the temporal chasms that separate individuals from the meaningful and potentially interpellative events of the past.”²⁴⁴ So allowing viewers to enter into this history allows them to ‘experience’ vicariously the horrors of the bombing war on a very personal level. Similarly, the use of this effect in *Die Flucht* allows the viewer to mourn the passing of the way of life left behind by Lena. A perfect example of this is cutting from the grand ballroom scene mentioned previously directly to the following scene – in the same room the next morning – which depicts Ferdinand’s body laid out in a coffin. Since the viewer is drawn into events by invoking the heritage mode, they feel more acutely the personal, emotional and furthermore historical implications of this.

As well as comparing *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* to film genres such as the melodrama or the Hollywood blockbuster, it is worth at this point analysing the similarities between these films and teamWorx’s other Event Movies, and how this affects their approach to history. There can be no denying the narrative similarities between *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* and the rest of teamWorx’s Event Movie canon. Amongst many others Helmut Ziegler noted: “Irgendwann wird ein Filmhochschüler seine Diplomarbeit über ‘Strukturelle Ähnlichkeiten in den Drehbüchern der Produktionsfirma Teamworx’ schreiben wollen.”²⁴⁵ This is particularly noticeable in the trio of Event Movies: *Die Luftbrücke*, *Die Sturmflut* and *Dresden*, all of which were released within a year of each other and all of which feature a love triangle against the

²⁴² As noted by Decker in ‘Frau Gräfin’. It is worth mentioning that two of teamWorx’s founding members, Wolf Bauer and Ariane Krampe, worked as producers on *Verbotene Liebe* during its earliest days in the 1990s.

²⁴³ See Section 1.2.1 for more on this theory.

²⁴⁴ Landsberg, ‘Prosthetic memory’, p. 148.

²⁴⁵ Ziegler, ‘Zwischen Kitsch und Kunst’.

background of an historical event.²⁴⁶ Although Hofmann maintains the idea for these three films came from three different teams working separately, there is an uncanny resemblance between them.²⁴⁷ Similarly, the trope of the single mother as protagonist, as in *Die Flucht*, has been repeated in many Event Movies, such as *Nicht alle waren Mörder* and also *Die Luftbrücke*, *Die Sturmflut* and *Die Grenze*, setting familial relationships against the backdrop of historical events.²⁴⁸ Although obviously successful in its aim of attracting viewers (both *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* were teamWorx's most successful Event Movies to date), the use of such a 'formula' to tell such widely disparate stories was criticised by many reviewers, many of whom objected to the "TV movie of the week treatment of a German national tragedy."²⁴⁹ These structural similarities, especially comparing *Dresden* to *Die Sturmflut*, for example, which also features a love triangle involving a head doctor, have the result of sacrificing the plausibility of the history being told.²⁵⁰ It was put to Hofmann in an interview that using the same narrative structure has the effect of dehistoricising the historical background of the films, an accusation which Hofmann vehemently denied.²⁵¹ Wessel, on the other hand, spoke about the pressure to include a love story in *Die Flucht*, which is worth reproducing at length, as it provides an insight into the inner workings of teamWorx and the ongoing struggle (or balance, depending on one's viewpoint) between ratings and history:

"In der Zeit, wo der Stoff entwickelt wurde, das war ja noch bevor *Dresden* lief, da war das große Erfolgsgeheimnis 'Liebesgeschichte,' gerade im Hause teamWorx war 'Liebesgeschichte,' 'Liebesgeschichte,' 'Liebesgeschichte' und dem Druck, sich zu widersetzen, alleine, das hätte ich gar nicht geschafft. Also, das war gar nicht leicht. Gabriela Sperl, die eben auch gesagt hat, Liebesgeschichte, vielleicht muss es sein aber wenn, müssen wir das anders machen als wir das kennen und wir müssen uns da was einfallen lassen, dass das nicht so eine Schmalzgeschichte wird, weil eigentlich wollen wir was anderes erzählen."²⁵²

Wessel does however maintain that using a love story as the basis for dealing with another theme, is a valid cinematic tool:

"Es ist schon legitim sowas wie ein Motor einzubauen in eine Geschichte die da läuft, sei es ein Krimi oder eine Liebesgeschichte, um so eine Dramaturgie am Laufen zu haben,

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ See Christian Buß, 'Eine Art Völkerverständigung', in *taz*, 3 March 2006.

²⁴⁸ *Nicht alle waren Mörder* will be discussed later at length in Chapter 4.

²⁴⁹ James and Norris, 'Movie About Dresden'. This criticism referred solely to *Dresden*.

²⁵⁰ See Simon-Zülch, 'Quote und Qualität'.

²⁵¹ See Buß, 'Eine Art Völkerverständigung'.

²⁵² Interview with Kai Wessel, lines 147-55.

und an den Ränden und an den Seiten, so genau wie möglich, etwas Anderes zu erzählen, was einem eigentlich viel wichtiger [ist].²⁵³

In this way, a love story allows teamWorx to attract viewers yet the films can simultaneously utilise this love story to open up and deal with various issues surrounding the historical period.

This leads to an integral question for teamWorx's Event Movies, involving the question of ratings and whether the Event Movies are indeed solely constructed in order to gain viewers or whether this is achieved precisely because of their bold approach to history and historical debates. Hofmann maintained that ratings are of secondary importance. He said, of *Dresden*: "Wenn du einen Film machst von so einer physischen Heftigkeit, spekulierst du nicht auf Quote."²⁵⁴ Wessel was very aware of the necessity of success for *Die Flucht*, due to the high budget and high expectations.²⁵⁵ This was reinforced in the 'Making Of' documentary, where Wessel acknowledged that *Die Flucht* was not meant to be a documentary but an entertainment film: "Wir müssen trotzdem und vor allem natürlich auch eine Geschichte erzählen."²⁵⁶ Certain critical reactions to the films question whether the use of this dramatic formula is a necessary evil in attracting viewers, while others ask: "Ist der Preis, Geschichte so darzustellen, zu hoch: Man erreicht über 13 Millionen Zuschauer, aber die haben nun ein in Teilen schräges Geschichtsbild im Kopf?"²⁵⁷ Indeed, it seems somewhat cynical to suggest that one can only interest 'the masses' in history through the TV blockbuster format, which includes the obligatory love story.²⁵⁸ Others have been more harsh, suggesting that *Dresden* in particular represented a rejection of history in favour of audience-grabbing techniques: "Hier stimmt nur eines: die Einschaltquote," wrote Rainer Karlsch in a letter to the *Berliner Zeitung*.²⁵⁹

Finally, there is the issue of trivialisation. It must be asked whether forcing sensitive history into a TV movie mould and using devices from genre productions such as melodrama, blockbuster or heritage film negatively affects the history being told and whether its instrumentalisation for commercial gain should be permissible. There are suggestions that by converting historical events into objects for consumption by a

²⁵³ Ibid., lines 161-4.

²⁵⁴ Keil, 'Krieg und Frieden'.

²⁵⁵ See Interview with Kai Wessel, lines 73-9.

²⁵⁶ *Die Flucht: Making Of*, (0:04).

²⁵⁷ Burchaud, "Ein starker Erinnerungstopos".

²⁵⁸ See Finger, 'Die Ohnmacht der Bilder'.

²⁵⁹ Rainer Karlsch, "'Dresden': ZDF-Zweiteiler im Feuer der Gefühle", in *Berliner Zeitung*, 11 March 2006.

prime-time audience, the filmmakers are trivialising them.²⁶⁰ This criticism was particularly marked regarding *Dresden*, whose theme was one of the most serious and sensitive of all teamWorx's Event Movies up until that point. As Hannah Pilarczyk maintained, perhaps it could be forgivable for other films (such as *Der Tunnel*, *Die Sturmflut* or *Die Luftbrücke*), "dass sie die deutsche Historie gleichsam als Vorwand wie Kulisse nahmen, um emotionale Geschichte zu erzählen. Aber Dresden?"²⁶¹ With regards to *Dresden*, Kerstin Decker claimed: "Kitsch ist kitsch, sonst nichts, schon richtig, aber manchmal ist er ein Verbrechen."²⁶² *Die Flucht* was also criticised in this respect by Peter Steinbach, the film's historical advisor, who wondered whether the inclusion of a love story was historically appropriate,²⁶³ while historian Hannes Heer questioned this further: "Das Ganze noch mal als Melodram und dann noch als Adels-Schmonzette zu bringen, also das fand ich schon völlig daneben."²⁶⁴ Finally, Gustav Seibt described *Die Flucht* thus: "Das ganze ist eine nahrhafte Torte aus trockenen Böden von Didaktik mit cremigen Schichten von Gefühl und einem Schlag fetter Musiksahe oben drauf. Alles nicht verkehrt, politisch-historisch unanfechtbar, dabei unterhaltsam und ergreifend. Und eben doch zu süß und zu fett."²⁶⁵ Reviews such as these suggest the efforts made to make the historical and educational aspects of the film palatable for a wider audience have perhaps gone too far.

The filmmakers themselves and certain other critics have responded to accusations of trivialisation. The voiceover of the 'Making Of' documentary claims there was a clear aim in *Dresden*'s script "jeglicher Trivialisierung zu vermeiden"²⁶⁶ and Richard Overy refutes any encroaching sense of sentimentalisation in *Dresden*: "I've seen very few films which have managed to reconstruct what life was like in the Second World War without making it all romantic and sentimental."²⁶⁷ In her review in the *taz*, Hannah Pilarczyk sees *Dresden* as a test as to whether "eine deutsche Kriegstragödie sensibel fürs Fernsehen [umgesetzt werden kann]" – a test which, according to her, was passed successfully.²⁶⁸ There appears, however, to be very little criticism of teamWorx's employment of an American style to deal with a specifically German issue. Today, the lines between 'American' and 'German' style have been

²⁶⁰ See Finger, 'Der englische Pilot'.

²⁶¹ Hannah Pilarczyk, 'Dresden, 13. Februar 1945', in *taz*, 4 March 2006.

²⁶² Kerstin Decker, 'Schuld und Schwester', in *Tagesspiegel*, 4 March 2006.

²⁶³ See Burchaud, "Ein starker Erinnerungstopos".

²⁶⁴ Hanno Harnisch, 'Austausch des Inventars im Haus der Geschichte', in *Neues Deutschland*, 9 March 2007.

²⁶⁵ Gustav Seibt, 'Hinter einem Wall aus Leibern', in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2 March 2007.

²⁶⁶ *Das Making Of Dresden*, (0:04).

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, (0:12).

²⁶⁸ Pilarczyk, 'Dresden'.

blurred to such an extent that to criticise a television production for using the above devices because they come from America (rather than because they trivialise the subject *per se*) is ludicrous.²⁶⁹ teamWorx's further use of a more 'European' genre, that of heritage cinema, suggests it is simply making use of devices and styles which are proven to attract a large number of viewers. Most important for teamWorx then, is the German history shown. These so-called 'American' devices actually help create empathy with German characters and create an emotional link between them and the audience. Indeed, the devices and effects borrowed from mass-market movie genres, such as the melodrama, the Hollywood blockbuster and the heritage film have been employed for various reasons. Firstly, they attract a wider audience but also make this history more accessible to the general public. Employing melodrama and aspects of the heritage film allows the viewer to comprehend the wider historical issues and to experience this history through the creation of 'prosthetic memories.' The final question is really whether the value of bringing history to a wider audience outweighs the perceived trivialisation of history necessary for the Event Movies to work as Event Movies. This is a question which seemingly has no definitive answer.

3.2.4: Debates

The following section will investigate some of the debates surrounding representations of German victimhood on screen, analysing what contribution *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* make to these debates and how they are representative (or not) of efforts to come to terms with the Nazi past. It will firstly focus on the issue of victimhood: how are victims presented in teamWorx's Event Movies and, importantly, who is to be considered a victim? Both films do indeed put the issue of wartime suffering to the fore. Scriptwriter Kolditz maintains that in *Dresden*: "Wir erzählen was Krieg wirklich ist: unendliches Leid."²⁷⁰ Hannes Heer has further suggested that these films can have a concrete effect on the way in which victimhood is remembered in German society, claiming they could be used as support for the creation of the 'Zentrum gegen Vertreibungen' by the 'Bund der Vertriebenen' and similarly for Jörg Friedrich's proposed 'Zentrum für die Opfer des Bombenkrieges,' for instance.²⁷¹

To evaluate these claims and investigate how representations of victimhood could be and have been instrumentalised, it is firstly necessary to explore the depiction

²⁶⁹ See Section 2.2.2 for more on the supposed dichotomy between German and Hollywood filmmaking.

²⁷⁰ Hanfeld, 'Dresden, brennende Stadt'.

²⁷¹ See Harnisch, 'Austausch des Inventars'.

of victimhood and suffering within the films themselves. In *Dresden* the characterisation of Germany as a nation of victims begins with the opening titles: ‘Im Osten hat am 12. Januar die Rote Armee mit ihrer entscheidenden Großoffensive begonnen’ and ‘Die amerikanische und britische Luftwaffe beherrschen unangefochten den deutschen Luftraum. Mittlerweile können die britischen Bomber jede deutsche Stadt angreifen.’²⁷² These are shown over a smoky, increasingly red-tinged background. These titles also acknowledge a certain amount of German perpetration: referring to the ‘Ardennenoffensive der deutschen Wehrmacht’²⁷³ and the ‘KZ Auschwitz,’²⁷⁴ giving a wider view of suffering during the Second World War. These titles suggest a defeated nation, underscoring the description of the city at this time in the film’s ‘Making Of’ documentary: “Dresden war so gut wie wehrlos.”²⁷⁵ Situating much of the film’s first part inside a hospital gives ample opportunity to depict victims of the war in gruesome detail. The first scene of the film portrays an operation on a soldier from the front line, who has grenade shrapnel in his body. He is clearly in pain and his life is in danger. In many scenes taking place in the hospital, including during exchanges between Anna and her father, an ambulance arrives from the front line, transporting injured troops. A constant stream of injured soldiers appears at the hospital, simultaneously suggesting the proximity of the Eastern front and that Anna and the rest of the city are in imminent danger. In one scene Anna’s friend and colleague Maria comments: “Vielleicht sind wir das Frontlazarett.”²⁷⁶ As well as the hospital’s military patients, the ‘ordinary’ citizens of Dresden are depicted as victims of the war. The film begins with an air raid warning in the hospital, suggesting that the population are constantly under threat. Similarly, there are several scenes throughout the film of long lines of refugees walking across the bridge into the city and later gathered by the railway station to receive food, which highlights the desperate situation of the Germans at this time. The lack of food and supplies is also mentioned by many of the characters, showing the effects of the war on daily life in the city. Simon Goldberg’s joke reveals this: “Was ist der Unterschied zwischen Indien und Deutschland? In Indien hungert ein Mann fürs ganze Volk und in Deutschland hungert ein ganzes Volk für einen Mann.”²⁷⁷ Anna’s family have already seen the effects of the war; her brother died fighting at the front, which has left scars on the surviving family members. The final sequences of the bombing in the film’s second

²⁷² *Dresden*, Part 1, (0:00).

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, Part 1, (0:00).

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Part 1, (0:00).

²⁷⁵ *Das Making Of Dresden*, (0:01).

²⁷⁶ *Dresden*, Part 1, (0:26).

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, Part 1, (0:38).

half are a litany of suffering, affecting all of Dresden's population. These scenes feature shocking images of death and destruction: people whose possessions are on fire; a man with a wooden leg, which has caught ablaze; and a woman pulling a burning pram along the street, amongst many others. Added to this are a number of extended sequences in the air raid shelters underneath the city. People are depicted suffocating with carbon monoxide poisoning and a group of elderly people plead with a soldier to shoot them before they suffocate, which he does before turning the weapon on himself. The images of charred bodies and the completely destroyed city the following morning leave no doubt in the viewer's mind as to how much the citizens of Dresden suffered that night.

The protagonists of *Die Flucht* are also portrayed as victims from a great many sources. From the beginning of the film it is clear that the German population is suffering as a result of the war. Lena's daughter Vicky is sent away because it is not safe in Berlin, due to the constant bombing raids. The viewer learns that Lena was only able to leave the capital because all the schools had been closed, suggesting the city was in chaos at that time. As in *Dresden* there are constant complaints that there is not enough food or supplies and like Anna, Lena's brother has already fallen in the conflict. Once the trek begins in earnest in the film's second half, many more examples of suffering are depicted; the hardships crossing the snowy wastelands are plain to see, and there are a number of sequences which underscore this. A horse and its carriage, along with its passengers, are lost under the ice and in another scene a woman's child has frozen to death in her arms. Added to these images of suffering caused by war in an abstract sense, it is also clear that the Russians are to blame for much of the suffering of the protagonists. It is Russian soldiers who rape Babette and Frau Meister, Russian aircraft which shoot at the caravan without provocation and a Russian tank appears at the end of the film's first part, killing the butler, destroying Schloss Mahlenberg and providing a physical embodiment of why Lena and the rest of the refugees were forced to leave. In addition to this, the central protagonists are clearly victims of National Socialism. This can be seen throughout the film and is first suggested by the lack of men at the Mahlenberg estate. Babette informs Lena that her husband Georg and the others have been taken by the Nazis to fight. The Nazis' disregard for their own population is made clear later on, when Babette's son Fritz joins the 'Volkssturm,' a laughable rag-tag band of old men and children. The men of the SS, whom Lena pleads for permission to leave, are archetypal 'evil' Nazis, lacking any sense of human empathy. The viewer learns of the party's proclamation regarding the treks through Lena's voiceover: "Ostpreußen werde sich wie ein Wall von Leibern dem Feind

entgegenstellen.”²⁷⁸ This is reinforced by the words of the SS: “Ostpreußen ist eine Festung. Die Menschen sind die Festung”²⁷⁹ and “Wer geht wird mit dem Tode bestraft.”²⁸⁰ Ultimately the SS reveal their complete abandonment of the German people: “Jetzt gibt’s nur eines. Endsieg oder Untergang. Und wenn wir untergehen, dann nehmen wir euch mit. Gerade euch.”²⁸¹ Fear of the Nazis runs throughout the film and is in some respects more present and dominating than the fear of the Russian invaders. Lena tells Francois to destroy the escape wagon the prisoners of war were secretly building, since they would all be hanged because of ‘defeatism,’ were it to be discovered. Ferdinand shoots himself because he dare not go back to the front and is aware that he will be shot anyway for desertion. Along the trek route there are a number of hanged people with cardboard signs around their necks with such slogans as: ‘Ich bin ein Verräter-Schwein’ and ‘Ich wollte fliehen.’

In the Event Movies, Germans can also be categorised as victims in a much more subtle way. This may allow the present-day German viewer to consider themselves a victim of the loss caused by the descent into fascism and the subsequent destruction of German culture during the war years. *Dresden* represents the disappearance of a unique world, which is clear from the title sequence. Mournful nostalgic music is played over images of pre-war Dresden, pre-empting a sense of loss. This is typified by the ‘Leitmotif’ of Martin Luther, representing Germany’s cultural and enlightened history, after whom Anna’s hospital is named and whose statue is depicted throughout the film. At first it stands proudly in the square in front of the Frauenkirche and then, after the bombings, destroyed on the ground, which is shown in both film and archive footage. Importantly, it is with a shot of the new, re-erected statue that the documentary footage of 2005 begins: the suggestion here is that it is only 60 years after the bombing, with the rebuilding of the Frauenkirche, that Dresden and Germany can reclaim this former glory. This theme is much more noticeable in *Die Flucht*, which portrays the German people as victims relating to the loss of Eastern ‘Heimat’ and the loss of the German (particularly Prussian) nobility. These are both ambiguous losses, however. With reference to the lands of East Prussia, the concept of German ‘Heimat’ is invoked, and there is a focus both on Lena’s relationship to the land

²⁷⁸ *Die Flucht*, Part 1, (1:12).

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Part 1, (1:13).

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Part 1, (1:14).

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Part 1, (1:15).

and the beauty and goodness of the natural world.²⁸² Lena's voiceover at the beginning of the film reports: "In der Hoffnung auf Versöhnung war ich nach acht Jahren zum ersten Mal wieder in meiner Heimat,"²⁸³ which could be taken literally, in the sense that she was born there, but also in a deeper metaphorical sense. The many scenes of Lena riding her horse through this landscape and the beautiful tableaux of hills and sky reinforce her relationship to it. In an exchange between Lena and Rüdiger the landscape is fetishised and the sense of loss becomes apparent. Rüdiger tells Lena: "Das Licht so stark. Der Himmel so hoch. Die Ferne so mächtig. [...] Schau es dir an, Lena. Ein letztes Mal. Du wirst es so niemals wiedersehen."²⁸⁴ The importance of nature is also underscored throughout the film, reinforced by the folk song sung by the workers at the end of the harvest time, which revolves around the natural world, and the birdsong and insect noise which penetrate the soundtrack. It is partially this which marks the differences between Lena's two suitors. Francois is seen to be close to nature, riding horses and working in the fields, whereas Heinrich is often seen driving a car and is at home in the opulent surroundings of Schloss Gernstorff, or behind a desk. The scenes in Bavaria, at the end of the refugees' long trek, call into question this image of lost 'Heimat,' however. The colours in this new Germany are bright and vivid, the grass is green, the meadows yellow and the skies a cloudless blue. It is summertime and the refugees are seen eating, relaxing and playing outside. In order to solidify their relationship Lena and Francois take a walk through the beautiful scenery, taking shelter under a tree when it rains, where they enjoy a passionate kiss. "So ungewiss unsere Zukunft war, so sicher wusste ich, dass sie nichts mit der Welt zu tun haben würde, aus der wir gekommen waren, und dass ich nicht mehr die gleiche war," Lena's voiceover informs the viewer.²⁸⁵ This seems to suggest there is a new 'Heimat,' just as beautiful as the old one, with new friends and new allies, disposing of any revisionistic tendencies which may have been suggested by a longing for the East.

Similarly, there is perhaps a sense of loss regarding the Prussian nobility, represented by Lena and Heinrich's families. Lena enjoys certain privileges throughout the film, because of her class. She uses her status as 'Gräfin' to get back her horses from the Nazis and remonstrates with them about the prisoners of war. Even during the trek, Lena, as 'Gräfin,' is offered a comfortable bed to sleep in, while the others must make

²⁸² The term 'Heimat' is difficult to define and has a myriad of connotations. For an exploration of this theme see Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat A German Dream: Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

²⁸³ *Die Flucht*, Part 1, (0:02).

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Part 1, (1:17).

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, Part 2, (1:13).

do with the stables. Similarly, Lena does her best to rise to the demands of her nobility, including agreeing to marry Heinrich. She tells Francois: “Ich [lebe] in einer Welt [...], in der man sich verantwortlich fühlt, in der es Traditionen gibt, und deshalb heirate ich auch!” and speaks often of her duty towards her family.²⁸⁶ It is presented as a tragedy that the nobility is threatened. Ferdinand blames Hitler for this downfall: “600 Jahre Tradition, [...] ausradiert, vorbei, vernichtet. Das hat er innerhalb von 11 Jahren geschafft.”²⁸⁷ The suicides of both Lena’s father and Rüdiger suggest, however, that the old traditions are perhaps best left in the past, especially considering the links the Prussian noble families had with the Nazi movement and that the new way of thinking, represented by Lena and Vicky, as well as the movement into a more egalitarian society with close links to Europe (through Francois), is something to be welcomed.

The question arising from this portrayal of various aspects of German victimhood is whether the two films could be understood as guilty of revisionism and whether by representing the German people as victims of the war they are guilty of relativising the crimes committed by Germans in this period. This follows on from criticism of Friedrich’s *Der Brand* and of the ‘Bund der Vertriebenen,’ who were criticised for attempting to lessen German guilt by portraying German suffering and furthermore comparing this to the suffering caused by Germans, in particular the Holocaust.²⁸⁸ Many critics did indeed note revisionistic tendencies within these Event Movies. Jan Freitag described *Die Flucht* as “ein weiterer Schritt zur Relativierung im Fernsehen,”²⁸⁹ and Daland Segler referred to the film as “[ein Versuch] gut 60 Jahre nach Kriegsende die Deutschen als Volk von Opfern von ihrer Schuld reinzuwaschen.”²⁹⁰ Yet it was *Dresden* which was most criticised in this respect. Evelyn Finger criticised the film sharply in *Die Zeit*, arguing that although its first half dealt with crimes of the Germans, the horrors of the firestorm suggest that Germany had successfully paid its penance: “[After the suffering of the bombings,] dann erscheint alles zuvor begangene Unrecht mit einem Schlag abgebüßt.”²⁹¹ Similarly, she argued *Dresden* represents a reversal of the standard perpetrator/victim model: “Wer vorher Täter war, ist plötzlich Opfer. Wer sich vorher mitschuldig fühlte an Hitlers ‘totalen Krieg’ ist nun ins Recht gesetzt durch Churchills ‘moral bombing.’”²⁹²

²⁸⁶ Ibid., Part 1, (0:54).

²⁸⁷ Ibid., Part 1, (1:01).

²⁸⁸ See the previous discussion on *Der Brand* and the ‘Bund der Vertriebenen’ in Section 3.1.1 and 3.1.2.

²⁸⁹ Freitag, ‘Rote Wangen’.

²⁹⁰ Segler, ‘Engel der Gestrandeten’.

²⁹¹ Finger, ‘Der englische Pilot’.

²⁹² Ibid.

Nevertheless, despite these accusations, the filmmakers and other commentators maintain *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* should not be understood as revisionistic or relativistic. Hofmann said of *Dresden*: “Es dürfen keine revisionistische Gelüste bedient werden”²⁹³ and furthermore compared it to Friedrich’s *Der Brand* as “[das,] was ich nicht wollte: einen Film über die Opfer von Dresden, der in nationalistisches Pathos abrutscht.”²⁹⁴ This was reinforced by the film’s producers, from both teamWorx and ZDF, including Günter van Endert, who maintained the filmmakers did not want to give a black-and-white picture of guilt and responsibility: “Wir wollten natürlich nicht sagen die Deutsche waren [...] die Opfer, die Engländer waren die Täter.”²⁹⁵ Hans Janke further claimed: “*Dresden* soll: ‘die nazideutsche Ursprungschuld am zweiten Weltkrieg, am Tod von 50 Millionen Menschen’ nicht dadurch relativisieren, dass der britische Angriff als das gekennzeichnet sei, was er war: ‘eine fürchterliche Verheerung.’”²⁹⁶ Janke furthermore denied that the film challenges the primacy of Jewish victimhood by claiming: “*Dresden* wird nicht vor dem Hintergrund von Auschwitz erzählt, aber Auschwitz ist da.”²⁹⁷ Many reviewers of the film agreed with this, praising *Dresden* for its intention “beim Thema Bombenkrieg den Deutschen nicht automatisch die bequeme Opferrolle zuzuschreiben.”²⁹⁸ Others argued the film shows Germans as victims without putting the issue of guilt to the background, something which “lähmt ihn nicht. Sondern verleiht ihm Tiefe, moralische Glaubwürdigkeit und ungeheure Suggestivität.”²⁹⁹ Another reviewer claimed: “Für Opferdiskurse bieten sich [...] keine Ansatzpunkte.”³⁰⁰ *Dresden*’s status as anti-war film above all could perhaps help it to avoid accusations of relativisation. “*Dresden* ist keine Aufrechnung, sondern ein Film über den Krieg gegen den Krieg,”³⁰¹ wrote Michael Hanfeld in his review of the film. Felicitas Woll meanwhile commented: “Für uns war es vor allem wichtig, dass es keine Schuldzuweisungen gibt. Wir wollten zeigen, dass Krieg immer etwas Furchtbares ist.”³⁰²

Wessel similarly denied any revisionistic tendencies were at work in *Die Flucht*. Although acknowledging it would be impossible to fully explore the complex issues of guilt from both sides, it was still important for him to avoid black-and-white depictions

²⁹³ Buß, ‘Eine Art Völkerverständigung’.

²⁹⁴ Hanfeld, ‘Eine Reise durch die Apokalypse’.

²⁹⁵ *Das Making Of Dresden*, (0:16).

²⁹⁶ See Keil, ‘Krieg und Frieden’.

²⁹⁷ *Das Making Of Dresden*, (0:13).

²⁹⁸ Finger, ‘Der englische Pilot’.

²⁹⁹ Simon-Zülch, ‘Quote und Qualität’.

³⁰⁰ Pilarczyk, ‘Dresden’.

³⁰¹ Hanfeld, ‘Eine Reise durch die Apokalypse’.

³⁰² Wystrichowski, “‘Die Leute haben geweint’”.

– namely “der böse Russe und der gute Deutsche” – and to show that the suffering experienced by the characters in the film came from Germany itself.³⁰³ This was reinforced by many of the film’s reviewers, who saw it as a further example of how the distinctions between perpetrators and victims can be blurred without necessarily leading to revisionism;³⁰⁴ and praising it for walking the fine line between authentic portrayals of history and revisionistic interpretations.³⁰⁵ Hannes Heer, for example, sees *Die Flucht* to be (at least at first glance) politically correct.³⁰⁶ Finally, *Die Flucht* was praised for portraying a differentiated view of flight and expulsion: showing firstly that it also affected forced labourers and prisoners of war; secondly, that this suffering was a result of the actions of the Nazis and finally, that this history of flight and expulsion should be understood in the wider context of European flight and expulsion.³⁰⁷ To prove their lack of revisionistic tendencies, it was important for *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*’s filmmakers that the Event Movies should not receive any ‘Applaus von der falschen Seite.’³⁰⁸ So, for example, the crew made sure no Neo-Nazis managed to appear as extras in *Dresden*, as had been the case with *Der Untergang*.³⁰⁹ Wessel also rejected contact from the ‘Bund der Vertriebenen’ – Erika Steinbach had sent him an email after the film’s broadcast – because he wanted to remain free from association with them.³¹⁰ Referring to *Die Flucht*, Hofmann maintained: “Du darfst kein Applaus aus der revanchistischen Ecke bekommen,”³¹¹ and Joachim Kosack similarly hoped the film would not be “falsch benutzt.”³¹²

For some viewers and reviewers, however, the films were seen to be too politically correct, too balanced. This could potentially have a negative effect on any message they were trying to convey. Critic Helmut Ziegler wrote that “[*Dresden*] hält extrem die Waage [...], [sodass] kein Zuschauer in seinen Gefühlen verletzt sein dürfte.”³¹³ The film was criticised for including too many built-in ‘safety features,’ existing solely to deflect criticism of revisionism, such as the Jewish sub-plot, which

³⁰³ Interview with Kai Wessel. See lines 116-34.

³⁰⁴ See Freitag, ‘Rote Wangen’.

³⁰⁵ See Pätzold, ‘Die Flucht’.

³⁰⁶ See Harnisch, ‘Austausch des Inventars’.

³⁰⁷ See Burchaud, “‘Ein starker Erinnerungstopp’”.

³⁰⁸ See Steffen Grimberg, ‘Gefühlte Heimat’, in *taz*, 3 March 2007 and Heinrich et al (ed.), *ZDF Jahrbuch 2006*, p. 125.

³⁰⁹ See Hanfeld, ‘Eine Reise durch die Apokalypse’.

³¹⁰ See Interview with Kai Wessel, lines 359-72.

³¹¹ *Die Flucht: Making Of*, (0:03).

³¹² *Ibid.*, (0:26).

³¹³ Ziegler, ‘Zwischen Kitsch und Kunst’.

serves little dramaturgical function.³¹⁴ British journalist Roger Boyes reacted against the exaggerated political correctness of *Dresden*, asking: “Warum hat Deutschland nicht den Mut, seine Geschichte auf seiner Weise zu erzählen?” and “Warum muß man Dresden durch britische *und* deutsche Augen sehen?” He further claimed the filmmakers artificially inserted numerous examples of ‘bad Germans,’ in order to say to the world: “Seht her! Wir sind keine Rechtsradikalen!”³¹⁵ *Die Flucht* also encountered accusations of excessive political correctness. There were claims that it had to counter every scene featuring Germans as victims with one depicting the cruelty of the Nazis. Again this was put down to the filmmakers’ desire not to offend anyone.³¹⁶ This political correctness risks effacing the efforts made to deliver a nuanced depiction of guilt and responsibility and could affect how *Die Flucht* functions as a television film. Peter von Becker wrote: “Das alles ist keine Kunst, es ist nur das Schema einer quotenschielenden Political Correctness.”³¹⁷

Bearing in mind the accusations of revisionism and relativisation levelled at *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*, as well as the counter-arguments from filmmakers and other sources, the following section will use an analysis of the films to investigate the different ways in which they deal with questions of guilt and responsibility for the myriad of suffering depicted throughout. It will firstly address *Dresden*, which producer Jan Mojto has described as: “Ein hochpolitischer Film; ein Film, der die Frage stellt nach Verantwortung, Schuld und Sühne – auf deutscher und alliierter Seite.”³¹⁸ A dominant motif of *Dresden* was that the suffering depicted throughout was a result of National Socialism. This can be seen both in general terms, since the Nazis were responsible for beginning the war which claimed so many lives, and also because the Nazis were guilty of crimes against their own people. Scriptwriter Stefan Kolditz maintained: “Dieser Krieg ist vom deutschen Boden begonnen worden und kehrte am Ende des Krieges nach Deutschland zurück.”³¹⁹ This was also noted by several critics: “*Dresden* sieht ein Zeichen für die deutschen Opfer, aber lässt nie einem Zweifel daran, wer letztendlich die Schuld für diesen Angriff hatte: Der von den Nazis mit aller Brutalität in die Welt hinausgetragene Krieg kehrte mit dem britischen Lancaster-

³¹⁴ See Hanfeld, ‘In der Wut des Feuersturms’ and Thomas Eckert and Joachim Huber, ‘Seid bitte nicht so puristisch deutsch’, in *Tagesspiegel*, 11 March 2006.

³¹⁵ Roger Boyes, ‘Dresden hat besseres verdient als “Dresden”’, in *Die Welt*, 7 March 2006.

³¹⁶ See Hanfeld, ‘Ostpreußens Gloria’.

³¹⁷ Von Becker, ‘Die Flucht vor uns selbst’.

³¹⁸ Hoffmann, ‘Make Love Not War’.

³¹⁹ *Das Making Of Dresden*, (0:16).

Staffeln lediglich in die deutsche Heimat zu.”³²⁰ Cornelia Wystrichowski further commented: “Der Film will Mitgefühl für die Opfer des Bombenangriffs auf Dresden wecken, verliert dabei aber nie aus dem Blick, dass Nazideutschland diese Katastrophe selber heraufbeschworen hat.”³²¹ The film suggests this outlook even during its opening titles. As well as portraying Germany as a war-torn nation at the brink of collapse, the titles highlight the crimes of the Germans, potentially even suggesting a causal link between the two. The titles furthermore name Auschwitz, which serves no real dramatic purpose but reminds the viewer of the horrific crimes of the Nazis and the role of the Allies in liberating the concentration camps. This theme continues throughout the title sequence, during which the viewer hears speeches from both Hitler and ‘Bomber’ Harris on the subject of the bombing campaign. Importantly, Hitler’s speech – which includes the phrase: “Wir werden ihre Städte ausradieren!”³²² – is heard first, suggesting Harris’s speech is a response to the aggression and warmongering of Hitler and the Nazis. A similar effect is achieved by the screening of newsreel footage during a scene taking place in a cinema. The newsreel shows bombed-out German cities but then quickly shows the damage caused to London by German bombers, which the newsreel voiceover celebrates. The support shown by the German people to the destruction caused by bombings helps to bring into doubt their status as victims once the bombs start to fall on Dresden. Gauleiter Mutschmann, in whose office Anna’s sister Eva works and who appears to be a friend of their family, represents the evil of the Nazis. In an almost comic sequence, Mutschmann overhears his Adjutant talking about the morphine plot and asks loudly whom he should string up. “Defätisten und Vaterlandsverräter,” comes the Adjutant’s formulaic answer.³²³ The release of tension, that he has not discovered their plan and the amusement which comes from placating the high-up officer using Nazi rhetoric, masks the true significance of this statement. A similar impression is gained from the scene where Gauleiter Mutschmann discovers Robert. As Robert is disguised in a German officer’s uniform, Mutschmann believes him to have suffered an injury at the front, leaving him unable to speak. The Gauleiter reassures Robert, by claiming: “Denken Sie daran, wer das getan hat, der wird bitter dafür bezahlen,”³²⁴ mirroring another of his statements at the party: “Wir werden dem

³²⁰ Heinrich et al (ed.), *ZDF Jahrbuch 2006*, p. 125.

³²¹ Wystrichowski, ““Die Leute haben geweint””.

³²² *Dresden*, Part 1, (0:01).

³²³ *Ibid.*, Part 2, (0:22).

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, Part 2, (0:14).

Feind seine Taten hundertfach zurückzahlen.”³²⁵ This underscores the belligerence of the Nazis in general but also serves a further purpose in justifying the actions of the British to bomb Dresden in order to stop further suffering. This furthermore suggests that, if given the chance, the Nazis would have done the same thing to Britain, but perhaps even worse, which may remove a certain amount of guilt from the British. Further cementing the portrayal of the Nazis as perpetrators, the actions of the German military against German civilians are highlighted throughout the film. Anna becomes embroiled in a shocking scene featuring a woman who is shot for attempting to hide her husband, a deserter. Despite the audience’s relief at Anna’s escape, the scene, which features gruesome make-up and which does not shy away from depicting the shooting, leaves no doubt in the viewer’s mind as to the crimes of the Nazis. This is reinforced by a scene towards the end of the film, during the morning after the bombing, where the whole city is in ruins. A man is shot for ‘stealing’ a pan from the debris of a house, witnessed by Eva and her mother. This arbitrary and nonsensical violence reminds the viewer that the suffering inflicted by the bombing raid does not wash clean the heinous sins of the Nazis. One final reminder of the crimes of the Nazis is the *mise-en-scène* of the scenes of refugees crossing the bridge into Dresden. The vibrant red swastika flags, contrasting with the monochrome colour scheme of the rest of the shot, frame the scene, suggesting perhaps that the suffering seen between them, and indeed throughout the rest of the film, is the result of National Socialism.

As well as the unquestionable guilt of the Nazis, there is also the suggestion within *Dresden* that the general populace bears some amount of guilt for the war in general and therefore also for the bombing of Dresden by the Allies in retaliation. The film reminds the viewer it is they who voted in the Nazis – or allowed their rise to power – and did not do enough to resist them. The responsibility of the German people at large was made clear by the filmmakers. Stefan Kolditz wanted to portray: “Der Mensch als Opfer und Schöpfer seiner eigenen Apokalypse.”³²⁶ Perhaps the most obvious example of the role of ‘ordinary’ Germans as agents of their own destruction and therefore of their responsibility for the suffering seen in the film is Anna’s father’s theft of morphine from the hospital. The lack of morphine is a running motif throughout the film’s first section: “Immer weniger Personal, immer mehr Patienten und kaum noch Medikamente,”³²⁷ complains Dr Mauth. This is firstly characterised as a result of the

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, Part 2, (0:10).

³²⁶ Hanfeld, ‘In der Wut des Feuersturms’.

³²⁷ *Dresden*, Part 1, (0:30).

war and the poor supply lines due to Allied invasion and bombing. It is seen to be a cause of much suffering: in the first scene in the hospital a patient is shown to be in a great deal of pain because the surgeons are forced to operate without anaesthetic. However, it soon becomes clear that this suffering is not in fact due to the Allies but is home-grown; it is Dr Mauth's avarice and desire for personal gain which causes his fellow Germans to suffer. This acts as a neat synecdoche for the film as a whole: although at first glance the suffering depicted is caused by the Allies, when one scratches the surface it is the German people themselves who are at the root of this suffering. The violence and aggression of the German people in general are also portrayed in the film. This is typified by the scene in which Robert and his comrades are shot by a group of men after parachuting from their aeroplanes, despite quoting the Geneva Convention to the uninterested peasants. The responsibility of the German people for the subsequent horrific air raid is underscored by Anna's exclamation during the bombing. As she, Alexander and Robert stand in the middle of the burning city, Alexander claims: "Das ist er," as he tussles with Robert, to which Anna replies: "Nein, das sind wir."³²⁸ The speed with which Anna concocts this retort and the unsuitability of a war zone for discussing questions of guilt and responsibility point to the artificiality of this response, and furthermore suggest that this and other sections of the film were inserted merely to provide a handy defence against accusations of revisionism. There is furthermore a sense that the German people are complicit with the Nazis in their crimes and are therefore equally responsible for the war and subsequent retribution. An example of this is Eva, whose relationship with Gauleiter Mutschmann's Adjutant is alluded to throughout the film. It is clear that she has 'gotten into bed' with the Nazi in order to receive certain short-term material gains, again something of an allegory for the German population during the Third Reich. The use of Nazi imagery to describe this sexual relationship further underscores this: "Kraft durch Freude?" Anna asks her sister, in order to not-so-subtly enquire as to whether Eva has slept with the Adjutant in return for helping the family with supplies for the engagement party, to which Eva replies: "Triumph des Willens!"³²⁹ Anna's mother is an ambiguous character. Although she is unkind to the family's (presumably) Eastern European maid, she deals with most of the harsh realities of life in the Third Reich by simply ignoring them. She forces Anna to look away from a hanged Jewish man during their tram ride and spends the majority of the film self-medicating through a combination of pills and alcohol; during the

³²⁸ Ibid., Part 2, (1:02).

³²⁹ Ibid., Part 1, (0:38).

engagement party scene it is suggested she is an alcoholic. This could be seen as representing the willingness of some of the German population to ‘turn their head away’ from the problems of Nazism and the crimes committed in their name. Finally the scene in the bunker, where a group of elderly people plead with a soldier to shoot them before they asphyxiate, could be a reference to the complicity of the German people in their own downfall. Through their actions (or inaction), they stand responsible for the suffering that was delivered to them and that they literally ‘asked for it.’ Once more, these suggestions that the responsibility for the suffering in the film is laid at the feet of the German people may potentially protect the film from accusations of revisionism.

A theme running through *Dresden* is the treatment of Jewish people. This theme seems specifically designed to show both the crimes of the Nazis in general and the attitudes of the German population at large, thus once more attributing a sense of guilt to the Germans instead of the Allied bombers. Beginning the film with an allusion to Auschwitz, *Dresden* immediately aims to protect itself from accusations that it ignores or relativises the Holocaust (as with other efforts dealing with the bombing war, *Der Brand* being a prime example). During a tram ride Anna and her mother briefly see a hanged Jewish man, with a sign reading: ‘Ich habe mit einer deutschen Frau Rassenschande getrieben,’ before turning away. Earlier in the film Robert witnesses children and adults taunting a Jewish man, calling him “Judenschwein,” “Deutschlands Unglück”³³⁰ and other insults. This shows the attitudes of the general public and therefore potentially mitigates their status as victims when the bombs fall. Similarly, during the bombing scenes a Jewish man is repeatedly refused entry to a bunker. This lack of compassion shown by the Germans towards another human being perhaps has the effect of lessening the compassion the viewer feels for them as victims. The images of concentration camp victims, wearing the easily-recognisable uniform, to help clear dead bodies the morning after the bombing (a well-documented fact) further reminds the viewer of the victims of the Germans. It also reminds the viewer that *Dresden* was not an innocent city, since there evidently must have been a concentration camp close by. Finally, the scenes featuring Simon Goldberg highlight the treatment of Jewish people by the Nazi system. Simon has a dark humour, telling jokes about the execution of Jews and stating matter-of-factly: “Vor dem Ende bringen sie uns alle um. Das ist das Großartige an uns Deutschen, dass wir so gründlich sind,”³³¹ reminding the viewer of the hopelessness of the situation. This subplot culminates in an emotional scene, in

³³⁰ Ibid., Part 1, (0:26).

³³¹ Ibid., Part 1, (0:47).

which Simon has to deliver work orders (which would lead the recipients to concentration camps) to a Jewish woman and her young son, who in a moment of pure bathos, chats with Simon and introduces him to his teddy bear. Amidst such emotional anguish the viewer is forced to reassure themselves that these Jewish characters will not be taken to a concentration camp by the Nazis and that they will be saved this horror by the bombing of the city. Here, emotional blackmail is employed to convince the viewer of the necessity of the bombing in order to stop this vicious, ghastly and unfair regime.

Die Flucht also deals with questions of guilt and responsibility for the suffering depicted. As with *Dresden*, the responsibility of the Nazis for the war and its various effects are laid out in the very first scenes. This is made clear from Lena's voiceover: "Der von uns begonnene Krieg schlug jetzt mit voller Wucht auf uns zurück."³³² The specific crimes of the German army are similarly referred to by Ferdinand in an emotional outburst to his father, perhaps putting into context the crimes of the Soviet army depicted later in the film: "Damit auch du, Vater, endlich begreifst, dass wir nicht nur kämpfen, sondern morden, wir die Wehrmacht! [...] Frauen, Kinder, [...] Polen, Juden, Russen, erschossen haben wir sie."³³³ This is heard over the protestations of his father, who chooses to believe the myth of the 'saubere Wehrmacht.' The film also depicts victims of the Nazis themselves as dealt with previously: the hanged deserters, the intention of building a wall of bodies to protect East Prussia, not evacuating the population, taking away the old men and boys to form the 'Volkssturm' and finally the graphic murder of the prisoners of war by Nazi soldiers. In addition to this, however, much guilt is apportioned to the general German population. This is made clear by Lena's father as he differentiates this war from the last one: "Diesmal ist es anders. Wir haben uns gemein gemacht mit denen. Und wir sind dadurch selbst [...] Schuld."³³⁴ The guilt of 'ordinary' German people is characterised, somewhat problematically, by Babette and her son Fritz. Babette is seen to be a fervent supporter of the Nazis: "Mit der Wunderwaffe wird er sie alle zurücktreiben, der Führer,"³³⁵ she enthuses early in the film. As discussed previously, it is perhaps due to her belief in National Socialism that she is singled out for punishment, suffering rape by the Red Army. This seems to suggest a clear causal link between Nazism and the suffering undergone by the German population in the last days of the war. Similarly, Babette's son Fritz is a complete believer in National Socialism: "Der würde seinem Vater lieber heute als morgen an die

³³² *Die Flucht*, Part 1, (0:01).

³³³ *Ibid.*, Part 1, (0:18).

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, Part 1, (0:40).

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, Part 1, (0:09).

Front folgen,³³⁶ she tells Lena, and later he willingly joins the ‘Volkssturm.’ Fritz is shown to be the cause of many of the problems and suffering experienced by the characters during the film. He reports the prisoners of war to the SS which results in them being taken away and nearly hanged (indeed, one of their number is shot trying to escape); he is partly responsible for Lena’s decision to send away Francois, the threat he represents is made clear by cutting to Fritz’s watching eyes as Lena and Francois kiss; and finally he represents an obstacle to the refugees’ assimilation in the new post-war German landscape, because of his clinging to the dream of National Socialism. He accuses his mother of betraying Hitler: “Auch du Mutter hast ihn verraten. Wir waren ihm nicht wert, der Führer!” before leaving the group.³³⁷ The way in which Fritz repeats old clichés about Hitler and the war, in face of overwhelming evidence, reveals him to be a victim of circumstance. He has spent most of his life under Hitler’s rule and has been constantly fed propaganda, not least by his mother. Oma Herta chastises Babette thus: “Er hat doch nichts anders gehört – auch von dir nicht!”³³⁸ The real fault here lies with his mother Babette; the repercussions of her generation’s whole-hearted acceptance of National Socialism is suggested by Fritz’s departure from the group. He storms off into the post-war landscape, ripping off the white armband of peace, perhaps pointing to the continuing problems of Neo-Nazism today.³³⁹ It is also suggested faintly that Lena and the other refugees are victims of the German people where they attempt to settle in Bavaria. This relates to the recent spate of research into attitudes towards the refugees from the East, who were often still seen as outsiders and treated very badly. Lena passes a sign reading ‘Wir wollen keine Fremden hier,’ whilst her voiceover maintains: “Aber auch hier wollte uns niemand auf Dauer haben.”³⁴⁰ The brief conversation she has with the unwelcoming Bavarian woman embodies this attitude. One final example of the responsibility of the ‘ordinary’ German for the suffering depicted is suggested by the character of Heinrich, who is the archetypal ‘Schreibtischtäter.’ He is accused by his brother Ferdinand of killing people without getting his hands dirty. This is proven firstly by Heinrich’s willingness to turn Ferdinand over to the military police, knowing full well that this would mean execution. Towards the end of the film, in the dying days of the war, Heinrich presides over a military court in which three deserters are sentenced to death. This blind willingness to follow orders and the inability to see one’s actions in a

³³⁶ Ibid., Part 1, (0:13).

³³⁷ Ibid., Part 2, (1:15).

³³⁸ Ibid., Part 1, (0:57).

³³⁹ See Heckner, ‘Televising Tainted History’, pp. 83-4 for more on this.

³⁴⁰ *Die Flucht*, Part 2, (1:05).

wider context – “Wir sind ganz kleine Rättchen,”³⁴¹ claims Heinrich – results in a failure to take responsibility for his crimes. His punishment is rejection as a possible suitor by Lena, who reacts against Heinrich’s sentencing of the three deserters: “Du bist einer von ihnen.”³⁴² In the post-Nazi future, the film suggests, there will be room only for those who are able to follow their own moral compass, not blindly follow orders.

Hierarchies of victimhood and of guilt and responsibility in the films are created by depicting the mitigated suffering of the central characters. Although they are seen to suffer, the suffering of other groups is often seen as much greater. In *Dresden*, Anna and her family complain about the war and the lack of supplies, although they are portrayed as reasonably well-off. They live in a large house, wear expensive furs and manage to eat well; this is specifically contrasted by cutting from a shot of the Goldbergs’ meagre dining table to one of the Mauths’ well-stocked breakfast table, suggesting there are people much worse off than these ‘average Germans.’ Similarly, the viewer is encouraged to feel empathy for the suffering of Lena and her family during their expulsion from the East, the loss of their homeland and the downfall of these noble families. Yet the opulence of Schloss Mahlenberg is constantly contrasted with the fates of others, particularly the very basic sleeping quarters of the prisoners of war. Exemplifying this is a scene in which Lena argues with her father about how to take care of the streams of refugees seeking shelter on the estate: he vetoes offering shelter to the refugees while being served tea from a silver pot, a scene which questions the status of these noble families as victims.

Integral to questions of guilt and responsibility is the separation of ‘ordinary’ Germans and Nazis. If these two groups are seen as disparate then blame can be laid solely with the former, absolving ‘ordinary’ Germans, as typified by the films’ central characters, of any sense of guilt. The filmmakers reportedly wanted to avoid depictions of heroism and the separation of people into the guilty and the innocent, but rather: “Die Widersprüche der Endkriegszeit in Deutschland zeigen.”³⁴³ Yet this does not appear to be the result. Many reviewers noted the films’ portrayal of heroic tendencies in the German population at large: “So sieht Selbstglorifizierung im großen Fernsehstil aus,” commented Evelyn Finger.³⁴⁴ Similarly, the films’ central characters were identified as possessing heroic qualities. This is true of both Anna – “Annas Unschuld wird zur

³⁴¹ Ibid., Part 2, (1:18).

³⁴² Ibid., Part 2, (1:18).

³⁴³ Hanfeld, ‘Dresden, brennende Stadt’.

³⁴⁴ Finger, ‘Der englische Pilot’.

moralischen Integrität. Und das macht sie zur positiven Identifikationsfigur³⁴⁵ – and Lena – “Die Gräfin ist nur als Heldin, nicht als Opfer und schon gar nicht als Täterin vorstellbar.”³⁴⁶ This is, in part, a problem caused by the demands of the prime-time TV Event Movie. The format requires positive figures for identification, clearly demarcated from the evil antagonists. Anna in *Dresden* is presented as an apolitical character, someone who thinks and acts according to her emotions, rather than to a defined political standpoint. The most marked device in separating Anna from the Nazis and presenting her as a positive identification figure is the subplot featuring the Goldbergs, to whom Anna secretly gives food. This portrays Anna as untainted by the Nazis’ politics, she is a resistor of the regime, yet this is presented not as an act of political resistance but as Anna simply helping a friend, an act with which the audience can easily identify. Her foolish mistake in giving a cut of pork to the Goldbergs shows her willingness to help and also presents her as something of a naïf, who is not really aware of all the implications of her actions. Further separation of Nazis and the German people is maintained by Anna herself during her romantic argument with Robert at her engagement party. She accuses him (and therefore the British) of being: “Kaum besser als die Nazis,”³⁴⁷ suggesting that she does not believe in the Nazis herself, and indeed thinks of them in a negative sense. This, however, is countered by Robert who makes reference to the Nazis present at the party. Anna’s protestation: “Das war nicht ich!”³⁴⁸ is met scathingly by Robert who remarks: “Den Satz sollst du dir merken, für die Zeit danach,”³⁴⁹ suggesting that the Germans, even those as apolitical as Anna, are in some way responsible for the actions of the Nazis. Anna’s and Alexander’s rejection of the Nazis and their warmongering is suggested in the same scene: as Gauleiter Mutschmann pontificates to a small group on Germany’s military tactics, on how the ‘Wunderwaffe’ would destroy their enemies and “[ihnen] in einem Blutbad tauchen,” the disgust on Anna and Alexander’s faces is clear.³⁵⁰ The rejection of National Socialism by the German population at large during the last days of the war is further suggested by the scene in which Eva tries to bargain her way into an air raid shelter by claiming her duties as secretary to Gauleiter Mutschmann make her more important. The assembled crowd react disparagingly to this, one woman telling her to go to their own Nazi bunker, where there is enough room.

³⁴⁵ Simon-Zülch, ‘Quote und Qualität’.

³⁴⁶ Finger, ‘Die Ohnmacht der Bilder’.

³⁴⁷ *Dresden*, Part 2, (0:07).

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Part 2, (0:07).

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Part 2, (0:07).

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Part 2, (0:09).

Similarly, *Die Flucht*'s Lena is presented in a most positive light: it is she who stands up for the prisoners of war when no-one else will, securing them more food to eat. She also offers shelter to the numerous refugees arriving at Schloss Mahlenberg, even when this is forbidden by her father. Lena is explicitly portrayed as disliking the National Socialists. This is established without subtlety in Babette's statement: "Ich weiss, du kannst sie [die Partei] nicht leiden"³⁵¹ and reinforced by her claim to Francois: "Ich habe nichts mit denen [the Nazis] zu tun."³⁵² This distance is established at the very beginning of the film with the woman who comes to take Vicky away from Berlin. She is something of a caricature, wearing swastikas all over her clothes and speaking in exaggerated Nazi language: "Deine Mama hat kriegswichtige Aufgaben und ist unentbehrlich für den Endsieg."³⁵³ She is regarded critically by both Lena and Vicky, suggesting they are not fervent believers in National Socialism. This is furthermore proven by the way in which Lena uses Nazi rhetoric in order to get her own way, whether to get back the horses requisitioned by the military – "Glauben Sie an den Endsieg? Sie glauben doch an den Führer?"³⁵⁴ – or getting Vicky sent back to her – "Meinen Sie die Partei wäre daran interessiert, dass eine deutsche Mutter nicht zu lang von ihrem Kind getrennt ist?"³⁵⁵ This not only shows that Lena dislikes the Nazis but that she is not afraid to stand up to them, to use their own system against them in order to protect her family and the people under her.

One final investigation into questions of guilt and responsibility centres around the portrayal of the British in *Dresden*. It seems that the film's depiction of Nazi Germany's enemies is as balanced as it is of the German people themselves, refusing to accuse the British of war crimes, which Friedrich did in *Der Brand*, and which many people feared the film would. To Hofmann it had always been clear that he would have to justify his film in front of British audiences, not least since he wanted to sell his film to the lucrative British market.³⁵⁶ The British Council in Germany organised a screening of the film and the British Embassy "wollte über den Film einen Diskurs führen."³⁵⁷ Hofmann maintained: "Der Film findet ja schließlich auch eine Balance in der Darstellung der Briten."³⁵⁸ Although *Dresden* graphically depicts the catastrophic events wrought by the bombers, on reflection their actions are portrayed as justified. In

³⁵¹ *Die Flucht*, Part 1, (0:13).

³⁵² *Ibid.*, Part 1, (0:53).

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, Part 1, (0:01).

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Part 1, (0:14).

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Part 1, (0:21).

³⁵⁶ See Ziegler, 'Zwischen Kitsch und Kunst'.

³⁵⁷ Hanfeld, 'Eine Reise durch die Apokalypse'.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

some respects, the British pilots and Bomber Command are presented as warlike and depicted as villains, yet this is balanced throughout. This image is suggested at the opening of the film as a speech from ‘Bomber’ Harris is played, calling Germany “a most interesting initial experiment,”³⁵⁹ showing something of a disregard for human life and the impression that war is simply a matter of profit and loss tallies. However, as mentioned previously, that this speech comes after that of Hitler suggests that the British bombing is in retaliation to the Germans’ actions, and that Harris’s lack of aggression compared to Hitler paints him as the moral superior of the two men. There are several instances of the British airmen making certain anti-German remarks, referring to their quarry as “Jerries”³⁶⁰ and “Fucking Germans.”³⁶¹ One of the airmen invokes a Biblical reference during the raid on Magdeburg: “And the Lord let fire and brimstone rain down from Heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah and thunder and hail did fall to the earth upon the godless and there came a terrible wind.”³⁶² He later laughs at the falling bombs, shouting: “And once again the courageous fiery riders of the Apocalypse have struck!”³⁶³ referring to the inhabitants of Dresden as: “Grilled Nazi pigs.”³⁶⁴ Robert’s fellow pilot and best friend William, however, is shown to be more sensitive to the suffering of others, visible from the close-ups of his disapproving reaction to this anti-German sentiment. He reproaches his fellow pilot, only for the viewer to learn: “Hey! My sister burned to death in Coventry. I’m not shedding any tears for those bastards down there.”³⁶⁵ This reminds the viewer that the British are not necessarily aggressive warmongers by nature – like the film’s depiction of the Nazis – but that it is the actions of the Nazis which have forced them to it. There are several other examples of this kind of behaviour, where the British are depicted taking pleasure in the bombing raids and lack respect for the victims. Bomber Command tells the bombers to: “Bomb the city till it burns.”³⁶⁶ Pilots are shown laughing and joking about the mission and ‘Bomber’ Harris congratulates them on the raid on Magdeburg, where they achieved “44 per cent total destruction.”³⁶⁷ There is also a suggestion that the British were motivated by a sense of inferiority, wanting to pull their weight against the more ‘senior’ Allied partners, the Americans and Russians. It is mentioned that the

³⁵⁹ *Dresden*, Part 1, (0:01).

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Part 1, (0:07).

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Part 1, (0:13).

³⁶² *Ibid.*, Part 1, (0:11).

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, Part 2, (0:50).

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Part 2, (0:50).

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Part 2, (0:50).

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Part 2, (0:28).

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Part 1, (0:20).

Prime Minister needs something to show they are still part of Allied military strategy. “Stalin expects our help!”³⁶⁸ maintains Harris. A contemporary British newspaper cartoon, of Stalin smashing National Socialism, is shown with the caption: ‘Do not let him do the job alone, Mr. Churchill!’³⁶⁹ This, however, could be understood as a suggestion that the actions of the Western Allies, in this case the British bombing raids, were necessary in order to prevent Stalin gaining an (even larger) foothold in Germany at the end of the war.

In addition to this, many of the British pilots and officers are seen to be peaceful, motivated purely by noble ends rather than aggression or even retaliation. This is reflected in the possible arguments given for the bombing and specifically the site of Dresden. The Prime Minister is worried the Germans will use poison gas or the atomic bomb and it is remarked that in Dresden there is a Gestapo Headquarters and a munitions factory as well as a poison gas works. The overall argument put forward is that: “The sooner this war ends, the fewer people will die.”³⁷⁰ Furthermore, the bombing is questioned openly by certain officers. Saundby suggests Germany is slowly being over-bombed and a fellow officer questions the target of Dresden, as he was there as a student before the war: “It’s the most beautiful city I’ve ever seen,” he enthuses.³⁷¹ The noble aims of the pilots are inferred throughout; the first scene of Robert throwing balls into Hitler’s mouth suggests the pilots are targeting Hitler specifically, not the ‘ordinary’ German people. Furthermore, in William’s toast to his fallen comrades (among whom he believes Robert to be), he claims they gave their lives “for England and the freedom of Europe,”³⁷² not solely to beat the Germans, lending a humanitarian edge to their actions. Through this balanced view of the British bomber pilots, *Dresden* manages to protect itself from charges of revisionism. At times, however, this balance seems excessive and therefore leads the viewer to question its historical accuracy. Portraying the British not as villains, nor even as heroes, but predominantly as victims of circumstance, threatens to bring British and Germans together in a community of victims. This absolves them all from questions of guilt and responsibility and instead portrays everyone as victims of war in very vague and general terms. The link between these supposed enemies is hinted at throughout the film. This is noticeable in the way in which the same Bible verse, first quoted by the priest of the Frauenkirche, at the behest

³⁶⁸ Ibid., Part 1, (0:31).

³⁶⁹ Ibid., Part 2, (0:30).

³⁷⁰ Ibid., Part 2, (0:19).

³⁷¹ Ibid., Part 2, (0:30).

³⁷² Ibid., Part 1, (0:29).

of Gauleiter Mutschmann, is repeated by one of the British pilots, suggesting the universal fallacy of war, that those who wage it always believe themselves to be in the right and that it is always the civilian population which suffers the most. This universalisation is hinted at during the bombing scene, with a cut from William, who is holding his mask over his face, to a similar shot of Anna holding a handkerchief over hers. Comparing these two people, especially during a scene of intense emotion and suffering, unites them in a community of victims. *Die Flucht* could also be said to contain such a suggestion, made clear as Lena and Francois reveal that both their brothers fell in the war: no matter what side you are on, war is always a personal tragedy. Yet even here a distinction is made: Francois's brother was ten years younger than Lena's when he was killed, so in the context of the conversation this allows him to refute Lena's request for sympathy. Here there remains a clear hierarchy in this community of victims, in that those who began the war perhaps should not be allowed the same victim status as those against whom the war was waged.

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, one of the main reasons for the recent resurgence of memory of German victimhood relates to the transmission of these memories from generation to generation. With reference to the Mitscherlichs' 'inability to mourn,' it is only through subsequent generations that this traumatic past can truly be confronted. The importance of generational memory transference and potential generational conflict in *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* is evident from the filmmakers and within the Event Movies themselves. The filmmakers acknowledged that different generations approach memory of the Nazi past differently: "Ich glaube, dass wir diese Filme wahrscheinlich anders machen, als es unsere Väter gemacht haben und ich glaube, dass unsere Kinder die Filme wieder anders machen," claimed producer Sascha Schwingel.³⁷³ Similarly, Hofmann maintained that the new generation of directors and actors approach this issue differently and that one can: "Das ganze deutsche Vergangenheitsthema nicht mehr so krampfhaft behandeln wie noch vor zwanzig Jahren."³⁷⁴ The importance of family narratives to the filmmakers and actors specifically has been noted in discussions on the films. Felicitas Woll, whose family lived through the bombings, as detailed previously, spoke on her own experiences of generation memory transference: "Es wurde viel in unserer Familie darüber gesprochen."³⁷⁵ She also noted the ability of *Dresden* to perform a similar function:

³⁷³ *Das Making Of Dresden*, (0:05).

³⁷⁴ *Die Flucht: Making Of*, (0:02).

³⁷⁵ 'Dresden ist weiblich'.

“Am Set mit seinen Szenen vor und während der Zerstörung merkte ich, dass hier etwas von Generation zu Generation weitergegeben wird. Da war plötzlich eine Verbindung da.”³⁷⁶ Speaking candidly for the ‘Making Of’ documentary, Heiner Lauterbach, who plays Anna’s father, claimed he “[trägt] Verantwortung an dem was meine Vorfahren gemacht haben im Dritten Reich.”³⁷⁷ As explored previously, Wessel’s personal engagement with the themes of *Die Flucht* came from the stories told by his grandmother, and he felt it was finally time to try and understand what she had been trying to say and what he had been ignoring for so long:

“Das ist natürlich sowas wie, wenn man jung ist... meine Großmutter hat immer wieder natürlich aus der alten Zeit erzählt und wie es nach dem Krieg war und so weiter, und man hört ja nicht zu. Als ich jung war, habe ich nicht zugehört. Das waren immer ihre Geschichten, aber es hatte mit meinem Leben nichts zu tun. [...] Ich hatte irgendwie das Gefühl, man ist jetzt irgendwie reif genug – für mich zumindest – reif genug, sich für das Leben von den Generationen vor allem auch wirklich zu interessieren.”³⁷⁸

As well as this acknowledgement of the importance of cross-generational transmission of memory in making the films, these Event Movies serve a vital function in facilitating generational conversations on the themes and issues depicted within. For example, at the premiere of *Dresden* all generations were represented, from 14-year-olds to 80-year-olds. At the reception afterwards hosted by ZDF “ergab sich eine familienübergreifende Debatte über den Krieg,”³⁷⁹ which Hofmann does not believe would have been possible without the film. A member of ZDF commented: “Wir wissen aus Gesprächen und Zuschauerpost, dass in vielen Familien nach der Sendung über die Erlebnisse im Bombenkrieg gesprochen wurde. Mit der jüngeren Generation oft zum ersten Mal. Privates Erinnern und traumatische Erfahrungen wurden in einen öffentlichen Diskurs überführt.”³⁸⁰ Hofmann has confirmed the generation-spanning qualities of the films:

“Bei *Dresden* und bei *Der Flucht* haben wir eine Publikumsuntersuchung gemacht über die Sender, wo ganz klar wird, dass teilweise Familien von den Enkelkinder über die Eltern über die Großeltern [...] haben teilweise zu dritt über drei Generationen vorm Fernseher gesessen. Über drei Generationen [haben] über deutsche Geschichte geredet, plötzlich.”³⁸¹

Fiction film can be extremely useful in providing the impetus for historical conversations and transference of memories, since it is most often its visual aspects

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ *Das Making Of Dresden*, (0:21-0:22).

³⁷⁸ Interview with Kai Wessel. See lines 53-62.

³⁷⁹ Hanfeld, ‘Eine Reise durch die Apokalypse’.

³⁸⁰ Heinrich et al (ed.), *ZDF Jahrbuch 2006*, p. 125.

³⁸¹ Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 87-91.

which give a shared point of focus for both participants. The image is of major importance, giving younger viewers a tangible reference point to properly imagine ‘how it was.’ This is reinforced by Peter Steinbach’s comments on *Die Flucht*: “Ich bin allerdings der Meinung, dass einige Bilder historisch sehr dicht sind. Es kommt bei solchen Filmen darauf an, dass Bilder Erinnerungsbezüge schaffen.”³⁸² He also appreciated the film’s impressive images of the refugees against the snowy landscape, which feature a large number of extras, arguing that such scenes help film function as: “Augenöffner und Türöffner für das kollektive Gedächtnis.”³⁸³ Additionally, this is reflected by the phenomenon that certain memories and stories of the older generation are in fact based not on real life but on fictional films and other sources, which have been merged with one’s own memories. This was discovered by Welzer *et al* in their study *Opa war kein Nazi*:

“[Es kommt nicht allzu selten vor], dass autobiographische Erlebnisse gar nicht dem ‘wirklichen Leben’ entstammen, sondern Spielfilmen und anderen Quellen entlehnt sind, den Erzählern aber – sei es durch wiederholtes Berichten, sei es durch besonders gute ‘Passung’ zur eigenen Lebensgeschichte – so zu Eigen geworden sind, dass sie als authentischer Bestandteil [des] Lebens erinnert und empfunden werden.”³⁸⁴

Films such as *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* can perform a further function, in that they offer the generation who suffered this pain one final chance to come to terms with this suffering, where previously they had been denied.³⁸⁵ Gabriela Sperl commented that many people who experienced such suffering “haben ihr Leben lang das verdrängt, haben nicht darüber geredet,”³⁸⁶ and this is heavily reinforced by Wessel in excerpts from the interview recorded with him. It is worth reproducing these excerpts at length, in order to show the opinions of *Die Flucht*’s director on this sensitive issue. Indeed, it is one of the most important instances in which it becomes clear what concrete effect the film was seen by the filmmakers to have had on how the Nazi past is viewed by the general public. Wessel commented:

“Es ist eben auch so mehr oder weniger die letzte Chance, darum war es so wichtig, das eben durchzuziehen, diese Frauen, denen das passiert ist, die nie ein Forum für ihr Leid hatten, wo es keine Traumabewältigung gibt, keine psychologische Beratung. Ganz im Gegenteil. [...] Diese Frauen hatten nie ein Forum. Und erst durch die letzten Jahre, also durchaus durch Guido Knopp und ARD, Dokumentationsserie, aber auch [...] natürlich vor allem durch *Die Flucht*, war es möglich diese Generationen, diese paar Überlebenden, die es noch gibt, vielleicht noch mal ins Gespräch zu kriegen mit den Jüngeren. Dass die

³⁸² Burchaud, “‘Ein starker Erinnerungstopos’”.

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Welzer et al, *Opa war kein Nazi*, p. 16.

³⁸⁵ See Section 3.1.3 on questions of taboo.

³⁸⁶ *Die Flucht: Making Of*, (0:01).

Jüngeren wirklich noch mal kommen sagen: ‘Großtante, erzähl doch mal, wie war das denn bei dir. Ich hab diesen Film gesehen, sag mal kommst du nicht auch aus...’ Und dass die noch mal die Möglichkeit haben, das zu erzählen.”³⁸⁷

Wessel further illustrated his point by relating a story told to him by a man working in a hospice about one of his patients:

“‘Wir haben eine Frau, sie will seit zwei, drei Monaten nicht sterben, sie ist schon lange bereit aber sie will nicht sterben und sie schafft es nicht Abschied zu nehmen. Und sie hat den Film gesehen und zehn Tage später ist sie eingeschlafen.’ Und er war ganz sicher, dass das mit diesem Film zu tun hat. Dass irgendwas in ihr war, irgendein Knoten, diese Erinnerung hat irgendwas nochmal gelöst, oder, er war sich sicher, das hängt zusammen. Weil sie hat danach so geweint und auch in gewisserweise auch verändert.”³⁸⁸

Finally, Wessel draws conclusions on his responsibility as a filmmaker and the specific responsibilities and possibilities of the Event Movie:

“Es zeigt [...] wie wichtig Fernsehen ist und wie wichtig es ist, Fernsehen ernsthaft zu betreiben und wie wichtig es ist, seine Zuschauer ernst zu nehmen, weil das ist wirklich Leben. Wir erzählen in der Regel von fiktiven Leben, da draußen findet das Leben wirklich statt, und das andere ist [wie] wichtig es war, diesen Frauen auch nochmal ein Forum zu geben und deren Leid anzuerkennen.”³⁸⁹

The films themselves contain several comments on how memories can be transferred from generation to generation and how the younger generation has been successful at breaking away from their parents. In general terms, the films suggest that the children of this Nazi generation should not carry the guilt for their parents’ sins. This is a perfect example of how the use of certain genres in the films can assist the exploration of various historical issues. Anna’s relationship with her family in *Dresden* conforms to the classic melodramatic convention of a woman struggling to break out against her overbearing, controlling family. However, this also serves an ideological point, in that Anna eventually manages to escape her family – representing the generation of National Socialism – to begin a new life with new ideals, qualifying her as the standard-bearer for the new democratic Federal Republic. The qualities of the ‘next generation,’ at odds with those of National Socialism, are typified by the bathetic scene of two children sharing bread the morning after the bombing. This is the new caring, sharing Germany, this scene seems to suggest, in contrast to the infighting and aggressive German population depicted at times throughout the film. The generational conflict between the generation of Nazism and the one which will rebuild afterwards is made apparent throughout the film, most noticeably with the words Anna’s father

³⁸⁷ Interview with Kai Wessel. See lines 435-50 for more details.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., lines 454-60.

³⁸⁹ Ibid. See lines 461-6.

speaks to her: “Vielleicht wird der Moment kommen, wo du mich hassen wirst,”³⁹⁰ which are repeated later. Although purportedly relating to his actions in stealing morphine and secretly planning their new life in Switzerland, this could be read as symbolic of the generational conflict regarding the legacy of Nazism. Similarly, the trope of freedom runs through the film: Anna is searching for freedom from her family, even if she is not always aware of it. This is typified in the scene where her mother forces Anna to come to the cinema with her and Eva, by using the phrase: “Heute ist unser freier Tag,”³⁹¹ showing that under this myth of freedom Anna is in fact a prisoner. This is emphasised by Robert who tells her (in English): “You know what’s worse than not being free? It’s not being free and convincing yourself that you are free.”³⁹² It is only after the bombing and complete destruction of the city, as well as the death of Anna’s father and her symbolic choice of Robert over Alexander, that Anna is able to exclaim: “Ich bin frei.”³⁹³ This could certainly be seen as problematic, firstly because of the suggestion that the Germans should see the Allied invasion as a liberation (a battle of terminology which has been raging in Germany for many years), and the subsequent depiction of Anna (and therefore the German people) as prisoners of the Nazis, which is questionable since it removes any acknowledgement of collaboration or complicity with the regime and presents them as equals with all other victims of National Socialism. In *Die Flucht*, Lena is similarly the standard-bearer for a new generation. As has been suggested before, the film is also a struggle of one woman to break away from the constraints of her family, shown by the duty she feels to her father and the legacy of the family. She is portrayed as kind, generous and philanthropic, caring for everyone – whether people under her command, other refugees or prisoners of war – and is also depicted as being able to find her way successfully in the new Germany, represented by her relationship with Francois at the end of the film, highlighting the importance of a link to Europe. All of this suggests the new generation will be able to break away from fascism. This is reinforced in two ways; firstly, in that Lena’s daughter Vicky seems to be even further along this path. She is unfettered by the demands of nobility and honest in her love of Francois and the other foreign prisoners of war. Secondly, the suicide of both Lena’s father and Rüdiger makes it clear there is no place for this generation and their values in the new Germany. Although this could be seen as problematic, in that suggesting post-war Germany is entirely populated by such positive characters as Anna

³⁹⁰ *Dresden*, Part 1, (0:49).

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Part 1, (0:42).

³⁹² *Ibid.*, Part 2, (0:07).

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, Part 2, (1:15).

and Lena removes the need for any denazification after the war or any ‘Vergangenheitsbewältigung’ today, the character of Fritz provides a cautionary tale. Filled with propaganda by his mother, there is no place for him in the new Germany, and although younger than Lena, he represents the continued danger of Nazi ideology.

It must furthermore be asked whether *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* regard themselves as breaking taboos on the depiction of German victimhood. This next brief section will deal with the opinions of the filmmakers as well as certain critics. For Hofmann there is no doubt that the themes of the bombing war and flight and expulsion were taboo and had not been discussed publicly in Germany:

“*Die Flucht* und *Dresden* waren interessant, weil es beides für Deutschland nationale Traumathemen waren. Es waren Mythosthemen, die in jeder Familie Thema waren, über die aber nie jemand einen Film gemacht hat, über die nie jemand gesprochen hatte. Das geht für die Bombardierung von Dresden genauso wie für *Die Flucht*. Es waren Themen, die du in jeder deutschen Familie von den Großeltern gekannt hast aber es gab keinen Film dazu.”³⁹⁴

Indeed, Hofmann ascribes the great success of the films to the fact that they dealt with taboo themes:

“Die Filmen waren wie so eine Art von Ventil, für nationale Debatten und das ist nicht erklärbar warum 12/13 Millionen Leute das anschauen. Diese gigantische Zuschauerzahl, gerade bei *Dresden* und bei [*Der*] *Flucht*, ist nur erklärbar, weil sowohl Dresden als auch [...] Flucht und Vertreibung in Deutschland große, große Tabuthemen waren, große nationale Mythosthemen waren, die eben seit Jahren, wie gesagt, nicht bearbeitet worden sind. Also emotional nicht abgearbeitet worden sind.”³⁹⁵

In much of the publicity material the filmmakers expressed the originality of *Dresden*. The voiceover on the ‘Making Of’ documentary maintains *Dresden* was the first fictional film on the bombings.³⁹⁶ This is similarly claimed by Hofmann: “*Dresden* ist einer der ersten, der Krieg so radikal psychisch und physisch wahrnehmbar macht.”³⁹⁷ Certain critics similarly noted *Dresden*’s achievement of being the first film to deal with this subject and furthermore praised ZDF for having the courage to make such a film: “Heute Abend ist Premiere in Dresden. Die Zuschauer dort und in zwei Wochen im ZDF werden eine Zäsur erleben.”³⁹⁸ Hofmann maintained his generation has a certain distance from this past, allowing them to broaden their perspectives on representations. Richter similarly maintained that the turn of the century historicised

³⁹⁴ Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 22-7.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., lines 93-100.

³⁹⁶ See *Das Making Of Dresden*, (0:01).

³⁹⁷ Hanfeld, ‘Eine Reise durch die Apokalypse’.

³⁹⁸ Hanfeld, ‘In der Wut des Feuersturms’. See also Eckert and Huber, ‘Seid bitte nicht so puristisch deutsch’.

20th Century German history, thus providing them with a sense of distance (‘Abstand’) from it.³⁹⁹

The issue of flight and expulsion was also described as taboo in the promotional material surrounding *Die Flucht*. ARD’s director of programming, Günter Struve, claimed *Die Flucht* was the first television fiction film to deal with flight and expulsion.⁴⁰⁰ Hofmann referred to the topic as ‘extrem tabuisiert,’⁴⁰¹ as did Maria Furtwängler.⁴⁰² Wessel noted how changing attitudes towards this issue have allowed them to break this taboo: “Als mir vor 15 Jahren eine Stoffidee zu diesem Thema angetragen wurde, dachte ich nicht im Traum daran, mich mit diesem damals als revanchistisch angesehenen Thema auseinander zu setzen.”⁴⁰³ While certain critics acknowledged *Die Flucht* as breaking a taboo,⁴⁰⁴ there were many suggestions that the topic of flight and expulsion was not the taboo it had been made out to be.⁴⁰⁵ Wessel himself describes the topic as “ein selbstgemachtes Tabu”⁴⁰⁶ and that the post-war generations wanted first to deal with issues of guilt before their own suffering. This taboo is further disputed by Peter von Becker who maintains: “Längst sind auch die Opfer der deutschen Zivilbevölkerung kein anrühiges Spezialthema mehr von Revanchisten oder nur Gegenstand geschichtsblinder Aufrechnung.”⁴⁰⁷ Meanwhile, Kurt Pätzold criticised the constant claims of ‘taboo-breaking’ firstly as attempts to gain publicity and secondly as an excuse to come back time and time again to this era of history.⁴⁰⁸ Similarly, although the film’s historical advisor Peter Steinbach disputes the existence of a taboo on this topic, he admits *Die Flucht* is the first effort to address a mass audience, and indeed it is the first example of any medium reaching 12-13 million people on the topic of flight and expulsion.⁴⁰⁹

As regards the effects of these Event Movies on contemporary German ‘Vergangenheitsbewältigung,’ the makers of *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* were adamant that the films should engender debate and cause discussions. Hofmann wanted to harness the controversy of the topic of flight and expulsion in order to create debate: “Ich hätte halt

³⁹⁹ See Hanfeld, ‘Eine Reise durch die Apokalypse’.

⁴⁰⁰ See Huber and Jenkner, ‘Krieg ohne Ende’.

⁴⁰¹ Grimberg, ‘Gefühlte Heimat’.

⁴⁰² See Wick, ‘Ein Star auf der Flucht’.

⁴⁰³ Kai Wessel, ‘Über “Die Flucht”’,

http://www.daserste.de/dieflucht/allround_dyn~uid,3x5quzd5rylh1jl8~cm.asp.

⁴⁰⁴ See Decker, ‘Frau Gräfin’, for example.

⁴⁰⁵ See Section 3.1.3 for examples of how this subject has been dealt with in film, literature and private discourse throughout post-war history.

⁴⁰⁶ Interview with Kai Wessel, line 324.

⁴⁰⁷ Von Becker, ‘Die Flucht vor uns selbst’.

⁴⁰⁸ See Pätzold, ‘Die Flucht’.

⁴⁰⁹ See Burchaud, “‘Ein starker Erinnerungstopos’”.

gerne, dass die Familien betroffen sind. Dass endlich über Themen geredet wird, die vielleicht zwanzig, dreißig Jahren nicht besprochen worden sind in der Familie.”⁴¹⁰ This was supported by Wessel, who saw *Die Flucht* and surrounding debates as important in finally giving recognition and a voice to those who had been ignored for so long: “Ich glaube, das muss man auch erzählen, weil dieses Schicksal dieser vor allem Frauen, nie, zumindest, 40 Jahre lang, irgendeine Form von Bericht gefunden hat, irgendeine Form von Anerkennung oder Aufarbeiten, sondern das wurde eigentlich mehr oder weniger verschwiegen, gesellschaftlich.”⁴¹¹ Wessel further expressed the view that the films’ depiction of history should serve a specific purpose: “Sie sollen berichten. Berichten, um nicht zu vergessen. Berichten, um darüber zu reden.”⁴¹² Gabriela Sperl maintained that *Die Flucht* “gibt die Menschen ihre Erinnerung zurück. [...] Sie kriegen das, was sie verdrängt haben. [...] Man gibt ihnen die Möglichkeit auch darüber noch mal zu reflektieren und [...] zu trauern.”⁴¹³ Although it would be impossible for a film to ‘give memories back,’ from this it is clear that Sperl sees the duty of the film to allow people to discuss their past and come to terms with their history. The very purpose of Event Movies, according to ARD’s internal definitions, is to create discussion and shape historical consciousness within the general population:

“Die gezeigten dokufiktionale Events tragen dazu bei, die Erinnerung an einschneidende geschichtliche Ereignisse wachzuhalten, die auf das Leben vieler Menschen in Deutschland einen großen Einfluss hatten. Sinn und Zweck solcher aufwändig produzierten Filme ist es auch, den Dialog im Familien- und Freundeskreis über Generationsgrenzen hinweg zu befördern und dadurch zur Entwicklung einer geschichtlichen Identität der Bundesbürgerinnen und –bürger beizutragen.”⁴¹⁴

A further trend of which the films are symptomatic is the increasing normalisation of the issue of German victimhood and its relationship to German national identity. These films allow the German viewer an emotional identification with German victims of the war and, furthermore, show positive German characters. Both Wessel and Hofmann maintain this is only possible due to the current more relaxed attitude towards German national identity, particularly after the football World Cup of 2006, whose very public display of patriotism showed that Germans could be proud of their country without displaying revisionist undertones. This has perhaps led to a greater normalisation of the Nazi past; positive German narratives, which would

⁴¹⁰ *Die Flucht: Making Of*, (0:26).

⁴¹¹ Interview with Kai Wessel, lines 92-6.

⁴¹² Wessel, ‘Über “Die Flucht”’.

⁴¹³ *Die Flucht: Making Of*, (0:27).

⁴¹⁴ Raff (ed.), *ARD Jahrbuch 08*, p. 469.

previously perhaps have been taboo, are now permitted, as critics' fears of an immediate slide into fervent nationalism have been proven unfounded.⁴¹⁵ Taking this concept of normalisation of the past, the following section will explore how the films create an atmosphere of reconciliation between two warring sides and how the films situate the new democratic Germany, having come to terms with its past, within a specifically European context. As seen previously, a successful integration as a prominent member of the new European community is one way in which Germany can begin to see itself as a normal nation, and this is made clear in both of teamWorx's Event Movies.⁴¹⁶ Günther van Endert of ZDF maintained the importance of "Versöhnungsgedanken" during the making of *Dresden*.⁴¹⁷ Integral to the way in which the film depicts the reconciliation of Britain and Germany is the love story between Robert and Anna.⁴¹⁸ As well as detailing their growing romance through the narrative, other filmic devices – cutting between the two characters, for example – bring them closer in the viewer's mind. Anna's final choice of Robert over Alexander makes it clear she (and therefore the new Federal Republic she represents) is choosing reconciliation with Britain over German nationalism. The revelation that Robert's mother was German, and so that he is part-German himself, invokes memories of the pre-war fruitful international co-operation between the two nations (although in this context, also the previous war between them), and the joint German/British daughter Anna bears symbolises the future co-operation between them in the context of a European partnership. The final scene of the film, the re-dedication of the Frauenkirche, makes the issue of reconciliation clear. The words of Bundespräsident Horst Köhler, speaking of the church itself – "Wieder aufgebaut als ein Zeichen der Versöhnung, der Hoffnung, und des Glaubens"⁴¹⁹ – reinforce this sense of reconciliation. The final words of the film leave the viewer with an image of reconciliation within an international context: "Die wiederaufgebaute Frauenkirche verbindet Menschen, weltweit. Menschen, die die Völkerverständigung Wirklichkeit werden liessen und wollen, dass es nie wieder Krieg gibt. Nicht in Europa und nicht anderswo auf der Welt."⁴²⁰ The use of this documentary footage to end the film was much disputed. Richter felt the sentiment of this scene corresponded to the message of

⁴¹⁵ See Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 127-34 and Interview with Kai Wessel, lines 220-4.

⁴¹⁶ See Brockmann, "Normalization", pp. 22-5 for more on normalisation through European integration. See also Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, pp. 255-71 for more on the importance of Europe in contemporary memory of the Nazi past.

⁴¹⁷ *Das Making Of Dresden*, (0:05).

⁴¹⁸ See Hanfeld, 'Eine Reise durch die Apokalypse' and Heinrich et al (ed.), *ZDF Jahrbuch 2006*, p. 125.

⁴¹⁹ *Dresden*, Part 2, (1:26).

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, Part 2, (1:27).

the film as a whole.⁴²¹ Hofmann meanwhile, was moved by the ‘Friedensgruß’ and by the faces of those who had (potentially) lived through it.⁴²² The film was criticised for ending with this positive image of reconciliation, potentially smoothing over everything else seen in the film. It was criticised as a very ‘prime-time’ way of ending things, providing an extremely positive and uplifting conclusion to the story: “Ihr Gang durchs Höllenfeuer hat sie moralisch erhöht, am Horizont dämmert Zukunft und wenn schließlich die wiedererrichtete Frauenkirche eingeblendet wird, soll der Zuschauer wohl zufrieden ‘hosianna!’ rufen,” wrote Evelyn Finger.⁴²³ As well as a positive sense of reconciliation, the final scene also offers something a little harder to swallow, the sense of drawing a line under the past, of a potential ‘Schlußstrich.’ This final image provides narrative conclusion, returning to the ‘status quo’ of the first documentary pictures of Dresden in the title sequence, where the Frauenkirche features prominently. Yet taking the suggestion in the film that the destruction of Dresden was in retaliation for the crimes of National Socialism, for which all of Germany was responsible, the rebuilding of the church would then stand for the final hurdle in coming to terms with this past, that everything is as it was before and the German people no longer need to worry about the past, as penance has been paid.

Die Flucht tells international stories through its theme of flight and expulsion, which are not exclusively a German problem: “Sie sind europäisch, interkontinental, global. Und wenn wir als Deutsche darüber berichten, dann vielleicht deshalb, weil wir es waren, die diese beispiellose Flucht und Vertreibungsgeschichte ausgelöst haben,” claimed Wessel.⁴²⁴ As with *Dresden*, *Die Flucht*’s inter-European love story suggests reconciliation between two former enemies, and this is made apparent elsewhere in the film by featuring another international romance in the form of Waltraud and a French prisoner of war, which results in a joint Franco-German baby. Further images of international co-operation abound throughout the film. This is made most clear during the brief Christmas scene where the German workers and prisoners of war join together to sing ‘Silent Night,’ each using the lyrics of their own language, yet singing the same harmonious melody. It is made clear this European co-operation is the way forward, suggested by Lena’s promise to eventually return to Francois, bringing Vicky and forming a new family. These international and European perspectives have been

⁴²¹ See Hanfeld, ‘Eine Reise durch die Apokalypse’.

⁴²² See Ibid.

⁴²³ Finger, ‘Der englische Pilot’. See also Segler, ‘Engel des Lebens’ and Hanfeld, ‘In der Wut des Feuersturms’.

⁴²⁴ Wessel, ‘Über “Die Flucht”’.

criticised, however, as a ploy to sell better on the world market, and similarly to improve the image of Germans in the eyes of the rest of the world.⁴²⁵

One of the recurring messages and themes of *Dresden* is the anti-war motif. Hofmann has described the film as a “‘Film gegen den Krieg’ und ‘für eine größere Mitmenschlichkeit,’”⁴²⁶ which was reinforced by Heike Hempel: “*Dresden* ist ein Anti-Kriegs-Drama.”⁴²⁷ In Michael Hanfeld’s review of the film he characterised *Dresden* as an anti-war film and claimed the script focused on providing images which will support this. “Es geht nicht um die Guten und die Bösen, und es geht nicht um ein didaktisches Lehrstück,”⁴²⁸ maintained scriptwriter Kolditz. This can be best seen in the bombing scenes, which consist predominantly of a series of tableaux designed to show the terror and suffering caused by war: the sequence featuring a woman dragging a flaming pram behind her is a prominent example of this. The problem with this simplistic ‘war is bad’ message is that it effaces the delicate questions of guilt and responsibility the film attempts to debate, and perhaps trivialises the crimes of National Socialism by reducing them to their base factors and equating them with other war crimes. There have been comments that *Dresden*’s depiction of the bombing campaign should serve a concrete purpose for today’s society, namely carrying forward the message of ‘Nie Wieder Krieg’ to present-day conflicts. Kolditz maintained the lessons learned from *Dresden* should be utilised in order to question the war in Iraq, for example.⁴²⁹ This is made clear by Richard Overy, who sets out what he wants the film to achieve in a rather cryptic remark: “This film will, I hope, remind people [...] exactly what they’re doing when they drop bombs on a big city.”⁴³⁰ *Die Flucht* has similar desires to raise awareness of issues of flight and expulsion elsewhere in the world in the present day, as suggested by Peter Steinbach: “Der film könnte bewirken, dass man zu einem universellen Verständnis von Vertreibung als Voraussetzung von individuellen Leiden kommt.”⁴³¹ Furthermore, Wessel is extremely clear in his desires for the themes of *Die Flucht* to be broadened out and used to understand the suffering that is happening today, whether the expulsion of peoples in Africa and the Middle East, or the use of rape as a weapon of war: “Wenn man versucht, über so eine einzelne Geschichte vielleicht, so schafft man

⁴²⁵ See Freitag, ‘Rote Wangen’.

⁴²⁶ Ziegler, ‘Zwischen Kitsch und Kunst’.

⁴²⁷ Cited in Keil, ‘Krieg und Frieden’.

⁴²⁸ Cited in Hanfeld, ‘Dresden, brennende Stadt’.

⁴²⁹ See Hoffmann, ‘Make Love Not War’.

⁴³⁰ *Das Making Of Dresden*, (0:24).

⁴³¹ Cited in Burchaud, “‘Ein starker Erinnerungstopos’”.

auch selber mal die Sensibilität für Flucht allgemein herzustellen,” he commented.⁴³²

These films aim not only to allow the viewers to reflect on issues of the past but also to re-evaluate their thoughts on similar crimes in the present.

One trend in approaching the National Socialist past to which *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* most certainly conform is that of the personalisation and individualisation of history. Here the choice of melodrama as a dramatic and narrative device can be explained in the context of recent memory trends. Both *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* explore the issue German suffering through the point of view of one main character, with whom the viewer is encouraged to empathise. The position of *Dresden* in this trend has been remarked upon by Heike Hempel, who places the film in the context of recent literary personal explorations of the Nazi past by authors such as Uwe Timm and Wibke Brunns, as well as the growing trend of exploring the past through family history. This personalisation of history was praised by some yet criticised by others, such as Evelyn Finger, who described *Dresden* as: “Individuelle Katastrophenerfahrung statt komplizierter moralphilosophischer Debatte: Das ist neuerdings das Prinzip publikumswirksamer Geschichtsklitterung.”⁴³³ Conversely this personalisation has been described as a positive device in securing the interest of the younger generation, who can relate to the emotional love story.⁴³⁴ It could be argued that personal stories, which are popular with television and film viewers, can achieve a larger and much wider audience than would have been interested in the topic previously, as is the case with teamWorx’s Event Movies. There is a strong link between the personal and political, between the individual and the wider context in both films. For instance, in *Die Flucht* Lena suffers a personal catastrophe, which is inextricably linked to the wider catastrophe of flight and expulsion and indeed the downfall of Germany as a whole. Wessel reportedly wanted to make a film from the perspective of the general population, which would exemplify the suffering of this period: “Niemand leidet in einem Krieg so sehr wie die Zivilbevölkerung,”⁴³⁵ he claimed. There are, however, a number of problems related to the use of personal stories in dealing with wider history. The first is particularly appropriate to *Dresden*, which, although it claims to tell the personal story of Anna, also includes a number of scenes which do not relate to her or her personal development in any way. These are predominantly the scenes set at Morton Hall, featuring documentary-like dialogue on the minutiae of the bombing raids. These scenes

⁴³² Interview with Kai Wessel, lines 101-3.

⁴³³ Finger, ‘Der englische Pilot’.

⁴³⁴ See Fromme, ‘In den Kellern der brennenden Stadt’.

⁴³⁵ Wessel, ‘Über “Die Flucht”’.

detract from the emotional involvement the viewer has invested in Anna up until that point and could result in negating the impact of the individualised approach to history. There is also potentially the risk of trivialising issues of war, suffering and guilt if one sees them not even as a backdrop for a love story but merely as an allegory for the confused emotional state of its protagonist. Encouraging the audience to understand these real-life horrific events as existing solely for the purpose of understanding a fictional character more deeply could be seen as trivialisation.

The final point here, and one which relates to the popularity of personalised and individualised narratives, is the role of women in these two Event Movies and how this relates to the films' ability to come to terms with the past. Indeed, the use of women is typical for the genre of melodrama but here also serves a political function. Wessel sees the recent trend for women's stories during the Third Reich as part of the trend away from hard, dry master narratives of war and towards personalised stories. This also relates to the German victimhood trend at large, since women are often the primary civilian victims of war and can be seen as less political figures than men, who in war narratives are too often soldiers, with all the political implications this brings. "Da sind Frauen im Dritten Reich erst mal unschuldig," Wessel commented.⁴³⁶ This characterisation of women as the innocent victims of war is typified by comments made by Woll in an interview with *Der Spiegel* (entitled 'Dresden ist weiblich'): "Mir wurde klar, dass der Krieg so männlich ist. Die Frauenkirche hat etwas Weibliches. Sie ist hell und nicht erdrückend. Dresden ist weiblich. Es haut einen um."⁴³⁷ So, in their use of female characters, *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* conform to many current trends in memory of the National Socialist past and simultaneously conform to the demands of a popular movie genre, the melodrama, which also performs a vital function in attracting viewers.

Both *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* contribute to the recent debate on representations of German victimhood during the Second World War. They certainly depict the suffering of the German people and yet for the most part manage to avoid accusations of revisionism, due to the discussions of guilt and responsibility set out in the films. Suffering is seen to come from a variety of sources: from the Allies (the British and Russians respectively), from the Nazis and finally from the German people themselves. This balance was seen by certain viewers and reviewers as too politically correct and potentially able to negate the reportedly taboo-breaking depictions of Germans as victims. The films were also accused of employing political correctness simply in order

⁴³⁶ Interview with Kai Wessel, lines 184-5.

⁴³⁷ 'Dresden ist weiblich'.

to gain larger viewing figures and to sell abroad (particularly to the British market).⁴³⁸ This political correctness has a further effect which could be seen as dangerous to the audience's understanding of history and to the process of coming to terms with the Nazi past. The films simultaneously show all parties as both victims and perpetrators and unites them in a community of victims. Although this follows a number of contemporary memory trends, particularly of normalisation within the context of Europeanisation, this approach may lose sight of any specific historical guilt and responsibility.

3.2.5: Criticism

As teamWorx's biggest-budget and most-watched Event Movies, *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* received a great deal of critical response and many viewers and reviewers wanted to make their opinions heard. After the screening of *Dresden*, for example, ZDF received 411 telephone calls and 718 written responses to the film, which naturally contained varying viewpoints.⁴³⁹ This section will evaluate some of the reaction to these Event Movies, from newspaper and magazine reviews of the period but also on the 'Amazon.de' online shop.⁴⁴⁰ There were many positive reviews of *Dresden* in the media at the time. Hofmann maintained that much of the contemporary criticism of the film was in fact very good and that attitudes towards teamWorx as a whole and *Dresden* specifically had altered over time, as it became clear that these films were commercially successful. He ascribed this to a general mistrust in Germany of the ability of popular forms of entertainment to deal with serious history.⁴⁴¹ Indeed, the material on *Dresden* in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, which Hofmann named specifically, was extensive and overwhelmingly positive. The following summarises reviewer Michael Hanfeld's thoughts on the film: "Nico Hofmann und Roland Suso Richter zeigen es ohne Kitsch, ohne falsches Pathos, ohne Schwarzweißmalerei; mit einem unglaublichen Schauspielereensemble und einer perfekten technischen Darstellung der Vernichtung."⁴⁴² Some of this positive criticism came from unlikely sources, such as the traditionally left-wing (and therefore potentially critical of populist film dealing with issues of

⁴³⁸ See Eckert and Huber, 'Seid bitte nicht so puristisch deutsch'.

⁴³⁹ See Heinrich et al (ed.), *ZDF Jahrbuch 2006*, p. 252.

⁴⁴⁰ See 'Kundenrezension: Dresden' and Author unknown, 'Kundenrezension: Die Flucht', Amazon.de, http://www.amazon.de/product-reviews/B000NA254Q/ref=cm_cr_dp_all_summary?ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=1&sortBy=bySubmissionDateDescending. The following will make use of comments left by 'Amazon.de' customers who purchased the DVD of *Dresden* (76 comments) and *Die Flucht* (34 comments).

⁴⁴¹ See Interview with Nico Hofman, lines 280-2.

⁴⁴² Hanfeld, 'In der Wut des Feuersturms'.

German victimhood) *taz*, which separated *Dresden* from previous teamWorx efforts such as *Die Luftbrücke*.⁴⁴³ *Dresden* was similarly praised in the *Tagesspiegel* with a favourable comparison to other Event Movies broadcast around that time.⁴⁴⁴ When the film was repeated in May 2010, (as one three-hour feature-film), although understandably not causing the same amount of debate and interest, the film was still recommended to viewers: it was the day's 'Fernsehtipp' in the *Berliner Zeitung* and similarly featured as a pick of the day in the listings magazine *TV Movie*, who rated it highly for 'Spannung' and 'Gefühl'.⁴⁴⁵ Many reviewers on the 'Amazon.de' website praised the film in general positive terms, some hyperbolically. One reviewer claimed: "Das alleine [actors, direction, producers etc] lässt diesen Film zu DEN Top Filmen der deutschen Filmgeschichte werden," further maintaining: "Der 2-Teiler ist ein absoluter Hammer."⁴⁴⁶ *Die Flucht* similarly received a range of reviews in newspapers, including many extremely positive examples: "[*Die Flucht* ist] ein gelungenes Werk: dramatisch rund, wunderschön gefilmt, schauspielerisch anspruchsvoll, bestes ausgestattet,"⁴⁴⁷ as well as numerous positive comments on 'Amazon.de'.⁴⁴⁸

The acting was perhaps at the forefront of themes singled out for praise. Felicitas Woll was named as a large ingredient of *Dresden*'s success in both newspaper and online reviews and, similarly, Maria Furtwängler's acting received special mention from numerous critics.⁴⁴⁹ Many viewers of *Dresden*, posting on 'Amazon.de,' seemed to engage with the love story, yet it was attacked from several areas for 'trivialising history' and for destroying any sense of realism. One viewer enjoyed the 'Verbotene-Liebe' storyline and another calls the love story 'relativ kitschfrei'.⁴⁵⁰ The special effects were also a positive point for many reviewers, who thought the bombing scenes were very impressive and furthermore that the special effects made the film more believable and historically correct.⁴⁵¹ The perceived realism of the films was a further point of praise. Many reviewers found that the convincing love story, the attention to detail regarding costume, décor and so on, the script, actors and the fact that three historians worked on the film all helped to give the impression of realism.⁴⁵² *Die Flucht*

⁴⁴³ See Buß, 'Eine Art Völkerverständigung'.

⁴⁴⁴ See Eckert and Huber, 'Seid bitte nicht so puristisch deutsch'.

⁴⁴⁵ See 'Dresden', *TV Movie* and Author unknown, 'Dresden', in *Berliner Zeitung*, 5 May 2010.

⁴⁴⁶ 'Kundenrezension: Dresden'.

⁴⁴⁷ Freitag, 'Rote Wangen'.

⁴⁴⁸ See 'Kundenrezension: Die Flucht'.

⁴⁴⁹ See Segler, 'Engel des Lebens', Eckert and Huber, 'Seid bitte nicht so puristisch deutsch', 'Kundenrezension: Dresden' and 'Kundenrezension: Die Flucht'.

⁴⁵⁰ See 'Kundenrezension: Dresden'.

⁴⁵¹ See Keil, 'Krieg und Frieden' and 'Kundenrezension: Dresden'.

⁴⁵² See 'Kundenrezension: Dresden'.

was similarly praised for its authenticity, specifically by a number of former refugees, who had shared a similar experience to the characters of *Die Flucht*, including Günther Montkowski and Anita Motzkus.⁴⁵³ Certain viewers with personal or family experience of flight and expulsion commented on the film on ‘Amazon.de’ and claimed it portrayed such an experience authentically.⁴⁵⁴

One of the major aspects noted and praised by viewers and reviewers was the films’ approach to history and the way in which a complex historical issue was explored. Many viewers identified with the anti-war motif of *Dresden*, which was a clear aim of the filmmakers. One viewer understood the film’s message thus: “Botschaft: Never Again.”⁴⁵⁵ Viewers furthermore noted that the film attempted to show all sides of the war, yet it simultaneously laid the guilt on Nazi Germany alone.⁴⁵⁶ Many viewers also felt the film helped them understand not only what happened during those dark days, but what it felt like, helping them to reflect on their own lives and their relationships with the generation of their grandparents.⁴⁵⁷ This shows how effective the devices of the heritage movie have been, which create such ‘prosthetic memories’ for the viewer. Certain viewers were also very aware of the necessity of using the form of a fictional Event Movie in order to deal with an historical issue, with one reviewer writing: “Du musst die Schüler da abholen, wo sie stehen.”⁴⁵⁸ Recognising that *Dresden* is not a documentary but rather a fiction film, these viewers accepted it on its own terms, something not done by certain others.⁴⁵⁹ Viewers also commented on *Die Flucht*’s approach to history, agreeing that it broke a taboo and praised it for helping to keep the memory of this tragedy alive.⁴⁶⁰

There were also a number of negative comments and opinions on *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*, which criticised a variety of themes. Christian Buß suggested before the broadcast that *Dresden* could be teamWorx’s first flop.⁴⁶¹ Viewers posting on ‘Amazon.de’ criticised the acting, the plot and the love story. One reviewer noted and criticised *Dresden*’s borrowings from Hollywood, claiming it was a failed attempt to copy this American style: “Es klappt ja doch nicht.”⁴⁶² Most of the negative criticism of *Die Flucht* focused on its approach to history. One theme in common for criticism in

⁴⁵³ See Sonja Pohlmann, “‘Ein Flüchtling bleibt man ein Leben lang’”, in *Tagesspiegel*, 4 March 2007.

⁴⁵⁴ ‘Kundenrezension: Die Flucht’. Other reviewers gave opposing viewpoints, however.

⁴⁵⁵ ‘Kundenrezension: Dresden’.

⁴⁵⁶ See Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ See Ibid.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ See Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ See ‘Kundenrezension: Die Flucht’.

⁴⁶¹ See Buß, ‘Eine Art Völkerverständigung’.

⁴⁶² ‘Kundenrezension: Dresden’.

both films was their lack of realism, in direct contrast to previous positive comments as well as comments from the filmmakers. *Dresden* was criticised for logical errors, the love story which made it unbelievable, its similarity to teamWorx's other Event Movies and for the fact that, in the original television broadcast, the British actors were dubbed instead of subtitled in German.⁴⁶³ *Die Flucht*, meanwhile, was similarly criticised for its lack of historical authenticity, especially compared to documentaries on the issue, and that it was full of clichés. One viewer, who had personal experiences of flight and expulsion, wrote: "Einiges wirkte unrealistisch bzw. wurde nicht so gezeigt, wie es war."⁴⁶⁴

Dresden in particular was criticised for its love story, which was described as kitsch, clichéd, soap opera-esque and unbelievable by several critics. Some viewers specifically commented that the kitsch qualities of the love story prevented "eine echte Auseinandersetzung" with the historical issues.⁴⁶⁵ The use of soap opera to depict history was one of the major themes within the accusations that *Dresden* was guilty of trivialising history. Several viewers felt it was simply 'inappropriate' to depict such serious historical themes using this kind of love story. One particularly agitated viewer wrote: "Rezessenten die diesen Film mit 'sehr gut' bewertet haben, da es ja eine so tolle Liebesromanze sei, können auch gleich auf dem Friedhof 'Dirty Dancing' schauen. Das ist ungefähr das Selbe,"⁴⁶⁶ reacting strongly against the mix of romance and historical suffering. The artificiality of the film, particularly the special effects and CGI, were seen by many to be in direct contrast with the attempt to show authentic history and therefore trivialised the suffering depicted. Certain viewers even saw the film as an insult to the victims. Many viewers agreed that the issue of the bombing war should be dealt with, yet saw the film as a wasted opportunity. This was either due to the love story dominating the historical aspects of the film or because of the political correctness and the desire to represent all sides of the conflict. Indeed, certain viewers complained that *Dresden* did not go into enough detail and did not depict all the horrific events of the bombings. This was contradicted, however, by other criticism of the film, which argued Germans should still not be allowed to perceive themselves as victims, given the crimes the Germans committed.⁴⁶⁷ Similar comments were given for *Die Flucht*, viewers argued that a love story and Event Movie were not appropriate medium in

⁴⁶³ See Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴ 'Kundenrezension: Die Flucht'.

⁴⁶⁵ See 'Kundenrezension: Dresden'.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁷ See Ibid.

dealing with this issue and indeed that a lot of detail was missing, that the film was too superficial.⁴⁶⁸ One final criticism of both films was that many viewers saw it as too politically correct. Viewers criticised *Dresden* for showing all angles yet not taking a position of its own and for being too black-and-white in a moral sense. Furthermore this political correctness was accused of adding a sense of distance which prevented a true coming to terms with the issues.⁴⁶⁹ Similarly, viewers of *Die Flucht* criticised Lena's relationship with Francois as an 'Alibi-Geschichte.' They also found the Germans were portrayed as too evil and the Russians as too nice.⁴⁷⁰ The large amount of criticism received by *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*, in comparison to teamWorx's other TV Event Movies, revealed the company's success in provoking debate and discussion in the press and to a certain extent within the general population. Although the films' approach to history was applauded by a number of viewers, the large amount of negative criticism levelled particularly at *Dresden* does seem to suggest perhaps that Germany was not yet ready for an exploration of this theme, at least in the form of an Event Movie.

3.2.6: Conclusions

Dresden and *Die Flucht* are perfect examples of the teamWorx Event Movie. They have big budgets, huge audience figures and have managed to create a great deal of debate on historical issues. Part of the films' attractions is their supposed authenticity, as claimed by teamWorx. This is attempted through the amount of research undertaken by the filmmakers, the use of historical advisors and eyewitnesses and the reconstruction of authentic sets, locations, costumes and props. Authenticity is also suggested through a number of filmic devices: the inclusion of archive newsreel footage for example, and the foregrounding of history, even when it is not necessary for the narrative, which is intended to lend an educational aspect to the films. These claims of authenticity are questionable for a number of reasons. Filmmakers can viably attempt to create a sense of 'how it really was' but to 'reconstruct authentic sets,' as an example of what the filmmakers claim, is simply a contradiction in terms. Although the inclusion of historical advisors serves publicity purposes very well and spares any significant historical *faux pas*, attempting to create a single definitive version of events for which there exist as many versions as there are people who lived through them is an impossible task, and it is misleading to claim to do so. teamWorx also employs certain

⁴⁶⁸ See 'Kundenrezension: Die Flucht'.

⁴⁶⁹ See 'Kundenrezension: Dresden'.

⁴⁷⁰ See 'Kundenrezension: Die Flucht'.

devices of genre cinema which may be seen to act in contrast to the authentic history it wants to convey. The most evident of these is the genre of melodrama, which features in both films. They contain similar love stories revolving around the concept of ‘forbidden love,’ as well as highlighting issues of family. In addition to this, the films deploy tropes of the Hollywood blockbuster, including the disaster movie genre and similarly borrow from the more European heritage mode. Using these genres is not necessarily at odds with earnest approaches to the past, however. For example, the dominant presence of women in both of these films conforms to the genre of melodrama, yet similarly is an accurate image of the home front in Germany at the time, as the majority of the male population would have been drafted to fight. This similarly corresponds to the current historiographical trend for personalised, individualised history, which allows a more de-politicised approach to issues of suffering and guilt. The heritage genre, with its focus on the visual and sensual, can be of great use in drawing the viewer into a specific historical period, increasing their emotional identification with the characters and therefore potentially increasing their understanding of the historical issues involved. The borrowing of these genres has also provoked accusations of trivialising history. The employment of melodramatic devices arguably forces viewers to emotionally identify more with the trials and tribulations of a fictional couple over the real victims of an horrific atrocity. Similarly, the blockbuster genre demands spectacle and suspense, both of which could be seen to be in bad taste regarding such sensitive historical issues. For example, special effects provide the viewers with exciting and spectacular images of the atrocities of the bombing in *Dresden*, and the use of camera and editing techniques in *Die Flucht* elicits a sense of suspense before the rape scene. These genres also demand a clear separation of good and evil, according to which punishment is meted out. The death of Lena’s father and the rape of Babette, in terms of a classical movie narrative, could be understood as punishment or retribution for their actions earlier in the film. Allowing the viewer to believe that only the guilty died and only the innocent survived is not only an affront to the victims but also prevents a coming-to-terms with this issue, since it suggests the guilty have already paid for their sins.

According to teamWorx, employing techniques of genre films is no barrier to engaging with many of the current debates surrounding depictions of the National Socialist past. Many of the filmmakers (and critics) credit *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* with breaking a taboo on representations of the bombing war and flight and expulsion, respectively. Although a taboo on this subject is heavily disputed, *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* represent the first time these topics have been disseminated to such a wide and

varied audience.⁴⁷¹ These films show that guilt and suffering are not black-and-white and that the Allies (represented by the British in *Dresden*, and the Russians in *Die Flucht*), the Nazis and ‘ordinary’ Germans all bear a certain amount of responsibility and guilt for the suffering depicted within the films. This attempt to balance depictions of guilt, seemingly in order to avoid charges of relativisation or revisionism, creates the impression that everyone is simultaneously a victim and a perpetrator and real questions of who is responsible are almost glossed over. The Event Movies are also reflective of other trends and debates on coming to terms with the Nazi past and are intended not only to encourage learning about this specific history but also to have concrete aims regarding the relevance of this history in today’s society. The films feature reflections on the transmission of memory (and similarly the transmission of guilt and responsibility) to the next generation and on the normalisation of the Nazi past. There are also suggestions that the best way to differentiate post-war Germany from Nazism and the Third Reich is a successful reconciliation within a democratic Europe. Finally there exists a clear anti-war sentiment, the viewer being deliberately encouraged to draw parallels with suffering that is taking place today.

In understanding *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*’s relationship to debates on coming to terms with the Nazi past the term ‘consensus’ is key. This is a different consensus to the one theorised by Eric Rentschler in his disparaging essay on post-wall German cinema yet the principle is roughly the same, in that teamWorx does not wish to exclude anyone.⁴⁷² *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* apportion guilt for the suffering depicted to a number of sources – the Allies, the Nazis and ‘ordinary’ Germans – and similarly afford victim status to several different groups, which has the result of not offending any one group. The films use techniques borrowed from both American and European filmmaking traditions yet stress the importance of German authorship and the relevance the films have to present-day German society. They want to attract viewers interested in history and also those who would feel more at home with a daily soap. In one sense this could be regarded as a positive development. It is difficult to imagine how else one could produce a film on such a sensitive subject which would attract so many people without employing similar failsafe devices to protect it from revisionism. However, this inability to take a stance and the employment of certain cinematic techniques, particularly those from disaster movies, result in a dehistoricisation of these historical events, forcing the viewer to understand them as natural occurrences without agents. If

⁴⁷¹ See Section 3.1.3 on the supposed taboos surrounding depictions of Germans as victims.

⁴⁷² See Section 2.4.1 on Rentschler’s article.

everyone is simultaneously a victim and a perpetrator, no-one can truly be guilty. It is precisely because teamWorx claims to show the whole truth of an historical event, through its constant claims of authenticity, that their films actually dehistoricise the event in question. In exploring these events through personal stories while simultaneously claiming to show the whole gamut of suffering, this suffering is universalised and the viewer is encouraged to understand these debates in universal terms of good and evil. Despite delivering debates on German victimhood to a large audience, the inherent dehistoricisation in *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* may completely negate the efforts made to influence memory of these events and debates on the legacy of National Socialism.

Chapter 4: The Holocaust: *Nicht alle waren Mörder*

This chapter intends to explore how the Holocaust has been remembered in Germany from the end of the Second World War to the present day, paying particular attention to how these trends have been reflected and influenced by film and television productions. It will also evaluate whether an issue as sensitive as the Holocaust should be dealt with in film at all. It will lead onto an analysis of the teamWorx Event Movie *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, taking into consideration teamWorx's attitudes towards historical authenticity and towards Hollywood, and will then investigate whether the film continues or breaks with the trends in representing the Holocaust laid out in this chapter, and to what extent it reflects current memory debates on the legacy of the Holocaust.

4.1: Memory of the Holocaust in post-war Germany

4.1.1: Should the Holocaust be dealt with in film at all?

The Holocaust has been an extremely popular subject for film and television productions and its popularity continues to rise. A record number of films have been made on the Holocaust since 1989 and television has become the main medium globally for conveying the Holocaust.¹ Despite this, ever since the liberation of the concentration camps there have been claims that the depiction of the Holocaust in fictional film is impermissible. Adorno's much quoted dictum that 'to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric' and similarly his assertion that "alle Kultur nach Auschwitz, samt der dringlichen Kritik daran, Müll ist,"² has been taken to suggest the 'unrepresentability' of the Holocaust and presents a barrier to engaging with it fully through art.³ Many other voices have compounded this, including historian Dan Diner, who claims there is no appropriate narrative for communicating the Holocaust, only statistics.⁴ One vociferous commentator on this subject is Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, who maintains the impossibility of representing the Holocaust through any means. He has written: "The Holocaust? The ultimate event, the ultimate mystery, never to be

¹ See Terri Ginsberg, *Holocaust Film: The Political Aesthetics of Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007), p. 2 and Baron, *Projecting the Holocaust into the Present*, p. 6.

² Cited in Martina Thiele, *Publizistische Kontroversen über den Holocaust im Film* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2000), p. 27.

³ For more see Ginsberg, *Holocaust Film*, pp. 3-5. This is often taken out of context and commentators often refuse to acknowledge the subtlety of Adorno's argumentation. Nevertheless, this brief quote informs the viewpoint of many of those who argue against exploring the Holocaust in fiction.

⁴ See Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, p. 237.

comprehended or transmitted. Only those who were there know what it was; the others will never know.”⁵ Wiesel maintains there should be a sacred reverence surrounding Holocaust discourse: “Before I say the words, Auschwitz or Treblinka, there must be a space, a breathing space, a kind of zone of silence,”⁶ and argues that the incomprehensibility of the Holocaust is an intrinsic part of its nature: “Let’s be honest: In this sense, the enemy can boast of his triumph. Through the scope of his deadly enterprise, he deprives us of words to describe it.”⁷

Wiesel has also remarked upon the impotence of film to come to terms with the Holocaust; that for such an event to be handled by the mass media would automatically mean profaning and trivializing ‘a sacred subject.’⁸ Similarly he suggests the impossible task of the filmmaker:

“The question inexorably asserts itself: Does there exist another way, another language, to say what is unsayable? [...] The image perhaps? Can it be more accessible, more malleable, more expressive than the word? More true as well? Can I admit it? I am as wary of one as of the other. Even more of the image. Of the filmed image, of course. One does not imagine the unimaginable. And in particular, one does not show it on screen.”⁹

After claiming the impossibility of communicating this ontological event on screen in any form, Wiesel then goes one step further and suggests that Hollywood-style genre productions especially trivialise the Holocaust, noting that “melodrama and crematoria are hardly compatible” and maintaining the superiority of ‘higher’ art forms (which are indeed still art forms) in doing justice to this subject.¹⁰ He writes:

“Up against Hollywood super-productions, can poetic memory hold its own? Me, I prefer it. I prefer restraint to excess, the murmur of documentary to the script edited by tear-jerk specialists. [...] Perhaps I am too severe, too demanding, but the Holocaust as filmed romantic adventure seems to me an outrage to the memory of the dead, and to sensitivity.”¹¹

Similar viewpoints are espoused by Claude Lanzmann, director of the much-lauded documentary epic *Shoah* (1985). He maintains that the depiction of the Holocaust in (any kind of) fiction is a transgression:

⁵ Elie Wiesel, ‘Trivializing the Holocaust: Semi-Fact and Semi-Fiction’, in *New York Times*, 16 April 1978, cited in Hirsch, *Afterimage*, p. 5.

⁶ Cited in Annette Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 4.

⁷ Elie Wiesel, ‘Foreword’, in Annette Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. xi.

⁸ See *Ibid.*, p. xi.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xi. See also p. xv.

¹⁰ See Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows*, p. 26.

¹¹ Wiesel, ‘Foreword’, p. xii.

“Der Holocaust ist vor allem darin einzigartig, dass er sich mit einem Flammenkreis umgibt, einer Grenze, die nicht überschritten werden darf, weil ein bestimmtes, absolutes Maß an Greueln nicht übertragbar ist: Wer es tut, macht sich der schlimmsten Übertretung schuldig. Die Fiktion ist eine Übertretung, und es ist meine tiefste Überzeugung, dass jede Darstellung verboten ist. [...] Übertreten oder trivialisieren läuft hier auf das gleiche hinaus. Ob Serie oder Film, beide übertreten, weil sie ‘trivialisieren’ und so die Einzigartigkeit des Holocaust zunichte machen.”¹²

The above comes from a review of *Schindler’s List*, in which Lanzmann attacks the film for using images to represent the Holocaust, writing that “Bilder töten die Imagination.”¹³

Many of those who argue against the use of film in depicting the Holocaust maintain that the dramatic necessities of narrative film are utterly at odds with the Holocaust as event. “Art is not appropriate to the Holocaust,” writes Michael Wyschogrod, because “art takes the sting out of suffering.”¹⁴ Ilan Avisar has identified the following ‘essentials’ of a dramatic narrative:

“A significant conflict whose development and resolution induce a serious reflection on and refine our perception of the human predicament; the behavior of the dramatic agents in the framework of the basic conflict whose actions involve crucial decisions that affect the progress of the narrative and bear special moral weight; and a complete action whose narrative units relate to each other in a sequential manner, creating expectations for probable and meaningful developments whose fulfillment is achieved and dominated by an overall coherence.”¹⁵

Avisar then notes that: “The Holocaust defies each of these fundamentals of drama.”¹⁶ Following this argument, to modify experiences of the Holocaust in order to give individuals agency where they had none, to impose narrative form where none exists and to imply a satisfying resolution where there could be none at all suggests trivialisation, corrupting and distorting an historical event – for some the ultimate historical event – for the supposed ‘low’ purpose of entertainment. Israeli-born director Menachem Golan notes that “movies are always entertainment” and to use the Holocaust in such a way could be in extremely bad taste. He writes: “Films in a way are romantic, and the Holocaust can’t be romantic.”¹⁷ Many claim that forgetting the Holocaust would be a scandal and agree upon the ‘Erinnerungsgebot,’ that memory of

¹² Claude Lanzmann, ‘Ihr sollt nicht weinen: Einspruch gegen *Schindlers Liste*’, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 5 March 1994, first published in *Le Monde*, 3 March 1994, translated by Grete Osterwald, in Christoph Weiss (ed.), *Der Gute Deutsche’: Dokumente zur Diskussion um Steven Spielbergs “Schindlers Liste” in Deutschland* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig Universitätsverlag, 1995), p. 175.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

¹⁴ Michael Wyschogrod, ‘Some Theological Reflections on the Holocaust’ in *Response* 25 (1975), p. 68, cited in Ilan Avisar, *Screening the Holocaust: Cinema’s Images of the Unimaginable* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. viii.

¹⁵ Avisar, *Screening the Holocaust*, pp. 47-8.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

¹⁷ Cited in Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows*, p. 18.

the Holocaust should be transmitted to future generations. The Jewish philosopher Emil Fackenheim has suggested the addition of a 614th commandment to the 613 listed in the Hebraic Bible, to keep memory of the Holocaust alive. Yet paradoxically, some of the very same commentators argue (as above) against the representability of Auschwitz and ignore the cultural role played by transmission of memory to a material recording medium, which necessitates some change in form.¹⁸

However, there are those who argue that filmic representations of the Holocaust are permissible and indeed necessary for a deeper understanding of the topic and to safeguard memory of the event, especially as the time distance from it becomes greater. Certain commentators argue that television can be an extremely important medium for approaching the past, perhaps even “unser wichtigstes Medium für historische Reflexion” and claim television is able to operate as a conduit between the intellectual elite and the public, communicating historical research and memory debates to the population at large.¹⁹ Presenting serious history through the prism of entertainment may alter it in some way but can be of integral importance in making this history accessible to the wider public, as well as generating a sense of empathy and an ethical awareness, thereby rendering this history more immediate and allowing the viewer to engage with it fully.²⁰ There are furthermore those such as Jeffrey Alexander, who argue that the line between the actual, historical Holocaust and mediated representations of it (as are necessary for collective memory) would be impossible to draw.²¹ One theory suggests that, directly after an event, black-and-white documentary images can speak for themselves; however, in time a ‘collective numbing’ occurs and later creative efforts on this theme must work harder to overcome this collective numbing. Documentary images, therefore, must be submitted to narrative form in order to achieve the response previously provoked by simple photographic images.²² Annette Insdorf further argues that the Holocaust is neither a “closed chapter” nor an “isolated event,” and therefore that the “luxury of forgetfulness is not possible.”²³ In order to prevent an atrocity such as the Holocaust from ever happening again, and while there are still individuals who deny the Holocaust in order to further their own purposes, it is important to remember

¹⁸ See Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, p. 235.

¹⁹ See Wulf Kansteiner, ‘Populäres Geschichtsfernsehen vor “Holocaust”’: Die Darstellung des Nationalsozialismus und des Zweiten Weltkrieges in drei Erfolgssendungen des ZDF’, in *Zeitgeschichte-online*, (2004), <http://www.zeitgeschichte-online.de/md=FSHolocaust-Kansteiner>, p. 2 and Wulf Kansteiner, ‘Nazis, Viewers and Statistics: Television History, Television Audience Research and Collective Memory in West Germany’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (2004), p. 576.

²⁰ See Baron, *Projecting the Holocaust into the Present*, pp. 262-3.

²¹ See Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, p. 156.

²² See Hirsch, *Afterimage*, p. 19.

²³ Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows*, p. xix.

publicly. Television and film have become necessary tools in communicating any sense of the Holocaust to the next generations. The risk of trivialising the Holocaust is a lesser evil to it being forgotten altogether.²⁴

4.1.2: A History of Holocaust features

The following section aims to give a brief history of how the Holocaust has been depicted in film and television since the end of the war and how this influences current portrayals of the Holocaust, particularly teamWorx's *Nicht alle waren Mörder*.

4.1.2.1: Depictions of the Holocaust directly after the war

The first screen depictions of the Holocaust appeared immediately after the end of the war. German citizens were informed about the horrors of the Holocaust by American newsreels and compulsory screenings of the American-made documentary *Die Todesmühlen*, which audiences were forced to watch in order to receive ration cards.²⁵ In general, post-war depictions of the victims of Germans were not taboo, but overall rather patchy; German cinema at the time was more concerned about dealing with its own trauma than empathising with others.²⁶ The first explicit exploration of the Holocaust on German television was in 1957, when Alain Resnais's seminal documentary film *Nuit et brouillard* was screened on ARD. The film was seen as "besonders wertvoll" by the government, many copies were ordered for educational purposes and it continues to be shown in German schools.²⁷ Importantly, this was a French production; the first German film to depict the persecution and mass murder by the German army during the war was *Am grünen Strand der Spree* in 1957, which included an almost 20-minute sequence of the shooting of Polish Jews in 1941.²⁸ This failed, however, to instigate a wider coming-to-terms with the issue in German film, something for which audiences would have to wait several years.

4.1.2.2: Divided memory of the Holocaust

²⁴ See Baron, *Projecting the Holocaust into the Present*, p. 4.

²⁵ See Sabine Hake, *German National Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 87-8.

²⁶ Typified by the genre of the 'Trümmerfilm.' See Shandley, 'Rubble Canyons', pp. 132-47 and Robert R. Shandley, 'Dismantling the Dream Factory: The Film Industry in Berubbled Germany', in *South Central Review*, Vol. 16, No. 2/3 (1999), pp. 104-17.

²⁷ See Christoph Classen, 'Back to the Fifties? Die NS-Vergangenheit als nationaler Opfermythos im frühen Fernsehen des Bundesrepublik', in *Zeitgeschichte-online*, (March 2004/ October 2005), <http://www.zeitgeschichte-online.de/md=FSHolocaust-Classen>, p. 11.

²⁸ See *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

There was a great difference in the way East and West Germany remembered the Holocaust. Whereas in the West the anti-Semitism of the Nazis was remembered as part of the regime's 'crimes against humanity,' the GDR downplayed the anti-Semitism of the Third Reich, which was subsumed into a narrow representation of the anti-fascist myth.²⁹ According to the official hierarchy of victims of fascism, Jews were afforded only the twelfth position, since this did not fit in with the state-sanctioned ideological battle of fascism and anti-fascism.³⁰ The GDR did, however, make a number of films dealing with the Holocaust. In fact, the first German production to depict the mass persecution of Jews was made in East Germany in 1959: *Sterne* by Konrad Wolf. Several others were made during the first few decades of the GDR, including *Ehe in Schatten* (1947), *Die Affäre Blum* (1948) and *Professor Mamlock* (1961), suggesting that in these early years, East Germany seemed more prepared to deal with the Holocaust than its Western counterpart.³¹ However, it has been noted that given the number of films made on the topic of National Socialism during this period, films depicting the Jews as main victims were nevertheless severely under-represented.³² German unification managed to place memory of the Third Reich back on the agenda, and reunified Germany was able to approach depictions of the Holocaust without the demands of instrumentalisation for propagandistic ends which characterised early divided efforts.³³

4.1.2.3: *Holocaust*

The following section will focus on *Holocaust*, the five-part television mini-series made for the American commercial network NBC and screened in the USA in April 1978. The series detailed the various fates of the Jewish Weiss family during the Nazis' rise to power and throughout the Second World War. It will be discussed at such length due to its extraordinary importance in the history of film and television productions of the Holocaust in Germany and around the world. It has been claimed that the mini-series broke a taboo with regards to depicting the Holocaust on screen and it certainly had an effect on future attempts at portraying the Holocaust in TV and film.³⁴

²⁹ For more on the anti-fascist film see Berghahn, *Hollywood behind the Wall*, pp. 55-98 and Christiane Mückenberger, 'The Anti-Fascist Past in DEFA Films', in Seán Allan and John Sandford (ed.), *DEFA: East German Cinema 1946-1992* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1999), pp. 58-76.

³⁰ See Berghahn, *Hollywood behind the Wall*, p. 87.

³¹ See *Ibid.*, pp. 86-7.

³² See *Ibid.*, p. 87.

³³ See Section 1.2.2 for more on this post-unification resurgence of memory of the National Socialist past.

³⁴ See Jürgen Wilke, 'Die Fernsehserie "Holocaust" als Medienereignis', in *Zeitgeschichte-online*, (2004), <http://www.zeitgeschichte-online.de/md=FSHolocaust-Wilke>, p. 8.

Understanding the debates surrounding *Holocaust* will be integral to understanding the situation of Holocaust film today. *Holocaust* will furthermore provide a useful source for comparison regarding such issues as Hollywood film techniques, melodrama and emotionalisation during the later analysis of teamWorx's *Nicht alle waren Mörder*.

Since the 1970s, Germany had been in the middle of a so-called 'Hitler-Welle,' which provided the context for the country's reception of *Holocaust*. There was an increase in sales of Nazi memorabilia and memoirs, and books, photo collections and records were being produced and sold in hitherto unmatched quantities. A new link had been forged between history, mass media and commercialisation, and these products filled the 'grey area between memory and document' with "Banalisation, Beschönigung and Verherrlichung des 'Dritten Reiches.'"³⁵ This renewed interest was partially due to a revival of the debate on the current relevance of the Nazi past within German society. The current actions of the terrorist group die Rote Armee Fraktion (RAF) as well as the continued trial of several SS members who had served at the Majdanek concentration camp, which began in 1975, ensured that the Nazi past and its legacy were continually on the agenda.³⁶ Several other developments had occurred by 1978 to ensure it was the right time for the reception of *Holocaust*. At that time a paradigm shift was under way in German historiography, as there began to be more of a focus on 'everyday' history ('Alltagsgeschichte'), to which the story of *Holocaust*'s Weiss family fitted perfectly.³⁷ Similarly, there were also suggestions that by this time, historians had managed to 'work through' earlier aspects of the Third Reich – Hitler's rise to power for example – and so were only just ready to begin to come to terms with other issues, including the victims of the regime.³⁸

The reaction to the screening of the mini-series was enormous, and it found both critics and champions in America and Germany. This section will firstly focus on some of the criticism *Holocaust* received, keeping in mind that much of it, as criticism of a fictional, melodramatic television production dealing with the Holocaust, could also be applied to many later efforts, not least *Nicht alle waren Mörder*. The most common criticism of the mini-series was that serious history had been sacrificed for the sake of drama and that the over-emotionalisation of history in the series in fact detracted from understanding the real, historical Holocaust. A review in the *Rheinischer Merkur* stated:

³⁵ Harald Schmid, 'Die "Stunde der Wahrheit" und ihre Voraussetzungen. Zum geschichtskulturellen Wirkungskontext von "Holocaust"', in *Zeitgeschichte-online*, (2004), <http://www.zeitgeschichte-online.de/md=FSHolocaust-Schmid>, p. 4.

³⁶ See *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³⁷ See *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

“The most lenient objection to ‘Holocaust’ is that respect has been sacrificed here to play-acting: respect for reality and respect for the victims.”³⁹ For some, *Holocaust* was the final proof that television cannot deal with such serious matters appropriately, that instead it had to resort to emotional entertainment, and was thus accused of being designed to “tug at the audience’s heartstrings.”⁴⁰ Some argued however that this “bland drama” would “diminish the horrors of the actual atrocities” and therefore reduce an authentic human reaction to it.⁴¹ Similarly, it was claimed that genuine black-and-white photos from the camps were “more powerful and heartbreaking” than the entirety of the mini-series.⁴² A further problem was the transformation of an unimaginable event into a dramatic narrative form, which was criticised for being too simplistic – “Das Gute siegt, und das Böse wird bestraft”⁴³ – and for sacrificing reality for the necessities of the genre, including artificial moments of tension and cliff-hangers.⁴⁴ A similar theme was at the basis of Elie Wiesel’s oft-repeated criticism, that the film “turns an ontological event into a soap opera,” that it is “an insult to those who perished and to those who survived.”⁴⁵ For him and others, the programme trivialised the Holocaust and he claimed that representing the fate of six million Jews was utterly impossible in such a film. Similarly, he maintained that the audience would not be able to distinguish between fact and fiction, a common criticism of Holocaust film.⁴⁶ There were also worries that the high level of factual errors (including everything down to minor costume inaccuracies) would affect the audience’s understanding of the reality of the Holocaust.⁴⁷

Compounding the criticism of trivialisation was the related criticism that *Holocaust* turned the Holocaust itself into a commodity, something to be bought and consumed. For some, the idea of turning the suffering of millions into profit was considered distasteful at the very least. Importantly, the show was created for NBC, a

³⁹ Siegfried Zielinski, ‘History as Entertainment and Provocation: The TV Series “Holocaust” in West Germany’, in *New German Critique*, No. 19, Special Issue 1: Germans and Jews (1980), p. 86.

⁴⁰ See Baron, *Projecting the Holocaust into the Present*, p. 53 and Christoph Classen, ‘Zum Themenschwerpunkt: Die Fernsehserie “Holocaust” - Rückblicke auf eine “betroffene Nation”’, in *Zeitgeschichte-online*, (March 2004/ October 2005), <http://www.zeitgeschichte-online.de/md=FSHolocaust-Vorwort-Classen>, p. 2.

⁴¹ Avisar, *Screening the Holocaust*, p. 130.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 129.

⁴³ Thiele, *Publizistische Kontroversen über den Holocaust im Film*, p. 304.

⁴⁴ See *Ibid.*, p. 303.

⁴⁵ See Baron, *Projecting the Holocaust into the Present*, p. 54. See also Wilke, ‘Die Fernsehserie “Holocaust” als Medienereignis’, p. 2.

⁴⁶ See Wilke, ‘Die Fernsehserie “Holocaust” als Medienereignis’, p. 2.

⁴⁷ See Jens Müller-Bauseneik, ‘Die US-Fernsehserie “Holocaust” im Spiegel der deutschen Presse (Januar – März 1979): Eine Dokumentation’, in *Zeitgeschichte-online*, (2004), <http://www.zeitgeschichte-online.de/md=FSHolocaust-Bauseneik>, p. 9.

commercial television company which funds itself through advertising. This meant it would have to be “equally responsive to the demands of both prime-time show biz and historical accuracy.”⁴⁸ It is also worth noting that *Holocaust* was based on another mini-series, the extremely successful *Roots*, made for ABC and broadcast in 1977, which dealt with the history and legacy of slavery. This may suggest that *Holocaust* was not made out of any true desire to come to terms with the truth of the Holocaust *per se*, but rather to emulate the previous show’s commercial success.⁴⁹ The status of *Holocaust* as commodity is undeniable, confirmed by ARD’s purchase of the series’ broadcast rights, paying a reported one million DM. History here had been transformed into a commodity, something to be bought and sold.⁵⁰

Another criticism of the *Holocaust* mini-series was based around its country of origin. For many critics the ‘Americanisation’ of the Holocaust was tantamount to its trivialisation and often the two terms were used interchangeably. Any American attempt to come to terms with this part of history, is often immediately dismissed as ‘Disneyfizierung’ or ‘McDonaldisierung,’ with film and television efforts being described disparagingly as nothing but “eine von Amerika dominierte Trivialisierung des Geschehenen.”⁵¹ The constant negative reaction from certain critics – something that continues to this day – to anything produced by Hollywood as ‘low culture,’ and therefore artistically worthless, reinforces the argument that the Holocaust is indeed unrepresentable by mass media. A main facet of accusations of Americanisation, in addition to the trivialisation and commodification an American production supposedly creates, is that with *Holocaust* America had effectively ‘stolen’ German history. This was the viewpoint of celebrated New German Cinema director Edgar Reitz whose masterpiece *Heimat* was intended to correct the skewed version of German history portrayed in the mini-series. Reitz maintained:

“If we are to come to terms with the Third Reich and the crimes committed in our country, it has to be by the same means we use every day to take stock of the world we live in. [...] Authors all over the world are trying to take possession of their history [...] but they often find that it is torn out of their hands. The most serious act of expropriation occurs when people are deprived of their history. With *Holocaust*, the Americans have taken away our history.”⁵²

⁴⁸ Baron, *Projecting the Holocaust into the Present*, p. 54.

⁴⁹ See Wilke, ‘Die Fernsehserie “Holocaust” als Medienereignis’, p. 1.

⁵⁰ See *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁵¹ Levy and Sznajder, *Erinnerung im globalen Zeitalter*, pp. 153.

⁵² Cited in Thomas Elsaesser, ‘American friends’, p. 144.

That *Holocaust* was made in America moves this history away from the province of Germany alone. In addition to this mini-series, America in the 1970s was at the forefront of Holocaust remembrance, with the Eichmann trial, Hannah Arendt's book on Eichmann, and the Six-Day War, which demonstrated the threat to Israel and related the historical endangerment of the Jewish people. Additionally, Jimmy Carter's Presidential Commission on the Holocaust, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York and the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles were all set up in this decade,⁵³ giving the impression that the Holocaust was as much a part of US culture as that of other nations. Because it was made in America, *Holocaust* was able to regard the event from an innocent perspective, thereby offering a universality of memory. The mini-series allegedly reshaped the Holocaust into a story about "pluralism, tolerance, democracy, and human rights that American tells about itself,"⁵⁴ placing the same importance on the symbolic struggle between good and evil it depicted as on the factual history of the Holocaust.⁵⁵ It has further been suggested that *Holocaust* fulfilled a necessary desire in American society at that time for a conflict where the moral sides were clear and from which the present-day USA had a large distance in time and space. This desire was evident due to a certain moral instability in the United States after such events as the Watergate scandal and the war in Vietnam.⁵⁶ Remembering the murder of European Jews and importantly, that this crime was committed by a different, far-off nation helped them to cast their own history in a better light (as, after all, the USA was partly responsible for defeating Hitler and the Nazis) and to 'externalise evil.'⁵⁷ As well as these criticisms of *Holocaust*, the show received much reproach specifically from Germany, for various reasons. The day *Holocaust's* first episode was screened was denounced by *Der Spiegel* as a "Schwarzer Freitag für die Geschichtswissenschaft."⁵⁸ As well as mistrusting the capability of an entertainment series to appropriately depict the Holocaust – something perhaps reinforced by ARD's decisions to broadcast documentaries and discussion shows on the subject around the screening of the programme – there were also worries that *Holocaust* may cause a certain anti-German sentiment abroad.⁵⁹ There were complaints that the

⁵³ See Burkhard Asmuss (ed.), *Holocaust: Der Nationalsozialistische Völkermord und die Motive seiner Erinnerung* (Berlin: DHM-Museumspädagogik, 2002), p. 233.

⁵⁴ Tim Cole, *Selling the Holocaust: From Auschwitz to Schindler: How history is bought, packaged and sold* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 14.

⁵⁵ See Levy and Sznajder, *Erinnerung im globalen Zeitalter*, pp. 128-32.

⁵⁶ See *Ibid.*, pp. 131-2.

⁵⁷ See Asmuss (ed.), *Holocaust*, p. 233.

⁵⁸ Schmid, 'Die "Stunde der Wahrheit"', p. 8.

⁵⁹ See Zielinski, 'History as Entertainment and Provocation,' p. 86.

show focused too much on the dichotomy between victims and perpetrators and left little room for 'ordinary' Germans. *Die Welt* even complained that American schoolbooks should be altered to include the plight of the expellees for the sake of balance.⁶⁰

Although the series did receive much criticism from various quarters, as detailed above, it must also be mentioned that *Holocaust* gained a considerable amount of positive reviews and support. It won a number of prizes, including an Emmy award and some from certain Jewish organisations.⁶¹ Indeed, whatever image the series gave of the Holocaust, there can be no doubt that it put the issue at the top of the agenda and led to numerous discussions on it.⁶² An article in a 1979 issue of *Cahiers du Cinéma* claimed "that the fiction of *Holocaust* has more effect, *today*... than all the documentary material ever accumulated on the genocide of the Jews."⁶³ Indeed, the enormous reaction to the series' German screening on ARD in 1979 is testament to its ability to affect public opinion. *Holocaust* received approximately 40% of the potential audience share in West Germany at the time, with around two-thirds of this audience reporting they had been affected by it and many reporting they had used the programme as a basis to talk about this issue with their family or friends.⁶⁴ Similarly impressive was the way *Holocaust* reached all age groups and educational backgrounds. The series was even dubbed 'the catharsis of the nation' by *Spiegel* magazine.⁶⁵ Indeed, many magazines and newspapers (*Der Spiegel* included) released special issues about the programme and the wider themes involved. *Holocaust* proved for some that drama could indeed be a powerful tool in communicating the horrors of the Holocaust to a wider audience. Annette Insdorf writes: "The death of six million is beyond human comprehension, hence empathy, the death of six is not... Finally, critics maintained that Germans had to experience the Holocaust emotionally, even if it was portrayed in Hollywood terms."⁶⁶ *Holocaust* succeeded in reaching parts of the population which other, more traditional history resources could not. Heinz Höhne wrote in *Der Spiegel*:

"Eine amerikanische Fernsehserie von trivialer Machart, produziert aus mehr kommerziellen als aus moralischen Motiven, mehr zur Unterhaltung als zur Aufklärung,

⁶⁰ See *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁶¹ See Wilke, 'Die Fernsehserie "Holocaust" als Medienereignis', p. 2.

⁶² See Heinz Werner Hübner, '>Holocaust<', in Guido Knopp and Siegfried Quandt (ed.), *Geschichte im Fernsehen: Ein Handbuch* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988), p. 138, Schmid, 'Die "Stunde der Wahrheit"', pp. 1-10 and Wilke, 'Die Fernsehserie "Holocaust" als Medienereignis', pp. 1-8.

⁶³ Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows*, p. 6.

⁶⁴ See Wilke, 'Die Fernsehserie "Holocaust" als Medienereignis', p. 7.

⁶⁵ Cited in Zielinski, 'History as Entertainment and Provocation', p. 81.

⁶⁶ Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows*, p. 6.

hat geschafft, was mit Hunderten von Büchern, Theaterstücken, Filmen und TV-Sendungen, Tausenden Dokumenten und allen KZ-Prozessen in drei Jahrzehnten Nachkriegsgeschichte nicht gelungen ist: die Deutschen über die in ihrem Namen begangenen Verbrechen an den Juden so ins Bild zu setzen, dass Millionen erschüttert wurden.”⁶⁷

Further proof of the significance of the programme came when ‘Die Gesellschaft für die deutsche Sprache’ voted ‘Holocaust’ as word of the year 1979,⁶⁸ the word having not been frequently used in public discourse until the broadcast of the TV series.

It cannot be denied that *Holocaust* and the resulting debates and discussions had a great effect on the way Germany related to its past and changed the shape of German ‘Vergangenheitsbewältigung’ forever. In fact, one commentator wrote that for future historians, the history of Holocaust memory in Germany could be divided as before and after the transmission of *Holocaust*.⁶⁹ The success of *Holocaust* and the huge waves it created were, in a sense, proof that the FRG had failed to come to terms successfully with the legacy of the Holocaust. It was widely accepted that Germany had been trying to get to grips with this issue in numerous ways, but it finally took a commercial film from Hollywood to truly affect the German public. It was further suggested that the negative reaction the series received in Germany, as well as much of the criticism of Americanisation, was perhaps somewhat misguided: since Germany had failed in its task of ‘Vergangenheitsbewältigung,’ someone else had to step in and undertake it on their behalf. In reply to some of the criticism detailed above, such as the fears *Holocaust* would present a negative image of Germany on the world stage, came the reminder: “Nicht die Darstellung der Verbrechen beschmutzt uns, die Verbrechen selbst haben es getan.”⁷⁰ This was an important facet of the response to *Holocaust* from the GDR; the controversy this series had caused in the West was proof for East Germans that the FRG had once again failed in the task of coming to terms with its own difficult past. This was summarised in a review in the East German magazine *Film und Fernsehen*: “Der historische Hilfsschüler heißt Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Sie ist sitzengeblieben. Mitten in ihrer unbewältigten Vergangenheit.”⁷¹ *Holocaust* was difficult to receive in the East and was not a significant focus of official discourse. What reaction there was followed party lines – for example the criticism that it concentrated too much on the suffering of the Jews and ignored other victims, such as communists – and it generally

⁶⁷ Cited in Thiele, *Publizistische Kontroversen über den Holocaust im Film*, p. 322.

⁶⁸ See Wilke, ‘Die Fernsehserie “Holocaust” als Medienereignis’, p. 8.

⁶⁹ See Hübner, ‘>Holocaust<’, p. 135.

⁷⁰ Müller-Bauseneik, ‘Die US-Fernsehserie “Holocaust”’, p. 15.

⁷¹ Heinz Grote, “‘Holocaust’”, in *Film und Fernsehen*, Jg. 20 (1979), p. 2, cited in Müller-Bauseneik, ‘Die US-Fernsehserie “Holocaust”’, p. 7.

failed to provoke the same reaction or have a similar influence on that country's memory discourse as it did in the West.⁷²

The importance of the mini-series *Holocaust* within the history of German coming-to-terms with this issue should not be underestimated. The programme was feted as having broken a taboo in representing the Holocaust, and although it had been seen on screen before then, *Holocaust* certainly broke a taboo regarding the mixing of serious history and entertainment strategies.⁷³ After the American miniseries was broadcast, several German productions were screened on ZDF – such as the mini-series *Geschwister Oppermann* (1983), *Die Bertinis* (1988), *Die Durchreise* (1993), and *Regentropfen* (1982 – which attempted to recapture the effect of the original, without much success.⁷⁴ The above evidence suggests that *Holocaust* has been integral in creating the current shape of Holocaust memory.

4.1.2.4: Post-unification Holocaust memory

This section will briefly detail trends and debates in memory of the Holocaust in Germany from unification up to the present day. It has already been discussed what effect German unification had upon the country's relationship with the legacy of National Socialism,⁷⁵ so this section will primarily focus on more general developments in Holocaust memory of the past two decades, with a particular interest in trends in Holocaust film. It must first be noted that the Holocaust is still constantly at the centre of various debates and discussions. Despite the rise of other, potentially competitive discourses, such as that on German victimhood, the Holocaust remains a constant part of Germany's relationship with its past. This is typified by the debates surrounding Berlin's Holocaust Memorial, the construction of which was proposed as early as 1988 and which eventually officially opened in 2005. There were heated debates on whether such a memorial should exist at all, what form it should take, who should build it (the final choice of the American architect Peter Eisenmann again provoked reaction against a foreigner – especially an American – interfering with German memories of its past), and how it should be funded (attempts to raise the money again attracted accusations of trivialising and commercialising the Holocaust). The memorial seemed beset by a plethora of other issues, most poignantly the scandal caused by the discovery that the

⁷² See Schmid, 'Die "Stunde der Wahrheit"', p. 1 and Müller-Bauseneik, 'Die US-Fernsehserie "Holocaust"', pp. 6-7.

⁷³ See Zielinski, 'History as Entertainment and Provocation', p. 95.

⁷⁴ See Kansteiner, *In Pursuit of German Memory*, p. 116.

⁷⁵ See Section 1.2.2.

company providing the graffiti-resistant coating for the memorial, Degussa, was a sister company of Degesch, which produced the poisonous gas Cyclon B during the Second World War. That the memorial provoked so much debate was symptomatic of the public feeling about memory of the Holocaust in Germany and similarly, that this debate raged on for over twenty years (and indeed still continues) keeps the arguments around Holocaust memory in the public consciousness.⁷⁶ As graffiti near the site read: ‘the debate is the memorial.’⁷⁷ The Holocaust memorial is a rather appropriate point for comparison to the use of popular film in remembering the Holocaust. Just as the memorial was designed as a place ‘wo man gerne hingehet’⁷⁸ and where children enjoy jumping from stone to stone, Holocaust film entertains and remembers simultaneously.⁷⁹ Further cementing the importance of the Holocaust in 21st century German memory discourse was the 2002 exhibition at the Deutsches Historisches Museum, entitled: ‘Holocaust: Der Nationalsozialistische Völkermord und die Motive seiner Erinnerung,’ which claimed to be the first comprehensive exhibition on the subject in Germany.⁸⁰ Something that keeps the memory of the Holocaust alive is its instrumentalisation for all manner of purposes. In his now iconic speech in 1998, accepting the ‘Friedenspreis des deutschen Buchhandels,’ Martin Walser spoke of the ‘Moralkeule’ of Auschwitz, to refer to how the current generation of Germans are repeatedly being made to feel guilty for the actions of their forefathers.⁸¹ At once immediately recognisable and still able to shock, images associated with the Holocaust have been used in certain advertising campaigns, for example comparing battery chickens to concentration camp prisoners.⁸² Through this constant instrumentalisation and the constant exposure to its motifs, certain commentators fear that the public will become desensitised to these images, that they will lose their power and that they will become detached from the reality of the Holocaust.

Dominating the debate on many contemporary representations of the Holocaust, which began with discussions on the American mini-series, is the accusation that the event itself is being commodified and therefore trivialised. This was suggested by the Jewish historian Yaffa Eliach, in his oft-repeated maxim: “There is no business like

⁷⁶ For examples of the continued debate surrounding the Holocaust memorial see, for example, Haak, ‘Respekt vor dem Stein’.

⁷⁷ See Pearce, *Contemporary Germany and the Nazi Legacy*, pp. 129-51 for a thorough discussion of the debates surrounding the Holocaust memorial.

⁷⁸ See *Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁷⁹ See Kansteiner, *In Pursuit of German Memory*, p. 296.

⁸⁰ See Asmuss (ed.), *Holocaust*, p. 13.

⁸¹ See Walser, *Erfahrungen beim Verfassen einer Sonntagsrede*, p. 20.

⁸² See Classen, ‘Zum Themenschwerpunkt’, p. 2.

Shoah Business.”⁸³ From a different viewpoint, but similarly compounding the idea that the Holocaust is currently big business, was Norman Finkelstein’s book *The Holocaust Industry* (2000).⁸⁴ So-called ‘Auschwitz tourism’ is booming and represents an important source of income for places which once held concentration camps.⁸⁵ In recent years the Holocaust has been transformed into consumer goods like never before: Holocaust comics, trashy Holocaust literature and even Holocaust cookbooks are currently available. This trivialisation, however, may not merely represent a loss of respectful memory but may also be used to cope with something terrible by making it familiar. The uses of commercialisation of history have been noted by Tim Cole, which he links to a similar (if not identical) trivialisation of the First World War: “Through the process of ‘trivialisation’ [...] the reality of war was disguised and controlled, even if it was not transcended. [...] Trivialisation was one way of coping with war, not by exalting and glorifying it, but by making it familiar, that which was in one’s power to choose and to dominate.”⁸⁶ It must be asked whether the Holocaust as event can ever be consumed as commodity and how this alters public memory and understanding of it, if it is somehow weakened, robbed of its power or even, in a very real sense, forgotten.⁸⁷ Indeed, the maxim ‘immer davon reden, nie daran denken’ summarises the alleged dangers of trivialising the Holocaust: if the iconography and motifs of the Holocaust become routine and omnipresent, these images will lose their ability to shock and memory of Holocaust as the ‘ultimate historical event’ would therefore, for some, become devalued.⁸⁸

Another development in the area of Holocaust memory, and one which arguably began around the broadcast of *Holocaust* in the 1970s is the increasing globalisation of the Holocaust. Since 1945, ‘Auschwitz’ has come to mean something for countries and groups of people which had no direct link to the Holocaust.⁸⁹ The large number of recent autobiographies, memoirs, video projects and so on have transported private memory into the public arena and this rise in individual memory points towards a decline in the power of nation states to define Holocaust memory.⁹⁰ This is also partially

⁸³ Yaffa Eliach, ‘President’s Commission on the Holocaust: reflections’, cited in Cole, *Selling the Holocaust*, p. 6.

⁸⁴ Finkelstein’s book claimed, to summarise very briefly, that American Jews were instrumentalising the Holocaust for profit. Although a much disputed claim it nonetheless reinforced the idea that the Holocaust was being instrumentalised and commodified, for various ends.

⁸⁵ See Levy and Sznajder, *Erinnerung im globalen Zeitalter*, p. 156.

⁸⁶ Cole, *Selling the Holocaust*, p. 15.

⁸⁷ See Levy and Sznajder, *Erinnerung im globalen Zeitalter*, p. 155.

⁸⁸ See Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, p. 248.

⁸⁹ See Levy and Sznajder, *Erinnerung im globalen Zeitalter*, p. 37.

⁹⁰ See *Ibid.*, p. 151.

due to the nature of the Holocaust itself, which has left its survivors and their descendents displaced across the whole world. Aleida Assmann argues that there is another paradox integral in Holocaust memory, in that the increasingly universalised perspective of the Holocaust results in a dissolution of individual identity and therefore memory, upon which Holocaust memory in a wider sense is based.⁹¹ Although the globalisation of Holocaust memory could be seen as a positive development, as more and more countries and cultures learn the lesson of ‘nie wieder Auschwitz,’ there are fears, voiced by historian Pierre Nora, amongst others, that globalisation can lead to a loss of collective memory and its replacement by unauthentic, superficial substitutes – such as entertainment films – which privilege universal emotionalisation over true experiences.⁹² Similarly, this increasing globalisation can result in the Holocaust being reduced to a simple dichotomy of good versus evil, a cautionary tale, and the true horror experienced by millions could be lost forever. In the minds of certain critics there exists a divide between European and US Holocaust filmmakers, the former dealing with the Holocaust “to explore and express their own national traumas” – or, in the case of German filmmakers, as a form of therapy, to work through issues of guilt – and the latter exploiting the Holocaust to ‘make a quick buck.’⁹³ This dichotomy of European film as art and American film as commodity utterly ignores any artistic merit in American features (which can also be motivated by autobiographical desires) as well as the intrinsic necessity of European films to sell at the box office.⁹⁴ The suggested ‘Germanification’ of the word Holocaust to ‘Holokaust,’ by historian Eberhard Jäckels, which was adopted by Guido Knopp as the title for his documentary screened in 2000, leads one to believe there is a desire in Germany to ‘reclaim’ the Holocaust as a specifically German event. This relates once again to a primary question in Holocaust research: ‘to whom does the Holocaust really belong?’ Do German filmmakers have a duty to deal with this issue or do they even have a right? The maxim: ‘Wen es besonders angeht, der muss und kann deshalb nicht,’⁹⁵ questions the supposed German ‘ownership’ of the Holocaust, as perhaps would be claimed by Reitz, in his criticism of the Americanisation of the Holocaust in the 1970s miniseries.

⁹¹ See Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, p. 48.

⁹² See Levy and Sznajder, *Erinnerung im globalen Zeitalter*, p. 19.

⁹³ See Avisar, *Screening the Holocaust*, p. 132.

⁹⁴ See *Ibid.*, p. 133 and Thiele, *Publizistische Kontroversen über den Holocaust im Film*, p. 123 & p. 468. The dichotomy between Hollywood and German cinematic traditions is discussed and dispelled in Section 2.2.2.

⁹⁵ Thiele, *Publizistische Kontroversen über den Holocaust im Film*, p. 85.

As well as the Americanisation of the Holocaust, there has also been a more recent focus on the Holocaust as a European site of memory. Much as the Holocaust is used as a negative foundation myth for the Federal Republic, there are also suggestions that the Holocaust could be used as a common event in European history to tie together an ever-expanding and fractured Europe. In January 2000, representatives from 16 European countries were invited to Stockholm to take part in a conference on the forms commemoration and education of the Holocaust should take. The former Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson stated the aims of the conference thus:

“Es ist durchaus angemessen, dass diese erste große internationale Konferenz des neuen Jahrtausends sich dazu bekennt, die Saat einer besseren Zukunft in den Boden einer bitteren Vergangenheit zu streuen. Wir fühlen mit den Opfern, und ihr Kampf ist uns Ansporn. Wir wollen uns verpflichten, der Opfer zu gedenken, die ihr Leben gelassen haben, die noch unter uns weilenden Überlebenden zu achten und das gemeinsame menschliche Streben nach gegenseitigem Verstehen und nach Gerechtigkeit zu bekräftigen.”⁹⁶

There are, however, certain issues with this Europeanisation. The most prominent is the adoption of a US model of Holocaust memory, which suggests the transformation of this very real event (of which there are physical traces all over Europe) into an exclusively moral issue, one of good and evil, which decontextualises the Holocaust and removes its European specificity.⁹⁷ Similarly, the focus on the Europe-wide adoption of a victim perspective ignores the perpetrators, therefore perhaps dehistoricising the Holocaust and glossing over the role played by Nazis but also ‘fellow travellers’ and collaborators in Germany and in other countries in Europe.

In recent times the way the majority of the global (and especially German) population relates to the Holocaust has undergone a dramatic shift. Much of this is a result of the shift from communicative memory to cultural memory, hastened by the demise of the last surviving generation to experience the Third Reich first-hand.⁹⁸ The Holocaust, what and how it actually was, is now predominantly communicated through mass communication: through television, cinema and in newspapers.⁹⁹ Aleida Assmann writes:

“Das liegt daran, dass das Erfahrungsgedächtnis der Zeitzegen, wenn es in Zukunft nicht verlorengehen soll, in ein kulturelles Gedächtnis der Nachwelt übersetzt werden muss. Das lebendige Gedächtnis weicht damit einem mediengestützten Gedächtnis, das sich auf materielle Träger wie Denkmäler, Gedenkstätten, Museen und Archiven stützt. Während

⁹⁶ See Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, pp. 255.

⁹⁷ See *Ibid.*, pp. 255-61.

⁹⁸ As discussed in Section 1.2.1 and 1.2.2.

⁹⁹ See Levy and Sznajder, *Erinnerung im globalen Zeitalter*, p. 152.

bestimmte Arten von Gedächtnis im Rückzug begriffen sind, wie das Lerngedächtnis, das Bildungsgedächtnis und, in Bezug auf die Shoah, das Erfahrungsgedächtnis, nehmen andere Formen des Gedächtnisses wie das der Medien oder der Politik offensichtlich an Bedeutung zu.”¹⁰⁰

Historians are no longer the main purveyors of Holocaust memory but rather popular culture;¹⁰¹ the general population encounters the Holocaust mainly through their free time, through entertainment. Indeed, the symbol of the Holocaust has shifted from Anne Frank, the victim, through Elie Wiesel, the survivor, to today Steven Spielberg, the creator of Holocaust fiction.¹⁰² Since the release of Spielberg’s *Schindler’s List*, there has been little question of the link between the Holocaust and the culture industry. Although criticised from some quarters with the accusation of trivialising the Holocaust, the film was hailed as an international success – winning the Academy Award for Best Film in 1993 – and one which brought the Holocaust to a whole new audience. Admirers of the film claim that it is “für Kids attraktiv [...], die sich in der Schule bei vergleichbaren Themen einfach wegdrehen.”¹⁰³ The result now is that Spielberg’s version of the Holocaust and the Holocaust as event have become the same thing in the minds of many people: “Wirklichkeit und Fiktion verschwimmen miteinander.”¹⁰⁴ Although many critics have claimed that the ubiquity of ‘fake’ cinema versions of the Holocaust somehow denigrate the event itself, it is important to note that today’s viewers are skilled interpreters of media messages, and that they are able, for the most part, to distinguish between truth and embellishment.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, entertainment productions on the Holocaust do not replace what the viewer may have learned about the topic, in school, from books, or through family narratives, but rather complement this knowledge. Parallel memories can exist simultaneously. Furthermore, the current necessity of media to take on the task of communicating Holocaust memory is bound up with the nature of the event itself. Miriam Bratu Hansen writes:

“For whether we like it or not, the predominant vehicles of public memory *are* the media of technical re/production and mass consumption. This issue is especially exacerbated for the remembrance of the Shoah in light of the specific crisis posed by the Nazis’ destruction of the very basis and structures of collective remembering. (In contrast with most of the ‘ordinary massacres’ committed in the course of the German genocidal war all over Europe, the Shoah did not leave any communities of survivors, widows and

¹⁰⁰ Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1999), p. 15, cited in Levy and Sznajder, *Erinnerung im globalen Zeitalter*, p. 43.

¹⁰¹ See Levy and Sznajder, *Erinnerung im globalen Zeitalter*, p. 30.

¹⁰² See Cole, *Selling the Holocaust*, p. xii.

¹⁰³ Thiele, *Publizistische Kontroversen über den Holocaust im Film*, p. 122.

¹⁰⁴ Levy and Sznajder, *Erinnerung im globalen Zeitalter*, p. 157.

¹⁰⁵ See *Ibid.*, p. 154.

children, not even burial sites that would have provided a link with a more ‘organic’ tradition of oral and collective memory.)”¹⁰⁶

Following on from this concept and to end the section, it is worth investigating some of the themes in Holocaust film which have appeared from the 1990s onwards. This will take into account a number of films produced outside of Germany since, due to the aforementioned globalisation of Holocaust memory, these do indeed have an effect on the multitude of Holocaust memory strands in the Federal Republic. As parallel memories exist so has the definition of a ‘Holocaust movie’ fractured to include many different foci, genres and styles, representing the breadth of memory and reflecting developments in memory discourse. In general terms, film critics such as Peter Körte, Georg Seeßlen and Stefan Reinecke have noticed a ‘neue Unbefangenheit,’ with regard to Holocaust film in the 1990s and onwards, reflecting the attitude of normalisation at this time, and they have remarked upon a trend towards nostalgia and the melodramatisation of fascism, possibly relating to the rise of the sub-genre of heritage Holocaust film discussed previously.¹⁰⁷ The increasing number and popularity of Holocaust features has been ascribed to their qualities as: “Perfekte Film-Stories, Helden, Bösewichter und Opfer, Hartgesottenes und Sentimentales, für jeden Geschmack etwas, Filme für Hausfrauennachmittage und Nachtvorstellungen, für Bundesfilmpreisverleihungen und für den Export nach Spanien.”¹⁰⁸ Perhaps the most noticeable theme within Holocaust films of recent years is the Jewish survival narrative, found in *Schindler’s List* and, similarly, in several German (co-)productions, including *Hitlerjunge Salomon*, *Mutter’s Courage* (1995), *The Pianist*, *Rosenstraße* and *Die Fälscher* (2007). This sub-genre of film has been criticised for its portrayal of survival as the entire story of the Holocaust, despite its status as historical anomaly, and for suggesting that the protagonists’ survival was due to the exceptional talents of those involved, the mercy of ‘good’ Germans, or simply due to dumb luck. This is one of the reasons this sub-genre of films appears to be the most popular type of Holocaust movie: they can conform to the demands of a traditional Hollywood narrative, offering a celebration of survival and redemptive closure, something which can never truly be the case when dealing with the Holocaust.¹⁰⁹ Perhaps a reason why there exist so many

¹⁰⁶ Miriam Bratu Hansen, ‘*Schindler’s List* is not *Shoah*: Second Commandment, Popular Modernism and Public Memory’, in Barbie Zelizer (ed.), *Visual Culture and the Holocaust* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001), p. 147.

¹⁰⁷ See Thiele, *Publizistische Kontroversen über den Holocaust im Film*, pp. 121-2. See also Section 2.4.2 on heritage cinema and the Holocaust.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

¹⁰⁹ See Cole, *Selling the Holocaust*, p. xvii.

‘good German’ variations on the Jewish survival theme is that it fulfils the dramatic necessity of a hero, however problematic that hero may be.¹¹⁰ The wealth of survival narratives risks turning this historical anomaly into the dominant narrative audiences relate to the Holocaust, and for many critics of this sub-genre the question exists: if there were so many ‘good Germans,’ why were more Jews not saved?¹¹¹

The rise in survival films, particularly those which focus on the actions of a ‘good German’ – such as *Schindler’s List* as well as *Aimée & Jaguar*, *Rosenstraße*, and others – reflects the relatively recent interest in the so-called ‘Stille Helden.’ These were mostly non-Jewish Germans, who helped Jewish people to survive the Holocaust, by offering them hiding places or providing them with food or falsified documents. It is worth tracking the development of this area of research in order to provide a context for the analysis of teamWorx’s Event Movie *Nicht alle waren Mörder*. In the immediate post-war period, as with most acts of resistance against the Nazi regime, those who helped save Jewish people were mostly ignored, in the face of the shocking enormity of Jewish victims and in a bid by the Allies to avoid any shirking of guilt amongst the German population. Between 1958 and 1966 however, 738 men and women who had saved Jewish people were honoured as ‘Unbesungene Helden’ in an initiative by the Berlin ‘Innensenator,’ an initiative which originated within the ‘jüdische Gemeinde’ in Berlin. 250 of these people were awarded the Bundesverdienstkreuz for their efforts.¹¹² Since then research into this group of people has been inconsistent. In the 1980s the ‘Gedenkstätte deutscher Widerstand,’ under the leadership of Peter Steinbach, who acted as historical advisor on *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, began to document some of their cases and more recently Professor Wolfgang Benz and a team from the ‘Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung’ at the ‘Technische Universität Berlin’ undertook the first comprehensive research project into this area. Of considerable importance was the effect on public consciousness the release of *Schindler’s List* had on Germany, creating a wide interest in the subject within the general population.¹¹³ A further important event was the opening of the ‘Gedenkstätte Stille Helden’ in the Mitte district of Berlin on 27th October 2008 – incorporating the ‘Gedenkstätte Blindenwerkstatt Otto Weidt’ set up a few years earlier – which contains the first permanent exhibition on the role of

¹¹⁰ See Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, p. 154.

¹¹¹ See Lanzmann, ‘Ihr sollt nicht weinen’, pp. 176-7, Hansen, ‘*Schindler’s List* is not *Shoah*’, p. 131 and Kansteiner, *In Pursuit of German Memory*, p. 117.

¹¹² See Author unknown, ‘Der lange Weg zur Anerkennung’, <http://www.swr.de/nicht-alle-waren-moerder/barrierefreie-version/befreiung-bei-martchen/hintergrund/der-lange-weg-zur-erkennung.html>.

¹¹³ It is worth noting that many of the speeches at, and much of the literature dealing with, the opening of this ‘Gedenkstätte’ mention *Schindler’s List* specifically as an influence on public memory of this issue. See the following footnote for references.

these silent helpers. It details the fates of some of the 1,700 Jewish people in Berlin who survived due to the actions of others (out of the approximate 5,000 from all of Germany). In a speech at the opening of the exhibition, the governing mayor of the city, Klaus Wowereit, praised the ‘Gedenkstätte,’ claiming it would close a gap in the capital’s memory of the Third Reich and that “Berlin braucht einen solchen Ort.”¹¹⁴ Similarly, the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem has, since the 1960s, been honouring these ‘Gerechten unter den Völkern,’ in which those people nominated were invited to plant a tree in the ‘Allee der Gerechten.’ There are around 400 Germans out of the approximately 22,000 people of all nations who have been honoured in this way.¹¹⁵ The international focus on the ‘Stille Helden’ (from *Schindler’s List* and the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial, for example) also helps to reduce the possible accusations of revisionism associated with their relatively recent high profile in Germany.

Another post-1990 development in Holocaust films is the popularity of films which attempt to create a German/Jewish symbiosis, portraying images of unity between Germans and Jews and therefore allowing German viewers to mourn the loss of this special relationship. Some examples of such films are: *Aimée und Jaguar*, *Rosenstraße* and the British production *The Boy in Striped Pyjamas* (2008). This issue was discussed at length in the review of Stuart Taberner’s article *Philo-Semitism in Recent German Film* and will be invoked during the later analysis of teamWorx’s film.¹¹⁶ Related to this is the further subset of Holocaust films which depict the persecution of children, for example *Hitlerjunge Salomon*, *The Boy in Striped Pyjamas* and the French film *Au Revoir, Les Enfants* (1987). Focusing on Germans as victims of the war and perhaps even the Holocaust, as Taberner suggests, reflects an increasing trend in research into ‘other’ groups, aside from Jews, who were persecuted by the National Socialists, such as the Sinti and Roma or homosexuals. Indeed, a small number

¹¹⁴ Klaus Wowereit, “‘Es gilt das gesprochene Wort!’: Rede des Regierenden Bürgermeisters von Berlin, Klaus Wowereit, anlässlich des Festaktes zur Eröffnung der Gedenkstätte “Stille Helden” am 27. Oktober 2008 im Berliner Rathaus’, speech, 27 October 2008, http://www.gedenkstaette-stille-helden.de/pdf/Rede_RBm_Wowereit_Stille_Helden.pdf.

¹¹⁵ See Ibid., Bernd Neumann, “‘Es gilt das gesprochene Wort!’: Rede von Kulturstaatsminister Bernd Neumann MdB, anlässlich des Festaktes zur Eröffnung der Gedenkstätte “Stille Helden” am 27. Oktober 2008 im Berliner Rathaus’, speech, 27 October 2008, http://www.gedenkstaette-stille-helden.de/pdf/Rede_Kulturstaatsminister_Neumann_Stille_Helden.pdf, Stiftung Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, ‘Presseinformation: Eröffnung der neuen Gedenkstätte Stille Helden’, 27 October 2008, http://www.gedenkstaette-stille-helden.de/pdf/Presse_StilleHelden.pdf, ‘Der lange Weg zur Anerkennung’, and Author unknown, ‘Bäume für die Helden’, <http://www.swr.de/nicht-alle-waren-moerder/barrierefreie-version/befreiung-bei-martchen/hintergrund/baeume-fuer-die-helden.html>.

¹¹⁶ Taberner, ‘Philo-Semitism in recent German Film’, pp. 357-72. See Section 2.4.2 for an in-depth analysis of this article.

of films have been made which focus on these other victims, especially homosexuals, for example the British production *Bent* (1997), based on a play by Martin Sherman and Färberböck's *Aimée und Jaguar*, based on the book by Erica Fischer, both of which focus on the plight of homosexuals during the Nazi regime. This expansion of the understanding of victimhood relates to a comment by Holocaust survivor Ivan Ivanji, who wrote that when dealing with the Holocaust the only thing permissible would be 'the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth,' that not only the memories of the survivors but also those of the concentration camp guards, the people who drove the trains to Auschwitz, everyone who was involved in the Holocaust, would be necessary to show the whole truth of the Holocaust. Ivanji admits this is impossible and yet provides an argument for the inclusion of this wide variety of experiences into generally accepted Holocaust memory.¹¹⁷

Another trend identified in films dealing with the Holocaust is its portrayal through the genre of action movie. Lawrence Baron chooses Bryan Singer's comic-book adaptation *X-Men* (2000) as a (rather tenuous but nonetheless valid) example of how certain motifs of the Holocaust can be co-opted as the basis for a Hollywood blockbuster. Although the movie offers only a very brief scene set inside Auschwitz and reduces the Holocaust to allegory for the rest of the film, Baron argues that the inclusion of such themes within such a blockbuster will have a much better chance at reaching wider, and especially younger, audiences than most other Holocaust features. The latest film in this comic-book franchise, *X-Men: First Class* (2011), features much more on the Holocaust and its aftermath. The Holocaust has indeed featured on-screen as action movie numerous times in recent years: in *Defiance* (2008) a group of escaped Jewish prisoners join Russian resistance fighters against the Nazis and Quentin Tarantino's latest feature, the unashamedly ahistorical *Inglourious Basterds*, functions as a Jewish revenge fantasy, as a team of American Jews torture and kill Nazis in increasingly gory scenes.¹¹⁸ More recently in Germany, trash director Uwe Boll, famous for directing and producing schlock horror features such as *House of the Dead* (2003), and *Alone in the Dark*, (2005) and video game adaptations, like *Bloodrayne* (2005), *Bloodrayne: Deliverance* (2007) and *Bloodrayne: The Third Reich* (2010), is to release a film entitled *Auschwitz* at the end of 2011. Trailers for the film have already caused a certain

¹¹⁷ See Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, pp. 237-8.

¹¹⁸ See, for example, Achim Saupe, 'Kill Hitler – Die *Inglourious Basterds* auf Racheefeldzug', in *Zeitgeschichte-online*, September 2009, http://zeitgeschichte-online.de/portals/_rainbow/documents/pdf/Basterds-Saupe.pdf and Philipp Oehmke and Martin Wolf, "'Meine eigene Welt': Der US-Regisseur Quentin Tarantino über Kino im "Dritten Reich", die Grenzen der Phantasie und seinen neuen Spielfilm "Inglourious Basterds"', in *Der Spiegel*, 3 August 2009.

degree of outrage, graphically depicting the gassing of concentration camp inmates whose frenzied clamouring is ignored by the guard, played by Boll himself.¹¹⁹ Here it is evident that a multitude of different film styles are being used to depict the Holocaust, all of which bring with them innate problems, yet also certain benefits. When analysing *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, it must be asked how this film fits into these recent developments of Holocaust pictures, and what effect this ultimately has on the history which is conveyed.

4.2: *Nicht alle waren Mörder*

This section will provide an analysis of teamWorx's Event Movie *Nicht alle waren Mörder*. It will detail how the film depicts the Holocaust and compare this to current trends in Holocaust filmmaking as explored earlier in this chapter, in order to establish whether *Nicht alle waren Mörder* conforms to or breaks away from these trends. It will also ask whether the film avoids the pitfall that many critics have levelled against fictionalised Holocaust films, namely that of trivialisation, and how this is achieved.¹²⁰ This section will then go a step further and analyse how *Nicht alle waren Mörder* and the critical reaction to it reflect the contemporary situation in Germany regarding memory of the Holocaust.

4.2.1: Introduction to the film

Nicht alle waren Mörder was first broadcast on Wednesday, 1st November 2006, in the prime-time slot of 8.15pm on ARD, receiving an audience of 5.31 million (around 14.9% of the potential audience). The Event Movie was based on the bestselling memoirs of the actor Michael Degen, published to great acclaim in 1999.¹²¹ It was the second teamWorx feature from director Jo Baier, after *Stauffenberg*, leading Christopher Keil to describe him as “Spezialist für Zivilcourage und historischen Widerstand.”¹²² The film tells “a story of compassion and generosity in the darkest hour of German history,”¹²³ of how the young Degen and his mother Anna survived the

¹¹⁹ See, for example, Sophie Albers and Matthias Schmidt, ‘Trailer im Netz: Trash-Regisseur Boll provoziert mit Auschwitz-Film’, in *Stern*, 14 September 2010 and Hans-Georg Rodek, ‘Umstritten: Uwe Boll will in Auschwitz drehen’, in *Die Welt*, 8 September 2010.

¹²⁰ See Section 4.1.1 for details of this criticism.

¹²¹ Michael Degen, *Nicht alle waren Mörder: Eine Kindheit in Berlin* (München: Ullstein, 2003).

¹²² Christopher Keil, ‘Angst in Berlin’, in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 1 November 2006.

¹²³ Author unknown, ‘*Nicht alle waren Mörder* international trailer’, found at, <http://www.teamworx.de/jart/prj3/teamworx/main.jart?rel=de&reserve-mode=active&content-id=1182683302401&fid=1179735213484>, accessed 8 November 2010.

Second World War by fleeing their home and receiving food and shelter from a series of sympathetic Germans, all of whom had varied reasons for helping them. They were under constant threat of discovery and of being killed in a bombing raid, which were becoming increasingly frequent in Berlin in the latter stages of the war. The film features a number of popular actors from German television and cinema, including Nadja Uhl in the leading female role and Axel Prahl, Katharina Thalbach, Hannelore Elsner, Richy Müller and Maria Simon in supporting parts. Financial backing for the Event Movie came mostly from the Stuttgart-based public broadcasting company Südwestrundfunk, with which *Stauffenberg* was also made, with other funding provided by Jan Mojto's EOS-Entertainment, the FilmFernsehFonds in Bavaria, the Medien- und Filmgesellschaft in Baden-Württemberg and the Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg.¹²⁴

The decision to make the film came from Nico Hofmann himself, who had attempted to buy the rights to Degen's memoirs before 2006 but found they had already been purchased by producer Bernd Eichinger. Eichinger passed up the chance to make the film and, after the rights became available again, Hofmann began to work together with Degen on producing the Event Movie.¹²⁵ Hofmann claimed: "*Nicht alle waren Mörder* war mir wichtig weil er im Grund genommen, jüdisches Leben in Deutschland untersucht und mir wichtig war in den ganzen Filmen, die ich gemacht habe, ein Film zu haben, der ganz stark auf das jüdische Thema auch abzielt."¹²⁶ This highlights the question of whether *Nicht alle waren Mörder* can be classified as a Holocaust film. There are no images of concentration camps and, although the central characters are Jewish, much of the film's focus is on the non-Jewish characters who assist them. To depict the fates of Jews in Germany in the latter stages of the Second World War is to portray, to some extent, the effects of National Socialist anti-Semitism and of the Final Solution, so Hofmann's reticence to describe the film using the word 'Holocaust' seems somewhat strange: the film does not show 'jüdisches Leben,' but rather 'jüdisches Überleben.' Although concentration camps and torture are not visually depicted, they are clearly referred to and the film uses various methods to remind the viewer of the constant threat the central characters, as Jews, are under. *Nicht alle waren Mörder* does share many similarities with other Holocaust features and has been described as a

¹²⁴ Author unknown, 'Ein einzigartiger Blickwinkel', <http://www.swr.de/nicht-alle-waren-moerder/der-film-making-of/der-film/die-produzenten.html>.

¹²⁵ See Ibid.

¹²⁶ Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 27-30.

“Holocaustdrama” by critics.¹²⁷ As a result of this, *Nicht alle waren Mörder* shall be defined and analysed as a ‘Holocaust film.’

4.2.2: Authenticity

In this section it will be asked how authenticity is attempted in *Nicht alle waren Mörder*. The Event Movie will be compared to how previous Holocaust films have approached authenticity and it will be asked whether authenticity is necessary (or even possible) in depicting the Holocaust.¹²⁸ Finally, the claims of authenticity from teamWorx’s filmmakers will be explored and evaluated, using examples from *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, to reveal whether the Event Movie supports or contradicts these claims. Firstly, it will be necessary to explore the difficulties related to authenticity in memory of the Holocaust specifically and the often troubled relationship between authenticity and personal and collective memory. Much of the criticism directed towards *Holocaust* and later *Schindler’s List* by Elie Wiesel, Claude Lanzmann and others suggests that, when dealing with the Holocaust, films should attempt to remain as close as possible to personally experienced history, one of the few generally accepted criteria for evaluating Holocaust features.¹²⁹ Most of the recent Holocaust films mentioned in the section above, unlike *Holocaust*, are based on memoirs or real-life incidents, like *Nicht alle waren Mörder*. Despite this, however, many scholars have noted the impossibility of representing history authentically in film and specifically the paradox of representing the Holocaust in an authentic fashion.¹³⁰ Manuel Köppen and Klaus R. Scherpe ask: “Wie sind ‘wirkliche’ und vor allem wirksame Aussagen nach und über Auschwitz formulierbar, wenn es unmöglich ist, die Vergangenheit authentisch zu erfahren?”¹³¹ Many historians suggest that even if Holocaust memory is able to retain its authenticity when translated into other forms, film is not the medium for doing so. Martina Thiele writes that “‘Ver’-filmung’ signifies the “‘Ver’-lust’ of authenticity – “Es kann jedoch keine 1:1-Übersetzung von einer Kunstform in eine andere geben”¹³² – suggesting film cannot recreate the authenticity of memoirs nor of memories. She similarly describes the mistaken belief that realistic locations and props bring a film closer to authenticity, something espoused by teamWorx’s filmmakers, as “ein recht naiver Realismus-

¹²⁷ See Christian Buß, ‘Wer hat schon saubere Hände?’, in *Der Spiegel*, 1 November 2006.

¹²⁸ See Section 2.1.1 for discussions on authenticity in general terms and with reference to the Holocaust.

¹²⁹ See Avisar, *Screening the Holocaust*, pp. 46-52.

¹³⁰ See Section 2.1 for more on authenticity.

¹³¹ Manuel Köppen and Klaus R. Scherpe, ‘Zur Einführung: Der Streit um die Darstellbarkeit des Holocaust’, in Manuel Köppen and Klaus R. Scherpe (ed.), *Bilder des Holocaust* (Köln: Böhlau, 1997), p. 1.

¹³² Thiele, *Publizistische Kontroversen über den Holocaust im Film*, p. 37.

Begriff.”¹³³ These attempts to achieve authenticity through realistic sets, props and costumes can actually work against understanding of the Holocaust, she argues. They give the film an air of authenticity which masks the possible unreal aspects and obscures the impossibility of authentic representation. “Particularly for those who know little about the Holocaust,” writes Annette Insdorf, “the apparent reality disguises the fairy-tale aspects.”¹³⁴ This impossibility of authentic representation can be seen in the paradox affecting Holocaust witnesses, suggested by Primo Levi in *The Drowned and the Saved*. Here, the truest, most authentic witnesses are those who died; those who survived were unrepresentative and therefore did not have access to the range of experience required for ‘true, authentic’ Holocaust memory.¹³⁵ It has similarly been suggested that the nature of the Holocaust itself precludes authenticity in Holocaust memory: if the victims did survive, their witnessing would be an impossible act, since no-one could possibly believe what they had been through.¹³⁶ Authenticity in a Holocaust film, therefore, is similarly impossible: film “positions the spectator as a false witness, one who can slip in and out of the witnessing position at will without having to experience the existential consequences of this act, one who can master the Holocaust as a spectacle.”¹³⁷ This relates to much of the criticism of *Schindler’s List*, which maintains that, although based on historical fact, the plot of the film was so unrepresentative of the norm that it could be considered untrue. Miriam Bratu Hansen writes: “Although the story [...] is historically ‘authentic,’ it cannot but remain a fairy tale in the face of the overwhelming facticity of ‘man-made mass death.’”¹³⁸ This once more suggests the problem that if the stories of the murdered cannot be passed on, because they cannot write them and the stories of the survivors should not be passed on because they are unrepresentative, then the Holocaust is in danger of being forgotten. In the analysis of *Nicht alle waren Mörder* it will be asked how the Event Movie gets past this paradox of representation.

The use of Michael Degen’s memoirs as a source text for *Nicht alle waren Mörder* allows teamWorx to claim a certain degree of authenticity, if authenticity can be inferred from personal experience of the Holocaust. Here teamWorx’s film is in the tradition of many recent Holocaust features which use personal stories as their starting

¹³³ Ibid., p. 124.

¹³⁴ Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows*, p. 12. This was in an analysis of the Hollywood film *Victory* (1981) but remains relevant for Holocaust film in general.

¹³⁵ See Hartman, *Scars of the Spirit*, p. 86.

¹³⁶ See Ibid., p. 88.

¹³⁷ Hirsch, *Afterimage*, p. 21.

¹³⁸ Hansen, ‘*Schindler’s List* is not *Shoah*’, p. 131.

point.¹³⁹ Degen's memoirs are also typical of a relatively new wave of texts recalling the authors' childhood during the Third Reich, possibly influenced by the number of memoirs of non-Jewish children detailing their traumatic childhoods in wartime Germany.¹⁴⁰ Klaudia Wick writes: "Michael Degen ist der prominenteste einer großen Zahl von Autoren, die sich die Qual nun endlich von der Seele schreiben."¹⁴¹ Indeed, a month before *Nicht alle waren Mörder* was broadcast, the two-parter *Neger, Neger, Schornsteinfeger* (2006), a production from 'Aspekt Telefilm-Produktion GmbH,' was screened on ZDF. Based on the memoirs of Hans-Jürgen Massaquoi (entitled *Destined to Witness* in the original English), it told the story of the young Massaquoi, son of a Liberian father and German mother, who grew up during the rise of National Socialism and the Second World War.¹⁴² teamWorx's producers maintain that their interest in Degen's memoirs was partially due to its new and enlightening view on the Third Reich; Hofmann commented that "Michael Degen's zutiefst menschlicher Ansatz hat mich ergriffen und bewegt."¹⁴³ Conversely, it could simply be that childhood memoirs have proven themselves to be a 'bankable commodity' and this is why teamWorx has produced this film at this exact point in time.

One cannot, however, claim that *Nicht alle waren Mörder* is protected against claims of inauthenticity and revisionism – as were directed at many of the films mentioned in the opening section – simply because the events and characters in the film can be traced back to Degen's memoirs. Here several problems with the use of memoirs as a basis for a film should be considered. The first is that personal memory is coloured by events which happen in the interim.¹⁴⁴ The childhood memories of a young boy written up decades later cannot be relied upon as absolute historical truth, especially considering the level of detail Degen gives, including many conversations which appear to be reproduced verbatim. This is not to say that Degen is a liar, or that the events in the book did not happen – just to maintain that personal memoirs, just as personal memories, cannot be relied upon to reflect exactly what happened.¹⁴⁵ This leads onto another issue, relating specifically to the nature of film in adapting personal memoirs.

¹³⁹ For example *Hitlerjunge Salomon*, based on the memoirs of Sally Perel, or *Aimée & Jaguar*, following the lives of two women, Elisabeth Wust and Felice Schragenheim, as reconstructed in Erica Fischer, *Aimée & Jaguar – Eine Liebesgeschichte, Berlin 1943*, (Munich: dtv, 1999).

¹⁴⁰ See Section 3.1.1 for examples of such texts portraying German victimhood.

¹⁴¹ Klaudia Wick, 'Flucht durch Berlin', in *Berliner Zeitung*, 1 November 2006.

¹⁴² Hans-Jürgen Massaquoi, translated by Ulrike Wasel and Klaus Timmermann, *Neger, Neger, Schornsteinfeger* (München: Knauer, 1999).

¹⁴³ 'Ein einzigartiger Blickwinkel'.

¹⁴⁴ As discussed in Section 1.2.1.

¹⁴⁵ See Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, pp. 124-34 for more on the problems with memoirs and authenticity.

Even if Degen's memoirs could be considered authentic since they were written from the memory of the person who experienced the events in the book, this authenticity could not be transferred to the film due to the large number of people involved in making such an Event Movie: the director, producers, actors, camera operators, set designers, even wardrobe and make-up, each with their own separate creative vision of what is authentic. Even with Degen's creative input, the supposed authenticity of his memoirs is filtered so much it becomes meaningless. The intrinsic quality of film means that, apart from documentary images, everything on screen – props, costumes, scenery, actors – is falsified and therefore cannot be said to be authentic.¹⁴⁶ A further problem with the use of a book as source text for *Nicht alle waren Mörder* is that details had to be changed to translate the book to screen. For one, the text needs abridging, since no ninety-minute television film could include all the events featured in the book. Similarly, the narrative position of Michael Degen in his memoirs cannot successfully be communicated in such a film. He is a privileged narrator, speaking at many points with the benefit of hindsight and often adding extra information and asides, which would be difficult to convey in a narrative film and would be anathema in an Event Movie, as such a novel approach would perhaps confuse and alienate the mainstream audience. *Nicht alle waren Mörder* remains relatively consistent to the source text, and although there are sections which have been omitted or repositioned and characters and events which have been conflated it would be useless to note every single one of these, since the point remains that claiming the film is authentic because of its reliance on Degen's actual memoirs is false, and ignores the complete impossibility of transferring text to screen in an authentic way.

Something which, for teamWorx, reinforces the authenticity of the film is the reaction of Michael Degen himself to the production. Degen was involved throughout the filmmaking process and was already familiar with the teamWorx company from his role in *Die Sturmflut* in 2006, in which he played against Uhl. Degen had nothing but praise for Baier and his ability to do his memoirs justice: "Wenn schon verfilmen, dann von Jo Baier. Er ist gründlich, er recherchiert ganz genau, was ich später auch erlebt habe, mit ihm gemeinsam. Er hat den nötigen Humor. Und ich glaube, dass er die Figuren sehr, sehr gut erfasst hat."¹⁴⁷ Degen was deeply moved watching the film's final cut: "Es war sehr merkwürdig. [...] Von einem gewissen Punkt war ich dann doch so

¹⁴⁶ Which is not to say that documentary is an authentic form of historical film, indeed it is often just as constructed as fiction film. However, there is not the scope to properly investigate this issue here.

¹⁴⁷ Author unknown, 'Aus weiter Ferne hergeholt. Erschreckend', <http://www.swr.de/nicht-alle-waren-moerder/der-film-making-of/der-film/der-zeitzeuge.html>.

ergriffen, dass ich nicht mehr die Kraft hatte, den Film anzuschauen.”¹⁴⁸ Finally, even though he acknowledges that an historical film requires “Reduktion und Konzentration,” he believes: “Selbstverständlich kann dieser Film der historischen Dimension gerecht werden. Besonders in der Form, die Jo Baier mit seinem Ensemble gefunden hat.”¹⁴⁹ teamWorx’s filmmakers claim authenticity for *Nicht alle waren Mörder* in various other ways. Many of Baier’s colleagues have praised him for his approach to authenticity (not least Degen himself). Producer Jürgen Schuster commented: “Wer die Filme von Jo Baier kennt, der weiß um seinen hohen Anspruch an Authentizität.”¹⁵⁰ Similarly, Hofmann has praised Baier and maintained that *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, just as with teamWorx’s other features, featured a high level of authenticity:

“Bei den Dreharbeiten haben wir vor allem auf Authentizität gesetzt. Jo Baier war für diese Zusammenarbeit daher der ideale Partner. Kein anderer deutscher Regisseur versteht es so klug, präzise Recherche mit einer großen Emotion der Figuren zusammenzuführen. Schon in seinem Drehbuch – und später auch im Film – ist es Jo Baier gelungen, die Geschichte von Michael Degen in all ihren Facetten kraftvoll und differenziert zu einem bewegenden Stoff zu verdichten.”¹⁵¹

It is not just the producers who see authenticity as one of the main aims of the film but also the set designer Klaus Peter Platten, who wanted the scenes of the bombing, which were filmed in Breslau, to be “so authentisch wie möglich.”¹⁵² Similarly, cameraman Gunnar Fuß spoke of how the crew wanted to create an “authentischen, naturalistischen Look. [...] Nicht sehr gestylt, sondern wirklich sehr dokumentarisch.”¹⁵³ Finally the use of Peter Steinbach, director of the ‘Gedenkstätte deutscher Widerstand’ as an historical advisor reinforces teamWorx’s desire for *Nicht alle waren Mörder* to be considered historically accurate and authentic in terms of material aspects and in the sense of avoiding anachronisms or any historical inaccuracies.

With teamWorx’s claims of authenticity in mind, it will be necessary to analyse the filmic devices employed within *Nicht alle waren Mörder* to evaluate to what extent the film itself supports teamWorx’s claims. The Event Movie is shot in the Hollywood ‘classical realist’ style, with a prevalence of shot/reverse-shot editing, particularly

¹⁴⁸ Michael Hanfeld, ‘Ein Gespräch mit dem Schauspieler Michael Degen’, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 31 October 2006.

¹⁴⁹ ‘Aus weiter Ferne hergeholt’.

¹⁵⁰ ‘Ein einzigartiger Blickwinkel’.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² *Making Of “Nicht alle waren Mörder”*, dir. unknown, Ceres Film, 2006, (0:07).

¹⁵³ Ibid., (0:11).

during dialogue.¹⁵⁴ Often referred to as a ‘styleless style,’ this is used to completely efface the feeling of watching a film, to make what appears on screen seem natural instead of intricately constructed. At certain dramatic points the camera serves to bring the viewer more immediately into events. During the bombing scene, for example, where Anna and Michael flee Ludmilla’s burning apartment and run through the streets outside, the camera starts to shake to imitate the bombing but then also to act as an imaginary point-of-view shot. This effect is used again in the scene where Anna and Michael are almost discovered by the Gestapo and are forced to leave Hotze’s house, and then later in the scene where Rolf is killed by a bomb and Michael carries him back to his father. The purpose of this shot is to provide an almost ‘super-authenticity’: if the viewer really were present in the scene in the position of the camera, then this is exactly the view they would have. The audience would furthermore expect such a shot like this, as it is often used in disaster or action movies during scenes of high tension. Another way of creating the illusion of authenticity is the attention to detail the filmmakers gave regarding sets, costumes, make-up and other material aspects, as detailed above. Much time and effort was spent searching for the right locations, which were dressed to be as similar as possible to wartime Berlin.¹⁵⁵ The Stettiner Bahnhof scene, for example, features over 350 extras, all of whom are dressed and made-up to look as authentic as possible.¹⁵⁶ This is an authenticity of style, where every button on every uniform and every hairstyle is correct, something which may mask larger historical inaccuracies and furthermore the impossibility of fully communicating the Holocaust experience from the survivor’s viewpoint. In these respects, *Nicht alle waren Mörder* conforms to the standard of many recent Holocaust features.

Despite this drive towards authenticity there are aspects of *Nicht alle waren Mörder* which point towards the status of the film as constructed, aspects which work against the illusion of authenticity created by the devices detailed above. In narrative terms, there seem to be certain coincidences to help advance the plot, the likeliness of which one could question. For example, at the Stettiner Bahnhof Michael meets the ‘NSV’ (‘Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt’) nun Erna Niehoff who helps him after a former classmate identifies him as a Jew and, similarly, it is pure coincidence that Michael falls over and avoids being crushed in a phone box during the bombing raid. It

¹⁵⁴ See James Monaco, *How to Read a Film* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 173 and Robert Lapsley and Michael Westlake (ed.), *Film Theory: An Introduction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 140-1.

¹⁵⁵ See *Making Of “Nicht alle waren Mörder”*, (0:07).

¹⁵⁶ See *Ibid.*, (0:16).

can of course be argued that any survivor's story needs to rely on a great deal of luck, since if it were otherwise the writer would not be alive to tell the tale, yet importantly these two examples were not taken from Degen's memoirs. Furthermore, some of the characters do not appear to be fully fleshed out (as in the book) but, due to their often short time on screen, are reduced to ideological mouthpieces. The character of Käthe Niehoff represents an example of this. She seems only to exist to re-voice Nazi propaganda about Jews,¹⁵⁷ to remind viewers of the level of anti-Semitism that was prevalent at the time, even amongst other enemies of the Nazis. She then appears shocked and remorseful when she hears the full extent of the Final Solution on the English radio station. There are a number of other moments which point towards the constructed nature of the film. Most notably there is a flashback scene, when Anna recounts to Michael how she managed to escape from the Gestapo. The flashback is a standard narrative device, but within the extremely naturalistic context of the film thus far it appears out of place and once again reminds viewers they are watching a film. Similarly, one can cite the small number of CGI effects used: the explosion which kills Rolf and the lights of the bombings as the Russians draw closer to Berlin, to give two examples. These computer-generated effects are readily identifiable as such and therefore are marks of 'inauthenticity,' working against the impression of authenticity teamWorx wants the film to have.¹⁵⁸

So despite teamWorx's constant reiteration that *Nicht alle waren Mörder* is authentic – reportedly achieved through realistic sets, locations and costumes, through the use of Degen's memoirs as a source text and through a 'realistic' film style – there are certain aspects which undermine these claims, including a number of narrative and technical film devices. In comparison with teamWorx's other Event Movies on the National Socialist past, particularly *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*, *Nicht alle waren Mörder* comes the closest to authenticity, in so far as it can, if the film is judged by its adherence to experienced, remembered history and its refusal to insert fictionalised aspects of the narrative, such as a love story. Although critics may question the ability of an entertainment product, and one which features a number of melodramatic devices (as will be discussed in the following section), to sufficiently portray the 'truth' of the Holocaust, *Nicht alle waren Mörder's* focus on the personal experience of Michael

¹⁵⁷ For example that the Jews are born with business sense and that they were to blame for the treatment of communists. See *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, dir. Jo Baier, teamWorx, 2006, (0:51).

¹⁵⁸ See Interview with Kai Wessel, lines 264-7, who speaks on how he avoided computer effects in *Die Flucht* in order to keep a sense of authenticity.

Degen negates much of this criticism and so the Event Movie performs an important function in safeguarding memory of the Holocaust for future generations.

4.2.3: Hollywood and international influences

The following section will question to what extent *Nicht alle waren Mörder* uses devices of American filmmaking to deal with the Holocaust. To achieve this, the Event Movie will predominantly be analysed using the genre of melodrama and compared to 1978's *Holocaust*, which was notable for combining entertainment strategies with serious history.¹⁵⁹ The similarities of *Nicht alle waren Mörder* to the other Event Movies in teamWorx's canon will also be evaluated, and it will be asked what effect this has on the serious, authentic history teamWorx wants to portray (as detailed in the section above) and whether the use of genre devices results in a 'trivialisation' of the Holocaust, as suggested by Claude Lanzmann and Elie Wiesel.¹⁶⁰ Analysing the film in the context of Hollywood productions can be valuable in revealing the potential normalisation of the National Socialist past: if teamWorx, a German company, can approach the most difficult period of the country's history as other nations do, then this would point to a normalisation in Germany's relationship to its past. This could already be suggested by comparing comments on *Holocaust* from the New German Cinema director Edgar Reitz and from Nico Hofmann. Whereas Reitz reacted against the perceived Americanisation of German history,¹⁶¹ Hofmann regards the broadcast of *Holocaust* as an important step in mixing history and entertainment and emotionalising history in order to reach a wider audience. Hofmann claims: "Einer der ersten Riesenerfolge war die amerikanische Holocaust-Serie. Sie war heftig umstritten in der Kritik, aber hatte gigantische Einschaltquoten gehabt, weil sie hochemotional war und durch diese Emotion eine nationale Debatte möglich gemacht hat."¹⁶² Similarly, Hofmann mentions that it was hated by critics and loved by audiences: "*Holocaust* haben die Kritiker auch gehasst, [...] bis auf Joachim Fest, der damals eine sehr kluge Betrachtung geschrieben hat über die Emotionalisierung von Geschichte, aber alle anderen fanden es schrecklich, und trotzdem hat es Millionen erreicht."¹⁶³

Nicht alle waren Mörder could be said to conform to a classical Hollywood style, as many of the camera techniques and stylistic devices at work are very similar to

¹⁵⁹ See Section 4.1.2.3.

¹⁶⁰ See Section 4.1.1.

¹⁶¹ As discussed in Section 4.1.2.3.

¹⁶² Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 136-40.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, lines 276-9.

those used in American mainstream productions.¹⁶⁴ As discussed in the previous section, the camerawork conforms to the classical Hollywood continuity style, whose imperceptible editing allows the viewer to be swept into the narrative. The film similarly conforms to the rules of Hollywood as regards tension, suspense, drama and excitement. Although the scene of the bombing raid is the only one which could be compared to a big-budget action movie, with its flaming sets and stunts, there is constant tension and drama throughout: firstly with Anna and Michael's dramatic escape from their apartment; the bombing raid; Anna almost being caught by the Gestapo; having to flee from Hotze's in the middle of the night; the death of Rolf; and finally the invasion by the Soviets towards the end of the film. The positioning of these dramatic moments is also of utmost importance and in this respect *Nicht alle waren Mörder* conforms to the plot structure of a genre film: establishment, animation, intensification and resolution.¹⁶⁵ This is true for the film as a whole. Establishment: Anna and Michael are Jews living in Nazi Berlin; animation: they are forced to flee and go underground; intensification: the situation becomes increasingly desperate; resolution: the Russians arrive and the war comes to an end. It is also true for each syntagmatic unit. The basic narrative pattern of each unit is repeated a number of times, in approximately the same way, each of which conforms to the plot structure outlined above: Anna and Michael make their way to their next accommodation; they usually eat a meal with their hosts and some sort of status quo is reached; there is some sense of danger which quickly intensifies and they are forced to leave; they move on to somewhere else and the process begins anew. There are six separate climaxes, all spaced relatively equally, in this ninety-minute film. One reason for this is that it is imperative to keep the audience's attention throughout. Another possible reason could be that, although there would have been no commercial breaks on prime-time ARD, in selling the film to an international market the producers would have been aware they may have to sell to networks which do have advertisements and so inserted ready-made cliff-hangers into the film. The most spectacular and most extended narrative peak comes less than twenty minutes into the film with the bombing scene. This is most probably designed to grab the viewer's attention straight away and to encourage them to continue watching.¹⁶⁶ Adapting a story to make it suitable and attractive for viewers

¹⁶⁴ As defined in Section 2.2.1.

¹⁶⁵ See Schatz, *Hollywood Genres*, p. 30.

¹⁶⁶ Nico Hofmann has spoken on the importance of grabbing viewers' attention immediately using the example of Event Movie *Mogadischu*, which lost 2.3 million viewers in its first ten minutes. See Müller and Tuma, 'Letzlich geht es nie um Größe'.

unavoidably impacts on the way it portrays history and its alleged authenticity, if the filmmaker is forced to artificially insert dramatic peaks on a regular basis.¹⁶⁷

Nicht alle waren Mörder further conforms to Hollywood genre productions in its narrative resolution. In the American *Holocaust*, despite all the horror witnessed in the previous episodes, the final image is of Rudi's smiling face against a bright blue sky. On the surface, *Nicht alle waren Mörder*'s final scene is rather morose; Anna and Michael are at the deathbed of their friend Martchen, who has been taken ill with jaundice and with whom they discuss the matter of death. There is, however, a definite sense of resolution. The scene takes place in the hospital which was featured towards the beginning of the film, where Michael is not allowed to visit his dying father. This particular conflict is resolved with a scene in which Anna allows him to enter the hospital room, which was previously forbidden, to say goodbye to Martchen. The final scene is in fact rather inconclusive, the viewer has no idea what has happened to Anna and Michael since the Russians arrived; life would not have been easy in post-war Germany, which is simply not explained.¹⁶⁸ Yet Anna and Michael are smartly dressed and Anna is wearing clothes of a lighter colour, a marked difference to the dull browns of her previous outfits. The scene is well-lit, compared to the shadows and darkness which pervade throughout the rest of the film, with a strong light coming in through the hospital room's window, suggesting a sense of hope for the future. The final subtitle ('Alle anderen haben überlebt'¹⁶⁹) reinforces this, focusing on the positive narrative of survival rather than the historical reality of the Holocaust. Strangely there appears to be no reference to the six million Jews who were killed during the Holocaust, not even those who were featured on screen, however briefly. The final message of the film is one of hope rather than despair. Nevertheless, the film's resolution is markedly less positive than the ending of Degen's memoirs. They offer a more traditional 'happy end' as Degen travels to Israel to find his brother, with Degen informing his brother in the last line that their mother is still alive.¹⁷⁰

Of all film genres, *Nicht alle waren Mörder* conforms perhaps the most closely to the melodrama, defined by Thomas Schatz as "popular romances that depicted a virtuous individual (usually a woman) [...] victimized by repressive and inequitable

¹⁶⁷ See Interview with Kai Wessel, lines 393-5.

¹⁶⁸ Degen's memoirs continue to detail the hardships of life in post-war Berlin. See Degen, *Nicht alle waren Mörder*.

¹⁶⁹ *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, (1:33).

¹⁷⁰ Degen, *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, p. 332.

social circumstances.”¹⁷¹ Although the aspect of romance is absent (a rare occurrence for a teamWorx Event Movie), *Nicht alle waren Mörder* can nevertheless be understood as a melodrama and it should be analysed as such. To an even greater extent than *Holocaust* the film centres around the family and also conforms to the role of women in melodrama as the dominant force within the narrative. Men are either absent (such as Anna’s husband, and Ludmilla’s husband Epstein), ineffectual (the alcoholic Redlich and the hen-pecked Herr Teuber) or presented as a threat (the men of the Gestapo and the Russian soldiers at the end of the film). As well as the importance of women in melodrama, the absence of men adds to the sense of historical accuracy, since most men would have been drafted into the army, as the introduction of the Teubers’ son Felix, who was absent but for a photograph, reminds the viewer. Another classic melodramatic device present in the film is the use of coincidence to advance the narrative. It is due to coincidence that Michael falls over so that he and his mother avoid being crushed inside a phone box. Coincidence also plays a major part in *Holocaust*, in that the major characters often encounter each other by chance despite being displaced across the whole of Eastern Europe: Rudi meets his brother-in-law in Kiev, Karl just narrowly misses his mother in Auschwitz, and Rudi and Inge are reunited at the end of the mini-series in Theresienstadt. A final element of melodrama is the use of music to heighten the viewers’ emotional response. Compared to the other Event Movies, *Nicht alle waren Mörder*’s music is relatively subtle, certainly more understated than the usual bombastic approach of Thomas Wanker and Harald Kloser, the composers behind the score for *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*. In *Nicht alle waren Mörder* music is most often used to increase an emotional response when characters speak on certain subjects. Several times when Anna’s husband is mentioned – who was murdered at Sachsenhausen concentration camp – melancholic music starts, the same melancholic music which plays at the very end of the film, as Martchen lies dying. It performs the classical function of music in melodrama, namely to provoke an emotional response and to increase the empathy felt by the viewer towards the characters and their situation.

Nicht alle waren Mörder further resembles a Hollywood feature in its use of well-established stars in the central and supporting roles, such as Nadja Uhl as Anna Degen as well as Hannelore Elsner and Axel Prahl as Ludmilla and Redlich respectively. The choice of Uhl to play the lead character is revealing. She is not Jewish and professed to be surprised when asked to play this Jewish role.¹⁷² Uhl also played the

¹⁷¹ Schatz, *Hollywood Genres*, p. 222.

¹⁷² See *Making Of “Nicht alle waren Mörder”*, (0:02).

‘Nazi’ twin in Dutch Second World War drama *De tweeling* (2002), so that the choice of her to play the lead role was perhaps less to do with her identification with the character of Anna Degen and more to do with the fact she is a popular – and very attractive – actress. Michael Degen did remark that Uhl was very different to his mother.¹⁷³ Casting this very Germanic actress in the lead role could also suggest a universalisation of suffering, allowing German viewers to identify with the suffering experienced by Anna Degen. Similarly, Dagmar Manzel (who plays Martchen) is a very attractive actress, whereas in Michael Degen’s memoirs he describes the real Martchen as a rather plain, even ugly woman, making constant reference to her enormous nose.¹⁷⁴ This has been tempered for the film, where Manzel conforms to the beauty of the rest of the cast: “Models hätte man nicht exquisiter aufnehmen können,” wrote Dieter Kuhlbrodt.¹⁷⁵

As suggested earlier, however, although *Nicht alle waren Mörder* does conform in some respects to a Hollywood style, it is a lot more restrained than *Holocaust*, for example. The understated colour palette of blues, greys, browns and dark greens shun sensationalism and there are no violent, gruesome or shocking scenes. The horrific realities of the Holocaust are spoken about but not explicitly depicted, such as in Anna’s monologue on the treatment of her husband at Sachsenhausen. Many of the reviews of the Event Movie approved of this restraint. Nikolaus von Festenberg wrote in his review in *Der Spiegel*: “Seifenoperhaft wird Jo Baiers Film an keiner einzigen Stelle” and “So unkitschig kann die Sprache der Fiktion sein.”¹⁷⁶ Christian Buß meanwhile commented: “Dass dieser so simple humanistische Ansatz in der ARD-Produktion nicht einen Augenblick lang in der Schönfärberei endet, liegt an der Sachlichkeit im Blick auf das Geschehen.”¹⁷⁷ So although *Nicht alle waren Mörder* does share certain filmic, stylistic and narrative devices with Hollywood genre productions and popular melodramatic television films, these are however perhaps necessary to gain an audience and keep the viewers sufficiently interested to continue watching. These melodramatic devices are much less noticeable and less frequent than those used in *Holocaust*, for instance. The positive criticism *Nicht alle waren Mörder* has received and the overall lack of accusations of trivialisation, perhaps due to the film’s subtlety, help to set it apart from other genre productions.

¹⁷³ See Hanfeld, ‘Ein Gespräch mit dem Schauspieler Michael Degen’.

¹⁷⁴ “Mein Gott, hat die eine lange Nase”, was Degen’s first impression of her. Degen, *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, p. 193.

¹⁷⁵ Cited in René Martens, ‘Hang zum Eskapismus’, in *taz*, 1 November 2006.

¹⁷⁶ Nikolaus von Festenberg, ‘Die Sieger der Mütter Courage’, in *Der Spiegel*, 25 September 2006.

¹⁷⁷ Buß, ‘Wer hat schon saubere Hände?’.

The final point in this section will evaluate the similarities between *Nicht alle waren Mörder* and other teamWorx Event Movies. This will assist in discerning whether the impetus behind making the film is Hofmann's reported desire to look at Jewish life, or merely to find a plausible story which could be shoehorned into the Event Movie template. The latter would be the viewpoint of René Martens, critic for the *taz*, who has described the film as "gefälliges Historytainment," which "liegt damit voll im TV-Trend,"¹⁷⁸ and who evidently views *Nicht alle waren Mörder* as merely the latest in a long line of melodramatic historical features, particularly since it was broadcast a month after the similar *Neger, Neger Schornsteinfeger*. The film received much media attention and, like other Event Movies, had a cinematic premiere to which a mixture of political and showbusiness guests were invited.¹⁷⁹ *Nicht alle waren Mörder* has been compared to teamWorx's other historical Event Movies, particularly *Dresden*, with its bombing scenes and *Die Sturmflut*, since Uhl also starred in the latter production. The use of stars such as Uhl and Hannelore Elsner, who have both appeared in other teamWorx movies – not to mention that the film is about Michael Degen, who played in *Die Sturmflut* – once again ties it into the teamWorx canon. Another teamWorx trope, which is continued in *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, is the 'single mother' paradigm, where the central character is mother to a small child with an absent father. Further examples of such Event Movies are *Die Flucht*, *Die Sturmflut* (where Uhl again plays the mother to a small boy), *Die Luftbrücke*, and *Die Grenze*. This recurring constellation of characters reduces the importance of the specific historical context and allows the viewer to focus on the (timeless) personal issue of a mother caring for her child in difficult situations, as in all the other films, rather than on the characters as Jews in the historical context of the Holocaust. Martens' review of the film recalls much of the criticism of the previous teamWorx features, referring to it as a "Rührstück mit historischem Aroma," and "[eine] bombastische wie sentimentalisierte Zeitgeschichtsinszenierung."¹⁸⁰ Despite this, Martens does differentiate between this Event Movie and the others. He notes the rise of the "Freitagfilme Supermarkt-Süßstoff" and then remarks (perhaps slightly ironically) that *Nicht alle waren Mörder* is "[Süßstoff] aus dem Bioladen – mit gutem Gewissen zu genießen."¹⁸¹ However, there is much in *Nicht alle waren Mörder* to differentiate it from teamWorx's other Event Movies. It is one of the few examples of such films which do not involve any kind of

¹⁷⁸ Martens, 'Hang zum Eskapismus'.

¹⁷⁹ See Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

love story, most probably relating to the reliance on a specific historical text, and although there are elements of the disaster movie in the bombing scene, with certain echoes of *Dresden* and later moments of suspense and drama, it is far removed from the classic disaster movie narrative used in the aforementioned film as well as in numerous others. So although *Nicht alle waren Mörder* does borrow certain devices from Hollywood movie-making as well as from other Event Movies, it also differentiates itself from these genres. There is little within the style of the film to characterise it as a specifically German production, however. German specificity is therefore achieved, or at least attempted, by the supposed authenticity of the film as seen above and the inclusion of debates on coming to terms with the past which are specific to Germany, as will be dealt with in the following section.

4.2.4: Debates

This section will consider to what extent *Nicht alle waren Mörder* has been influenced by contemporary debates on depictions of the Holocaust, what contribution it makes to these debates and furthermore what this may reveal as to how contemporary Germany is coming to terms with the legacy of National Socialism and the Holocaust. This section will firstly deal with *Nicht alle waren Mörder*'s depiction of the 'Stille Helden,' ordinary people, mostly non-Jewish Germans, who helped Jewish people to survive the Holocaust. As discussed previously, this theme has gained popularity only very recently, with the 'Gedenkstätte Stille Helden' being set up in Berlin in 2008 to pay tribute to this group of people. The portrayal of the 'Stille Helden' was in many respects a key aim of the film, according to the filmmakers. In writing the original book, Michael Degen reportedly wanted to "den mutigen Helfern ein Denkmal setzen"¹⁸² and to show that "die Menschlichkeit [...] hatte Hitler nicht ausrotten können."¹⁸³ These ambitions were supported by director Baier, who understood the actions of the 'Stille Helden' as resistance against Hitler.¹⁸⁴ Similarly, producer Gabriela Sperl wanted to show, "dass es im Zentrum der nationalsozialistischen Macht immer wieder Anstand und Menschlichkeit gegeben hat."¹⁸⁵ Despite these aims, accusations of trivialisation or relativisation could potentially be levelled at *Nicht alle waren Mörder*:¹⁸⁶ to focus on

¹⁸² Wick, 'Flucht durch Berlin'.

¹⁸³ *Making Of "Nicht alle waren Mörder"*, (0:00).

¹⁸⁴ See Jo Baier, 'Für Mut und Zivilcourage', September 2005, <http://www.swr.de/nicht-alle-waren-moerder/der-film-making-of/der-film/die-idee.html>.

¹⁸⁵ 'Ein einzigartiger Blickwinkel'.

¹⁸⁶ This was, however, mostly absent in press and viewer criticism of the film. See Section 4.2.5 for an evaluation of critical reactions to the Event Movie.

the actions of heroic Germans – although the majority of the population were, without question, active or passive supporters of the Final Solution – and to ignore the wider picture of the genocide of the Jewish people could be seen as extremely problematic. Even the title itself is provocative, suggesting a focus not on the victims but rather on the decent, upstanding German people who had previously been wronged.¹⁸⁷ The perpetrators of these crimes are not portrayed, so there is very little to balance the ‘good Germans’ depicted in the film by showing those who gave or even carried out the orders. The major threat to the protagonists is represented by the Gestapo, who are shown only very briefly: during an altercation with Anna on the street and then outside Hotze’s house, in the dark, seen from afar. It is significant that *Nicht alle waren Mörder* is the only Event Movie in teamWorx’s canon (to date) which claims to deal with Jewish life and the Holocaust, yet it actually takes German resistance characters as its focus, potentially glossing over the Holocaust itself. There is no background information given on the historical facts of the Holocaust or on the plight of other Jews, not even in the film’s final subtitle, which informs us that: ‘Alle anderen haben überlebt.’¹⁸⁸ Of the approximately 6,000 Jews in Berlin at the beginning of the war only 1,500 survived. Despite this, *Nicht alle waren Mörder* focuses on the positive, yet historically unrepresentative, narrative of survival instead of that of murder, giving it, in the words of one reviewer: “Die Wahrheit eines Märchens.”¹⁸⁹

The fact that the survival of Anna and Michael was statistically unlikely does not mean that it is historically inaccurate or false, and to be able to focus on individual stories that go against the norm without constantly reiterating widely-known and oft-repeated facts about the terror of the Holocaust could suggest a normalisation of the Nazi past.¹⁹⁰ Despite this, the film uses several techniques to detract from the ‘Stille Helden’ as flawless heroes and hints towards the suffering of the Jewish population at this time, which could defend it from potential accusations of revisionism. Baier reminds the viewer that depictions of certain ‘ordinary’ Germans as being kind and helpful towards Jews does not necessarily imply an instant rehabilitation for the German people at large. In fact it can work in the opposite way; he suggests that for the wartime generation, reminders that there were those who helped Jewish people could be unwanted: “Der Widerstand der kleinen Leute [war] wie ein Stachel im eigenen Fleisch.

¹⁸⁷ See Author unknown, ‘Im Untergrund’, *Die Zeit*, 44 (2006).

¹⁸⁸ *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, (1:33). This refers to the characters depicted in the film who were not specifically mentioned in the final subtitles.

¹⁸⁹ ‘Im Untergrund’.

¹⁹⁰ See Section 1.2.4 on normalisation.

Denn wenn man sich mit der Zivilcourage der stillen Helfer auseinandersetzt, dann erinnert das einen auch daran, dass man selbst etwas hätte tun können.”¹⁹¹ In his review of the film, Nikolaus von Festenberg defends *Nicht alle waren Mörder* from accusations of trivialisation:

“Natürlich sind autobiografische Erinnerungen nicht repräsentativ für eine Epoche wie die der Nazi-Herrschaft. Sie stammen von Überlebenden und stellen schon deshalb die Ausnahmen von der Regel des millionenfachen Sterbens dar. Aber zum historischen Verharmlosungswerk, zur ‘Soapisierung’ des Holocaust, zählen sie dann nicht, wenn sie offen bleiben für die Nähe des Todes und des Mordens, wenn die Trauer über die Toten bei allem Überlebensglück mitzuspüren ist.”¹⁹²

An anti-revisionist agenda is inferred by the filmmakers, even in the same breath they use to honour the ‘Stille Helden.’ Gabriela Sperl maintains the film is “keine Exculpation der Täter”¹⁹³ and Baier asserts: “Es gibt für die vielen, die Unrecht und Mord begangen haben, kein Gegenwicht, ihre Verbrechen bleiben, was sie sind!”¹⁹⁴ as well as stating: “Es kann keine Aufrechnung gegen die entsetzlichen Verbrechen der Deutschen während des Faschismus geben.”¹⁹⁵ Even the film’s title can be read two ways, according to Michael Degen. ‘Nicht alle waren Mörder’ could also suggest that a great deal (of Germans, as is implied) were indeed murderers but that the film wishes to focus on the few exceptions. This balance has been noted by critics, such as Karen Krüger who praises Baier for his film on “zivilem Engagement,” “ohne die Mitverantwortung der Deutschen an der nationalsozialistischen Vernichtungspolitik zu relativieren.”¹⁹⁶ One of the ways in which Baier attempts to bring balance in the depiction of these silent heroes is to portray them as lacking heroic qualities, presenting them as real people who often have less than honourable motives for helping Anna and Michael. Baier writes: “Nicht alle von ihnen waren tolle Kerle, sondern Menschen mit guten wie auch schlechten Seiten. [...] Jeder kann sich so mit ihnen identifizieren, keiner muss denken: Das waren Helden, die konnten Zivilcourage zeigen. Aber ich, als normaler Mensch, ich könnte das nicht.”¹⁹⁷ This theme has been identified by reviewers of the film: its ‘Stille Helden’ have been described variously as: “Keine Helden, sondern Leute, die ihre Ängste beiseite schoben und einfach das Richtige taten;”¹⁹⁸

¹⁹¹ Karen Krüger, ‘Im Versteck vor den Nazis’, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20 December 2005.

¹⁹² Von Festenberg, ‘Die Sieger der Mütter Courage’.

¹⁹³ ‘Ein einzigartiger Blickwinkel’.

¹⁹⁴ Keil, ‘Angst in Berlin’.

¹⁹⁵ Sabine Schneider, ‘Auf der Flucht’, in *Berliner Zeitung*, 19 December 2005.

¹⁹⁶ Krüger, ‘Im Versteck vor den Nazis’.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Sabine Schneider, ‘Auf der Flucht’.

“Helden, die nichts Heldenhaftes haben;”¹⁹⁹ and “Helden sind diese Berliner nicht unbedingt.”²⁰⁰ Each of the film’s silent helpers could be seen a flawed character. Ludmilla, with whom Anna and Michael first find a place to stay, is a complex character. Despite harbouring the pair she holds piano recitals for Nazi party members and seems to have taken the pair in as they (Michael especially) remind her of her Jewish husband Epstein. Her sexual advances towards Michael reveal her to be something of a questionable saviour, and for her the most distressing part of the Holocaust seems to be the resulting lack of men with circumcised penises: “Schade. Bald wird es in Deutschland keine beschnittenen Männer mehr geben,” she laments to Michael.²⁰¹ Oma Teuber, to whom Anna and Michael flee next is a similarly morally compromised character. Running a family brothel she seems to be willing to accept money for anything, including harbouring Jewish ‘U-Boots’: “Von wat leben muss der Mensch,” she reasons.²⁰² The Teuber family are not presented as particularly vociferous opponents of Hitler or the war. When introducing her absent son Felix to Anna and Michael, Oma Teuber exclaims: “Er macht Hackfleisch aus den Russkis!”²⁰³ and a postcard with the legend ‘Volk als Gewehr’ can clearly be seen in their apartment. Even Anna’s friend Lona, who took over Anna’s husband’s business after it became illegal for Jews to own shops and continued to share the profits with him, reminds the viewer that she owes her living to the Nazis’ anti-Semitic policies, which despite her kind actions towards Anna and Michael never allows her to be a fully heroic character.

To further temper the portrayal of ‘good’ if morally complex Germans who offer help to Anna and Michael, there are several examples of ‘ordinary’ German people who display anti-Jewish sentiment. In the very first scene, as Michael runs home from his work in the cemetery with his yellow star clearly visible, he passes a man in the street who shouts at him: “Judenbengel! Dich kastrier’ ich gleich!”²⁰⁴ In a later scene Anna is almost caught by the Gestapo, yet it is revealed that a former colleague of Anna’s husband (shown in the back of the Gestapo car) has denounced her, suggesting it is an ‘ordinary’ member of the German public who is to blame for this, not the Gestapo, or at least suggests that the ‘ordinary’ German public were in league with the Nazi party. Similarly, when the Gestapo appear again, at Hotze’s house, it is most probably because

¹⁹⁹ Michael Hanfeld, ‘Die es nicht gab’, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 31 October 2006.

²⁰⁰ Kerstin Decker, ‘Einige waren Menschen’, in *Tagesspiegel*, 1 November 2006. See also Buß, ‘Wer hat schon saubere Hände?’.

²⁰¹ *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, (0:19).

²⁰² *Ibid.*, (0:36).

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, (0:33).

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, (0:02).

they have been called by Hotze's neighbour, a fervent Nazi, complaining of Hotze's communist leaflets. Finally, the scene in which Käthe interrogates Anna about her lack of political involvement ("Warst du nie politisch, Rosa?"), resorting to Jewish stereotypes – that making money "legt euch im Blut," and that "Ihr Juden" were to blame for the treatment of communists²⁰⁵ - suggests to the viewers that even amongst opponents of the regime, Jews found hostility from the rest of the German population.

Further suggesting potential revisionism in the film is *Nicht alle waren Mörder*'s depiction of non-Jewish German suffering, in common with teamWorx's other Event Movies on the National Socialist past, which portray Germans as victims of the Second World War.²⁰⁶ The trend in recent Holocaust features to include other non-Jewish victims of the Holocaust and previously neglected victims of Nazism may have paved the way for films such as this one in which Jewish suffering and German suffering are depicted simultaneously.²⁰⁷ This sub-section will deal with how German and Jewish victimhood is constructed within *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, and how (or indeed whether) the film avoids the relativisation of Jewish suffering. A focus on German suffering can firstly be understood from the film's title, which, along with the problematic aspects covered above, is reminiscent of Wolfgang Staudte's 1946 film *Die Mörder sind unter uns*. The film focused on the disastrous effects of the war on the German population through the psychological condition of one man returning to Berlin from the Eastern front. This reference in the mind of the viewer, however tenuous or unintentional, creates the impression that the film will deal in some way with the negative effects of the war on non-Jewish German citizens. The film includes many instances of German suffering, the first example of which is the scene where Anna and Michael are caught in a bombing raid. They are not the only ones who suffer in this attack, as is made clear by images of screaming people running through the streets, as well as the heaps of rubble which Anna and Michael witness the following morning. Additionally they encounter numerous women sweeping up what little remains of the homes they have lost, a motif of the 'Trümmerfilme,' or 'rubble films' of which *Die Mörder sind unter uns* is a prominent example. Anna's soothing yet naïve words to Michael during the raid: "Die sind nicht für uns. Die sind nur für die Nazis," reminds the viewer that it is actually not only the Nazis who get killed but the Jewish 'U-Boots' and also non-Jewish German civilians. In the aftermath of the bombings, during Anna's conversation with Hotze, we

²⁰⁵ Ibid., (0:50-0:51). 'Rosa Gemberg' was Anna Degen's code name when she was in hiding.

²⁰⁶ See Section 3.1.1 for an in-depth discussion on the recent trend of films dealing with Germans as victims of the Second World War.

²⁰⁷ See Taberner, 'Philo-Semitism in recent German film' pp. 357-72.

learn that he was in Buchenwald concentration camp for his political opposition to the Nazis, reminding the viewer that not only Jews suffered in this way. The further strain of the war on the civilian population is hinted at when Rolf Redlich, the young boy who has befriended Michael, is drafted to join the army, which recalls the number of young boys who were deployed to defend Berlin in a futile action during the final days of the war. During the penultimate scene, when the Russians arrive at Hotze's house and Martchen is escorted into another room by a Russian soldier, there is the uneasy reminder of the rape of German women by the Red Army during its invasion and occupation of Berlin. Rolf's death from an Allied bomb towards the end of the film once again portrays German children as innocent victims of the war, yet Rolf's father's reaction to the death does suggest a problematic relativisation: Erwin Redlich takes his son's death as divine retribution for his role in the Holocaust, driving trains transporting prisoners to Auschwitz: "Ich selber bin Schuld. Gott hat mir nicht verziehen,"²⁰⁸ he tells Anna and Michael. One critic writes that this scene suggests, "dass die Deutschen für den Judenmord schon hinreichend durch ihre Kriegsoffer gebüßt hätten,"²⁰⁹ that the suffering of the Germans during and especially at the end of the war somehow absolves them of their sins relating to the Holocaust. A similar logic is suggested in the final scene, where Martchen, a kind and virtuous character, dies in order to allow for a symbolic reconciliation between Jews and Germans. Through this act of 'self-sacrifice,' the guilt of the Germans is supposedly wiped clean, allowing for a positive post-war German identity. This is reflected in the endings of the other teamWorx Event Movies dealt with in this thesis, particularly *Dresden*, in which the bombing of the city cleanses it for the sake of future generations.²¹⁰ In this respect teamWorx's films could indeed be accused of relativisation.

Despite these examples of German suffering, and despite the lack of visual motifs of Jewish suffering during the Holocaust – the concentration camps, transport wagons and crematoria – with which viewers would be familiar from numerous other Holocaust films, *Nicht alle waren Mörder* portrays Anna and Michael, as Jews, as unquestionable victims of the Nazi regime, and manages to construct subtle hierarchies of victimhood in order to display this Jewish and German suffering simultaneously, yet avoid relativisation or questioning that Jewish victims are the ultimate victims of the Third Reich. There are several recurring motifs in the film which suggest the danger

²⁰⁸ *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, (1:18).

²⁰⁹ 'Im Untergrund'.

²¹⁰ See Section 3.2.4.

Anna and Michael are in and hint at the oppressive and violent nature of the Holocaust. The trope of smoke and mirrors, present throughout the film, is an example of this. Anna and Michael are often depicted reflected in a mirror: in Ludmilla's bedroom, at Oma Teuber's and at Hotze's house. Similarly, they often appear partially obscured by smoke – such as during the bombing raids and the morning afterwards; by fog – on a cold winter morning in Berlin and in the woods by Hotze's; or by steam – from the train as they make their way to Hotze's, and rising from coffee or pans of boiling water. These two motifs remind the viewer of the shadowy existence the principal characters are forced to live, that they are always in hiding, that they are forced to be spectral figures. Similarly, the mirror trope suggests a double life, that Anna and Michael Degen are now Rosa and Max Gemberg, and the skewed angles in which they can be seen in the mirrors reflects the strain this puts on them. Other sequences and images throughout the film subtly remind the viewer of the danger that Anna and Michael are in as Jews. At a vulnerable moment in Stettiner Bahnhof, when Michael believes his mother has been caught by the Gestapo, he is recognised by a former classmate who identifies him as a Jew. Michael is at one point depicted in front of a Star of David smeared in white paint on the side of a building, along with the slogan 'Deutsche wehrt euch!', a reminder of the Nazis' boycott of Jewish businesses and their wider anti-Semitic policies. A motif of barred windows and of barred light is also cast upon the protagonists throughout the film, beginning with striped light just after they manage to first flee their apartment building and which continues with the heavy bars on the windows of Michael's bedroom at Ludmilla's, the bars on the windows at Redlich's and then again in the basement at Hotze's at the end of the film. The intimation here is clear: that even though they have not been caught and deported to a concentration camp, Anna and Michael remain prisoners in Nazi Germany and the threat of actual imprisonment, and subsequent death, constantly looms. Several other more abstract motifs throughout the film reinforce this sense of doom and establish Jewish victimhood. Firstly, that the film begins in a Jewish cemetery is a stark reminder of the grim reality of the Holocaust, and introducing the viewer to Michael within this context suggests the fate potentially awaiting the boy and his mother. In a later scene, a tracking establishing shot of Hotze's house features a row of oppressive fence posts joined by wire and instantly creates an association with images of Auschwitz, with which the viewer will be familiar. As Anna and Michael return to this house, there is a shot of smoke rising from the chimney – ostensibly to signify that someone is living there again – but which also acts as a grim reminder of the crematoria of Auschwitz.

Nicht alle waren Mörder includes several other scenes which suggest to the viewer that it is the Jews who suffer the most during this period and that other victims are to be understood as ‘qualified’ victims, occupying a position lower down the hierarchy. The first exchange between Michael and Rolf, where the former punches the latter in return for Rolf’s attempt to hit him with a catapult, suggests this hierarchy. When Rolf complains about his bloody nose, Michael asks: “Wer hat angefangen? Du oder ich?”²¹¹ suggesting that any retribution coming to the Germans from those they have wronged is deserved, a foreshadowing of Rolf’s later fate. Although Hotze and the rest of his household are communists and are reported to have been resisting the regime in other ways, not only harbouring Anna and Michael, there is a clear sense that they are below their Jewish house guests in the hierarchy of victimhood. At one point Anna tells Michael: “Der [Hotze] ist in genauso viel Gefahr wie wir,”²¹² although the viewer can see this is not true: Hotze’s house is well-furnished and his family live in relative comfort, which is juxtaposed with the situation of Anna and Michael, who are on the run and have no permanent shelter or food supply. Furthermore, Hotze is eventually arrested after distributing anti-Nazi leaflets. This creates a distinction between Hotze, who is an enemy of the state because of his actions, and Anna and Michael who are enemies simply because of an accident of birth. When Anna tells Käthe she has never been “politisch,” it highlights this distinction.²¹³ Finally, it is revealed that Hotze spent some time in a concentration camp, although, as is evident, he was eventually released. Anna’s husband, meanwhile, died from the injuries he received from his torturers at Sachsenhausen. There is the implication that, if Anna and Michael are caught they will not be released like Hotze but that it would spell a death sentence for them. Even amongst victims of the regime there is a definite hierarchy, in which Anna and Michael as Jews have suffered the most. Hotze and other resisters are also present, but other non-Jewish Germans, although they are portrayed as victims, are only such to a limited degree. These hierarchies protect *Nicht alle waren Mörder* from accusations of relativisation of German and Jewish suffering. Although ‘ordinary,’ non-Jewish Germans are portrayed as victims, the established narrative of the primary suffering of Jews is not challenged. Although the film depicts all victims, there are clear lines of demarcation. A major problem which still exists, however, is the suggestion that the sacrifice of the ‘innocent’ German population can result in an absolution of German

²¹¹ *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, (0:48).

²¹² *Ibid.*, (0:57).

²¹³ *Ibid.*, (0:50).

guilt, although this issue does not seem to have been remarked upon with much frequency by the press or in other critical reaction to the film.

Nicht alle waren Mörder can perhaps further be protected against accusations of trivialisation or relativisation, through its presentation of an individualised, personalised story. The Event Movie has much in common with recent survival narratives, such as *Schindler's List* and the German productions *Hitlerjunge Salomon*, *Mutters Courage*, *The Pianist*, *Rosenstraße* and *Die Fälscher*.²¹⁴ This mode has often been criticised for giving an inaccurate representation of the Holocaust, for presenting an anomaly as historical truth and sometimes depicting no alternative Jewish fate to that of survival. *Nicht alle waren Mörder* is able to deflect these claims to a certain extent by presenting the Holocaust from the point of view of the child Michael. Throughout the film the viewers are reminded that they are witnessing events through Michael's eyes. The most obvious example of this is the subtitle at the beginning of the film: 'Nach den Erinnerungen von Michael Degen,' which makes it clear to the viewer that what is to come is to be from the perspective of the young Michael. Despite eschewing more literal point-of-view shots, instead favouring the classical over-the-shoulder shot, it is evident that Michael is at the centre of the story, even when he appears uninvolved in events or dialogue. During several conversations between adults, reaction shots of Michael are edited in between the standard shot/reverse-shot editing, so the viewers are able to empathise with him and are reminded that they are seeing his experiences. This focus on the memories of a child also helps to de-politicise the film; it can be excused for not detailing a wealth of background historical information or depicting the fates of others during the war, because it is unlikely a child would have been privy to such information, or that their focus would have been on the wider context of the war. This is typified within *Nicht alle waren Mörder* by the scene in which Anna and Michael arrive at Ludmilla's apartment in the company of Lona. Michael is left in his room as the adults discuss business elsewhere but instead of cutting to their conversation, the camera stays with Michael and the viewer shares his sadness and confusion at having to flee and stay in a strange place. This signifies that the film will focus on an emotional story of one child, rather than a wider historical background. As it is to be understood as an individualised, personal story of a child and his mother, *Nicht alle waren Mörder* is able to avoid accusations of revisionism by not including the whole spectrum of experience regarding the Holocaust, as it does not claim to tell the whole truth, just one particular story. Furthermore, this personalisation also points to a degree of

²¹⁴ As discussed in Section 4.1.2.4.

normalisation of the Holocaust: if a film can choose to focus on individual stories – including narratives of survival – without having to constantly reiterate the fates of others then it could therefore be suggested that the Holocaust is becoming more approachable and memory of it increasingly normalised. Furthermore, the lack of the type of criticism which surrounded *Schindler's List*, for example, suggests a normalisation of this kind of approach in Germany.²¹⁵

Another aspect of contemporary German Holocaust film, to which *Nicht alle waren Mörder* conforms, is the depiction of philo-Semitism within the German population, as suggested by Stuart Taberner in his 2005 article.²¹⁶ This German/Jewish symbiosis is evident within the Event Movie, most notably in its main theme; that it deals with 'ordinary' Germans who help Jews. As one reviewer commented: Degen (with his memoirs) "reichte [...] den Deutschen literarisch die Hand der Versöhnung."²¹⁷ The film includes many more instances of suggested German/Jewish solidarity. During dinner at Ludmilla's, Anna takes Lona's hand, which is shown in close-up, as a symbol of unity between the two. This image is reproduced later in a handshake between Michael and Rolf, again shown in close-up after their brief fight, signalling a rapprochement between the two boys. Similarly, Michael's efforts to save the mortally wounded Rolf, even after he implores Michael to go without him, shows their deep friendship. Finally, the last scene in which Anna and Michael stand at the deathbed of their friend Martchen seals the bond between the Jewish and German characters. There are a number of problems with this analysis, however. The first is that this approach polarises German and Jewish identities. Even suggesting that there can be resolution of this dichotomy implies that there is an intrinsic dichotomy between German and Jew. Furthermore, the philo-Semitism portrayed in the film could suggest, taken to its logical extremes of self-sacrifice, as with the death of Rolf and Martchen, that through their suffering the German people have atoned for the suffering of the Jews, which again is hugely problematic. A more nuanced reading of German and Jewish identities within the film suggests a synthesis of 'Germanness' and 'Jewishness' rather than a polarisation of identities and situates this within a wider context of integration in post-war Europe. Identity plays an important role in the film: for example, a number of characters speak with a strong Berlin accent, particularly Lona, Oma Teuber and Redlich, whereas Anna's accent is much less pronounced. This marks her as

²¹⁵ See Section 1.2.4 on the normalisation of the National Socialist past.

²¹⁶ Taberner, 'Philo-Semitism in recent German Film', pp. 357-72. See Section 2.4.2 for more on this.

²¹⁷ Wick, 'Flucht durch Berlin'.

an outsider, even in her own mind, as when she is stopped by the Gestapo and tries to convince them of her fake identity as the non-Jewish German woman Rosa Gemberg, she adopts a strong Berlin accent. Towards the very end of the film it is revealed that Anna was born in Poland, something she previously attempts to cover up, telling Martchen she knew Russian because she went to boarding school in Russia. Anna even actively attempts to efface this Eastern identity, using the German ‘zum wohl’ to respond to a toast ‘na zdrove’ by the others, during a meal at Ludmilla’s.²¹⁸ After the Russians have invaded Berlin, at the very end of the film, Anna does not need to hide her true identity and, smilingly, reveals her Polish origins to Martchen. This acceptance of cross-European identity complements the push to normalisation through Europeanisation seen in teamWorx’s other Event Movies discussed previously.²¹⁹ The ultimate breakdown of this German/Jewish dichotomy occurs in the film’s final scene. Previously, this dichotomy had been set up by Anna, who admits to Redlich that she and Michael are Jewish with the words: “Wir sind nicht einfach nur Deutsche.”²²⁰ This is resolved by Michael, who replies to the Russian officer when asked whether he is German or Jewish: “Ich bin Deutscher und Jude.”²²¹ The suggestion here is that post-war Germany is a multicultural environment, where heterogeneity is to be celebrated and German identity is no longer based on such rigid lines, differentiating it from the strict racial policy of Nazi Germany.

Alongside this analysis of the filmic devices it is necessary to note and evaluate the intentions of teamWorx’s filmmakers regarding what effect the film should have on Germany’s collective memory of the Holocaust. As discussed previously, teamWorx’s Event Movies are not intended merely to entertain, but to have a positive effect on contemporary German society.²²² teamWorx intended the film to have an impact on the viewing public and to carry with it an educational message. As with their other Event Movies, a DVD intended to raise issues relating to the Third Reich was made available to schools. Hofmann gave an example of the effects he wanted the Event Movie to have, noting that after the film’s broadcast, friends of his were inspired to seek out contact with Jewish life, namely attending the dedication of the Munich synagogue: “Was mich am meisten freut,” he commented, “sind die konkreten Auswirkungen.”²²³ It was also suggested from some quarters that *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, in depicting the fate of the

²¹⁸ *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, (0:17).

²¹⁹ See Section 3.2.4 for a discussion on this theme in relation to *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*.

²²⁰ *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, (1:09).

²²¹ *Ibid.*, (1:27).

²²² In Section 1.3.5 as well as in other areas throughout the thesis.

²²³ Gangloff, ‘Wir machen keine Nico-Hofmann-Show’.

Jews in the Third Reich, could help protect against a rising anti-Semitism in Germany today. At the film's premiere in Munich, the deputy president of Munich's 'Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde' used the opportunity to warn against "einem aufbrechenden Rechtsradikalismus in Deutschland."²²⁴ In a conversation with Michael Degen, the actor Aaron Altaras, who plays the role of Degen in the film, discussed the continued presence of anti-Semites in Germany, stating: "Ich war schon mal in der Nähe von judenfeindlichen Leuten."²²⁵ Altaras maintains the power of film to affect opinion: "Ich finde, jeder muss mal solche Filme wie *Schindlers Liste* oder so mal gesehen haben. Das ist sehr wichtig, finde ich. Weil man kann durch Erzählen zwar auch viel erfahren."²²⁶ He also relates this to *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, which he hopes will have an effect in communicating the terror of the Holocaust: "Diese Rolle zu spielen ist, wie man im Jüdischen sagt, fast eine *Mizwa*. Das bedeutet soviel wie 'eine gute Tat.' Weil ich so den Menschen zeigen kann, wie es früher war. Vielleicht verstehen die Zuschauer dann etwas."²²⁷ Another objective of the film, according to Baier, is to increase what he terms 'Zivilcourage' within the German population. This 'Zivilcourage' shown by the 'Stille Helden' is still necessary today, Baier maintains, because "die Gefahr der Ausgrenzung besteht immer. Ich möchte mit meinem Film sagen: Leute traut euch, gegen den Strom zu schwimmen."²²⁸ He has also claimed:

"Es ist wichtig, besonders jungen Menschen zu zeigen, dass man jeder Ideologie mit einer gewissen Reserviertheit begegnen sollte. [...] Dass man kein Held sein muss um Zivilcourage zu zeigen. Dass es genügt, seinem Gefühl von Mitleid und Sympathie zu vertrauen und dass es sich lohnt, ihm zu folgen. Ich möchte, dass meine Zuschauer verstehen, wie selbstverständlich es sein kann, sich für andere Menschen einzusetzen."²²⁹

This is a clear message from Baier as to the effect on society he wants his film to have. Although it is unlikely that all, or indeed any, of *Nicht alle waren Mörder's* viewers were instantly encouraged to fight against social injustices, the film simultaneously reminds viewers of the horrors of the Holocaust and raises the issue of contemporary anti-Semitism and intolerance in a wider sense, without relativising the suffering of the Jews. That this is presented in a format which borrows certain Hollywood conventions and owes much to the style of melodrama does not necessarily affect the film's educational element but rather the personalisation of these issues

²²⁴ Keil, 'Angst in Berlin'.

²²⁵ Author unknown, 'Nachgefragt: Endlich zu Ende – oder doch nicht?', <http://www.swr.de/nicht-alle-waren-moerder/barrierefreie-version/befreiung-bei-martchen/nachgefragt.html>.

²²⁶ 'Nachgefragt'.

²²⁷ Krüger, 'Im Versteck vor den Nazis'.

²²⁸ Sabine Schneider, 'Auf der Flucht'.

²²⁹ Krüger, 'Im Versteck vor den Nazis'.

simultaneously draws the viewer in emotionally and allows the film to avoid long ‘justification’ sequences to protect against accusations of relativisation, which would detract from the plot and therefore lessen the emotional response. Although using some Hollywood conventions and sharing certain similarities with the US miniseries *Holocaust*, *Nicht alle waren Mörder* does not necessarily lose its German identity. In focusing on the actions of ‘ordinary’ Germans in a nuanced and balanced way and dealing with questions of German identity, as explored above, the Event Movie retains a German specificity. It could be argued that the film’s adoption of international stylistic devices may affect the way in which German viewers identify with the history on screen. Depicting German history using this global aesthetic could potentially have a certain distancing effect, and may reflect a wish of the filmmakers to free themselves of questions of guilt and responsibility and instead to utilise the past in order to tell more general, even ahistorical, moral stories (such as the American filmmakers were able to do with *Holocaust*).²³⁰ However, *Nicht alle waren Mörder* retains a German specificity, dealing overtly with questions of guilt and responsibility. Similarly, since the broadcast of *Holocaust*, this international style used in *Nicht alle waren Mörder* has become the dominant form of storytelling in German television drama, visible in a great proportion of prime-time TV films, and it is the style with which most German viewers are familiar and comfortable. This style, then, does not serve to distance the viewer from their own past, but to draw them in, allowing them to identify with figures in an emotional way and therefore engaging them in the historical debates dealt with in the film.

That *Nicht alle waren Mörder* is an Event Movie is also important. Broadcast on television, it was reportedly the first such production to deal with the actions of the ‘Stille Helden’ at that time, seen by such a (comparatively) wide audience. *Nicht alle waren Mörder*’s audience of 5.31 million is much greater than that of other Holocaust films, which were shown in cinemas, for example: *Aimée und Jaguar*, which received 1,180,224 viewers, *The Pianist* (906,400), *Rosenstraße* (647,794) and *Hitlerjunge Salomon* (285,220). It is worth noting that the viewing figures for *Nicht alle waren Mörder* were around the same as the most popular German film of 2006 (Tom Tykwer’s *Das Parfum*, which received approximately 5.5 million viewers), and almost the same as the number of Germans who saw *Schindler’s List* at its release in 1994 (around 6 million).²³¹ The audience of teamWorx’s Event Movie was therefore much larger (and

²³⁰ See Section 4.1.2.3 for more on this.

²³¹ All figures from Author unknown, ‘FilmFörderungsanstalt’, <http://www.ffa.de>. These figures are for cinema release only and do not take into consideration DVD sales or later television broadcast.

also presumably more varied) than would go to see such a film at the cinema, suggesting the significance of its contribution to memory of Holocaust and to the normalisation of the National Socialist past.

4.2.5: Criticism

As discussed above, previous film and television productions on the Holocaust which use conventions of popular cinema, such as *Holocaust* and *Schindler's List*, have been criticised from various quarters, represented by the comments of Elie Wiesel and Claude Lanzmann.²³² These criticisms suggests that using melodrama or soap opera to depict this unspeakable period trivialises the Holocaust and is therefore absolutely indefensible. So, following earlier sections exploring the aims and views of the filmmakers themselves and undertaking a filmic analysis of *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, this section will focus on critical reaction to the film in the contemporary press and also from the public, through the messages left on the comments boards of the 'Amazon.de' online shop.²³³ These comments will assist in the analysis of how views on the representation of the Holocaust have changed, and whether memory of the Holocaust has been normalised in Germany to such an extent that a German-made film on the Holocaust can firstly use devices and techniques from popular cinema and secondly focus on 'ordinary' Germans as opposed to solely on Jewish victims. Compared to the other Event Movies discussed in this thesis, there was much less critical reaction to *Nicht alle waren Mörder* in the press and online, relating possibly to the lower viewing figures. This, however, speaks volumes: what may have previously been seen as an extremely provocative film has not created the kind of scandal or garnered the criticism which *Holocaust* or even *Dresden* did, suggesting an advancing normalisation of this subject. Similarly, where *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* polarised the critics, the reaction to *Nicht alle waren Mörder* from the press and the public has been overwhelmingly positive, yet it received the poorest viewing figures of the three Event Movies dealt with in the thesis. This could dispute teamWorx's assertion that the Event Movies are simultaneously able to attract enormous viewing figures and receive critical acclaim.²³⁴

²³² See Section 4.1.1.

²³³ See Author unknown, 'Kundenrezension: Nicht alle waren Mörder', Amazon.de, http://www.amazon.de/product-reviews/B000J3OCAC/ref=cm_cr_dp_all_helpful?ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=1&sortBy=bySubmissionDateDescending. Nine reviews were left by customers who had bought the DVD of *Nicht alle waren Mörder*.

²³⁴ See Section 1.3.5 for more on this.

Nicht alle waren Mörder received a number of prizes at television awards ceremonies, including the ‘Adolf-Grimme-Preis’ for ‘Beste Schauspielerin’ (Nadja Uhl), ‘Bester Schauspieler’ (Aaron Altaras), ‘Bestes Buch’ (Baier) and ‘Beste Regie’ (Baier) in 2007, as well as the ‘Spezialpreis “Monaco Red Cross”’ at the ‘Festival de télévision’ in Monte Carlo, also in 2007.²³⁵ There have furthermore been many positive comments on *Nicht alle waren Mörder* in general terms. The Event Movie was called an “eindrucksvoller Fernsehfilm,”²³⁶ an “überragende[s] TV-Ereignis,”²³⁷ and one critic regretted that it was not a two-parter.²³⁸ Critics furthermore praised Baier for his “gelungene Verfilmung des Autobiografien des Schauspielers Michael Degen,”²³⁹ confirming that he “hat es geschafft, die teils beklemmenden, teils humorigen Kindheits-Erinnerungen des Schauspielers Michael Degen aus der Nazi-Zeit in einen spannenden TV-Film zu verwenden.”²⁴⁰ Similarly, critics mentioned the quality and intelligence of the production: “Glotze muss nicht doof und flach sein,” wrote Nikolaus von Festenberg;²⁴¹ Christopher Keil claimed: “Unterhaltungsfernsehen ist das [...] nicht, sondern einfach Qualitätsfernsehen,”²⁴² and Klaudia Wick praised the film for never descending into kitsch.²⁴³ The majority of comments on ‘Amazon.de’ were also positive, reviewers calling it “ein Muß!” and a “klasse[r] Film.”²⁴⁴ The acting was often singled out for praise. Michael Hanfeld wrote: “Das Schauspielensemble ist herausragend. [...] Wirklich jeder macht seine Nebenrolle zu einem Ereignis,”²⁴⁵ with special mentions going to leading actor Uhl as well as Axel Prahl, whom Nikolaus von Festenberg credits with the following: “Im grandiosen Spiel Prahls werden Mord und Tod lebendig, lebendiger als in vielen Dokumentaraufnahmen von den Leichenbergen in den Vernichtungslagern.”²⁴⁶ Of the nine ‘Amazon.de’ reviews, five specifically praised the quality of the acting.²⁴⁷ Reviewers also appreciated *Nicht alle waren Mörder*’s understated style, in comparison with other teamWorx Event Movies, such as *Dresden* or *Die Sturmflut*. Michael Hanfeld called Baier’s film: “Das stille Gegenstück

²³⁵ See Author unknown, ‘Preise & Auszeichnungen’,

<http://www.teamworx.de/presse/downloads/allgemeine-infos.html>.

²³⁶ Fritz Raff (ed.), *ARD Jahrbuch 07* (Hamburg: Hans-Bredow-Institut, 2007), p. 274.

²³⁷ Von Festenberg, ‘Die Sieger der Mütter Courage’.

²³⁸ See Buß, ‘Wer hat schon saubere Hände?’.

²³⁹ Keil, ‘Angst in Berlin’.

²⁴⁰ Buß, ‘Wer hat schon saubere Hände?’.

²⁴¹ Von Festenberg, ‘Die Sieger der Mütter Courage’.

²⁴² Keil, ‘Angst in Berlin’.

²⁴³ See Wick, ‘Flucht durch Berlin’.

²⁴⁴ ‘Kundenrezension: Nicht alle waren Mörder’.

²⁴⁵ Hanfeld, ‘Die es nicht gab’.

²⁴⁶ Von Festenberg, ‘Die Sieger der Mütter Courage’.

²⁴⁷ See ‘Kundenrezension: Nicht alle waren Mörder’.

zu *Dresden*, ein Kammerspiel, eine Moritat, die an die Vernichtung der Juden erinnert, indem sie die Geschichte der großen Ausnahme erzählt, die Geschichte einer wundersamen Rettung durch leisen unauffälligen Widerstand, ein Appell für Zivilcourage unter den denkbar gefährlichsten Umständen.²⁴⁸ The lack of bombast and spectacle had also been noted and applauded by Nikolaus von Festenberg who commented: “Am ergreifendsten sind die fiktiven Geschichtslektionen im Fernsehen, wenn keine großen Worte gemacht werden. Dann sagt ein Blick mehr als tausend Erklärungen, dann vermittelt eine einzelne Kameraeinstellung die ganze Trauer und alles Entsetzen.”²⁴⁹ The Event Movie’s influence on memory of the National Socialist past in Germany, a key aim of the filmmakers, was commented on specifically by critics. Christopher Keil called the film “ein wichtiger Augenblick gegen das Vergessen, [der] durch seine künstlerische Einstellung [überzeugt].”²⁵⁰ Nikolaus von Festenberg wrote that the filmmakers “haben den richtigen Weg zum Erinnern in den Zeiten des unterhaltenden Fernsehens gefunden,” claiming the greatest praise for the project was its acceptance by Degen himself.²⁵¹ A common theme for reviewers, also noted by those on ‘Amazon.de,’ was the balance and complexity of the film. Christian Buß praised Baier for portraying the extremely thin line between “Eigennutz und Altruismus,” an approach which, according to Buß, is rarely found on German television.²⁵² The film was referred to on ‘Amazon.de’ as “ein wichtiger Beitrag zum Thema Weltkrieg,” and the lack of black-and-white depictions of the characters is praised,²⁵³ a similar view to that of Christian Buß, who wrote in his review: “In diesem Film geht es nicht um die üblichen dramaturgischen Pappkameraden, die sonst so oft die Nazifolklore des deutschen Fernsehens bevölkern. Es geht um echte Charaktere.”²⁵⁴

Despite the majority of positive reviews, there were a small number who disliked Baier’s film. A number of the negative comments of the film on ‘Amazon.de’ focused on the difficulties of portraying history in an Event Movie, such as the reviewer who thought that the book was better, as well as one commentator who had “ein viel intensiveres Bild von der damaligen Zeit,” from family stories.²⁵⁵ A minority of press reviewers criticised the film for its tendency towards emotionalisation of the subject,

²⁴⁸ Hanfeld, ‘Die es nicht gab’.

²⁴⁹ Von Festenberg, ‘Die Sieger der Mütter Courage’.

²⁵⁰ Keil, ‘Angst in Berlin’.

²⁵¹ Von Festenberg, ‘Die Sieger der Mütter Courage’.

²⁵² Buß, ‘Wer hat schon saubere Hände?’.

²⁵³ ‘Kundenrezension: Nicht alle waren Mörder’.

²⁵⁴ Buß, ‘Wer hat schon saubere Hände?’.

²⁵⁵ ‘Kundenrezension: Nicht alle waren Mörder’.

describing it as escapism and sentimentalisation.²⁵⁶ Also criticised elsewhere was, as mentioned previously, the focus on the survival narrative without making reference to the much greater number of Jews who did not manage to survive.²⁵⁷ Much of this criticism came from a review by René Martens in the *taz*, which is perhaps unsurprising, as the newspaper's traditionally leftist sensibilities most certainly reacted strongly against the (perceived) relativisation of German guilt, through depictions of German suffering and the focus on the positive actions of a small number of individuals during a time of unspeakable crimes.²⁵⁸ However, these negative reviews were in the minority; the majority of reviewers, from the press and the public, appreciated *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, for its understated style, balanced viewpoint and approach to history.

4.2.6: Conclusions

In representing the Holocaust in a prime-time television drama teamWorx has been caught in a double-bind: how to convey the horror of the Holocaust to a wide audience without breaking Lanzmann's theorised 'Bilderverbot' surrounding it and without trivialising memory of the Holocaust using popular techniques. Although a non-documentary film, *Nicht alle waren Mörder* does (arguably) not break Lanzmann's 'ring of fire' around the Holocaust,²⁵⁹ as it does not depict a concentration camp nor feature the gruesome and, for some, exploitative images audiences have come to associate with the Holocaust. *Nicht alle waren Mörder's* focus is instead on the actions of 'ordinary' Germans during the war, something which could be seen as provocative and potentially revisionistic, yet the film mostly dodges these accusations by reinforcing a hierarchy of victimhood in which Jewish victims evidently occupy the top position. Where this balanced view may be seen to fall down is the suggestion that, through their wartime suffering, the German people are able to atone for the sins of the Holocaust. The film also suggests a much more inclusive post-war German identity, rejecting the polarisation of Germanness and Jewishness, and seeks to move away from strict racial ideals and situate itself as part of a wider European continuum of identity, in this way fighting against anti-Semitism in today's Germany.

The accusation that *Nicht alle waren Mörder* is guilty of revisionism, by focusing on a positive narrative of survival and ignoring the much greater number of

²⁵⁶ See Martens, 'Hang zum Eskapismus'.

²⁵⁷ See 'Im Untergrund'.

²⁵⁸ See Martens, 'Hang zum Eskapismus'.

²⁵⁹ See Section 4.1.1.

Jews who were killed during the Holocaust, is avoided by the use of Michael as the central character for identification. Experiencing this period through a child's eyes, compared to an omniscient narrator or even an adult proxy, de-politicises the film to a certain extent, since one could not expect a child to have wide knowledge of the politics of the Third Reich or of the experiences of other Jewish people. The use of Degen's memoirs, based on his personal experiences, forms the basis of teamWorx's claims of authenticity for *Nicht alle waren Mörder*. The film features a number of elements which contradict these claims, such as the use of certain narrative techniques as well as CGI and other technical devices. Compared to *Dresden* or *Die Flucht*, however, which bear less of a relationship to personal memories and which use more devices of popular cinema, *Nicht alle waren Mörder* conforms much more to teamWorx's definition of authenticity. Despite using film techniques and stylistic devices which are shared with Hollywood productions, *Nicht alle waren Mörder*'s focus on the role of 'ordinary' Germans and its nuanced depictions of victimhood, guilt and identity, added to the specific desires of the filmmakers that it should have an effect on memory of the Holocaust in Germany, provide it with a German specificity. That depictions of German suffering are unapologetically included in a Holocaust film suggests a move towards the normalisation of memory of the Holocaust and an expansion of the definition of Holocaust memory to include other issues. The construction of hierarchies of suffering, however, in which Jews most definitely occupy the top position, helps to protect *Nicht alle waren Mörder* from accusations of relativisation, yet perhaps reduces the level of normalisation it represents.

As with teamWorx's two other Event Movies analysed in this thesis, *Nicht alle waren Mörder*'s relationship with memory of the Holocaust and the Second World War can be summarised by using the concept of consensus. This consensus allows teamWorx to simultaneously achieve all of its aims for its Event Movies, which for some critics may appear contradictory. A prime example of this is that teamWorx attempts to portray the serious history of the Holocaust authentically and to do so in an entertaining way. Using Degen's memoirs as a source text affords *Nicht alle waren Mörder* a sense of authenticity, according to teamWorx's own definitions, and furthermore uses the emotional resonance of this story to gain a wide audience and elicit an emotional response from them. This is in part achieved by *Nicht alle waren Mörder*'s melodramatic devices and by music and other devices taken from Hollywood movie-making. The depiction of German suffering in the film and balanced explorations of guilt and responsibility during the Third Reich, however, also afford *Nicht alle waren*

Mörder a German specificity. That teamWorx is able to produce this consensus between entertainment strategies and serious history, between German history and Hollywood film devices, and between explorations of the Holocaust and other suffering during the Third Reich without receiving the amount of criticism attracted by previous Holocaust films suggests a normalisation of memory of the Holocaust and the National Socialist legacy.²⁶⁰ Normalisation is similarly suggested in *Nicht alle waren Mörder*'s use of the Holocaust as a prism through which to explore other issues related to the Second World War, such as the 'Stille Helden,' as well as using this memory for more contemporary ends, such as the struggle against anti-Semitism today.

²⁶⁰ See Section 1.2.4 for definitions and discussions of the term 'normalisation.'

Conclusion

The concept of normalisation has been an integral part of the theories and debates surrounding coming to terms with the National Socialist past since the end of the Second World War. Moving forward from the ‘Schlußstrich’ associated with Helmut Kohl, the Schröder government’s notion of normalisation was a more open concept, including the notion of ‘neue Unbefangenheit:’ the ability to approach the past more freely, without constraints and without constant reminders of the guilt and crimes of the German people, to remember the Nazi past without a constant fixation upon it.¹ If the National Socialist past were normalised in this way then it could be used as a prism for exploring other issues without leading to accusations of trivialisation or relativisation. This will be the definition of normalisation used for this conclusion, which aims to use the analyses of the three Event Movies discussed in this thesis – *Dresden*, *Nicht alle waren Mörder* and *Die Flucht* – focusing on how they affect and reflect certain debates on ‘Vergangenheitsbewältigung,’ to reveal to what extent memory of the National Socialist past could be considered to be ‘normalised’ in contemporary Germany.

Perhaps the most persuasive claim that these three teamWorx Event Movies reveal a growing normalisation of the Nazi past is represented by the theme of German victimhood, which is present in all of the films, to a greater or lesser extent. *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* deal specifically with topics related to the debate on German suffering during the Second World War – namely the bombing raids and expulsion from the East respectively – but this theme also recurs in *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, despite the film’s primary focus on the Holocaust. Indeed, teamWorx’s choice of subject matter for its Event Movies further suggests this normalisation. All three films reject a focus on German perpetrators – as had been standard throughout post-war history and particularly prevalent in the documentaries of Guido Knopp, for example – as well as a focus primarily on the victims of Germans. Instead the Event Movies depict narratives of German heroism, suffering and self-sacrifice. To focus on these themes would suggest at first glance that they are able to approach the past much more freely. Portraying the gamut of German suffering during this period would indicate a normalisation of the Nazi past, something reinforced by the lack of criticism in contemporary reviews of the film. Although the German press responded to the

¹ See Section 1.2.4 for further definitions of the term ‘normalisation.’

portrayals of German victimhood in the Event Movies, (particularly in *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*), accusations of revisionism were notoriously few compared to other debates on the National Socialist past throughout post-war history.

On closer inspection, however, the films' construction of German victimhood is balanced and moderated in many ways. Subtle hierarchies of victimhood are created, such as in *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, which portrays the German people as victims of the war yet makes clear that the Jewish victims of Germans occupy the top position in this hierarchy. Similarly, nuanced representations of guilt and responsibility within the films, including constant reminders that Germany and the German people were responsible for the war, threaten to efface the impact created by portraying Germans as victims. Questions of guilt and responsibility are similarly balanced, particularly concerning the alleged guilt of the Allies. So, although in *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* the British and Soviet armies respectively are shown committing atrocities, these are balanced by the horrific actions of the Nazis. The relationship between Nazis and 'ordinary' Germans is also a complicated one. While there are suggestions that these two groups should be regarded as completely separate, the films do not allow the German people to rest in the role of innocent victims and hint at their guilt for the atrocities of the Third Reich. In press and viewer reactions to the films, there was significantly more criticism that they were too balanced and too politically correct than there were accusations of revisionism, suggesting perhaps that the Event Movies did not reflect such an advanced degree of normalisation.

A further way in which normalisation appears to be suggested is the universalisation and instrumentalisation of specific themes of German history for other ends. As defined above, the ability to use the National Socialist past in order to deal with other issues, especially in a didactic way, suggests that this past has been normalised to a certain extent. This can be seen most clearly in the attitudes of the filmmakers themselves. In many of the interviews and promotional material surrounding the broadcast of the Event Movies, the filmmakers refer to their very specific aims as regards the films' impact. Through these Event Movies, an awareness of certain timeless issues or even specific messages for the present day can be gleaned from the lessons of the past. So, for example, *Dresden* was described by many as a generic 'anti-war film,' Nico Hofmann referring to it as a "'Film gegen den Krieg' und 'für eine größere Mitmenschlichkeit.'"² *Dresden*'s historical advisor, British historian Richard Overy, similarly revealed how the film could be instrumentalised as a warning

² Ziegler, 'Zwischen Kitsch und Kunst'.

for present-day or future wars. He claimed: “This film will, I hope, remind people [...] exactly what they’re doing when they drop bombs on a big city.”³ Similarly, Kai Wessel maintained *Die Flucht* was able to raise awareness of the present-day expulsion of peoples around the world: “Wenn man versucht, über so eine einzelne Geschichte vielleicht, so schafft man auch selber mal die Sensibilität für Flucht allgemein herzustellen,” he claimed, and similarly hoped *Die Flucht*’s distressing rape scene would create awareness of the use of rape as a weapon of war.⁴ With *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, director Jo Baier wanted to impart a universal message on the need for ‘Zivilcourage’ in present-day society. Baier maintained that the film should contain the message: “Leute traut euch, gegen den Strom zu schwimmen.”⁵ Through these extra-textual devices the film escapes the specificity of debates on the Second World War and universalises these issues so that they mean something to everyone. This does indeed suggest a normalisation of the Nazi past, according to the above definition, firstly in that it makes use of the past to create an awareness of more contemporary issues and secondly since it instrumentalises Germany’s own past in order to provide a negative image against which the present-day reunited Germany can define itself, at home and on the world stage.

Despite these universalising tendencies, the Event Movies are able to contribute to specific debates on Germany’s past and how it should be remembered. This is apparent from the extra-textual material and opinions of the filmmakers. Much of the focus on *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*, particularly the (limited) academic interest shown from the UK, concerns their role in the recent debates on representations of German victimhood, and Hofmann has maintained that the films would not have received the number of viewers or the amount of press interest they did unless they made an impact on these debates.⁶ teamWorx’s Event Movies are often reported as breaking taboos. Hofmann has claimed: “Sowohl Dresden als auch [...] Flucht und Vertreibung in Deutschland große, große Tabuthemen waren, große nationale Mythosthemen waren, die eben seit Jahren, [...] nicht bearbeitet worden sind.”⁷ Similarly, *Nicht alle waren Mörder* was purportedly the first fiction film to dedicate itself to the ‘Stille Helden.’ The supposed existence of these taboos suggests that these issues had not yet been

³ *Das Making Of Dresden*, (0:24).

⁴ See Interview with Kai Wessel, lines 97-103.

⁵ Sabine Schneider, ‘Auf der Flucht’.

⁶ See, for example, the edited volume Cooke and Silberman (ed.), *Screening War*, which makes reference to the three teamWorx Event Movies analysed in this thesis. See also Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 295-300.

⁷ Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 97-100.

normalised and that teamWorx's Event Movies played an integral role in this normalising process. Although the question of taboo is moot, since the majority of these claims have been dispelled throughout the course of this thesis, the great outpouring of grief after broadcast and the reported impact of these Event Movies with the viewing public and in the national press suggest that Germany is just beginning to come to terms with some aspects of its past, even after several decades. However, the inclusion of both specific German themes and their expansion to more universal issues must also be considered as a part of teamWorx's international outlook and its eye on the global market. Translating Germany-specific themes into global ones allows the Event Movies to serve different functions for different audiences. They are able to make an impact in specific debates on 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung' in Germany and can also be understood in much more general terms abroad.

An integral part of the successful normalisation of a country's past is a normal relationship with the rest of the world and a normal foreign policy.⁸ For Germany, successful integration into Europe, as a strong member of the European political, economic and cultural community, for example, can help distance itself from its National Socialist past.⁹ The concept of a successful reconciliation between former enemies and subsequent European integration is featured heavily within teamWorx's Event Movies. At the end of the films there is the suggestion that the future destiny of the protagonists and of Germany itself is intrinsically linked to Europe, and narrative closure is often achieved by reconciling two former enemies. This is symbolised in *Dresden* by the birth of Anna and Robert's daughter, uniting Britain and Germany. Similarly, in *Die Flucht*, Lena swears her love to the Frenchman Francois and, although their paths may diverge, they promise they will eventually be reunited. *Nicht alle waren Mörder* features a similar reconciliation of identity, predominantly a reconciliation of Jewish and German identity; Michael claims himself to be "Deutscher und Jude"¹⁰ at the end of the film. At this time, his mother feels able to reveal that she was born in Poland, perhaps acknowledging the importance of the steady Eastern expansion of the European Union. Reminding the viewer of these post-war reconciliations and, importantly, the country's acceptance by former enemies, the films appear to suggest that present-day Germany should indeed be considered a normal nation.

⁸ See Brockmann, "Normalization", pp. 22-5.

⁹ See Section 1.2.3 for more on this.

¹⁰ *Nicht alle waren Mörder*, (1:33).

A sense of normalisation is further suggested by the personalisation of history depicted in the films. This focus on the individual and their personal experiences during the Third Reich is a recent trend in historiography, featuring in recent debates on museums and memorials, and is prevalent in all three of the Event Movies.¹¹ Through the use of filmic and narrative devices the viewer is encouraged to identify with the experiences of one particular character.¹² To focus on one person's (fictional or otherwise) subjective experiences during the Third Reich, no matter how unrepresentative they may be, would suggest a normalisation of the past: that this history can be used as a backdrop to a personal story without necessitating the inclusion of historical background or the experiences of others. This is, however, not entirely the case in the Event Movies. Even *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*, which revolve around romantic love stories, both feature scenes which exist purely for historical exposition and education, scenes which one would perhaps expect to find in a documentary and which thus detract from the effects of the emotional narrative. The most prominent example of this is in *Dresden*, which alongside the blossoming romance between Anna and Robert features scenes set at the Morton Hall air base in England, which give the viewers several statistical details about the raid on Dresden but which have no bearing on the romantic love story. *Nicht alle waren Mörder* on the other hand does indeed focus on the emotional experiences of one person, Michael Degen, and deliberately eschews scenes dealing with the politics of the Third Reich and the war. Nevertheless, the film uses a number of recurring motifs to remind the viewer of the wider dangers of the war as well as less subtle moments of exposition: for example, a news report heard on the English radio station. Even here, a degree of historical background is deemed necessary.

One of the most problematic aspects of teamWorx's Event Movies and one which may work against suggestions of normalisation in other areas of the films is teamWorx's constant claim of authenticity. The filmmakers employ a great number of devices, both filmic and extra-filmic, to persuade the viewer of the authenticity of their productions: realistic sets, costumes and make-up, historical advisors, teams of researchers and excerpts of documentary footage, amongst others.¹³ Despite these myriad claims, it is impossible to call teamWorx's Event Movies authentic, for reasons outlined throughout this thesis, primarily due to both the problem with calling any kind

¹¹ See Sections 2.3.1 and 3.1.1 for more on the trend of personalisation in historical television and in the Germans as victims discourse respectively.

¹² See Sections 3.2.4 and 4.2.4 for more on these devices.

¹³ See Sections 3.2.2 and 4.2.2 for details of how these films attempt authenticity.

of historical memory authentic and the ‘inauthentic’ nature of film as a medium. To claim the films are authentic could therefore be seen as problematic, since everything – the serious history and the clichéd love story – has been described as similarly authentic and therefore been placed on the same level. Simultaneously asking the viewer to empathise with the fictional romantic problems of one couple and the real historical victims of a bombing raid, for example, is highly questionable and extremely problematic. If the National Socialist past were completely normalised, then these authenticity claims from the filmmakers would perhaps not be considered so necessary. teamWorx’s slavish devotion to the cult of authenticity betrays an inability to overcome the standard assumption that one must remain true to history or else be guilty of trivialisation. For teamWorx, then, the National Socialist past has not been normalised sufficiently that it feels able to let its fictional work acknowledge its own lack of authenticity and let the audience – who are experienced media consumers and most probably experienced history consumers – work out the relationship between fact and fiction for themselves.

A further normalising tendency of teamWorx’s Event Movies is their use of a ‘global aesthetic’ and devices and genres borrowed from Hollywood movie-making.¹⁴ The portrayal of German history by German filmmakers through the lens of Hollywood may create a distancing effect; it could be suggested that to be able to treat one’s own history as the rest of the world does would therefore represent the ultimate normalisation of this past. From an analysis of the Event Movies, however, it is apparent that the opposite has become the case: through the employment of this classical Hollywood style, including standard camera angles, seamless editing and a focus on personalisation and emotionalisation, the viewer is encouraged to identify all the more with the history shown, and to have an emotional reaction to it. In addition, the strong contributions these films make to current German debates on memory of the Nazi past, through both filmic and extra-filmic devices, never allow the viewer this sense of distance but rather draw them into these specific debates. The use of melodrama, as explored throughout this thesis, does not necessarily trivialise this history but rather increases the viewer’s emotional involvement with it and the sense of identification with the main characters. This is achieved through camera angles and editing but also through the films’ universal issues and challenges the protagonists face – for example problems relating to the family – with which the viewer can emphasise. Furthermore, the use of the heritage genre, a mainly European form of cinema, although one which

¹⁴ See Sections 3.2.3 and 4.2.3 for more on the influence of Hollywood on the Event Movies.

privileges style over content and image over analysis, can similarly foster viewer identification. As Alison Landsberg's theories on prosthetic memories suggest, this can create a deeper, three-dimensional historical awareness for the viewers. Using the style and effects of a Hollywood blockbuster, including special effects and CGI, further increases viewing figures and therefore increases the Event Movies' reach and scope for historical communication. Finally, this thesis has deconstructed the assumed dichotomy between 'German' and 'Hollywood' productions, which are today closer than ever.¹⁵ The 'global aesthetic' used in the Event Movies is a dominant style on German television and one with which German audiences will be familiar, given the number of American television series and films screened on German channels and the adoption of this aesthetic by a large number of German productions. The similarity of teamWorx's Event Movies to a great deal of TV films shown on German television does not create a distancing effect but rather strengthens the German viewers' relationship to the history portrayed. What is perhaps questionable about teamWorx's borrowing from American movie-making is suggested by the company's use of the 'disaster movie' template for some of its films and reflected in the narrative similarities between Event Movies. *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* were first in line for this type of criticism, with *Nicht alle waren Mörder* managing to avoid it. What this suggests is a universalisation and relativisation of experience: the disaster movie elements in *Dresden* suggest that the effects of the bombing are the same as of a tornado, a flood or volcanic eruption.¹⁶ By equating the effects of the war with natural disasters, questions of guilt and responsibility are therefore sidestepped. It is extremely problematic when victim status is assigned to everyone and those who were responsible for this suffering are ignored.

A final suggestion that the National Socialist past could be considered normalised can be inferred from Hofmann's claims in several interviews that the Nazi past is no longer such an important topic for German filmmakers and, as such, that teamWorx will be moving on to other themes and other areas of history. In an interview in 2004 Hofmann suggested: "Allerdings wird das Thema Drittes Reich irgendwann ausgereizt sein – ich schätze, etwa in vier bis fünf Jahren."¹⁷ He defended a refined version of this in 2010: "Das stimmt ja, so ist es auch. Es ist nicht ausgereizt, aber es ist nicht mehr die Intensität dahinter wie vor fünf Jahren."¹⁸ Despite this, in early 2011 three new Event Movies were broadcast, each dealing with (or set during) the Third

¹⁵ See Section 2.2.2 for more on this.

¹⁶ As in *Tornado*, *Die Sturmflut* and *Der Vulkan* respectively.

¹⁷ Gebauer, "Für uns lohnt sich Kino nicht".

¹⁸ Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 115-16.

Reich. These were *Hindenburg*, *Schicksalsjahre* and *The Sinking of the Laconia*. The reappearance of the National Socialist past in teamWorx's films poses a number of questions. How do these newer Event Movies fit into teamWorx's canon regarding coming to terms with the Nazi past and its normalisation? Do they show that it has not been normalised but rather that further issues appear which must be dealt with? Or do they perhaps show that this history has indeed been normalised and, in contrast to the 2006-2007 Event Movies, they use the Third Reich as nothing more than a convenient backdrop for other issues, suggesting a 'neue Unbefangenheit' regarding the past?

Hindenburg was a two-part action thriller based on the crash of the eponymous Zeppelin airship, which Hofmann described as "historischer Event 2.0 [...] oder 3.0,"¹⁹ suggesting a move away from the previous style of Event Movies represented by the films discussed in this thesis. Despite this, *Hindenburg* does conform with many of the conventions of the traditional Event Movie: it features a love story (including the forbidden love motif) and takes place against the backdrop of a major historical event, using spectacular special effects. Although Hofmann claimed the film was "sehr, sehr authentisch gemacht,"²⁰ it featured much less of a focus on authenticity and historical fact than other Event Movies. *Hindenburg* delivers a fictionalised version of events, the search for a bomb on board the airship. The uninformed viewer would therefore not be able to distinguish what is based on historical sources and what has been invented for the sake of the thriller storyline. Noticeably, *Hindenburg* featured many motifs from the classical Hollywood disaster movie, such as *The Towering Inferno* (1974), *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972), and the more recent *Titanic*, featuring a constellation of characters in a sealed environment, a race against time, special effects and many thrilling action sequences. Costing €10 million it was the most expensive TV film ever made for RTL and was described by the film's producer Sascha Schwingel as: "Ein großes Drama voller Spannung und Action."²¹ *Hindenburg* appeared to be teamWorx's most 'international' production to date, most notably since it was filmed in English, with German dubbing for the domestic release, a sure sign the film was made with the international market in mind. The increase in borrowing Hollywood style and devices may not just be due to a changing style in Event Movies but rather that it was filmed for RTL, demanding a different style to public-channel Event Movies. Although set during

¹⁹ Ibid., line 597.

²⁰ Ibid., line 242.

²¹ See Author unknown, 'Millionenpublikum für die "Hindenburg"', 7 February 2011, <http://www.teamworx.de/presse/nachrichtenarchiv/article/erfolg-338.html> and Thomas Lückerrath, "'Hindenburg"-Produzent Schwingel über das 10 Mio.-€-Werk', *DWDL.de*, 5 February 2011, <http://dwdl.de/sl/8617e3>.

the Third Reich, it would be difficult to characterise *Hindenburg* as a film which has the Nazi past as a main theme. Although there are references to the Nazi party, with an evil Gestapo officer amongst the cast of characters, and although it points towards issues of the Holocaust with a subplot featuring an emigrating Jewish family, the film's main struggle is between 'good' and 'evil' characters in generalised terms. The viewer will learn very little about the Nazi past from watching the Event Movie. The 'real' blame for the tensions of the film does not lay with the Nazis or the Germans; rather, the finger is pointed at capitalism. It is the wealthy American businessman who is to blame for the bomb on the Zeppelin. Reminiscent of the well-known 'Frankfurter Schule' tenet: 'Wer vom Faschismus spricht, darf vom Kapitalismus nicht schweigen,' this also suggests a normalisation. The Nazi characters are not the primary antagonists of the film and the German hero is shown to be exactly that, a whiter than white Hollywood-style action hero, unfettered by the current and future crimes of his countrymen. Indeed, the use of the Third Reich as a mere backdrop and the foregrounding of action and romance over history and authenticity do seem to suggest a normalisation of this history. Yet *Hindenburg* can be regarded as typical of teamWorx's approach to the past: it is most certainly a 'Mythosthema,' in Hofmann's terms. Early critical response to the Event Movie was generally positive, with around 7.5 million viewers tuning in for the first and second parts.²²

The Sinking of the Laconia, broadcast in the UK in January 2011 and in Germany in November 2011, was teamWorx's first co-production with the BBC. This was proof, perhaps more than anything else, of teamWorx's credentials in this field: the BBC is extremely respected in historical programming. The film is set in 1942, detailing the attack on the eponymous ship, carrying civilians and POWs, by a German U-Boot and the subsequent rescue attempt made by the U-Boot's captain. Although co-produced with another company and although the script – written by Alan Bleasdale – is markedly superior to the average teamWorx film, *The Sinking of the Laconia* conforms with many of the conventions of the typical Event Movie. The film is split into two parts, set against an historical background and features special effects, suspense and a love story (featuring once more the concept of forbidden love, between a British officer and a German woman, played by Franka Potente). The focus on international co-

²² See 'Millionenpublikum für die "Hindenburg"' and Stefan Tewes, 'Auch zweiter «Hindenburg»-Teil eine Macht', *Quotenmeter.de*, 8 February 2011, <http://www.quotenmeter.de/cms/?p1=n&p2=47592&p3>. The slightly smaller viewing figures *Hindenburg* received, compared to *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* for example, could perhaps be explained by the film's broadcast on a private, as opposed to a public channel.

operation and reconciliation, particularly in the European context,²³ is here made explicit, not only through the extra-filmic co-operation between teamWorx and the BBC but also through the love affair and the noble actions of the German U-Boot captain Hartenstein, who puts himself and his crew in danger in order to save the British. Focusing on disparate groups of British, Germans and characters of other nationalities, including Italian prisoners of war, *The Sinking of the Laconia* once more delivers a nuanced picture of guilt, responsibility and victimhood during the Second World War, yet without the constant balance of other productions (for example excessively reminding the viewer of German crimes to balance out any German suffering or heroic German characters). In the UK, the film's first part received 2.929 million viewers, a 12.1% market share, and the second 2.848 million, (11.8%); not unimpressive for BBC2.²⁴ On the whole, the British press reacted positively to the programme. Rhiannon Harries wrote in the *Independent*: "For if this wasn't the best bit of drama on the BBC in 20 years, I'm hard pressed to name anything in recent memory that exceeds it in quality."²⁵ Sam Wollaston of the *Guardian* identified many of the Event Movie's main themes, including the universalisation of many specific issues. He wrote: "This is not just the story of a tragic sinking: it's that plus an amazing rescue that raised questions about humanity and morality and had implications for how the remainder of the war at sea was fought." He also noted the nuanced way the film approaches questions of guilt: "Stereotypes and generalisations are avoided: everyone is an individual with a story and with imperfections; there are few heroes."²⁶ Although there were certain negative reactions to the film,²⁷ there were no accusations of revisionism or relativisation, in the British media at least. An early response to the film from Germany was provided by Nikolaus von Festenberg in a review in *Der Spiegel*. As well as praising the film in general terms, von Festenberg also suggests that a normalisation of the Nazi past has

²³ Indeed, the Americans in the film are featured in an extremely negative light.

²⁴ See Jason Deans, 'Alan Bleasdale drama sinks Chris Evans stunt show', in *Guardian online*, 7 January 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2011/jan/07/sinking-of-the-laconia-tv-ratings?INTCMP=SRCH> and John Plunkett, 'ITV1's Penn and Teller outfoxed by BBC1's Hustle', in *Guardian online*, 10 January 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2011/jan/10/penn-teller-hustle-tv-ratings?INTCMP=SRCH>.

²⁵ Rhiannon Harries, 'The Sinking of the Laconia, BBC2, Thursday & Friday; Sun, Sex and Suspicious Parents, BBC3, Monday', in *Independent online*, 9 January 2011, <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/reviews/the-sinking-of-the-laconia-bbc2-thursday-amp-friday-sun-sex-and-suspicious-parents-bbc3-monday-2179621.html#>.

²⁶ Sam Wollaston, 'TV review: The Sinking of the Laconia and Martin Clunes: Man to Mantas', in *Guardian online*, 7 January 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/tv-and-radio/2011/jan/07/sinking-of-laconia-martin-clunes?INTCMP=SRCH>.

²⁷ For example the review of the film in *The Telegraph*: John Preston, 'Arctic with Bruce Parry; Zen; The Sinking of the Laconia, review', in *Telegraph online*, 7 January 2011, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/8246838/Arctic-with-Bruce-Parry-Zen-The-Sinking-of-the-Laconia-review.html#>.

taken place, allowing the film to depict German heroes. He asks the quasi-rhetorical question: “Darf deutsches Fernsehen von moralischen Heldentaten deutscher Soldaten in Hitlers Armee erzählen? Trägt man damit zum Relativieren deutscher Schuld, zum Ablenken von Auschwitz bei?” Before answering it with the seemingly evident response: “Solche Fragen entstammen einer gefühlt längst vergangenen Zeit. Krieg und Holocaust werden seit Jahren im Kino und im Fernsehen als Stoff für die Projektionen der Heutigen verwertet. Nach den deutschen Schurken sind auch die deutschen Helden auf Leinwand oder Bildschirm geholt worden.”²⁸ Von Festenberg references *Schindler’s List*, German television series *Die Bertinis* and teamWorx’s own *Nicht alle waren Mörder* as both proof and agents of this normalisation. In his opinion, then, this subject has been normalised sufficiently to allow depictions of heroic Germans during the Second World War without the myriad of failsafe devices present in teamWorx’s earlier Event Movies, as discussed in this thesis.

The two-parter *Schicksalsjahre* was also well received by critics and was watched by 8.06 million viewers. Based on the memoirs of Uwe-Karsten Heye and starring Maria Furtwängler, the film traces the history of this family from 1938 to 1953, through the Second World War, the Russian occupation of Danzig and Ursula Heye’s escape to West Germany. *Schicksalsjahre* is a classic teamWorx Event Movie with a strong focus on romance and the family. Ursula’s relationship with Uwe-Karsten’s father Wolfgang runs throughout the film, as he is forced to fight in the War then is believed to be dead after deserting. Family is also important and Ursula’s relationship with her parents, her brother and her children are explored in depth. Although the film shares certain aspects with teamWorx’s previous Event Movies on the Third Reich, including depictions of German suffering and German perpetration, this represents less than half of the film. The Heye family’s suffering continues into the post-war landscape: they flee the GDR and experience more suffering in West Germany. This continuity does indeed suggest a normalisation, in that the depiction of National Socialism as merely another era in twentieth-century German history has been something of a taboo, contradicting the characterisation of the Third Reich as a unique event in history. This is achieved primarily by exploring this history through the optic of one family, using teamWorx’s tried and tested device of personalisation and emotionalisation. Critical reaction to *Schicksalsjahre* has been mixed. Christopher Keil in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* wrote that (for Furtwängler): “Von der *Flucht* zu den

²⁸ Nikolaus von Festenberg, ‘Der Feind, mein Retter’, in *Spiegel Online*, 1 November 2011, <http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/tv/a-795066.html>, accessed 3 November 2011.

Schicksalsjahren ist ein Schritt nach vorne.”²⁹ He also noted the specific effect the film could have on memory of the Nazi past by citing Heye: “Wenn man als Zuschauer am Schluss wisse, dass das alles, Naziterror, die Ermordung von Juden und Krieg, ‘nie wieder eine Rolle spielen sollte in unserem Leben, dann war das ein guter Film,’” before himself opining: “So gesehen ist das ein guter Film.”³⁰ Georg Diez’s review in *Der Spiegel* was a little more ambiguous. He criticised yet another film on the unquestioned suffering of the Germans, again featuring Furtwängler. Diez commented: “‘Schicksalsjahre’ war wieder mal eine geschichtspolitische Achterbahnfahrt, wie das ja in schöner Regelmäßigkeit vorkommt, seit wir wieder fröhliche Patrioten sind. Und die Leute vom ZDF werden schon wissen, warum sie für so einen Job ausgerechnet Maria Furtwängler wählen.”³¹ Diez further noticed a theme recurrent in teamWorx’s Event Movies, suggested by the name change from Heye’s original memoirs *Vom Glück nur ein Schatten* to *Schicksalsjahre*. The term ‘Schicksal’ suggests, just as the use of the disaster movie template does in *Dresden* and *Die Flucht*, that everything which occurs is due to fate and lacks political agents. This is reinforced by the film’s focus on individuals and on victims. As discussed above, ignoring the perpetrators of the crimes depicted can result in an ahistoricism and a failure to undertake a coming-to-terms with the past.³² Despite the slight change in historical focus, *Schicksalsjahre* can be understood as very similar to teamWorx’s previous Event Movies on the National Socialist past.

As *Schicksalsjahre* perhaps suggests, teamWorx’s future directions, as revealed by Hofmann, will involve a move away from the National Socialist past. This includes a focus on other histories, such as the GDR – indeed a filming of Uwe Tellkamp’s bestselling novel *Der Turm* is in the works – and on more modern German stories, in the mould of 2008’s *Willkommen zuhause*, dealing with a German soldier’s return from Afghanistan.³³ teamWorx has also branched out into other fields, such as cinema releases, including *Dschungelkind* and the award-winning *Das Lied in mir*, as well as advertising films and other areas of film and television production. Nevertheless, despite Hofmann’s earlier comments, teamWorx is continuing to produce films dealing with the National Socialist past, including a planned filming of Julia Franck’s bestseller *Die Mittagshfrau*, an upcoming film on Rommel and Hofmann’s epic *Unsere Mütter*,

²⁹ Cited in Christopher Keil, ‘Kein schlechter Klang’, in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 13 February 2011.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Georg Diez, ‘Die neue deutsche Leidensfrau’, in *Spiegel Online*, 17 February 2011, <http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/tv/0,1518,745702,00.html>.

³² See Section 3.2.3 for more on *Dresden* and *Die Flucht* as disaster movies.

³³ See Interview with Nico Hofmann, lines 604-5.

Unsere Väter, which, given the title's echoes of Hofmann's earlier work, *Land der Väter, Land der Söhne*, suggests another earnest appraisal of the National Socialist legacy and its continued importance in present-day Germany.³⁴ Indeed, this new batch of films does perhaps point towards a progressive normalisation, appearing to deal with the past much more freely than previously, yet still including nuanced debates of the history portrayed.

To answer many of the remaining questions and to resolve some of the apparent inconsistencies or paradoxes related to teamWorx's Event Movies on the National Socialist past, it will be necessary to invoke the concept of consensus, which is directly influenced by this process of normalisation. This is a very different form of consensus to the one criticised by Eric Rentschler in his essay on post-wall German cinema,³⁵ yet teamWorx similarly hopes to please as many people as possible. This is seen firstly in teamWorx's approach to the supposed binary opposition of 'Qualität und Quote'.³⁶ There is a constant suggestion in the German press that a programme which attracts viewers cannot be considered art or even quality programming, which perhaps reveals nothing as much as a general mistrust of mass culture. However, teamWorx has constantly claimed that programme quality and ratings are interrelated and that one cannot function without the other: such a large number of viewers tune in precisely because of the quality of its productions; the two are inseparable. This can be seen in the way the Event Movies receive enviable, record-breaking viewing figures as well as domestic and international film awards and also from Hofmann's own admissions on the subjects: "Quote und Qualität müssen sich also nicht ausschließen,"³⁷ he claims. This is indeed reinforced by several commentators, for example Bernhard Schlink: "[Hofmann] insistiert auf der Freiheit, mal auf Quote und mal auf Kunst zu setzen und mal mit Kunst Quote zu machen."³⁸ Similarly, teamWorx breaks down the supposed opposition between history and melodrama. The marrying of these two schools has been criticised in general by many commentators ever since *Holocaust* was the first programme to do so. Through the melodramatic style, which provides the audience with an emotional involvement to an individual within a wider historical narrative, teamWorx provides a consensus between history and melodrama.

³⁴ See *Ibid.*, lines 116-20 & 434-45.

³⁵ See Rentschler, 'Cinema of Consensus', pp. 260-77.

³⁶ See Section 1.3.5 for more on this.

³⁷ Floreck, 'Die Leute wollen wieder mehr Gefühl'.

³⁸ Schlink, 'Laudatio für Nico Hofmann'.

The perfect example of this consensus can be seen in the role of women in teamWorx's productions. In the majority of Event Movies (not only those discussed in this thesis), women take centre stage; they are the central protagonists and are the objects of identification for the (majority female) audience. This corresponds to the genre of melodrama, providing a point for emotional identification, yet also corresponds to the historical record: during the war men would have been absent and women were responsible for much of the day-to-day running of households. The use of women in this way suggests a de-politicisation of the past: allowing the film to explore personal and individual issues without some of the stigma associated with male characters (who would have been soldiers, prisoners or resistance fighters – rarely would they be afforded the same de-ideologised status as women). As well as conforming to a general trend in the personalisation and individualisation of history, with regards to the Nazi past, depicting one woman's struggle at the centre of an historical maelstrom increases viewer identification and empathy with the suffering of the individual. Through its use of women teamWorx creates a consensus between many supposedly contrary aspects of memory, history and entertainment.

In understanding the role played by consensus in German 'Histotainment,' one must ask how else historical television in present-day Germany should look, and what teamWorx's critics would see it replaced by. There seems to be no other format which could attract such a large number of viewers and therefore create and communicate historical debates to such a large and varied audience. As argued above, many of the populist devices in the films aid an understanding and coming-to-terms with this past. Furthermore, many critics underestimate present-day audiences, who are (for the most part) intelligent enough to be able to distinguish the historically factual and the fictional elements. As Rentschler lamented, the trend of film funding in post-unification Germany has moved away from independent, critically-acclaimed yet viewer-ignored features.³⁹ With television funding bodies favouring big returns on their investments, film and television productions which really make an impact on the consciousness of society and which shape the way German viewers understand the National Socialist past need to use devices of popular cinema; they need to be an 'Event.'

Finally, teamWorx's Event Movies can be seen as a consensus between an international style and a specifically German subject. By using Hollywood devices and a global aesthetic the Event Movies can secure a wide audience at home and internationally. As well as this they deal with specific German debates, not seen in

³⁹ See Rentschler, 'Cinema of Consensus', p. 267.

American films, and therefore are able to show the rest of the world that Germany is successfully coming to terms with its past. According to Schlink these Event Movies “vermitteln im Ausland ein anderes, reicheres Bild von Deutschland.”⁴⁰ Similarly, teamWorx creates a consensus between using history to attract viewers and using methods of mass culture in order to come to terms with this history. There is evidence on both sides of the argument: that teamWorx discovered history by accident and is merely riding the current memory wave, and conversely that the National Socialist past is something of great importance to Hofmann and that his Event Movies have the specific aim of coming to terms with the past.⁴¹ The two, however, are inseparable in contemporary Germany’s media landscape: debate is created and influenced by mass culture and large audiences and general public interest are attracted by the contributions these Event Movies make to taboo-breaking debates and by their status as ‘Events.’ It is indeed an ouroboros, an infinite feedback loop.

The consensus created by teamWorx between numerous supposed dichotomies – between history and melodrama, quality and ratings, Germany and Hollywood – is made possible because of the current state of normalisation of the National Socialist past. Although teamWorx may be the most visible exponent, the standard-bearer of this consensus memory wave, many of the devices used – such as the personalisation, individualisation and emotionalisation of the past, and the mixing of history and entertainment which creates this consensus – are results of outside forces: the progressive memory politics existing in Germany, combined with the effects of a generational shift. teamWorx’s Event Movies simultaneously influence and are influenced by a progressive step towards normalisation, which should perhaps better be thought of as a process rather than an ultimate goal, relating to Adorno’s recommended ‘Aufarbeitung’ of the past, which is fluid, rather than its ‘Bewältigung,’ which is not. As the planned films suggest, the Nazi past and memory of it will not die away, but will be revived and interpreted differently by each successive generation.

⁴⁰ Schlink, ‘Laudatio für Nico Hofmann’.

⁴¹ Hofmann’s own interest in his personal connection to the Nazi past was explored in his early films, such as *Land der Väter*, *Land der Söhne*.

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Filmography

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1 **Appendix 1: Interview with Nico Hofmann**¹

2

3 **Andrew Wormald:** Können Sie mir ein bisschen über die Struktur der Firma
4 teamWorx sagen? Damit meine ich, wer entscheidet einen Film über ein bestimmtes
5 Thema zu machen.

6 **Nico Hofmann:** Die sind zwei Fragen. Die Struktur besteht mittlerweile aus über 40
7 Mitarbeitern und fünf Produzenten, die eigentlich eigenverantwortliche Units betreiben,
8 dass heisst jeder hat seine eigene Unit mit seinen Mitarbeitern und entscheidet innerhalb
9 der Unit eigentlich auch alleine was er macht. Und es gibt zwei mal im Jahr eine große
10 Sitzung mit allen Mitarbeitern, wo wir alle Stoffe besprechen und bei diesen
11 Mitarbeiter-Meetings machen wir so eine Art von Stoffeausrichtung, also wir machen
12 eine Diskussion, wo gehen Stoffe die nächsten zwei, drei Jahre hin, was ist der Zeitgeist
13 im Moment, welche Themen sind wichtig und dann wird quasi untereinander
14 abgeglichen, wer welche Themen bearbeitet. Es ist sehr journalistisch, eigentlich ein
15 sehr journalistisches Vorgehen. Und die Stoffe, die du jetzt genommen hast für deine
16 Dissertation, die sind ja alles Filme aus den letzten 10 Jahren, die liegen ja teilweise vier
17 Jahre zurück, teilweise sechs Jahre zurück, sehr unterschiedliche Abstände, also ich
18 würde mal sagen, wir haben jetzt im Moment auch wieder eine völlig andere Situation
19 als vor fünf Jahren und interessant war damals, dass wir in der Tat ganz bewusst Stoffe
20 aus der Zeit von Nationalsozialismus herausgenommen haben - und zwar genau ist es
21 interessant für die du genommen hast - weil Stauffenberg war interessant weil es eine
22 Widerstandsgeschichte war, Die Flucht und Dresden waren interessant, weil es beides
23 für Deutschland nationale Traumathemen waren, es waren Mythosthemen, die in jeder
24 Familie Thema waren, über die aber nie jemand einen Film gemacht hat, über die nie
25 jemand gesprochen hatte. Das gilt für die Bombardierung von Dresden genauso wie für
26 die Flucht, es waren Themen, die du in jeder deutschen Familie von den Großeltern
27 gekannt hast aber es gab keinen Film dazu. Und Nicht alle waren Mörder war mir
28 wichtig weil er im Grund genommen, jüdisches Leben in Deutschland untersucht und
29 mir wichtig war in den ganzen Filmen, die ich gemacht habe, ein Film zu haben, der
30 ganz stark auf das jüdische Thema auch abzielt. So sind die entstanden und die sind
31 eigentlich sehr stark durch mich selbst entstanden, weil ich auf Grund meiner eigenen
32 Geschichte und Familienbiografie eine starke Affinität habe zu Zeitgeschichte, ich habe
33 es immer interessiert und die Vorschläge die da entstanden sind, die kamen sehr stark
34 auch durch mich.

35 **AW:** Darf ich denn auch fragen, wie die Filmen finanziert werden?

36 **NH:** Die Filme sind eigentlich alle gleich finanziert und zwar durch einen großen
37 Grundbetrag aus den Sendern, also ich würde mal sagen, mindestens 60% ist
38 Finanzierung aus dem Sender, mindestens 60% bis zu 70%, und 30% sind etwa
39 Weltvertrieb und Fernsehförderung. Es variiert je nach Film aber im Grund genommen
40 so eine Relation stimmt so für die Filme.

¹ NB: This is not a linguistic transcription. False starts, repetitions and fillers have been deleted for ease of comprehension. The interviewer's questions have similarly been altered for clarity and brevity.

41 **AW:** Also, das meisten Geld kommt von den Sendern.

42 **NH:** Kommt vom Sender. Wenn du jetzt einen Film nimmst wie Die Flucht, da
43 kommen etwa 6 Millionen vom Sender, denn 9 Millionen gekostet, 6 Millionen
44 kommen vom Sender, 3 Millionen kommen aus Weltbetrieb und Förderung. Und die
45 Relation stimmt in etwa für die anderen auch.

46 **AW:** Ich komme zu diesem Begriff von 'Kino fürs Fernsehen.' Können Sie mir diesen
47 Begriff genauer definieren? Und wie wichtig ist es für Sie dass die Filme im Fernsehen
48 statt im Kino ausgestrahlt werden?

49 **NH:** Also Kino fürs Fernsehen hat damit zu tun, dass du mit einem gewissen Aufwand
50 drehst, dass du eine gewisse... bei der Kamera, bei der Ausstattung, dass du im Grunde
51 genommen einen selben Aufwand betreibst, wie du ihn auch für einen Kinofilm
52 betreiben würdest. Und das sieht man den Filmen auch an, im Unterschied zu normalen
53 Fernsehspielen sind sie extrem aufwändig produziert. Das ist deshalb auch geschehen
54 einmal liegt es den Themen nah, weil du kannst einen Film wie Dresden... Wenn du 90-
55 Minuten Bombennacht inszeniert willst, kannst du nicht billig inszenieren. Wenn das
56 eine Wahrhaftigkeit haben soll, dann musst du das wie eine bestimmte Dimension auch
57 produzieren. Und der zweite Punkt ist ganz wichtig, dass die Filme auf dem
58 Weltvertrieb nur funktionieren, in einem internationalen Markt nur funktionieren, wenn
59 sie dieses Cineastische, dieses Kinohafte haben, also dieses Kinohafte hat unheimlich
60 viel zu tun mit der Gesamtverwertung der Film im Ausland, der Film ist zum Beispiel,
61 wie Dresden, in ganz Europa gelaufen auch, das sind überall Primetime in Spanien, ich
62 glaub sogar in England sind sie gelaufen.

63 **AW:** Das ist noch eine Frage, vielleicht haben Sie sie schon geantwortet, warum
64 glauben Sie, dass teamWorxs Fernsehfilme so international beliebt sind? Im Vergleich
65 mit anderen deutschen Fernsehfilmen zum Beispiel. Dresden wurde zu mehr als 90
66 Länder verkauft und mehrere Event Movies haben internationale Fernsehfilmpreisen
67 gewonnen.

68 **NH:** Dass es national funktioniert, hängt damit zusammen, dass es halt Themen sind,
69 die jahrelang eigentlich in Familien existieren, auch in Gesprächen mit
70 Familienmitgliedern existieren, es gibt eigentlich keinen Film dazu, es ist eigentlich
71 verrückt, dass aus den letzten 30 Jahren keinen einzigen Film zum Thema Dresden...,
72 es gab einfach keinen, es gab auch zu Stauffenberg... der letzte Film über Stauffenberg
73 aus Deutschland, der war vor über 30 Jahren, das war irgendwann in den 50er Jahren. Es
74 ist verrückt, dass die Filme auch keiner gemacht hat. Ich habe mich manchmal oft
75 gefragt, warum außer mir niemand auf die Idee kam, Stauffenberg zu machen,
76 beispielsweise. Aber, dass die Themen so wichtig waren, hat zu tun mit einer deutschen
77 Identitätssuche der letzten 10 Jahre, weil die Deutschen haben die letzte 10 Jahre
78 angefangen, sich sehr, sehr viel stärker mit ihrer eigenen Identität zu beschäftigen. Sie
79 haben sich viel offener mit ihrer eigenen Geschichte beschäftigt. Also, da hat sich ein
80 anderes Nationalitätsgefühl, ein anderes nationales Identitätsgefühl bei den Deutschen
81 eingestellt, ohne dass es revanchistisch ist, ohne dass es irgendwie ein falscher
82 Nationalstolz wird und deutsche Identität war ja immer die Jahrzehnte davor eine sehr

83 gebrochene, sehr ambivalente Angelegenheit und es gibt, auch durch die jüngere
84 Generation, es gibt auch ein Bedürfnis nach sowas wie deutsche Identität und es hat
85 auch damit dann den Wunsch freigesetzt zu sagen, man will sich auch mit deutscher
86 Geschichte beschäftigen und will auch die Filme dann sehen. Das war wie eine Art von,
87 ich würde mal sagen, so eine nationale Psychoanalyse. Ich kann mir anders nicht
88 erklären bei Dresden und bei Der Flucht haben wir eine Publikumsuntersuchung
89 gemacht über die Sender, wo ganz klar wird, dass teilweise Familien von den
90 Enkelkindern über die Eltern über die Großeltern, sie haben teilweise zu dritt über drei
91 Generationen vorm Fernseher gesessen. Über drei Generationen über deutsche
92 Geschichte geredet plötzlich und sowas ist nur möglich, wenn du quasi in den Familien
93 das Thema seit Jahrzehnten drin hast und niemand, niemand kommt mit dem Thema
94 eigentlich. Und die Filme waren wie so eine Art von Ventil, für nationale Debatten und
95 anders ist nicht erklärbar warum 12, 13 Millionen Leute das anschauen. Das ist anders
96 nicht erklärbar, die Zuschauerzahl ist nur erklärbar... also diese gigantische
97 Zuschauerzahl, gerade bei Dresden und bei Flucht, Flucht und Vertreibung, ist nur
98 erklärbar, weil sowohl Dresden als auch die Flucht, Flucht und Vertreibung in
99 Deutschland große, große Tabuthemen waren, große, nationale Mythosthemen waren,
100 die eben seit Jahren, wie gesagt, nicht bearbeitet worden sind. Also emotional nicht
101 abgearbeitet worden sind.

102 **AW:** Und dann...

103 **NH:** Ich werde auch sagen, dass die Zeit ändert sich aber auch, also du könntest zum
104 Beispiel im Moment... du kannst es nicht ewig weitermachen. Also ich sehe im
105 Moment dieses Interesse an diesen ganzen Geschichtsstoffen runtergehen, das ist nicht
106 auf der Intensität mal wie vor 5 Jahren. Wir haben im Moment mit ganz anderen Sachen
107 Erfolg, wir hatten jetzt einen großen Erfolg, ja mit fast 9 Millionen Zuschauer mit
108 einem Film über Scientology, also da gucken plötzlich 9 Millionen Leute Scientology,
109 der Film ist auch in die ganze Welt verkauft, also haben wir jetzt eben auf der MIF in
110 Cannes in ganz viele Länder verkauft. Der Zeitgeist ändert sich auch, du kannst nicht
111 dein Leben lang deutsche Geschichte machen. Das hat sich jetzt zu tun mit einem
112 Momentum dieser letzten fünf, sechs, sieben Jahre in Deutschland.

113 **AW:** Ich wollte Ihnen eigentlich fragen, ich habe ein sehr interessantes Zitat gelesen in
114 einem Interview im Spiegel, von 2004: "Irgendwann wird das Thema 'Drittes Reich'
115 ausgereizt sein. Ich schätze etwa in vier bis fünf Jahren."...

116 **NH:** Das stimmt ja, so ist es auch. Es ist nicht ausgereizt, aber es ist nicht mehr die
117 Intensität dahinter wie vor fünf Jahren. Also, ich mache jetzt noch einen großen Film
118 Unsere Mütter, Unsere Väter, wo ich quasi fünf Lebensläufe von jungen Menschen
119 zwischen 1936 und 1946 zeige, aber das ist jetzt wirklich, so mein letzter Kraftakt. Ich
120 werde danach... ich mache den Film und ich mache Die Mittagsfrau von der Julia
121 Franck, was ein Bestseller ist, der hat sich enorm verkauft im Buchhandel. Die sind die
122 beiden einzigen Filmen, die ich im Moment noch mache, die ins Dritte Reich irgendwie
123 reinrühren.

124 **AW:** Warum ist das so, glauben Sie? Ist es so, dass jetzt alles behandelt ist? Ist das
125 Tabu von Dresden und Stauffenberg endlich gebrochen und aufgelöst? Oder haben die
126 Zuschauer eigentlich die Schnauze voll?

127 **NH:** Ja, die Schnauze voll würde ich nicht sagen. Es ist... Ich glaube es ist... Das ist...
128 Das mag für dich absurd klingen aber es hat auch zu tun mit Sachen wie
129 Fußballweltmeisterschaft in Deutschland, mit Nationalstolz, also die Deutschen haben
130 unheimlich lange gebraucht, um ihre eigene nationale Identität überhaupt anzunehmen,
131 und auch überhaupt mit dem Dritten Reich umzugehen, und sich nicht nur permanent
132 schuldig zu fühlen. Das hat Generationen gebraucht, weißt du, also die Generation
133 meiner Eltern war noch in einem totalen Schuldgefühl, zurecht ja?, also Schuldgefühl
134 gegenüber Drittem Reich, Hitler, Judenvernichtung, das ist ein nationales Trauma, was
135 über Generationen in Deutschland weitergegeben worden ist. Da waren viele von diesen
136 Filmen früher, vor 20 Jahren, unheimlich didaktisch, sehr hölzern, sehr abstrakt, nicht
137 emotional, also einer der ersten Riesenerfolge war dann die amerikanische Holocaust
138 Serie und das ist auch schon wieder fast 25 Jahre her und die war deshalb erfolgreich,
139 weil sie das Thema... sie war ja heftig umstritten in der Kritik aber hat gigantische
140 Einschaltquote gehabt, weil sie emotional war, weil sie hochgradig emotional war und
141 durch diese Emotion eine nationale Debatte möglich gemacht hat und das ist bei Der
142 Flucht und das ist bei Dresden genauso gelungen. Und es gibt nicht so viel Themen, die
143 du ständig dann noch mal.. noch mal... es gibt nicht so viel nationale Themen, und ich
144 würde mal sagen die Deutschen sind im Moment auch in ihrer Selbstfindung, also wenn
145 du jetzt eine Stadt wie Berlin nimmst, die Weltoffenheit, die Berlin jetzt eigentlich in
146 den letzten fünf, sechs, sieben Jahren entwickelt hat, es ist eine polyglotte Stadt, es ist
147 keine deutsche Stadt mehr, es gibt unheimlich viel Amerikaner, Engländer, Italiener, so
148 wie du... Und es ist ja gut so, weisst du, es ist ein bisschen wie... ich hab in New York
149 gelebt vor 20 Jahren, es ist ein bisschen wie New York vor 20 Jahren. Ich finde es sehr
150 wohltuend, ich begrüße es, wenn Deutschland sich öffnet und...

151 **AW:** Aber würden Sie sagen dass, okay, die Themen sind jetzt behandelt und die
152 Deutschen können stolz sein. Punkt. Oder würden Sie mehr sagen, dass die Filme
153 geholfen haben diese Themen in die Diskussion zu bringen.

154 **NH:** Ja, Zweiteres würde ich sagen. Das Erste nicht, stolz sind die Deutschen lang noch
155 nicht. Nee, Zweiteres. Es hat eine Diskussion möglich gemacht und wir sind nach wie
156 vor in einem Prozess, der ist also nicht abgeschlossen. Wir haben übrigens jetzt auch
157 ganz anderes Thema, noch nämlich die Wiedervereinigung und die Geschichte der DDR
158 und der Ostdeutschen, das ist im Moment genauso interessant, auch für viele aus den
159 Westen, die haben keine Ahnung wie das Leben in der DDR damals abgelaufen ist.

160 **AW:** Es gibt sowieso Erinnerungswellen. Glauben Sie, dass teamWorx für diese
161 Erinnerungswellen verantwortlich sind, oder reagieren sie einfach, oder vielleicht ein
162 bisschen von beiden?

163 **NH:** Nein, wir sind schon verantwortlich, weil wir ja die Welle mit angestoßen [haben].
164 Wir haben sie nicht danach gemacht, wir waren aktive Treiber. Aber... die gleiche
165 Sachen passieren, interessanterweise etwa mit der Verzögerung von den Jahren dann

166 auch auf dem Buchmarkt beispielsweise, also zum Beispiel haben die Filme dann auch
167 eine ganze Welle von... also im Literaturbereich ist genau dasselbe dann zwei, drei
168 Jahre später passiert, deswegen sind jüngere Autoren... ich nehme jetzt Julia Franck,
169 Die Mittagsfrau, was ein Bestseller war, über ein Millionen mal verkauft. Es ist auch die
170 Geschichte ihrer Familie im Dritten Reich. Also, der Erfolg von dem Buch ist nicht
171 erklärbar, ohne dass man sagt, ja, auch das Buch hat dann im Bereich, ja des
172 Frauenbilds, was war das Frauenbild im Dritten Reich, auch noch mal anscheinend, eine
173 Millionen Leserschaft begeistert. Und deshalb sind wir mitten in der Debatte noch drin,
174 wir sind überhaupt nicht abgeschlossen damit. Aber diese große Impulse das
175 anzuschieben, das ist, glaube ich, passiert.

176 **AW:** Lassen uns zurück zu diesem Begriff von Emotionalität kommen. Also, die Event
177 Movies, die erzählen sehr persönliche Geschichten, sehr emotionale Geschichten,
178 obwohl sie sich im breiteren Kontext der 'Geschichte,' diese bestimmte Zeitperiode,
179 spielen. Wie schaffen Sie dann einen Ausgleich zwischen dem Verlangen eine
180 ergreifende/griffige? persönliche Geschichte zu erzählen und der Geschichtsperiode
181 darzustellen.

182 **NH:** Eben. Ich glaube, es geht überhaupt nur über Emotionalisierung, also wenn du
183 keine Emotionalisierung... es wurde ja ständig vorgeworfen, es wird immer gesagt, es
184 ist die gleiche Figurenkonstellation, was so gar nicht stimmt übrigens, es wird immer
185 gesagt, es ist zu verkitscht, es ist zu emotional, aber der Erfolg, die riesigen
186 Zuschauermengen kommen natürlich auch über die Emotionalisierung. Je trockener, je
187 unemotionaler du die Filme machst, desto weniger Zuschauer hast du, das ist einfach so.
188 Und der Ansatz muss immer sein, dass du eine persönliche Geschichte möglichst
189 recherchiert, also sowohl in Dresden, als auch vor allem in Der Flucht, also in Der
190 Flucht ist jede Rolle, jede Figur die da gespielt wird ist eine recherchierte originale
191 Biografie von Leuten die es gibt, oder es sind zwei, drei Biografien, die in einer Figur
192 zusammengearbeitet sind, gebaut sind, also das sind keine erfundene Figuren, das sind
193 sehr viel literarische Vorarbeiten gemacht worden, wo also viele Elemente aus der
194 Vorarbeit in Figuren reingeschrieben worden ist, das sind teilweise drei, vier
195 Originalfiguren gewesen, die wir zusammen recherchiert haben und in einer Figur
196 dramatisiert haben, also das sind keine erfundenen Figuren. Der Reiz liegt im Grunden
197 darin, diese Figuren, Geschichte so zu bauen, dass du dann halt wirklich auf die großen
198 Bildmomente und auf die großen epochalen Bilder dann auch kommst. In Der Flucht
199 sind das halt eben dann die Bilder von einem riesigen Flüchtlingstrecks, die über das Eis
200 ziehen. Oder in Dresden ist es dann der zweite Teil, wo du die Bombardierung eben dann
201 45-Minutenlang auch siehst und spürst. Die ganzen Geschichten sind so aufgebaut, dass
202 sie sich dann quasi in das eigene historische Drama reinführt und du das Drama da
203 miterlebst über die Figuren, so sind die Filme alle gebaut.

204 **AW:** Wie wichtig ist es dann für die historischen Event Movies, dass sie authentisch
205 wirken?

206 **NH:** Das ist extrem wichtig, also die Genauigkeit, auch bei Dresden im zweiten Teil,
207 wo du die Bombardierung zeigst, auch diese Luftschutzkeller unten zeigst, dass muss
208 alles im Detail stimmen und wir haben ja teilweise zwanzig, dreißig Berater bei diesen

209 Filmen, bei Dresden waren über dreißig Menschen aus Dresden, die uns quasi ihre
210 eigene Lebensgeschichte erzählt haben, diese Bombengeschichte erzählt haben. Und
211 denen haben wir den Film auch vorgeführt, also während des Drehs und auch im
212 Schneiderraum. Wir haben viele Dinge auch verändert bis dann wirklich auch dreißig
213 Leute, die das erlebt haben, sagen, ja, das stimmt, so war's. Und so kann man das doch
214 zeigen. Also, die Verantwortung, dass es authentisch ist und das es in sich stimmt, die
215 ist enorm groß. Es muss einfach authentisch stimmen. Du kannst es nicht erfinden. Das
216 geht auch für Die Flucht, das muss an jedem Detail, ob es für die Ausstattung ist, alles,
217 das ist auch das ,was Geld kostet, es muss einfach genau stimmen._Wir geben uns
218 einfach extrem Mühe.

219 **AW:** Zu einem Thema zu kommen, und das hat zu tun mit dem Einfluss von
220 Hollywood und von US-amerikanischen Fernsehen. Wie wird Hollywood von
221 teamWorx betrachtet und was für einen Einfluss hat Hollywood Movies auf die Movies,
222 die teamWorx macht.

223 **NH:** Hollywood ist zu allgemein, das ist... das hat einen Einfluss aber keinen Einfluss
224 auf mich wie..., ich könnte jetzt Filme sagen, die ich sehr mag, die mich vielleicht in
225 meinem Leben beeinflusst haben, das hat keinen Einfluss... Was einen Einfluss hat, sind
226 Arbeiten, die in Amerika gerade bei HBO beispielsweise entstanden sind, ich nehme mal
227 sowas wie jetzt eine Serie wie Pacific, die Spielberg gemacht hat, oder Band of Brothers
228 ist das beste Beispiel, so eine Erfindung wie Band of Brothers, wo du dann wirklich
229 sagst, okay, du hast eine Erzählhaltung wo du dich quasi einer ganzen Generation von
230 Kriegsveteranen nochmal widmest. Und auch sehr authentisch widmest also in der Art
231 und Weise wie das gedreht ist, also mit sehr viel Handkameras, sehr auf Authentizität
232 hin gedreht, das ist so... zum Beispiel Band of Brothers hat mich sehr beeinflusst in der
233 Modernität, in der Authentizität wo [man] mit historischen Stoffen umgehen kann, wie
234 modern man damit umgehen kann, also das würde ich sagen, sind Einflüsse, ja? Wobei
235 das fast zeitgleich war mit Dresden war, also das hat sich fast... war fast parallel die
236 Entwicklung der Sachen, es geht eher um eine Ästhetik , die ich denn manchmal da
237 entdeckte. Und was durchaus interessiert an Amerika, mich interessiert immer wieder,
238 ich denke an sowas wie The Hurt Locker... im Moment... ein sehr direkte authentische
239 Kamera, also wie Kamera Authentizität herstellen, das ist für mich ein ganz zentrales
240 Thema, weil mir geht's über eine gewisse Lebendigkeit... wir haben ein riesiges Projekt
241 gemacht, Die Hindenburg für RTL, also das um den... Zeppelin-Absturz geht, in
242 Lakehurst, der ist unglaublich modern gemacht der Film, und sehr sehr authentisch
243 gemacht, und es interessiert mich, mit welchen Mitteln, man im Moment Authentizität
244 hinbekommt, das sind Einflüsse aus Hollywood ganz klar, wo ich sagen würde, die
245 gefallen mir.

246 **AW:** The Hurt Locker, zum Beispiel, das würde ich mehr als 'independent'
247 amerikanisches Kino beschreiben.

248 **NH:** Ja, du, von den anderen Dingen kann ich gar nichts...., was soll ich von Avatar
249 lernen? Ich kann Avatar nicht umsetzen. Nein, mich interessiert sehr das independent
250 Kino, mich interessiert die Ästhetik, ich fand The Hurt Locker sehr interessant wie...
251 wie persönlich sie, Kathryn Bigelow, wie persönlich sie zu dem Drama da kommt. Wie

252 stark sie emotionalisiert durch über einen sehr authentischen dokumentarischen Kamera,
253 das fand ich sehr interessant an dem Film.

254 **AW:** Es gibt diese Mischung in den TV-Event Movies, in dem sie – insofern ich das
255 sehe/einschätzen kann – gleichzeitig aufklären und unterhalten wollen. Für viele
256 Kritiker schließen diese beide Standpunkte gleichzeitig aus. Wie funktioniert das in den
257 teamWorx Filmen?

258 **NH:** Es geht, man sieht ja das es geht. Andernfalls würden sie nicht das Publikum
259 erreichen. Klar, für viele Kritiker ist es irgendwie schwierig oder problematisch, wobei,
260 viele Kritiker auch, das muss man auch mal ganz klar dazu sagen, viele Kritiker über
261 Dresden beispielsweise haben am Anfang unheimlich positiv darüber geschrieben, das
262 kann man richtig nachprüfen. Dann, als es ein Riesenerfolg war, fanden sie es dann
263 irgendwie negativ. Das ist wirklich wahr. Das beste Beispiel ist die FAZ, die FAZ hat
264 drei, vier mal... auch die FAZ am Sonntag hat drei, vier mal riesig groß, ganzseitig,
265 ganzseitig, es gab viermal eine ganze Seite zu Dresden und dann jetzt plötzlich vor
266 einem Jahr oder so, oder jetzt wo auch Die Grenze lief von mir, kamen dann mega-
267 negative Äußerungen über Dresden, klar von dem Journalisten, der vor 5 Jahren das als
268 den besten Film gewürdigt hat. Ich kann das nicht ernst nehmen. Du musst mal halt eine
269 Haltung einnehmen. Mich hatte das noch nie interessiert, ich kann's nur so machen, wie
270 ich der Meinung bin, dass es stimmt, dass es authentisch ist, auch der Scientology Film,
271 in der FAZ, in der Sonntagszeitung gabs so eine beschissene Kritik und dann gab's noch
272 9 Millionen Zuschauer, also der Film war wichtig, und das hat ein enormes politisches
273 Feedback auch gehabt, der Film. Ich kann mich nur auf meinen eigenen Geschmack
274 verlassen. Für viele Kritiker ist es schwierig, ich muss das halt dazusagen, dass vieles,
275 was deutsche Kritiker jahrelang toll fanden, hat kein Mensch angeschaut und hat beim
276 Publikum keinerlei Wirkung erzeugt, und das muss ich dazusagen. Der erste Film, der
277 das mal aufgezeigt hat, war Holocaust und Holocaust haben die Kritiker auch gehasst,
278 wie gesagt... die FAZ... bis auf Joachim Fest, der damals eine sehr kluge Betrachtung
279 geschrieben hat über die Emotionalisierung von Geschichte, aber alle anderen fanden es
280 schrecklich und trotzdem hat es Millionen erreicht.

281 **AW:** Aber es ist immer so, besonders in Deutschland, finde ich, dass es dieses
282 Misstrauen von Populärenkino gibt.

283 **NH:** Das ist so, ja klar. Und das ist auch das Problem...

284 **AW:** Also, für Sie, diese zwei Themen, also... die Aufklärung der Geschichte, die
285 Authentizität der Geschichte und die Emotionalität, die unterhaltsame Qualitäten der
286 Filme, die sind verbunden?

287 **NH:** Ja. Das ist kein Widerspruch.

288 **AW:** Eine allgemeinere Frage, über die TV-Event Movies. Was macht ein teamWorx
289 Fernsehfilm zu einem 'Event'?

290 **NH:** Ein Event gelingt nur, wenn das Thema quasi zwei, drei Tage lang die Leute
291 beschäftigt, also das hat sehr viel zu tun mit Marketing, sehr viel zu tun mit Zeitgeist, es

292 hat sehr viel zu tun, zum richtigen Zeitpunkt mit dem richtigen Stoff da zu sein. Also
293 ein Event ist eigentlich nur was Menschen wirklich zwei, drei Tage lang thematisch
294 beschäftigt. Sonst ist es kein Event. Man muss auch unterscheiden, ob man sagt okay,
295 man hat einen Film, der ist mit sehr viel Geld gemacht und sehr aufwändig gemacht, das
296 heißt nicht, dass es ein Event ist. Ein Event wird es erst eigentlich durch die öffentliche
297 Aufmerksamkeit, durch das Zuschauerinteresse und durch die nationale Debatte, die
298 man auslöst. Sowas wie Scientology, der Scientology Film war ein Event, der war als
299 Event geplant, er war auch entsprechend in der Presse... du merkst auch wenn die
300 Pressearbeit auch dann sehr massiv ansteigt und alle darüber schreiben, also über
301 Scientology habe unheimlich viel geschrieben, die Zeitungen waren voll. Und dann
302 hat's plötzlich 9 Millionen Zuschauer und dann hast du ein Thema massiv gesetzt, und
303 es hat auch politische Auswirkung gehabt, im Landtag und so weiter, also das ist dann
304 schon ein Event, weil du kannst auf die Straße gehen und Leute haben den Film
305 gesehen. Das klingt so komisch, aber es ist so. Das ist auch das Gute bei teamWorx,
306 muss ich einfach mal sagen, du kannst Leute auf der Straße fragen, du kannst ihnen
307 fünf, sechs Titeln nennen und dann haben sie doch drei von diesen Filmen noch im
308 Kopf. Wenn sie über anderen Fernsehspiele, da würden sie wieder sagen, sie haben
309 damals Staufenberg gesehen, sie haben Die Flucht gesehen, die meisten haben ja Die
310 Flucht gesehen und sie haben Dresden gesehen und sie haben Scientology... du
311 kannst... ich war gestern essen und dann kamen zwei Leute, die haben Scientology
312 geguckt, du kannst am Tisch fragen und von 10 Leuten fünf haben es geguckt. Das
313 meine ich mit Event. Du musst ein Thema besetzt halten.

314 **AW:** Aber es ist ein bisschen komisch zu sagen, dass ein Event ist das, was die Leute
315 beschäftigt und dann zu sagen, dass irgendeine Produktion ist als Event geplant.

316 **NH:** Das ist immer eine Planung. Im besten Fall geht's dann auf. Es klappt ja nicht
317 immer. Jetzt bei einem Film wie Die Grenze hat es nicht funktioniert. Da war ich mir
318 ganz sicher, dass es ein super Thema ist und das hat 4,5 Millionen Zuschauer das ist
319 völlig indiskutabel, das ist kein Erfolg. Das ist gerade interessant zu sehen, dass Die
320 Grenze ging völlig den Bach runter, da hatte ich gehofft das wurde acht, neun Millionen
321 Zuschauer schauen und dass es auch wieder eine riesige Diskussion entfacht über
322 deutsche Wiedervereinigung... der Film ist auch übrigens sehr aktuell, also wenn man
323 den anschaut, also was in Griechenland jetzt passiert ist und so weiter eigentlich in dem
324 Film alles drin aber die Leute wollten nicht anschauen. Wahrscheinlich weil es zu nah
325 ist. Aber in der Tat, du planst es schon du planst es mit allen Marketing Maßnahmen,
326 planst du es zum Event zu schieben. Das ist mit einer riesigen Kampagne auch begleitet,
327 Dresden auch und Die Flucht auch. Und manchmal hast du Glück und es funktioniert,
328 manchmal funktioniert es nicht.

329 **AW:** Wie Sie das sehen. sind teamWorxs Event Movies etwas Neues, sind Sie ein
330 Bahnbrecher in dieser Hinsicht? Oder sind sie mehr in der reichen Tradition der
331 deutschen Fernsehfilm?

332 **NH:** Das ist es, glaub ich nicht, weil in der Stückzahl auch in der Massivität, auch mit
333 dem Erfolg, gab's das nicht in der Verbindung mit historischen Themen, also gab's
334 vielleicht mal früher mit Leuten wie Dieter Wedel, die dann auch 10, 11 Millionen

335 Zuschauer gemacht haben mit zwei, drei Mehrteilern aber dann doch übrigens mit sehr
336 zeitgenössischen Stücken, also diese Themasetzung mit deutscher Geschichte und
337 Event, das ist sicher was sehr stark von uns jetzt geprägt worden ist. Du musst aber
338 trotzdem die Firma im Moment eigentlich neu ausrichten, du musst auch neue Ideen
339 jetzt entwickeln, wo das entlang geht, weil es wird endlich, also du... ich würde mal
340 sagen, teamWorx war die letzten 10 Jahre sehr dominierend und ich würde auch sagen
341 teamWorx die letzten 10 Jahre gewisse Bereiche im Fernsehmarkt wirklich gesetzt hat
342 oder beeinflusst hat, das würde ich im jeden Fall sagen aber... du musst im Moment,
343 müssen wir wieder eine komplette Veränderung herbeiführen, du musst auch intern hier,
344 du musst eine komplette inhaltliche Neuausrichtung dir überlegen, ich habe die noch
345 nicht ganz, also wir suchen's im Moment auch.

346 **AW:** Die Geschichte... war das eine bewusste Entscheidung über die Geschichte
347 Fernsehfilme zu machen? Die meisten TV Event Movies gehen um historischen
348 Themen.

349 **NH:** Das war am Anfang keine bewusste Entscheidung. Ich glaube es war der Erfolg
350 von dem ersten Film, es war Der Tunnel, so eine Ost/West-Fluchtgeschichte erzählt
351 worden ist, was also quasi der Auftrag dieses ganzen Filmes war. Ich glaube, dass ich
352 da über den Tunnel Blut geleckt habe, das ich wirklich gesehen habe, ok das
353 funktioniert. Das hat sich eigentlich so geöffnet. Aber ich habe das in der Tat, die
354 letzten Jahre, sehr bewusst auch betrieben. Ich habe in der Tat sehr bewusst dann Stoffe
355 gesucht, die historischen Kontext haben, also das war kein Zufall, ich habe mich da
356 schon sehr präzise – sagen wir –wirklich abgearbeitet an deutscher Geschichte, habe
357 dann alle Themen rausgesucht. Das war kein Zufall, aber das es mal losging mit dem
358 Tunnel, das war durchaus ein Zufall und dann hat man gesehen, okay, das ist eine
359 interessante Marktlücke und wenn du alle Filme nimmst, das sind, glaube ich, über 15,
360 16 Eventfilme gewesen, und von den 16 Eventfilmen haben mindestens 10 mit
361 deutscher Geschichte damit zu tun.

362 **AW:** Wenn ich Sie nochmals zitieren darf von einem 2003 Interview, seit dem Tunnel,
363 eigentlich, "teamWorx steht für filmische Vergangenheitsbewältigung." Ich möchte Sie
364 fragen, ob Sie für mich den Begriff Vergangenheitsbewältigung – laut teamWorx –
365 definieren können. Was bedeutet das für die Firma?

366 **NH:** Ja, ein bisschen was wir voran geredet hatten. Das es meines Erachtens große
367 Themen gibt in Deutschland, die jahrelang emotional besetzt waren aber nicht
368 besprochen worden sind, auch nicht in Familien besprochen worden sind. Ich nehme
369 jetzt mal sowas wie Flucht und Vertreibung, in fast jeder deutschen Familie hat einen
370 Fall von Flucht und Vertreibung innerhalb der eigenen Familiengeschichte, teilweise
371 auch sehr schmerzhaft, es sind auch Geschichten dabei von Müttern die vergewaltigt
372 worden sind, auf der Flucht. Also das sind ganz viele Tabuthemen in den Familien. Und
373 das dann zu zeigen und darüber zu reden, das meine ich mit
374 Vergangenheitsbewältigung, das ist ein bisschen wie filmische Psychoanalyse, dass du
375 anhand von der filmischen Figurenkonstellation eine Emotionalisierung dazu kommst,
376 dass Leute einen Film anschauen und sich selbst öffnen, und in der Lage sind,
377 emotional darüber zu reden. Das war bei Dresden so, also als die Premiere war in

378 Dresden im Kino, da waren über 200 Menschen eingeladen von uns, da waren 1000
379 Leute im Kino, und 200 Menschen waren eingeladen, die die Bombennächte wirklich
380 selbst erlebt haben und der Film öffnet ja in dem Moment, wenn die das sehen und das
381 Publikum das sieht, so ein Abend öffnet, viele habe geweint, viele haben sich extrem
382 geöffnet innerhalb der eigenen Familie, viele haben über ihr Leben erzählt, du bist
383 sofort in dem Moment auch wo Menschen wie bei einer Psychoanalyse... eigentlich
384 eine innere Öffnung plötzlich durch den Film haben und zum aller ersten Mal Lust
385 haben, auch über ihre privatesten Geschichten zu reden, das meine ich mit
386 Vergangenheitsbewältigung.

387 **AW:** Wir haben schon gesagt, dass die Event Movies überall in der Welt verkauft
388 worden sind und populär sind, aber sie erzählen eigentlich sehr deutsche Geschichte, im
389 Vergleich mit anderen internationalen Filmen über das Dritte Reich, zum Beispiel. Ist das
390 etwas, das nur in Deutschland von einer deutschen Firma gemacht werden kann?

391 **NH:** Ich glaube ja. Ich habe immer die Erfahrung gemacht in den letzten Jahren, dass
392 ein starkes nationales Produkt aus Deutschland, was authentisch erzählt, das ist am
393 Weltmarkt am besten verkaufbar ist. Interessanterweise, war es auch halt wichtig, dass
394 Dresden als deutsche Geschichte von einem deutschen Produzenten in der Art und
395 Weise wie es gemacht war, authentisch gewirkt hat, und das kann es erklären, warum
396 andere Länder das dann gekauft haben. Das ist ja kein Unterschied, ob du so einen Film
397 mit englischen Schauspielern oder komplett amerikanisch drehst und es komplett quasi
398 sofort internationalisierst, das haben wir nie gemacht. Wir haben immer gesagt, das
399 Programm muss in Deutschland erst mal stimmen, es muss für Deutschland ernsthaft
400 wahr genommen werden, man muss es als authentisch empfinden und dann hast du eine
401 Chance auf dem Weltmarkt und im Grund genommen hat es sich auch eingestellt. Viele
402 Geschichten im Dritten Reich sind halt auch weltweit nach wie vor Themen, also
403 Stauffenberg, auch der Stauffenberg Film von uns hat sich sehr gut verkauft, hast du
404 gesehen, dass 5 Jahre später Tom Cruise den selben Film eigentlich nochmal macht.
405 Viele Themen, auch Dresden, mit Dresden war in England auch im Fernsehen, wo die
406 Engländer sich gefragt haben, warum sie nicht so ein Programm selbst produzieren, wo
407 quasi auch ist dieselbe Geschichte mit der Bombardierung Londons, wo du es
408 rüberdrehst und fragts, was hat der Zweite Weltkrieg auch in England ausgelöst? Das
409 löste auch immer so eine Debatte... auch in Spanien, also in Spanien war es sehr
410 erfolgreich im Fernsehen, dass sie dann auch überlegt haben, warum machen wir kein
411 Programm über unsere Befindlichkeit zum Beispiel in der Franco-Zeit, es hat... die
412 Filme haben auch dann in jeweiligem Land, wo sie gelaufen sind auch eine Debatte über
413 die Befindlichkeit von dem Land ausgelöst.

414 **AW:** Zurück zu dem Tom Cruise Film. Was sind die Unterschiede zwischen den zwei
415 Filmen. Ich habe beide gesehen, für mich sind sie eigentlich sehr nah...

416 **NH:** Der Unterschied ist, dass Tom Cruise es wesentlich mehr als Thriller erzählt. Also
417 im Grund genommen hat er es als politisches Thriller erzählt und das haben wir nicht
418 gemacht, wir sind dann ein bisschen vorsichtiger vorgegangen, wir sind, glaube ich,
419 auch deutlich mehr aus der Stauffenberg Perspektive vorgegangen und er hat einen
420 richtigen rasanten Krimi drausgedreht, also einen sehr modernen rasanten Krimi. Ich

421 fand den Film auch gut. Er hat mir gefallen. Von ihm. Aber das ist eine völlig andere
422 Regieansatz und der Film ist auch sehr viel moderner, es ist in den ganzen Approach ist
423 er sehr viel Hollywooddesker fast-Forward und sehr pushy, sehr physisch erzählt.

424 **AW:** Aber das hat natürlich damit zu tun, was ein Hollywood Film fördert.

425 **NH:** Ja, das hat damit zu tun, ja klar. Weil er den Weltmarkt bekommen wollte über den
426 spanennden Krimi, also... wenn du Tom Cruise als Schauspieler nimmst, die ganze Vita
427 von Tom Cruise nimmst, der letzten Jahre, das sehr stark aus den Action Bereich,
428 beispielsweise, kommt, er muss dann sein Publikum irgendeine Art von
429 Grundunterhaltung bieten. Ich fand den Film trotzdem sehr anständig gemacht, absolut.

430 **AW:** Was kann der teamWorx-Film dann bieten?

431 **NH:** Ja, der teamWorx-Film war zuerst, und der teamWorx-Film war genauso, der war
432 auch sehr hoch, das haben fast 8 Millionen Zuschauer angeschaut. Das war einfach noch
433 mal wichtig um dieses Kapitel deutscher Widerstand zu zeigen. Das hat sich eben auch
434 im Fernsehen den letzten zwanzig, dreißig Jahren überhaupt nicht mehr gegeben. Also
435 die Schwierigkeiten von Widerstand. Es gibt so zwei... also wir machen einen Film über
436 Rommel noch, also, Rommel ist auch eine interessante Figur. Das ist auch eine
437 Mythosfigur, die jeder noch aus der Erzählung kennt, was seine Eltern, Großeltern
438 kennt. Aber, das Psychogram von Rommel auch in der verherrenden Art und Weise wie
439 die Nationalsozialisten ihn propagandistisch misbraucht haben. Das auszuwerten, das ist
440 auch noch mal ein hoch interessantes Thema, das hat auch niemand gemacht. Also man
441 fragt sich auch es gibt drei amerikanische Rommel-Filme aber es gibt keinen deutschen
442 Rommel-Film, also eine Dokumentation ist dann auch immer interessant.

443 **AW:** Kommen wir zurück zu Stauffenberg. Wenn der Tom Cruise Film zuerst wäre,
444 hätten Sie gesagt 'ja, gut gemacht,' wir brauchen keinen deutschen Film?

445 **NH:** Wahrscheinlich ja. Ich hätte's wahrscheinlich nicht gemacht. Weil der Tom Cruise
446 Film wird irgendwann in Deutschland laufen, im Fernsehen, und dann ist das Thema
447 weg. Du kannst es nur einmal machen. Ich hätte's ja wahrscheinlich nicht gemacht. Im
448 Übrigen lief der Tom Cruise-Film hier nicht wirklich gut und er lief deshalb nicht
449 wirklich gut, weil der Stauffenberg-Film hat 8 Millionen Zuschauer gehabt und die
450 Leute haben's alle schon gesehen und der große Gedanke, weil er dachte, dass er in
451 Deutschland problemlos 5 Millionen, 4 Millionen Zuschauer holt damit und das hat
452 nicht funktioniert. Es würde übrigens auch nicht funktionieren, jetzt mal angenommen,
453 wenn ein Amerikaner würde jetzt Den Untergang, das Bernd Eichinger gemacht hat –
454 Downfall – noch mal auf amerikanisch drehen, das würde auch in Deutschland im Kino
455 nicht die Zuschauer mehr holen, das ist... wenn die Leute das einmal gesehen haben ist
456 es vorbei. Das kann man nicht wiederholen.

457 **AW:** Aber hat das nicht damit zu tun mit der Idee von Authentizität, dass ein deutscher
458 Film, von einer deutschen Firma mit deutschen Schauspieler irgendwie authentischer
459 ist, als ein amerikanische Produktion.

460 **NH:** Ich glaube schon, dass es authentischer ist. Ich glaube, dass ein deutscher Film mit
461 deutschen Schauspielern über Stauffenberg authentischer ist, weil es ein ganz anderer...
462 es geht schon mit den Schauspielern los, einfach ein Unterschied ob Sebastian Koch
463 spielt oder ob ein amerikanischer Schauspieler spielt. Das hat zu tun... ob du... ich finde's
464 definitiv authentischer. Das hat zu tun mit der Historie und der Vita und auch der
465 Beschäftigung aller, die da am Set stehen, auch Jo Baier hat den Film gemacht, der hat
466 sich wahnsinnig stark in das Thema reingearbeitet, also ich fand es... ich finde wichtig,
467 dass deutsche Themen erstmal von Deutschland aus auch erzählt werden. Das finde ich
468 ganz wichtig. Ich fand auch dann Den Untergang, mit Bruno Ganz, also Downfall, fand
469 ich extrem wichtig, dass es aus Deutschland heraus erzählt worden ist.

470 **AW:** Ich möchte fragen über das Zielpublikum der teamWorx Event Movies. Kann man
471 von einem allgemeinen Zielpublikum sprechen, oder ändert es sich von Film zu Film?

472 **NH:** Also das Zielpublikum ist sicherlich, es ist sicherlich 60% mehr Menschen, die
473 deutlich zwischen 50 und 80 Jahre alt sind. Es hat damit zu tun, dass da das Thema
474 stärker verankert ist. Wir haben aber alles in Filmen bemerkt, dass wir extrem viel junge
475 Zuschauer erreichen, also bei den Filmen haben wir, im Schnitt, 17-18%
476 Jugendmarktanteil, das sehr sehr hoch ist. Und das ist erstaunlich, und das hat zu tun
477 mit der moderneren Machart der Filme, aber ich würde mal sagen die
478 Zuschauermengen, du kannst ja bei jedem Film genau untersuchen, welche
479 Zuschauermengen waren im Programm drin, also die älteren Zuschauer sind garantiert
480 wesentlich stärker affin mit dem Thema als die Jungen, aber bei den großen Erfolgen,
481 ob das Dresden war oder Flucht, waren erstaunlich viel Junge im Programm. Da waren
482 schon 17-18% Marktanteil bei den Jungen. Das ist hoch. Und wenn wir anderen Sachen
483 machen, wie Das Wunder von Berlin, über den Fall der Berliner Mauer, das hatte auch
484 fast 20% Marktanteil, das ist eine erstaunlich hohe Sätze für historische Filme.

485 **AW:** Und das hat zu tun mit der Machart der Filme.

486 **NH:** Es hat mit der Machart zu tun, ja. Das hat mit der Machart zu tun, absolut. Und
487 auch wer spielt. Es geht immer auch darum, ob das jung besetzt ist. Oder ob das alt
488 besetzt ist, also es ist ganz wichtig, weil... Das Wunder von Berlin war ganz wichtig,
489 dass es eine sehr junge Besetzung hatte, es waren teilweise 20-Jährige, die die
490 Hauptrolle gespielt haben, also das zieht natürlich schon Publikum an.

491 **AW:** Ja, das führt zu meiner nächsten Frage: Wie wichtig ist es, dass berühmte
492 Schauspieler in den Event Movies spielen? zB. Felicitas Woll in Dresden.

493 **NH:** Ja. Sie war ja nicht berühmt. Also Felicitas, das kann man so nicht sagen.
494 Eigentlich ist es teilweise egal, das Thema macht den Erfolg aus, nicht die Schauspieler,
495 also die Felicitas, weisst du, die war ja durch die Serie Berlin, Berlin, die war ja in dem
496 Kreis von, sag ich mal, Berlin, Berlin hat im Schnitt 3, 4 Millionen Zuschauer gehabt.
497 Dresden hatte 13 Millionen, also Felicitas ist durch Dresden eigentlich zum Star
498 geworden. Es gibt viele Schauspieler mit den wir immer wieder gearbeitet haben, und
499 die... wie mit Sebastian Koch. Sebastian Koch hat sehr sehr viel solchen Events
500 gespielt, oder Heino Ferch hat in vielen gespielt, und andere, Thomas Kretschmann in

501 Mogadischu. Ich sag mal, die Besetzung muss... es muss populär sein. Ich würde schon
502 sagen, es muss populär sein. Maria Furtwängler, würde ich sagen, hat bei Der Flucht
503 einen sehr starken Anteil an Erfolg. Da ging Star Qualität und Rolle und Inhalt vom
504 Film sehr ineinander über. Da gibt's eine große Verbindung.

505 **AW:** Mit Felicitas Woll, dass sie durch Berlin, Berlin bekannt ist, war wichtig, die
506 jüngere Zuschauer anzulocken...

507 **NH:** Das war so, ja klar. Das ist ganz deutlich, ja bestimmt.

508 **AW:** Ihrer Meinung nach, was sind die Vorteile des Spielfilms, im Vergleich mit
509 Dokumentarfilmen, beim Aufgabe der Aufklärung der Vergangenheit?

510 **NH:** Du kannst einfach im Spielfilm..., du bist viel freier, du kannst natürlich eine ganz
511 andere dramaturgische und auch emotionale Zuspitzung mit den Themen machen. Das
512 hat eine andere Wirkung, das hat im Übrigen bei jedem Film deutlich mehr Zuschauer
513 gehabt. Es gab ja auch zum Thema 'deutscher Widerstand,' gab's eine ganze ZDF-
514 Reihe und es gab auch zu Flucht und Vertreibung eine ZDF-Reihe, die hatte nicht mal
515 ein Drittel der Zuschauer, also... die Guido Knopp Reihe über Flucht und Vertreibung
516 im ZDF, die hatte vielleicht 3 Million Zuschauer am Dienstag Abend, wir hatten 12
517 oder 13 Millionen, also wenn die Emotionalisierung klappt, und wenn die Zuschauer
518 sich darauf einlassen, auf diese emotionale Reise ist der große Fernsehevent immer das
519 erfolgreichere Programm. Wir haben es auch oft mal verkoppelt. Immer oftmals sind
520 hinter den Filmen, da noch mal eine Dokumentation gesetzt, die dann noch auch bei 7, 8
521 Millionen Zuschauern lief, und bei den Dokumentarsachen kannst du noch mal zu einer
522 ganz anderen Vertiefung kommen. Das Hauptthema ist die Emotionalisierung. Das
523 Hauptthema ist wirklich, welche Emotionen es frei setzt. Und die Emotionalisierung,
524 gerade bei Dresden, die ging halt eben dann auch wirklich nur mit Mitteln des
525 Spielfilms.

526 **AW:** Die meisten TV Event Movies gehen über die Geschichte, aber es gibt auch diese
527 Katastrophen-Filme, die auch TV Events sind, zum Beispiel Tornado und Vulkan. Wie
528 passen sie in diesem Kanon von historischen Event Movies?

529 **NH:** Gar nicht eigentlich. Vulkan, Tornado sind wirklich reine kommerzielle
530 Programme, also das ist ein rein kommerzielles Programm. Ich würde mal sagen, es gab
531 dann auch Die Sturmflut, die lief auch extrem gut. Bei Der Sturmflut damals bei RTL
532 war's beides. Es war großes Action Movie und es war trotzdem deutsche Geschichte,
533 nämlich die Überschwemmung in Hamburg. Das haben auch 11, 12 Millionen
534 Zuschauer angeschaut. Aber die anderen Filme, Tornado, Vulkan, das sind wirklich
535 reine Action Programme. Das ist ein reines Marketing-Spektakel um Programm-Erfolg
536 zu bringen. Es hat das Thema mittendrin, bei Vulkan hat's das Thema drin gehabt, auch
537 'was wäre wenn,' ja? Also was wäre wenn es war sowas wirklich in Deutschland und so
538 weiter. Es haben auch viele geguckt, es hat 27% Marktanteil gehabt in der zweiten
539 Folge. Es war ein Erfolg, aber es hat überhaupt nicht den Ansatz wie beispielsweise,
540 wenn du Stauffenberg machst.

541 **AW:** Man kann aber Ähnlichkeiten zwischen den Filmen sehen. Dresden, zum Beispiel,
542 kann als Katastrophen-Film betrachtet werden.

543 **NH:** Ja, ja... Bei dem Vulkanausbruch ist es ja eine Hypothese, du sagst quasi... ich
544 würde mal sagen, es ist sehr sehr viel mehr auf den Effekt gebaut. Also man hätte
545 Vulkan auch anders machen können. Ich hab's nur bei RTL nicht durchsetzen können,
546 weil es gab mal von der BBC The Day Britain Stops, also die BBC hat mal die ganze
547 Zeit Sachen gemacht, mit so einem Factual... Factual Entertainment, wo sie quasi so
548 Zukunftsvisionen sehr sehr dokumentarisch, sehr interessant für mich angepackt haben,
549 so wollte ich ja eigentlich Vulkan machen, ich wollte sehr genauer erzählen, ich wollte
550 sehr genau das große wissenschaftliche Arbeit erzählen, wie so ein 'Doku-Faction-
551 Film.' Das wollten sie nicht, sie wollten die ganze Spektakel und die ganze Effects, sie
552 wollten Geld ausgeben für die Effekte, für die CGIs und deshalb ist der Film so
553 geworden wie er ist, das ist ein reines RTL Programm. Und da sind dann schon die
554 erhebliche Unterschiede, wie präzise Dresden bei der Bombardierung gezeigt wird und
555 wie präzise die Erlebnissen von den Menschen in den Bombenkellern gezeigt werden.
556 Das ist eine ganz andere Authentizität als jetzt in Vulkan. In Vulkan ist es einfach ein
557 großes Spektakel.

558 **AW:** Aber da gibt's auch die Emotionalisierung, Beziehungen und die menschliche
559 Qualitäten....

560 **NH:** Ja, klar. Aber das hat jeder amerikanische Katastrophen-Film auch. Also da sind
561 die Einflüsse, bei Vulkan und diese Sachen, da sind die Einflüsse garantiert. Wenn man
562 sagt, 'welche Einflüsse kommen aus Amerika?' das sind sie garantiert wesentlich
563 stärker gegeben.

564 **AW:** Wie verkaufen sich die Katastrophen-Filme weltweit?

565 **NH:** Gut. Leider verkaufen sich die schlechtesten Filme am besten, sag mal, du kannst
566 weltweit die Filme, die klare eindeutige nur Katastrophen-Filme sind, die verkaufen
567 sich am besten.

568 **AW:** Das ist für mich interessant, denn ich würde denken, dass in diesem Bereich es
569 mehr Konkurrenz mit Hollywood geben würde. Aber wenn eine deutsche Firma einen
570 Film über deutsche Geschichte macht, hat dieser Film ein Vorteil.

571 **NH:** Ja, es ist so. Aber es ist halt eben deutsche Geschichte, du musst halt eben dann
572 Lust haben auf deutsche Geschichte. Wenn du sowas wie Tornado über Berlin, das
573 kannst du in Singapur, in Bangkok, das kannst du überall zeigen. Das kapiert jeder. Und
574 bei den anderen Filmen musst du schon eine gewisse Lust auch haben, auf den
575 historische Background. Du musst auch die Lust haben auf deutsche Geschichte und
576 dich damit beschäftigen wollen. Und eine Zeitlang, die letzten zehn Jahre lief das ganz
577 gut, ob das jetzt für die Zukunft dauerhaft geht, weiss ich nicht, würde ich eher sagen, es
578 wird kritisch, aber die letzten zehn Jahre... es war kein Problem, Dresden in alle
579 europäischen Länder primetime zu verkaufen, es war überall verkauft worden, Ja,
580 überall.

581 **AW:** Man kann doch Dresden als Katastrophen-Film betrachten, mit der
582 Liebesgeschichte und so weiter.

583 **NH:** Ja, klar. Stimmt. Das stimmt wirklich so, ja.

584 **AW:** Meine letzte Frage, die klassische Frage: Was hat teamWorx in den nächsten
585 Jahren vor? Sie haben gesagt, dass es ändern muss, aber sagen Sie auf wiedersehen zu
586 der Geschichte, bleiben Sie mit dem Format von TV 'Event Movie,' oder machen Sie
587 mehr kombinierte Formen, zB, Dutschke. Das war ein 'Event Movie,' aber kein
588 Fernsehfilm.

589 **NH:** Der lief ja überhaupt nicht. In der Quote war er ein Disaster, ja, weil er so gemacht
590 war, wie er gemacht war. Also ich glaube, dass ein paar Themen, wie jetzt Unsere
591 Mütter, Unsere Väter, also ein paar Themen kannst du noch wesentlich
592 mikroskopischer... also ein paar Sachen kommen von uns jetzt noch, wo wir noch mal
593 wesentlich präziser erzählen, also jetzt Unsere Mütter, Unsere Väter, ist eine sehr sehr
594 genaue, detailgenaue biografische Aufarbeitung von fünf Lebensläufen, von jungen
595 Menschen zwischen 36 und 46, also es geht sehr sehr viel mehr ins Detail der
596 jeweiligen Biografie. Was auch noch kommen wird, ist dass wir die Bildsprache
597 nochmal verändert haben, sowas wie Hindenburg ist extrem modern erzählt, extrem
598 figurenorientiert erzählt, aber extrem modern, also es ist ein Versuch, jetzt auch noch
599 mal ein historischer Event, historischen Event 2.0, es ist wirklich gesagt, oder 3.0, also
600 wie kann historischer Event in Zukunft aussehen, dass er nicht alt-modisch, nicht old-
601 fashioned... es ist auch eine ästhetische Veränderung, die wir da vorgenommen haben,
602 wir werden sehen ob es funktioniert. Wir haben schon bei Mogadischu angefangen, es
603 war auch ein sehr viel... Mogadischu war auch sehr viel moderner erzählt. Und dann,
604 was auf jeden Fall kommen wird ist die ganze DDR Geschichte, also ich mache im
605 Moment sehr viel mit... Es wird sehr viel noch kommen zum Thema DDR. Ich habe von
606 Uwe Tellkamp den Bestseller 'DenTurm' gekauft und werde das verfilmen. Also die
607 DDR-Geschichte wird kommen. Und dann wir garantiert noch kommen mehr 'was wäre
608 wenn,' also Future, Future-Betrachtung, so ein bisschen was die BBC macht mit The
609 Day Britain Stops. Ich würde wahnsinnig gern was machen über UFOs, wahnsinnig
610 gern was machen mit UFO-Forschung im Moment, also da kommen schon Themen...

611 **AW:** Aber die Hauptteilen der Event-Movies: die Emotionalisierung, die
612 Personalisierung und die personale Geschichten, das bleibt?

613 **NH:** Das bleibt, ja.

1 **Appendix 2: Interview with Kai Wessel¹**

2 **Andrew Wormald:** Zu beginnen können Sie mir vielleicht ein bisschen sagen über wie
3 Die Flucht als Projekt... wie sich der Film entstanden hat. Also warum wollten Sie den
4 Film machen, warum wollten Sie Teil des Projekts sein?

5 **Kai Wessel:** Naja, das Projekt wurde an mich herangetragen, die Idee... Ursprünglich
6 war die Idee mal, kennen Sie Marion Gräfin Dönhoff?...

7 **AW:** Ja.

8 **KW:** ...Über ihr Leben was zu machen, und ihr Leben zu verfilmen, da war sie schon
9 gestorben, glaube ich, weiss ich nicht genau. Das ist immer wieder an den
10 verschiedenen Rechteinhaber, an den Personen, gescheitert. Die es überhaupt nicht
11 wollten, sozusagen... Es war immer mal so, die ersten Ansätze, sind dann gerade die
12 Dönhoff... Da weiss man ja nichts über Männer. Also, so Liebesgeschichten oder so, ja?
13 Und wenn es dann um große teure Zweiteiler geht, war es zumindest in der Zeit, noch
14 für immer wichtig, dass irgendeine Liebesgeschichte ja [INAUDIBLE]. Und dann
15 haben immer alle Rechteinhaber gesagt: Leute, das könnt ihr nicht machen, weil es gab
16 keine und wir wissen von keiner und wir können keine erfinden. Und daran ist dieses
17 Projekt immer wieder gescheitert und eine Produzentin hat dann den Stoff abgegeben
18 und eine andere Produzentin, die auch selber schreibt, die Gabriela Sperl, hat das
19 übernommen und hat irgendwann dann für sich beschlossen, also man muss ja auch gar
20 nicht über die Gräfin Dönhoff was machen, sondern eigentlich ist ja diese ganze
21 Fluchtbewegung... sie, sagen wir mal, sie stellvertretend als für viele Frauen, die damals
22 auf sich gestellt, mitten im Winter ihre Heimat verlassen müssten, ohne Organisation, in
23 Panik und so weiter. Wenn man da erstmal ein bisschen was darüber gelesen hat, dann
24 weiss man auch, dass man eigentlich für die Geschichte der Dönhoff gar nicht im
25 Zentrum stellen muss. Also hat sich der Fokus ein bisschen verschoben. Man hat diese
26 Lena, ich sag mal, die hat Dönhoffsche Züge, dieses stark preußische Element, dieses
27 zupackende und so, da sind immer natürlich auch Einflüsse von der Dönhoff. In der
28 Entwicklung dieser Figur aber, hat sie sich vollkommen getrennt von real existierenden
29 Personen, und da frei eine Geschichte entwickelt.

30 **AW:** Und wann haben Sie die ersten Gedanken über den Stoff gehabt?

31 **KW:** Das war sicher zweieinhalb, drei Jahre vor Drehbeginn.

32 **AW:** Bei Der Flucht, wie wurden die Aufgaben geteilt, zwischen den Produzenten und
33 Ihnen als Regisseur. Ich muss auch sagen, dass ich richtig Laier bin, und nicht viel
34 weiss von die Verantwortungen eines Produzenten und die eines Regisseurs
35 normalerweise.

36 **KW:** Naja, das ist unterschiedlich. Also man kann ganz grob - und da gibt es immer
37 viele Ausnahmen – unterteilen zwischen Fernsehen und Kino, und in der Regel ist Kino

¹ NB: As with Appendix 1, this is not a linguistic transcription. False starts, repetitions and fillers have been deleted for ease of comprehension. The interviewer's questions have similarly been altered for clarity and brevity.

38 sozusagen immer etwas mehr vom Regisseur geprägt und initiiert. Und Fernsehen
39 dagegen, sozusagen, hat meistens - also immer nur so insgesamt - der Produzent eine
40 Idee und sucht sich einen Regisseur. Oder, was eben auch sehr sehr häufig ist, Autoren
41 haben eine Idee und haben zehn Seiten darüber oder sowas und suchen sich entweder
42 einen Produzenten oder einen Regisseur und dann sucht man sich einen Produzenten.
43 Regisseure im Fernsehen sind insgesamt weniger selbstbetreibende Kraft eines Stoffes.
44 Insgesamt, nur insgesamt, viele Ausnahme gibt es. Da sind es meistens eher die
45 Produzenten, die die Stoffidee haben. Und Menschen zusammenbringen. Also du,
46 Autor, ich könnte mir vorstellen, du, schreib ein Buch und dann nehmen wir dich,
47 Regisseur, dazu und dann ist es so ein Dreigestirn sozusagen.

48 **AW:** Und bei Der Flucht, wie hat es da funktioniert? Wofür waren Sie persönlich
49 verantwortlich?

50 **KW:** Die Produzentin, die Hauptproduzentin, Gabriela Sperl, ist auch Autorin, die hat
51 es auch selber geschrieben. Die hatte auch schon sehr viel Vorwissen über diese Zeit
52 und vor allem die Adligen, weil die auch viele kennt. Sie ist an mich herangetreten und
53 hat gefragt, kannst du dir vorstellen, dich für dieses Thema zu interessieren? Und da
54 auch meine Großmutter aus Westpreußen kam, nicht geflohen ist, aber hatte zu diesem
55 Landstrich immer ein Gefühl obwohl ich nie da war, und das ist natürlich sowas wie,
56 wenn man jung ist... meine Großmutter hat immer wieder natürlich aus der alten Zeit
57 erzählt und wie es nach dem Krieg war und so weiter, und man hört ja nicht zu. Als ich
58 jung war, habe ich nicht zugehört. Das waren immer ihre Geschichten, sie war keine
59 große Erzählerin oder so, sondern, aber es hatte mit meinem Leben nichts zu tun und ihr
60 Leben war theirs und mein Leben war meins. Und ich hatte irgendwie das Gefühl, man ist
61 jetzt irgendwie reif genug - für mich zumindest – reif genug, sich für das Leben von den
62 Generationen vor allem auch wirklich zu interessieren. Deswegen habe ich sofort gesagt.
63 Ganz schwieriger Stoff, gar keine Frage, ganz schwierig. Aber wenn man das richtige
64 Team hat, in Sinne von Produktion, Regie, Autor, dann glaube ich, muss man das
65 machen.

66 **AW:** Wie Sie gesagt haben, ist Flucht und Vertreibung ein sehr sensibles Thema, ein
67 sehr schwieriger Stoff, worüber müssten immer nachdenken, als Sie Die Flucht gedreht
68 haben? Wo waren die Schwierigkeiten eigentlich?

69 **KW:** Naja, es war ja klar, dass man sozusagen, den Fokus so einer Geschichte... Die
70 Schwierigkeit ist immer - darüber schreiben Sie dann auch, wahrscheinlich - ist Historie
71 in eine dramatische Form zu kriegen. Wie ein Leben eines Menschen, also wenn man
72 eine Biografie verfilmt nie den dramatischen Gesetzen eines Films gehorcht, so
73 gehorcht die Geschichte auch nicht in den dramatischen Gesetzen eines Films. Zumal,
74 wenn man ein so großen und teuren Film macht, diese sogenannten Event Movies, die
75 kosten sehr sehr viel Geld, die stehen unter einen sehr hohen Erfolgsdruck. Da kann
76 man nicht sagen, das ist Arthouse, und man hat 10 Millionen Euro zu Verfügung,
77 sondern da weiss man, das kann ja nur mainstream sein und das heisst aber nicht, das
78 man notwendigerweise, finde ich diesen Anspruch, nur noch ansetzen sollte, erfolgreich
79 zu sein, sondern da gibt's eben ganz ganz viele Aspekte, die man auch beachten muss.
80 Und das war eigentlich immer mein Ziel, das war auch – Gott sei Dank – das Ziel von

81 Gabriela Sperl. Ja, was ist das? Wenn man mal vergisst, dass man irgendwie... Oder
82 akzeptiert für sich, dass man einen Film versucht zu erzählen, der das Potential hat,
83 erfolgreich zu sein, dann war für mich immer wichtig die Frage, warum erzählt man
84 diese Geschichte eigentlich, überhaupt? Und ich glaube das war... da soviel im
85 Fernsehen erzählt wird, [INAUDIBLE] hier ist wirklich, aus welche Gründen auch
86 immer - und die sind hausgemacht, das ist sowieso klar - gut zwei Millionen Menschen,
87 mehr oder weniger über Nacht dazu gezwungen worden, alles was sie haben
88 einzupacken und mitten im Winter mit Neugeborenen, mit kleinen Kindern, ohne
89 Männer, nicht organisiert, ihre Heimat zu verlassen, ohne zu wissen wo sie hinkommen,
90 wo sie schlafen werden, wo sie essen herbekommen, wo die Reise überhaupt hingeht.
91 Das ist eine Notsituation, glaube ich, die es sich lohnt zu erzählen, ganz grundsätzlich,
92 natürlich anhand sozusagen der deutschen Zivilbevölkerung. Ich glaube, das muss man
93 auch erzählen, weil dieses Schicksal dieser vor allem Frauen, nie, zumindest, 40 Jahre
94 lang, irgendeine Form von Bericht gefunden hat, irgendeine Form von Anerkennung
95 oder Aufarbeitung, sondern das wurde eigentlich mehr oder weniger verschwiegen
96 gesellschaftlich, aus guten Gründen auch. Und ich glaube das war einfach auch eine
97 Zeit über dieses Schicksal zu berichten. Ich glaube man kann das auch wirklich machen,
98 weil überall auf der Welt, in Europa, in Bosnien, in Croatiën, gab es auch in jüngster
99 Vergangenheit noch fliehende Menschen, Menschen die vorm Krieg fliehen, vor Gewalt
100 fliehen, vor Vergewaltigung fliehen. In Afrika, ist es nach wie vor ein großes Thema, im
101 Irak-Krieg war's das auch. Wenn man versucht, über so eine einzelne Geschichte
102 vielleicht, so schafft man auch selber mal die Sensibilität für Flucht allgemein
103 herzustellen...

104 **AW:** So eine Universalisierung...

105 **KW:** Ja. Das war irgendwie immer meine Gedanke, dass man vielleicht den größeren
106 Bogen noch schafft vielleicht auch durch diese Tafel am Ende, die da kommt. Das war
107 die einzige... Ein weiteres und für mich ein wahnsinnig wichtiges Ziel war dass man,
108 dass ich immer gedacht habe... wir können nicht beide Seiten erzählen, weil... Zwei mal
109 neunzig Minuten sind lang, aber man kann nicht die komplette Schuld und die
110 komplette Entwicklung des Krieges erzählen. Das ist keine Dokumentation, sondern das
111 ist Fiktion. Aber dennoch, es war ganz wichtig, dass ich für mich das Gefühl habe, in
112 jedem Moment dieses Films, kann ich diesen Film auch in Moskau zeigen, oder in
113 Warschau. Ich möchte mich dahinstellen können, und meine Meinung vertreten können.
114 Warum ich glaube das das so ist wie es ist und warum es so wichtig ist.

115 **AW:** Ja, also, wie...

116 **KW:** Also nicht zu sehr in dieser Schwarz-Weiß-Malerei zu fahren; der böse Russe und
117 der gute Deutsche.

118 **AW:** Viele haben gesagt, und man sieht's im Film, das Die Flucht extrem ausgewogen
119 ist. zB. In einer Szene sieht man die Verbrechen des Russen und in der nächsten Szene
120 die Verbrechen der deutschen Armee. Habe Sie gefühlt diese Druck politisch korrekt zu
121 sein?

122 **KW:** Ich wollte politisch korrekt sein, ja. Oder sagen wir mal zumindest für mich selber
123 korrekt. Und nicht nach all diesen Füllen von Information, die man da bekommen kann,
124 sei es von Dokumentation, durchaus von der BBC, die ganze privaten Aufzeichnungen,
125 die in irgendwelchen kleinen Buchladen von 1978 mal ausgeschrieben worden, hin zu
126 großen Geschichtsbänden über dieser Zeit. Das Bild, was ich habe, oder von dieser Zeit
127 habe, in gerade diesem Aufschnitt sozusagen, Ende '44, Anfang '45, da war schon mein
128 Anspruch in immer mitzuerzählen, auch eine breite Bevölkerung, also deutlich zu
129 erzählen, wollte dieses Problem ja, was diese arme Frauen, Kinder hatten, das ist
130 hausgemacht. Das ist nicht so, das nur die bösen Russen kamen, die haben Krieg
131 geführt, ganz normal, aber wer seine eigene Zivilbevölkerung im Land behält und sagt
132 hier darf keiner wegbewegen, weil wir bilden ein Wall von Leibern, wortwörtlich, hat
133 der Gauleiter ja gesagt, zum Schutz von Ostpreußen, da muss man sich nicht wundern,
134 dass es zu dieser wirklichen Katastrophe kommt.

135 **AW:** Also, das ist nicht nur, dass man politisch korrekt sein will, sondern auch, dass
136 man treu zu der Geschichte bleiben will?

137 **KW:** Ja. Und das muss man, das ist natürlich die Nachsicht auch. Also, das wussten die
138 Leute früher ja damals so in dieser Form nicht. Sie wussten sie dürften Ostpreußen nicht
139 verlassen und sie mussten für jede Bewegung innerhalb des Landes einen Marschbefehl
140 oder einen Treckbefehl haben. Und wer das nicht hatte, wurde halt zum Teil mit dem
141 Tode bestraft. Klar. Das spricht sich natürlich schnell rum.

142 **AW:** Zurück zur der Liebesgeschichte und der Emotionalität. Wie haben Sie denn eine
143 Balance geschafft, zwischen der Liebesgeschichte, die eigentlich nicht den ganzen Film
144 geprägt hat, im Vergleich zu den anderen Event Movies vielleicht, und die Historie.

145 **KW:** Das kann man als Regisseur in so einem Projekt nicht alleine machen. Dazu
146 braucht man zumindest irgendwo jemanden der einen unterstützt, der Autor, der muss
147 eine [INAUDIBLE] bilden, weil alleine kriegt man das nicht durch, weil in der Zeit, wo
148 der Stoff entwickelt wurde, das war ja noch bevor Dresden lief, da war das große
149 Erfolgsgeheimnis 'Liebesgeschichte,' gerade im Hause teamWorx war
150 'Liebesgeschichte, Liebesgeschichte, Liebesgeschichte' und dem Druck, sich zu
151 widersetzen, alleine, das hätte ich gar nicht geschafft. Also, das war gar nicht leicht.
152 Gabriela Sperl, die eben auch gesagt hat, Liebesgeschichte, vielleicht muss es sein aber
153 wenn, müssen wir das anders machen als wir das kennen und wir müssen uns da was
154 einfallen lassen, dass das nicht so eine Schmalzgeschichte wird, weil eigentlich wollen
155 wir was anderes erzählen. Natürlich es gibt ja immer diesen, ich sag mal, Kniff, wenn
156 das mal einer erzählen will und der Fokus hat auf eine Geschichte, das macht mal Sinn
157 eine ganz andere Geschichte als Motor zu nehmen, die den Film laufen lässt, um das
158 andere nebenbei zu erzählen. Zum Beispiel, Der einzige Zeuge, von... der Australier....
159 wo es um die Amish people geht. So ein Krimi, aus dem Ende der 80ern.

160 **AW:** Weiß nicht.

161 **KW:** Na, Entschuldigung. Wie auch immer. Es ist schon legitim sowas wie ein Motor
162 einzubauen in eine Geschichte die da läuft, sei es ein Krimi oder eine Liebesgeschichte,

163 um so eine Dramaturgie am Laufen zu haben, und an den Ränden und an den Seiten, so
164 genau wie möglich, etwas Anderes zu erzählen, was einem eigentlich viel wichtiger ist.

165 **AW:** Ja, das kann ich verstehen. Also, zurück zu den Frauen. Die Flucht, laut dem Film
166 selbst, zeigt 'die Stunde der Frauen,' wie viele von teamWorx's Event Movies. Warum
167 glauben Sie, dass die Event Movies über diese Epoche weibliche Hauptfiguren haben?
168 Und erzählen Sie gerne Geschichten von starken Frauen (zum Beispiel Hilde.)?

169 **KW:** Also insgesamt würde ich sagen, habe ich sehr viel... mehr Filme gemacht mit
170 Frauen im Fokus als mit Männern.

171 **AW:** Aber wie wichtig ist es für die Dritten Reich Filme im allgemeinen, dass sie starke
172 Frauen als Hauptfiguren haben. Oder ist es nur Zufall?

173 **KW:** Nee, nee, das gibt natürlich so eine Entwicklung überhaupt insgesamt in den
174 letzten Jahren, erstmal würde ich sagen vor allem im Fernsehen sich den Frauen mehr
175 zu widmen. Schon richtig. Ich weiß nicht, ob es damit zusammenhängt, dass Geschichte
176 der Frauen vielleicht insgesamt erfolgreicher sind, vielleicht ist es, dass so eine
177 Gesellschaft ohne es wirklich auszusprechen, ohne es genau zu wissen, nachholen
178 möchte. Weil man so das Gefühl hat in den Jahrzehnten davor gab's da viele
179 Männergeschichten. Es war alles so härter und so, diese knallharten Filme sind ja
180 eigentlich relativ [INAUDIBLE]. Diese richtigen Männergeschichten. Vielleicht ist es
181 auch jetzt gerade was so Drittes Reich angeht, bieten sich Frauen, glaube ich... all die
182 Filme über die Sie schreiben, sind ja Filme, die sich weniger stark um die Frage der
183 Schuld kümmern als um, sagen wir mal, private Probleme in dem Großkonstrukt und
184 den Fokus eher auf das Detail als auf das ganze legen. Und da sind Frauen natürlich im
185 Dritten Reich erst mal unschuldig. In diesem Zusammenhang zum Beispiel Der
186 Vorleser... Die Vorleserin. Nee...

187 **AW:** Ja, Der Vorleser

188 **KW:** Ja. Weil man da ja eine Frau mit Schuld sozusagen, eigentlich im Fokus hat. Weil
189 ohne sie geht diese Geschichte ja gar nicht.

190 **AW:** Ja, aber das war die Ausnahme.

191 **KW:** Ja, ja.

192 **AW:** Unser Held (quasi) in der Flucht ist ein französischer Kriegsgefangener. Ein
193 bisschen wie Dresden und sein britischer Bomberpilot als Held. Dürfen wir keinen
194 deutschen Held haben?

195 **KW:** Naja, bei Stauffenberg haben sie's ja versucht. Bei Schindler wurde's versucht,
196 dann... was war der Name? In Shanghai gedrehte...

197 **AW:** Rabe.

198 **KW:** John Rabe. Da haben sie's versucht, oder gemacht ja auch. Also es gibt die schon
199 auch, die... Also sowas mit John Rabe wäre vor zehn, fünfzehn Jahre gar nicht denkbar
200 gewesen. So ein Film wäre gar nicht zustande gekommen.

201 **AW:** Und warum?

202 **KW:** Weil man grundsätzlich mit der Schuldfrage beschäftigt war, und der
203 Aufarbeitung der Geschichte und nach wie vor, glaube ich, es darum ging, eben auch zu
204 verhindern in gewisserweise, durch das mehrfache Erzählen von Schuld, zu verhindern,
205 dass so etwas nochmal den Deutschen passieren kann oder, glaube ich, das man
206 schrecklich immer immer wiederholt und das war einfach auch ganz schlimm und
207 Leute, wir müssen vorsichtig sein, ja sowas darf nie nie nie wieder passieren. Dass man
208 deswegen auch mehr Schwierigkeiten hat, sozusagen die guten Deutschen, die es sicher
209 irgendwo auch gab, die sicher in der Ausnahme waren, oder dass man sich um diese
210 Menschen kümmert, sondern eigentlich mehr um dieses Phänomen ja auch, dass eines
211 der gebildeten Völker in der Mitte Europas sich hinter einen Menschen stellt, der ja
212 durchaus erkennbar nicht alle Sinne beisammen hat, und Dinge verspricht, die nicht
213 erfüllbar sind und trotzdem, er ist ja nie mit 60% gewählt worden, oder 70%, der ist ja
214 kaum über 50% gekommen, das darf man ja auch nicht vergessen, aber trotzdem eben
215 eine Riesenmehrheit, ihm verholphen hat, durchaus Bürgerliche auch und auch
216 Großindustrielle eben an die Macht zukommen. Dieses Phänomen versteht, glaube ich
217 so richtig immer noch nur Wenige, oder vielleicht kann man's auch gar nicht verstehen.
218 Das macht den Deutschen grundsätzlich Angst, glaube ich, dass das passiert ist.

219 **AW:** Darum kommt's immer wieder zurück.

220 **KW:** Dadurch kam's immer wieder zurück. Weil diese Schuldfilme, die könnte man im
221 Moment, glaube ich, nicht drehen, wo die Deutschen als böse gezeigt werden. Ich
222 glaube, das ist im Moment schwierig, nach der Fussball Weltmeisterschaft, und so, wo
223 jeder mit den deutschen Flaggen rumfahren. Das wäre auch vor zehn Jahren nicht
224 denkbar gewesen, die wären ja alle abgeknickt worden, oder...

225 **AW:** Sie haben schon über das Dritte Reich Filme gemacht (Victor Klemperer
226 Tagebücher, Goebbels und Geduldig). Ihrer Meinung nach, wie hat das Bild vom
227 'Dritten Reich' im Fernsehen in den letzten 10 Jahren verändert?

228 **KW:** Sie meinen das Blick auf's Dritte Reich?

229 **AW:** Ja.

230 **KW:** Naja, in gewisserweise man kann das ja noch gar nicht abschließend sagen, weil
231 das ist ja irgendein Prozeß in dem man sich befindet, und der ist ja gar nicht beendet,
232 sondern irgendwo steht man ja noch mittendrin und die Frage ist wohin wird sich das
233 irgendwie entwickeln. Ich glaube, dass insgesamt, eine größere Normalität entstanden
234 ist im Umgang mit dem Dritten Reich, dass das Thema nicht mehr ganz so heiss
235 gehandelt wird im Sinne von 'das darf man nicht,' und 'sowas darf man gar nicht
236 erzählen.' Dass schon etwas genauer auch hingeguckt wird, also auch auf den einzelnen
237 Menschen, nicht nur so auf die Kollektivschuld, sondern, wir uns erlauben auch auf das
238 Individuum zu schauen und das zu betrachten. Dass insgesamt, glaube ich auch, sich so
239 ein anderes Nationalbewußtsein auch gebildet hat, dass jetzt nicht mehr nur demütigt
240 ist, sondern irgendwie auch eben mit Flaggen am Auto auf einmal durch die Stadt fährt.
241 Und das spiegelt sich auch natürlich im Fernsehen wider. Insgesamt, ist glaube ich auch

242 der Umgang mit historischer Genauigkeit im Fernsehen zurückgegangen, obwohl diese
243 ganzen Infotainment Geschichten hier, von Guido Knopp und so, sie sind sehr
244 unterhaltsam gemacht und sie haben ja auch, sie sind auch groß vertreten, oder, Spiegel-
245 TV, mein Gott glaube ich fünf mal die Woche irgendwas über das Dritte Reich,
246 unglaublich.

247 **AW:** Also, glauben Sie, es gibt noch mehr zu erzählen über das Dritte Reich. Dass es
248 weiter gehen wird? Denn im Gespräch mit Nico Hofmann hat er gesagt quasi, dass das
249 Thema 'Drittes Reich' ist bald vorbei und kommen andere Epoche der Zeitgeschichte...

250 **KW:** Ja, das glaube ich auch, da hat er wahrscheinlich recht. Da Nico ist einen guten
251 Riecher, der hat ein gutes Gespür dafür, das muss man sagen. Aber Nico denkt natürlich
252 auch vor allem im Moment wahrscheinlich an das große 'Event Movie' und so weiter,
253 sag mal den großen erfolgreichen Film. Und ich glaube, das muss im Dritten Reich
254 eigentlich nicht immer nur solche große...

255 **AW:** Ja ich habe gehofft, dass Sie mir vielleicht eine Definition von Authentizität geben
256 könnten. Oder zum Beispiel, der Hofmann sagt Die Flucht und andere Filme... man hat
257 versucht sie 'so authentisch wie möglich' zu machen. Und was bedeutet das für Sie
258 persönlich?

259 **KW:** Naja, authentisch muss nicht heißen, meineserachtens authentisch grenzt sich
260 vielleicht dadurch nochmal ab, ich glaube, dass wahr, Wahrhaftigkeit noch realer ist als
261 authentisch. Ich hab das Gefühl, authentisch kann etwas sein, was auch in einer
262 Atmosphäre ist, und man sagt, das ist eine authentische Atmosphäre, die sozusagen den
263 Kern trifft, und dennoch ist es nicht wahr. Es ist nicht passiert es ist keine wahre
264 Geschichte, eine authentische Geschichte. Ja, in der Tat, war mir das immer ganz
265 wichtig, zum Beispiel, dass... was ich nicht wollte, bei der Sturmflut und so weiter, ich
266 wollte eigentlich keine CGIs drin haben, keine Tricks. Wir haben ein paar drin, in
267 Schnittbildern, von wenigen Sekunden. Aber ich wollte eigentlich das da wirklich ein
268 Treck steht und ich glaube wir haben zusammengekriegt 700m Treck. Das ist schon
269 beeindruckend, wenn der sich bewegt. So an Masse auch und Menschen und Tieren und
270 so. Den mussten wir in zwei Einstellungen sogar noch mal ein bisschen verlängern, da
271 auf dem Eis, weil das nicht ganz gereicht hat, aber das sozusagen in alle Bildsprache
272 und alldem was man sieht an Schnee und Eis, das ist authentisch, da ist jetzt nicht am
273 Rechner, eine große Fantasiewelt entworfen. Da standen wirklich 700m Pferde und
274 Menschen, Pferdewagen und so... und ich glaube es war für alle die, die den Film
275 gemacht haben, wir hatten leider gleich am ersten Tag, das ging nicht anders, mussten
276 wir diesen Riesentreck hinstellen, in einer Allee runterfahren lassen und das war für alle
277 Beteiligten, glaube ich, sowas wie Gänsehaut, weil wenn man das immer nur entwirft,
278 und so, 'guck mal da ist Wagen da und Wagen da und Wagen da und Waltraud muss da
279 und Lena muss da reiten und dann haben wir noch den Transporter mit den Soldaten,
280 der muss dann da vorbeifahren, das ist alles theoretisch. Wenn man dann aber morgens
281 um zehn da irgendwie steht und um acht mal so diese Strecke abgegangen ist, und um
282 neun noch mal und man merkt wie groß das eigentlich wird und dann um zehn durch
283 sein Walkie sagt 'und bitte,' also 'Action' und dann setzt sich dieses Zeug in
284 Bewegung, durch diesen Schnee, das ist, allein der Klang, wenn 700m Pferdewagen und

285 Pferde und Menschen, wie das klingt im Schnee, also da standen glaube ich alle, selbst
286 der Herstellungsleiter, mit Tränen in den Augen und dachten, wow, jetzt weiss ich
287 worüber wir erzählen, weil da haben wir kein Bock darauf da jemals mitzulaufen und
288 nicht zu wissen wo man ankommt. Also, das war zutiefst bewegend, auch für die
289 Schauspieler, die alle mittendrin waren, deswegen war das irgendwie gut, die wussten
290 gleich wo der Hammer hängt und dass man nicht dann irgendwas macht, so, ich komme
291 jetzt mal schnell aus dem Hotel und wo soll ich hier welchen Satz sagen, sondern dass
292 das knallhart wird, Schnee und Eis und du steigst aus aus deinem Wagen und haust dich
293 auf die Fresse weil die Straße ist vereist. Und da sind ganz viele Schwierigkeiten, die
294 Pferde rutschen aus...

295 **AW:** Aber das hat geklappt, die Bilder des Trecks sehen wirklich beeindruckend aus.

296 **KW:** Ja, weil das irgendwie nicht gestellt ist. Auch die ganzen Komparsen und so, die
297 haben ja auch so wahnsinnig mitgemacht. Wir waren auch an Grenzen wo man auch
298 nicht mehr wusste, kann man das jetzt machen. Ist das für die Menschen [INAUDIBLE]
299 noch tragbar? Wenn eine Mutter mit drei Kindern eigentlich mehr oder weniger bereit
300 ist vier Stunden immer von da nach da, 1km und dann wieder 1km von da nach da, bis
301 so ein Treck erstmal umgedreht ist und wieder zurückläuft und dann wieder umgedreht
302 ist, und wieder zurückläuft, das braucht ja wahnsinnig viel Zeit und eben auch Kraft...
303 Die Pferde drehen durch und immer auch diese kleine Kinder, also hol die Frau mit den
304 Kindern, holt die raus. Sie sollen sich hier hinsetzen, Kaffee ja Tee und so weiter und
305 Decken und so. Und wenn wir wieder los gehen dann sollen Sie sich da wieder
306 reinstellen, das war ja auch manchmal so, dass man selber sagt, naja, es ist irgendwie
307 ganz wichtig aber sicherlich auch Grenzen der Filmherstellung.

308 **AW:** Ja natürlich.

309 **KW:** Also insgesamt... Also das ist nur diese eine Punkt mit dem authentisch
310 sozusagen. Keine CGIs und so. Es ging, aber eigentlich auch immer schon in der
311 Entwicklung des Drehbuchs darum eine Atmosphäre zu erzeugen, die natürlich, wie
312 gesagt, ein großes 'Event Movie' ist, auf der anderen Seite aber die Dinge nie
313 beschönen, immer versuchen ehrlich, so ehrlich wie möglich zu berichten. Eigentlich
314 immer auch auf Wahrheiten stützt aus Berichten aus, jemand gelesen hat, wie sowas
315 funktioniert. Wir hatten auch zwei Historiker, die uns permanent begleitet haben, die
316 wir auch immer wieder zu Rate gezogen haben, also ich würde sagen bis ins kleinste
317 Abzeichen durfte eigentlich keine Uniform ein Fehler sein, kein Fahrzeug dürfte
318 eigentlich falsch sein, da wurde überall versucht so genau wie möglich zu sein, als
319 kleines Zeichen für die sozusagen das Hoffen die authentische Atmosphäre dieser Zeit
320 dramatisiert zu haben. Also, nicht den Effekt Vordergrund, sondern das Authentische,
321 sagen wir mal so.

322 **AW:** Ich möchte auch fragen über das Tabu. Viele haben gesagt, dass die Flucht ein
323 Tabu gebrochen hat. Warum glauben Sie es gab ein solches Tabu (wenn überhaupt).

324 **KW:** Das ist natürlich ein selbstgemachtes Tabu, das gab es auch und ich würde sagen,
325 wenn ich Ihnen die Geschichte mit meiner Großmutter erzählt habe, dann ist es auch ein

326 bisschen so ein Zeichen für ein Tabu, weil in der Gesellschaft, sagen wir mal, ab '68,
327 hat sich bei Intellektuellen, Lehrern, Professoren, Linken und Linkenbürgerlichen, bei
328 der ganzen SPD-Bewegung natürlich, etwas eingestellt, dass da heisst: Wir dürfen
329 unsere Schuld und wollen unsere Schuld bekennen, wir müssen unsere Schuld
330 aufklären, das geht nicht, dass wir wie in den 50er Jahren, so tun also wäre gar nichts
331 passiert, wir fangen jetzt noch mal neu an, und wir müssen bei uns selber anfangen und
332 wir dürfen nicht bei den anderen anfangen: sozusagen 'aber du hast ja auch....' Und die
333 Vertriebenenverbände haben eigentlich seit Kriegsende natürlich darauf gepocht zu
334 erzählen die Geschichte des eigenen Leids, die Geschichte der Flucht, die Geschichte
335 des Zurücklassens ihres Hab und Guts, die Geschichten von Enteignung und eben
336 Vertreibung, die manchmal noch viel schlimmer waren als die Geschichten der Flucht,
337 also nach dem Krieg, die Säuberung sozusagen, die ethnische Säuberung, die Säuberung
338 der Deutschen, die raus mussten aus den Gebieten, in den sie Jahrhunderte gelebt haben.
339 Also es war viel multikultureller in Europa vor dem Krieg als nach dem Krieg. Es war
340 ja wirklich ein Gemisch an Glaubensrichtungen und, und wieviele Englische
341 Journalisten gab es vor dem Krieg hier in Berlin? Das war ja wirklich Wahnsinn.
342 Wieviele Juden haben hier gelebt? Prag? Also eine absolute multikulturelle Stadt:
343 Deutsche, Österreicher, Tschechen, Juden, Christen, Moslems weiss ich nicht so, aber
344 lebten alle auf engem Raum eine lange Zeit zusammen. Auch natürlich aus den Süden,
345 also Jugoslawien, das hat alles nach dem Krieg aufgelöst. Die Deutschen wurden
346 natürlich rausgeschickt, zum Teil auch unter schlimmen Begleitumständen, und die
347 Vertriebenenverbände haben sich sehr auf dieses Thema gesetzt. Uns ist Leid
348 wiederfahren und wir klagen das ein. Und glaube ich, dass sie es so laut getan haben,
349 haben sie natürlich noch stärker den Protest der restlichen Bevölkerung bekommen
350 haben. Das geht nicht. Wir gehen keinen Schritt mit euch, weil wir müssen erstmal ganz
351 andere Sachen aufklären, bevor wir aufklären was [INAUDIBLE] Wir können froh sein,
352 als Deutsche insgesamt, dass wir mit so einem blauen Auge davon gekommen sind, weil
353 das ist ja das was Deutsche da offensichtlich zahlen müssen, als Preis für die Schuld
354 und deswegen müssen wir uns jetzt um die Schuld kümmern. Ich bin auch in so einer
355 Atmosphäre aufgewachsen, also das ist klar, natürlich, Schule, nicht die eigene Familie
356 primär aber Freundeskreis. Die waren eben auch so rechtsradikal, diese
357 Vertriebenenverbände... Frau Steinbach ist jetzt liberal, gegen, das war ja früher alles
358 CSU.

359 **AW:** Haben Sie Kontakt mit dem Bund der Vertriebenen gehabt?

360 **KW:** Nee.

361 **AW:** Wissen Sie, wie sie Ihren Film fanden?

362 **KW:** Also Frau Steinbach hat mir eine Email geschrieben, nach der Premiere, und hat
363 mich auch eingeladen zu einer Veranstaltung. Ich bin nicht hingegangen. Und ich wollte
364 auch vorher keinen Kontakt zu den Vertriebenenverbänden. Auch ganz bewusst, auch
365 weil ich den Eindruck hatte... Es gibt so viel frei verfügbare Information in
366 Antiquariaten, alte Bücher und so weiter, wo man auch aus anderen Zeiten noch lesen
367 konnte, und so... das ich nicht den Eindruck hatte, dass ich die Verbände noch großartig
368 helfen wollte, und ich wollte eben auch gar keine Berührung mit denen haben, weil ich

369 politisch darauf unabhängig sein wollte, ehrlich gesagt und überhaupt nicht so in einer
370 Ecke kommen wollte, weil das ist... nach wie vor gibt's ja Deutsche, die da von den
371 Preußischen Treuhänder auf Rückgabe von Grundstücken vor dem Europäischen
372 Gerichtshof klagen, irgendwo in Schlesien, und das geht halt nicht.

373 **AW:** Sie haben Fernsehfilme und auch, wie erwähnt, Kino-filme gemacht. Wie hat sich
374 die Flucht, als Fernsehfilm von einem Kino-Film unterschieden?

375 **KW:** Erstmal, sozusagen, unterscheidet sich für mich Kino und Fernsehen nicht
376 dadurch, dass ich den Eindruck habe, bei Kino muss man noch mehr, noch einen
377 besseren Film machen als bei Fernsehen, alle Filme macht man so gut man kann. Ein
378 Unterschied ist natürlich und das ist das Schöne am Kino, man hat erstmal die ungeteilte
379 Aufmerksamkeit des Zuschauers, weil er ist gekommen, er ist diesen weiten Weg
380 gegangen, hat Eintritt bezahlt und sitzt jetzt in diesem dunklen Raum und ist
381 offensichtlich bereit, sich dem Film zu widmen. Das ist ein Geschenk für jeden
382 Regisseur, aber natürlich auch eine Verantwortung, weil er hat Geld bezahlt und er hätte
383 auch zu Hause bleiben können und wenn er hinterher sagt, ich hätte auch lieber zu
384 Hause bleiben sollen, dann ist das natürlich scheiße. Klar, also es ist ein Geschenk und
385 auch eine besondere Verantwortung. Beim Fernsehen muss man halt immer ein
386 bisschen diese Fernbedienung beachten, das ist natürlich der Feind jeder Erzählung,
387 dass heißt da muss man immer so ein bisschen gucken, dass man in der Fläche
388 sozusagen immer auch unterhaltsamer ist, sozusagen, wenn sonst zulange keine, ich sag
389 mal, Energie... das kann ja alles Mögliche sein, Autounfälle, nackte Frauen, egal was,
390 ja? Wenn zu lange nichts passiert, dann schalten die Leute halt um. Das ist für mich der
391 einzige Unterschied, am sonsten versuche ich Filme zu machen, die auch auf dem
392 Leinwand funktionieren.

393 **AW:** Aber das hat auch ein Einfluss auf die Geschichte, wenn man sagt, man muss jede
394 fünf Minuten...

395 **KW:** Ja, natürlich. Wir haben gerade gestern einen Film gehabt, der für Fernsehen sehr
396 ungewöhnlich war, eigentlich mehr oder weniger nur vier Schauspieler in den
397 Hauptrollen spielt mehr oder weniger alles in einem Haus.

398 **AW:** Alles Liebe, ja ich hab's gestern geguckt.

399 **KW:** Da passiert die 90-Minuten eigentlich gar nichts. Es sind alles nur
400 Kopfkatastrophen. Es wird niemand entführt, es hat niemand Krebs, es verliebt sich
401 niemand, naja der Laurenz verliert am Schluss seine Freundin, aber es ist jetzt auch
402 nicht so, dass man sagt 'oh das große Drama,' oder so. Mehr oder weniger passiert in
403 90-Minuten nichts.

404 **AW:** Doch!

405 **KW:** Ja es passiert ganz viel, zwischen den Menschen, aber dramaturgisch gesehen, es
406 ist kein Mord am Anfang, es wird keiner erpresst, es wird kein Kind entführt.

407 **AW:** Aber vielleicht passiert's. Es gibt diese Spannung.

408 **KW:** Es könnte immer was passieren, ja.

409 **AW:** Vielleicht wird das Kind entführt. Vielleicht stirbt die Mutter. Eine nackte Frau.
410 Dann Schluss.

411 **KW:** Und das hat sehr gut funktioniert. Auch einschaltquotenmäßig. Und deswegen
412 glaube ich nach wie vor, solange man gut erzählt und was zu erzählen hat, braucht man
413 diese großen Ereignisse gar nicht.

414 **AW:** Zurück zu Quote. Die Flucht hatte die besten Einschaltquoten in derARD seit 10
415 Jahren bekommen. Warum war der Film so populär, Ihrer Meinung nach?

416 **KW:** Zum einen muss man sagen, dass Nico und seine Firma echte Profis sind, was
417 Pressearbeit betrifft. Das war eine Pressearbeit, die wirklich sehr sehr gut gemacht war.
418 Wiederum aber allerdings von der Presse sehr aufgenommen wurde. Das zeigte sich ja
419 schon, da scheint großes Interesse an diesem Thema zu sein. Wenn auch gespalten. Und
420 dann ist ein Grund natürlich Maria Furtwängler und ihre Beliebtheit bei den Deutschen
421 und wahrscheinlich der wichtigste Grund ist, dass, ich würde mal sagen, bestimmt in
422 jeder zweiten Familie in Deutschland irgendjemand irgendjemanden kennt, Tante,
423 Onkel, Großtante, Großmutter, Großvater, was auch immer, der seine Heimat verlassen
424 musste, durch Flucht oder Vertreibung oder was auch immer. Das man deswegen wohl
425 gedacht hat... [INAUDIBLE]... auch junge Menschen haben gedacht, dann guck ich
426 mir mal das an, weil wenn Tante Annie das auch passiert ist, dann will ich dann mal
427 sehen was das ist. Es sind, glaube ich, sehr sehr viele, weiss nicht wie viele Millionen.
428 Also Ostpreußen alleine sind zwei. Im gesamten, nennen wir es jetzt Ostgebiete, die
429 jetzt nicht mehr zu Deutschland gehören. Vertriebene sind's glaube ich drei oder vier
430 oder fünf Millionen, also insgesamt vielleicht sechs, sieben, acht Millionen, die ihre
431 Heimat verloren haben und da wir 80 Millionen haben heutzutage, können wir uns
432 ausrechnen, dass da ein Verhältnis ist von... ich weiss gar nicht wie man das über die
433 Generationen rechnet, aber man musste wissen wie groß eine durchschnittliche Familie
434 ist, aber schon rein rechnerisch ist da wahrscheinlich in jeder Familie eine betroffen, im
435 weitesten Sinne durch Flucht und Vertreibung. Es ist eben auch so mehr oder weniger
436 die letzte Chance, dass war uns darum war es so wichtig, dass eben durchzuziehen,
437 diese Frauen, denen das passiert ist, die nie ein Forum für ihr Leid hatten, wo es keine
438 Traumabewältigung gibt, keine psychologische Beratung, ganz im Gegenteil, wenn du
439 von deinen Geschichten erzählt hast, dann haben die Leute noch so wie ich reagiert und
440 sagten 'Oma, lass mal stecken,' weil wir haben gerade andere Probleme, wir müssen
441 nämlich aufklären, wo die Schlächter von Auschwitz alle stecken und das sind noch
442 jede Menge irgendwo da untergetaucht und wir müssen ja alle auskriegen und sie
443 müssen bestraft werden, das ist unser Thema. Diese Frauen hatten nie ein Forum. Und
444 erst durch die letzten Jahre, also durchaus durch Guido Knopp und ARD ,
445 Dokumentationsserie, aber auch durch Die Flucht natürlich vor allem durch Die Flucht,
446 war es möglich diese Generationen, diese paar Überlebenden, die es noch gibt,
447 vielleicht noch mal ins Gespräch zu kriegen mit den Jüngeren. Dass die Jüngeren
448 wirklich noch mal kommen sagen: Großtante, erzähl doch mal, wie war das denn bei
449 dir. Ich hab diesen Film gesehen, sag mal kommst du nicht auch aus... Und das die noch
450 mal die Möglichkeit haben, das zu erzählen. Also bei mir im Haus, das wusste ich gar

451 nicht. Unten im Parterre nach Der Flucht, es waren vier oder fünf Monaten danach,
452 sprach mich ein Herr Adler an und der sagte: “ich hab so ein Sterbe-Hospiz, bei mir
453 liegen ganz viele Menschen, die im Sterben liegen und da in Ruhe einschlafen und
454 davon haben ganz viele, eigentlich alle Ihren Film gesehen. Wir haben eine Frau, sie
455 will seit zwei, drei Monaten nicht sterben, sie ist schon lange bereit aber sie will nicht
456 sterben und sie schafft es nicht Abschied zu nehmen. Und sie hat den Film gesehen und
457 zehn Tage später ist sie eingeschlafen.” Und er war ganz sicher, dass das mit diesem
458 Film zu tun hat. Dass irgendwas in ihr war, irgendein Knoten, diese Erinnerung hat
459 nochmal irgendwas gelöst, oder, er war sich sicher, das hängt zusammen. Weil sie hat
460 danach so geweint und auch in gewisserweise auch verändert und ich war tiefbewegt
461 und bin das auch immer noch. Es zeigt... [INAUDIBLE]... wie wichtig Fernsehen ist
462 und wie wichtig es ist, Fernsehen ernsthaft zu betreiben und wie wichtig es ist, seine
463 Zuschauer ernst zu nehmen, weil das ist wirklich Leben. Wir erzählen in der Regel von
464 fiktiven Leben, da draußen findet das Leben wirklich statt, und das andere ist eben wie
465 wichtig es war, diesen Frauen auch nochmal ein Forum zu geben und deren Leid
466 anzuerkennen.

467 **AW:** Der Film hat einige gewalttätige oder grausame Momente (Vergewaltigungs-szene,
468 tote Kinder, Hinrichtungen). Obwohl Sie (vermutlich) so authentisch wie möglich sein
469 wollten, inwiefern waren Sie beschränkt, von dem, was Sie zeigen könnten, weil der
470 Film um 20:15 laufen müsste?

471 **KW:** Ja. Also die Vergewaltigungsszene hätte ich persönlich gerne noch länger gehabt.
472 Es ist ehrlich gesagt, ganz schlimm, ist unerträglich. Ich hätte das gerne noch...
473 [INAUDIBLE] es ist zensiert worden. Nach dem Motto das kann man nicht machen.
474 Hatten sie vielleicht auch Recht, aber das wäre sicher so im Kino sowas gewesen wie
475 wenn man sagt, ok da sitzen nur erwachsene Leute, den muss man sich halt stehen wenn
476 sich eine Frau von mehreren Soldaten angegriffen wird und die sich noch auch ablösen
477 und die anderen zugucken. Weil das ist auch noch ein Thema, die Leidtragenden eines
478 Krieges sind ja in der Regel die Frauen, dass Männer Frauen im Krieg vergewaltigen,
479 das ist ja nicht nur Russen eigen, das wissen wir von der Massenvergewaltigung im
480 Jugoslawkrieg. Jetzt ist es, wo ist es, zum Congo, Angola, es ist ja auch wieder so, dass
481 die Soldaten immer wieder rüberkommen, als Zeichen ihrer Macht die Frauen
482 vergewaltigen und dann wieder weggehen, das gehört zusammen. Dieses Leid
483 sozusagen zu schildern, und zwar bis zu Unerträglichkeit, finde ich eigentlich wichtig.
484 [INAUDIBLE] Filme müssen so hart sein, wie das Leben vielleicht ist, also
485 [INAUDIBLE] es darf nicht immer kuschelig sein.

486 **AW:** Es gibt also nochmal eine Balance zwischen den Versuch die Wirklichkeit
487 widerzuspiegeln und den Film zu einem so großes Publikum wie möglich zeigen zu
488 dürfen.

489 **KW:** Wir haben’s eigentlich immer versucht, Gewalt da zu vermeiden, wo sie für eine
490 reine Show-Effekt ist. Wir haben ja immer versucht Gewalt sozusagen nur da zu zeigen,
491 wo sie wirklich auch passiert ist, wo sie Teil der Geschichte ist und Teil der
492 Schwierigkeiten der Menschen, die zu dieser Zeit gelebt haben. Also nicht Action-
493 Sequenzen künstlich zu gestalten. Die größte Sequenz ist da sicherlich die Beschiessung

494 des Trecks aber das ist ja eben immer wieder auch passiert. Das ist ja natürlich auch
495 unrecht, weil auch damals gab's die Hager Kriegskonvention und da durften Zivilisten
496 nicht getötet und geschossen werden. Das gab als Kriegsverbrechen. Dämlich war
497 natürlich nur das die Wehrmacht auf ihrem Rückzug sich in die Zivilisten gemischt hat,
498 so sagen die Russen, und sich da quasi nicht versteckt hat aber dazwischen hing mit
499 ihren Kanonen und Gewehren und so. Und dann natürlich der Schuss von
500 [INAUDIBLE] legitimiert ist. Aber das hat eben auch zwei, drei mal am Tag
501 stattgefunden. Teil der Wahrheit, sagen wir's mal immer so.