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**Ending the Silence: A Documentary Theatre Response to the Impact of  
German War Guilt on Intergenerational, Bi-cultural Identity in New  
Zealand**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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in

English

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## Abstract

This exegesis forms the written accompaniment to the documentary theatre production *Ending the Silence*. Together, these creative and critical components form the basis for a Performance as Research (PAR) project undertaken as part of a Masters in English at Massey University. This research aims to explore and utilise the potentials of the ‘documentary theatre’ form to better understand how issues of heritage and inheritance have informed intergenerational Kiwi/German bicultural identity. The research also aims to analyse how engaging with a creative process enables a closer investigation into topics which may be regarded as taboo. The PAR project also aimed to give a voice to those who have been silenced due to the pressures of social constructs regarding German War Guilt. This term is defined as a response shared by Germans for Germany’s involvement in the Second World War. This project explores the themes of identity, guilt, history and fiction, and authenticity and the representation of trauma. The thesis begins by describing the ethnographic methodology utilised for devising the documentary theatre script *Ending the Silence*, highlighting how the creative process enabled a closer investigation of the key research themes. The research highlights how history and fiction can work symbiotically to explore taboo topics in greater depth. It concludes that documentary theatre is a useful tool for exploring taboo topics in history, arguing that there is a need to encourage intergenerational, inter-cultural communication around these topics in order to talk responsibly about past injustices.

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# Part One: Designing the Project

## Chapter One: Introduction

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The following thesis forms the critical discussion and accompanies the creative component of my Masters Performance as Research project. This performance based research project explores the impact of ‘German War Guilt’ on my immediate family. As a Performance as Research project, the research inquiry utilised Documentary Theatre as a tool to explore taboo historical topics that may inform identity. As such, this written exegesis outlines the journey I took in creating the performance component of this research project: *Ending the Silence*.<sup>1</sup> This documentary theatre play was set around a family table in modern day New Zealand, as one family discusses questions of identity, perceived guilt, and the unheard stories of the past. The play’s protagonist, Leigh, questions her cousin Sophie, father Simeon, and Poppa Jonas. In a bid to understand her heritage in more depth. She exhausts these avenues and eventually goes directly to the source – her great-uncle Klaus and his experiences of The Second World War – thus ending seventy years of silence. Without minimalising, normalising, justifying or denying the atrocities of the Second World War, but acknowledging that the past has a continual effect on people even through silence, *Ending the Silence* was created in order to explore how Documentary Theatre can get closer to taboo historical topics, while giving a voice to those who have previously remained silent. The script was devised using a compilation of interviews which were conducted with members of my immediate family, and other materials such as excerpts from an un-published autobiography and references to other historical documents.

This written thesis is divided into two parts. Part One includes this introduction and highlights the methodology of the project. Part Two explores the staging of the theoretical and conceptual territory that has influenced and been informed by the development of the creative component of my research project. The two sections complement one another as the theory has informed the practice, and the practice has in return illuminated the theoretical understandings expressed within this thesis.

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<sup>1</sup> Staged at Massey University theatre lab on 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015. Video documentation of the production can be accessed online via YouTube via this hidden link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g0FT0uMrte8>

This chapter begins by providing a brief overview of the history of the documentary theatre form utilised in devising the creative component. The chapter will then outline the inspiration driving this creative research project and give a brief historical review of the Second World War. In introducing this research project, I also provide a brief summary of what the key term 'taboo' refers to, and also define how German War Guilt ought to be understood in the context of this research project, and also touch on issues of authenticity and the treatment of documentary materials. which will be defined further in Chapter Four.

Chapter Two outlines the methodology that was used in devising the documentary theatre script. This section discusses the methods used to select my participants, including a detailed outline of my approach to the interview process and an explanation of how the script was composed.

The subsequent chapters comprising Part Two of this thesis discuss key themes that emerged in the devising process. Chapter Three highlights how the creative process enabled an exploration of issues of bicultural inheritance and identity. The chapter explores how the creative and devising process created a platform to reflect on the events of the past, constructing a framework for intergenerational dialogue and connection with cultural identity.

Chapter Four takes up a central issue of guilt. This chapter details German War Guilt which has been a driving influencer in this research. This chapter indicates that where it was first assumed that guilt was the key factor in a loss of identity, the creative project has illuminated that perhaps rather than guilt it is the perpetuation of a social stigma that has created this divide.

Chapter Five provides a discussion of three key research themes that arose during the creative process. These include the relationship between history and fiction, where it is suggested that both history and fiction can work in a complementary fashion to encourage critical investigation of one another. Another key theme that the chapter explores is the relationship between authenticity within documentary theatre. For example, it shows that understanding authenticity is essential in order to assess how this form of theatre can engage with taboo topics. It presents my understanding that authenticity occurs when there is a transparent representation of information. A final research theme that the chapter explores is the representation of trauma, by exploring the question 'how does one represent trauma if it is incommunicable?'

The conclusion forms the final chapter of this thesis and summarises key discoveries made, demonstrating that engaging with documentary theatre practice can encourage a greater reflection on topics considered taboo. The conclusion also reveals that there is a relationship between history and fiction that needs to be explored further in order to produce a deeper connection with historical narrative. This final chapter also highlights the limitations of the study by focusing on researcher bias, and indicates areas for future research within New Zealand, including further studies into multiculturalism within the nation.

### **Documentary Theatre: A Brief History**

My research project involved devising a documentary theatre production which was based on interviews with members of my immediate and extended family, due to our German heritage. In order to help contextualise my own approach to devising, this section provides a brief historical overview of documentary theatre, and outlines some of the genre's key features.

Erwin Piscator is widely accepted as the founding father of the German tradition of Documentary Theatre (Dawson, 1999; Irmer, 2006; Paget, 1987). Historically, Piscator and Bertolt Brecht are the most influential for the development of the political tradition of European Epic Theatre, which emerged during the interwar years. This form of theatre rejected the idea of a passive observer, and was created as a platform to encourage open discussion of political and social issues. This context informed the development of Epic Theatre, which encouraged the documentary theatre genre (Styan, 1993, p. 128). According to its creator, the documentary script *Trotz Alledem!* (1925) which was written by Piscator in collaboration with Felix Gasbarra, was the first production where 'the political document [was] the sole base for text and scenic work' (*as cited in*, Irmer, 2006, p. 18). Piscator was captivated by exploring the link between fact and fiction, asserting that '[it] is only from the facts themselves that the constraints and the constant mechanisms of life emerge, giving a deeper meaning to our private fears' (1980, p. 93). Documentary theatre scholar Derek Paget (1990) describes Piscator's theatre as being able to 'present an event and an attitude simultaneously' (p. 41). However, the rise of the Third Reich and the resulting exile of both Piscator and Brecht momentarily disrupted the growth and evolution of the documentary theatre form in Germany. Despite this, the notion that theatre can be a catalyst for social change continued to encourage leading theatre practitioners in the post-war years, including

Rolf Hochhuth, Heinar Kipphardt and Peter Weiss (Dawson, 1999; Irmer, 2006). The theatre created by these practitioners concentrated on ‘shifting its emphasis from the masses to the individual protagonist whose personal responsibility was to be analysed by the audience’ (Irmer, 2006, p.18). *The Investigation* (1965) by Peter Weiss is perhaps one of the most poignant documentary scripts of the 1960s. His play comprises excerpts of transcripts from the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials between 1963-65 in a manner that reassesses the way history is told. According to Weiss, documentary theatre is ‘a theater [sic] of factual reports’, and this conceptualisation continues to impact theatre today (Weiss, 1995, p. 139). The approach of many documentary theatre-markers in Germany during the 1960’s was to purposefully confront the audience with material that prohibited them from passively receiving information and rather encourage them to ask questions. While Germany’s documentary theatre scene flourished, this form of theatre also grew in popularity in Britain (Paget, 1987, p. 319). Joan Littlewood’s *Oh What a Lovely War* (1963) is an example of an early attempt ‘to provide counter narratives to the official versions of history written in by those in positions of power’ (Holdsworth, 2006, p. 80).

Since its inception, documentary theatre has developed to incorporate numerous approaches. Some of the terms associated with this theatre form include ‘fact-based theatre’, ‘reminiscence theatre’, ‘theatre of testimony’, ‘theatre of actuality’, and ‘verbatim theatre’ (Salz, 1996; Forsyth and Megson, 2009; Schweitzer, 2006; Mann, 2000). As an umbrella term documentary theatre covers a large range of theoretical and methodological practices, all of which share a common approach that utilises a range of documentary materials (newspapers, diaries, photographs, interviews etc.) as the basis for drama scripts.

Recently there has been a resurgence of verbatim theatre, a sub-genre of documentary theatre, which some scholars attribute to the lack of hard hitting, complex media reporting, and a general deficit of trust in the media and in political representatives (Anderson & Wilkinson, 2007, p. 153; Paget, 2009). Recent high profile examples of verbatim theatre include *The Permanent Way* (2003) by David Hare; *Talking to Terrorists* (2005) by Robin Soans; *My Name is Rachel Corrie* (2005) by Alan Rickman and Katharine Viner; *Let Me Down Easy* (2008) by Anna Deavere Smith; *Counted* (2010) by LookLeftLookright, and *Verbatim* (2010) by William Brandt and Miranda Harcourt. Gallagher et al. (2012) define verbatim theatre as using ‘the actual words of people, often in direct first-person address or

testimonial style, to raise issues relevant to a particular community and to activate broader social engagement’ (p. 28). Although it has been stated that verbatim theatre uses the actual words of people usually recorded in interview, it is important to keep in mind that theatre-makers are often at liberty to introduce fictionalised elements into the narrative, which is a necessary consideration for assessing the authenticity of the theatre form. In this thesis, the terms verbatim and documentary theatre are used interchangeably, and they should be understood as ‘using the words of actual people, as it was spoken’.

## **Historical Background**

Having briefly sketched the background of the documentary theatre form utilised in this research project, this section provides a brief overview of the Second World War. It provides a contextual platform for the inspiration of this project. This section outlines the origins of the war and indicates the scale of the conflict. This section also highlights the bombing of Hamburg, as these air raids are central to the stories told by participants.

The Second World War (1939-1945) was the world’s largest and most vehement armed conflict between the Allied countries, with a democratic ideology countenance, and the Axis coalition, with their totalitarian character. Germany’s role in the Second World War has tainted the nation’s legacy, causing a divide between Germans and other European nations. While this divide has become smaller as time progresses, the impact of the war has an everlasting effect on all involved.

During the war, the German government organised the planned extermination of Jews inhabiting German controlled areas. The vigorous pursuit and discrimination of Jews brought into question modern civilisation’s ability to act so inhumanely. With roughly six million Jews executed under the Nazi Regime, Germany, as a nation, was seen as the antagonist of the world. Although it is easy to understand how the world perceived Germans in the immediate years following the war, it is difficult to understand how in today’s society there is still the perception that ‘all Germans are Nazis’.

The Second World War encompassed monumental battles; Normandy, the Battle of Britain, the Western Front, et cetera. As well as these frontline battles, World War II was also comprised of multiple air raids. Both Allied and Axis powers implemented the systematic

bombing of the opposition. Due to the experiences of the participants involved in this research, I will take a moment to explore the bombings of Hamburg and discuss briefly how these events may have influenced the silence endured by Generation One, an important consideration for this thesis<sup>2</sup>. Keith Lowe (2007) presents an account from the perspectives of those who actually endured the bombing of Hamburg, while at the same time maintaining historical accuracy. The intention of his book was not to blame or excuse, rather to describe; to give us the record of how it was, as far as can be done. Being a controversial topic and one that is rarely talked about, Lowe highlights some key historical facts which surround the bombing of Hamburg in 1943 through to the end of the war.

In the final years of the war, Germany fell subject to multiple bombings countrywide. Each night bomber formations flew over the country, leaving it engulfed by fire and destruction. Beseler and Gutschow IX, estimate that the air raids saw 323,000 casualties, however estimations tally between 420,000 and 570,000 (as *cited in*, Friedrich, 2006). In 1943, British and American bombers launched an attack on the German city of Hamburg where my great-grandmother was living. For ten days the city was targeted by 9,000 tons of bombs. The firestorm created was allegedly visible for 200 miles. Keith Lowe's text describes the way German citizens were confronted by 'a sea of flame' (p. 112). Susanne Vees-Gulani (2003) depicts how at the conclusion of war, German cities were 'scenes of devastation' (p. 2). Vees-Gulani states that 'going through a bombing attack was a never-forgotten experience' (p. 2). Ian Buruma illustrates the scene clearly:

Billows of smoke and flame would reach heights of six thousand meters. Essen, an industrial city on the Ruhr, was described by one bomber pilot as a huge cooking pot on the boil, glowing, even at the distance of more than two hundred kilometres, like a red sunset. (Buruma, p. 63).

Reading these descriptions helps bring some perspective to the scale of the bombing of Hamburg and helps to illuminate the stories of war expressed by some of the participants. Because the topic is sensitive to discuss, gaining an understanding of the imagery outside of immediate memory allows me to connect with the stories being told in a more thorough capacity. Without an understanding of how vast and fierce the attacks were, it is impossible to understand the mixture of guilt and anger expressed by participants during the interview

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<sup>2</sup> See page 9.

process. According to Lowe, many did not complain about the scale of bombing, they simply took it in their stride knowing this was a consequence of the Nazi Regime. Lowe suggests that this is because ‘an unspoken sense of shame was already embedded in the German psyche long before the end of the war’ (p. 312).

### **Rationale for creating *Ending the Silence***

In her ethnographic study, *Keeping a low profile: An oral history of German immigration to New Zealand* (2002), Brigitte Bonisch-Brednich addressed the immigration of Germans to New Zealand post Second World War. Through the compilation of several interviews, Bonisch-Brednich provides an insightful first-hand look into the experiences of these German migrants. The text assumes the position that being foreign is hard but not impossible despite the anti-German sentiment which was part of New Zealand life both prior to and during the Second World War. Bonisch-Brednich uses the term *vergangenheitsbewältigung* in discussing the way immigrating Germans had to deal with their heritage and what they were essentially running away from. *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* is a composite German word. Broken down into its two parts, *vergangenheit*, means ‘past’, and *bewältigung*, ‘to overcome [especially the negative, such as mental injuries or guilt]’ (my translation). Bonisch-Brednich suggests that this combined term, *vergangenheitsbewältigung*, asks the question of ‘how society should cope with that part of history’ (p. 187). While she does little to answer this question herself, Bonisch-Brednich nevertheless asserts that the primary emphasis of *vergangenheitsbewältigung* is on the ‘moral implications and the historical image that emerges of a monstrous, atrocious, guilt-laden (self-)portrait’, which links directly to the second word in the composite (p. 187).

When understanding the entire word in this manner, it is easy to draw parallels between how a concept such as guilt can be carried by an entire populace, and why Germans have a specific word for coming to terms with the events of 1939-1945. From an early age, Germans are educated about the crimes committed by the Nazi regime during World War II. They are taught that these were the worst in history and that it is the duty of every German to never allow such crimes to be repeated.

The main focus in Germany when talking about World War II is the Holocaust. There is a cultural consensus among the leaders of the political, media and education spheres worldwide that Nazi Germany ought to be portrayed as the ‘bad guys’, whereas the Allies ought to be portrayed as ‘good guys’. However, in recent years this consensus has been challenged by investigations into the ethics of the fire bombings of German cities. It is interesting to note that the Wehrmacht Army are often excluded from World War II discussions with the focus being on the Nazi regime. Likewise, the New Zealand education curriculum encourages an anti-Nazi stance which is often misunderstood by students and turned into anti-German discourse. While this may seem harsh, it is a reality and one that I have lived. Subject to snide comments about killing the Jews, or being greeted with ‘Heil Hitler’ in high-school, I have from a young age desired a chance to explore a different narrative. There has never been doubt in my mind that the Nazi regime was an inhumane and criminal regime. Nor have there been questions about the responsibility of Germany for its participation in the war. However, there have been persistent questions in my mind about the humanness of Germans in general. And although there were questions, there was little room to ask them.

The chance to openly enquire about these questions disappeared with the death of my great-grandfather when I was nine years old, as my great-grandmother refused to talk about the war period. During World War II a stream of anti-German, rather than specifically anti-Nazi propaganda was perpetuated throughout Allied countries in literature, cinema and radio. This anti-German propaganda spiralled into a ‘hate society’ in the forthcoming years, which has consequently been difficult to eradicate. While the need for an anti-Nazi stance goes without saying, the propagated hate of all Germans is questionable. This propaganda has influenced a ‘silent generation’ as Merten suggests that ‘applying collective punishment on an entire people, no matter the circumstances, is a crime against humanity’ (2012, p. i).

There has been a shift in the intensity of the discourse of German suffering and German guilt primarily across different generations. Jorg Friedrich is a key player in the way German memory is currently represented, focusing his research on the experiences of civilians during the bombings of Germany. However, Assmann argues that the impasse manner in which Friedrich presents German memory can be surpassed by a more complex understanding of memory itself. Assmann argues that ‘social taboos block memories for long periods’ which

results in a belated reappearance of them (2006, p. 189). Gunter Grass highlights the way in which the resistance to remembrance has hindered a social move and understanding of German suffering (*as cited in*, Assmann, 2006). While stories of German suffering circulated privately (within family units), there has developed a disconnect between private and official historical memory (Assmann, 2006, p. 190).

Assmann highlights that in recent years there has been a reorientation of memory. The author notes that more frequently writers are etching their way into a long-term family history, endeavouring to understand and articulate an identity spanning three or four generations (p. 192). Examples of memory literature based on diaries and letters of deceased family members in Germany include Uwe Timm's, *Am Beispiel meines Bruders*, Cologne 2003, and Stephan Wackwitz's, *Ein unsichtbares Land. Familienroman*, Frankfurt a.M. 2003.

Assmann also asserts that there has been a shift in the aim of the writing. Prior to the 2000's, there was a desire to restore honour to a family name (p. 193). Nowadays, there is less importance on restoration, and a greater desire to come to terms with guilt and haunting legacies (p. 193). This research is in line with the latter, with a focus on understanding how the creative process involved in documentary theatre can enable a better understanding of the taboo, encouraging an intergenerational conversation which has yet to be had.

### **Introducing the Conceptual Territory**

In this section I first bring attention to the way I am using the term 'Generation' versus the lower case 'generation' and how the writing convention helps to understand this thesis in a wider context. Next I give a brief explanation of the idea of the taboo which was a central concept that formed the inspiration for this project. I look at this in terms of anti-German social discourse and suggest that it has informed my project in critical ways. This section also indicates the integral concept of German War Guilt and charts the impact of this concept on my creative project. Finally, this section presents a brief literature review on authenticity and the representation of trauma in documentary theatre. The taboo, German War Guilt, and authenticity and trauma are explored in more detail in Chapter Four.

## **Generation vs generation**

As this thesis is exploring intergenerational identity it is important to understand the capital letter convention used throughout this body of text. Where the term ‘Generation’ is employed, I am referencing the four generations of participants who were interviewed as part of my research for the construction of my documentary theatre script. Generation One includes participants who experienced the Second World War and should be considered as the oldest generation in the family unit, Generation Two encompasses the children of Generation One. Likewise, Generation Three are the descendants of Generation Two and finally Generation Four is the youngest generation in the family. Where ‘generation’ is used, the term is being used to define all people born and living at the same time, collectively.

## **The ‘taboo’**

For this exegesis taboo is defined as a topic that has been prohibited from conversation or restricted by social customs. In the context of this research project, the topic regarded as taboo is the experiences of everyday Germans during the Second World War. This concept has essentially encouraged Germans to be silent about growing up in Germany during or immediately after the Second World War, which has a ripple effect on German descendants remaining silent about their German heritage. Due to the negative involvement of the German State during the Second World War, discussing the German experience has been regarded as taboo. This thesis attempts to engage with some of the factors that might contribute to the silence around German heritage without negating injustices perpetuated by the Nazi regime. Along with the notion of taboo, another key factor that the thesis engages with is the notion of German War Guilt.

## **German War Guilt**

Typically, War Guilt is guilt associated with the First World War and Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles. However, for this thesis, the term is being used to isolate the collective guilt felt by Germans for the Nazi Regime. Collective guilt is the result of sharing a social identity with others whose actions represent a threat to that identity. The social identity that is shared is the German nationality and in this thesis, includes any person who has German

heritage. I am attributing the Nazi regime during the Second World War as the threat to that identity. To unpack this further, as a result of the Nazi regime, there has been a label which is now attached to German's in today's society. Social discourse has led to a social stigma which seems to have made 'German' synonymous with 'Nazi'. It is because of this guilt that silence around the events of the past has shrouded generations of Germans, leaving a negative stain on the fabric of German culture.

### **Authenticity and Representing Trauma**

Often when engaging with documentary theatre, questions about the theatre form's ability to be authentic in representation emerge. These questions concern whether this form of theatre meets its obligations as both an accurate representation of an event, and whether it fulfils its creative requirements as an aesthetic theatre form or work of art. While my own thesis does not aim to tackle the issue of documentary theatre's efficacy to be authentic in full, it is an important issue to take into consideration due to its reoccurring presence within theatre scholarship. For this thesis, authenticity is important not only for the accuracy of historical analysis but also because it is through an authentic conversation that change will ensue. While theatre is sometimes understood as a platform for creative expression it should also be seen as a platform for important social conversations to take place. When something is deemed authentic, it is likely to be taken more seriously. Therefore, it is important to ascertain documentary theatre's ability to straddle fact and fiction. Gary Dawson (1999) breaks the term documentary into its etymological foundations to analyse documentary theatre's ability to be authentic. He outlines that the French word *documentaire* comes from the Latin word *docui* which means 'to teach, rehearse (a play)' (p. 5). This definition provides a useful means to navigate what I refer to as the paradox of creative truth. The 'paradox of creative truth' refers to the seemingly contradictory notion that theatre is an art form that relies on fictional properties, but that documentary is based on fact and therefore documentary theatre cannot be authentic. However, looking at the Latin root word, it can be understood that documentary theatre can incorporate elements of both fact and fiction, presenting a form of the truth which is what makes it a paradox.

Julie Salverson (1996) provides an early discussion on the 'overemphasis' of representing an authentic story on stage arguing that just as the 'overly symbolic or abstract is

evasive, the overly literal is a lie' (p. 184). Similarly, Mark Chou and Roland Bleiker (2010) suggest that the 'fictional techniques of theatre paradoxically provided a more realistic account of reality than factual representations' (p. 563). In addition to this Michael Anderson and Linden Wilkinson (2007) suggest that the meaning of verbatim has changed over time creating a discontinuity within the theatre form. This is because, while verbatim means 'in exactly the same words as were used originally', as Anderson and Wilkinson point out, not all verbatim, is strictly verbatim (p. 155). The authors assert that authenticity is now in the story, rather than how the story is recounted. While this argument does have some merits, Gaul argues that the strength of verbatim theatre is that it is basic story-telling, which relies on real people and their words. The way in which the story is told explores cultural crises and exposes the complexities of real life (*as cited in*, Anderson & Wilkinson, p. 163). So what then does it mean to be authentic in theatre? Amanda Fisher (2011) defines authenticity as 'a yearning for greater honesty, truthfulness and importantly, a greater correspondence to reality' (p. 112). In terms of this study, it is important to understand the parameters within which documentary theatre finds itself in regards to authenticity. For this research, it is essential to present a creative project that is authentic in representation in order to explore the taboo in greater detail.

One important consideration in the representation of the taboo, is that the taboo traumatic events are sometimes retold. The authenticity of this retelling, in terms of presenting the 'real', is sometimes brought into question. Chou and Bleiker argue that 'by moving deeply painful and tense matters to the realm of fiction', they can be 'analysed and reflected upon more openly and away from the constraints of censorship and political correctness' (2010, p. 569). In doing this, the verbatim playwright, takes 'what is too difficult, too dangerous and too restrictive to discuss in reality' to the stage, a realm of fiction where the 'rehearsal for reality' can begin (p. 569). Taking these thoughts into consideration, in terms of representing war, verbatim asks us to reassess what we believe is real, what is truth and what is authentic. Although the literature widely asserts that verbatim has great potential, the limitations of the theatre form cannot be neglected. As Chou and Bleiker eloquently suggest, for all is worth, scripts of this theatre form are still just a 'representation that is inevitably subjective and mediated' (p. 570).

Commenting on the theatre form's ability to remain relevant, Paget (2009) claims that the 'participant in a live event and the witness of events have special claims to being something to be trusted' (p. 235). The documentary theatre event may work to develop trust, and provide rhetorical power to the testimony provided by participants and witnessed by audiences. When the evidence presented in documentary theatre performance is construed as testimony, there is a sense that this can be trusted more fully than other documents and materials, such as newspaper clippings, on which the performance might be based. Audiences might distrust these documents but nevertheless find testimony delivered in performance to be trustworthy and more authentic (Cheeseman, Piscator, Weiss, Oades, Blythe, Brandt & Harcourt etc.).

Drawing on methods of Playback Theatre, Rea Dennis criticises the literal representation of traumatic stories as they are 'potentially re-violating' (2008, *Refugee Performance*, p. 214). In *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory and Trauma*, Dominique LaCapra (1994) argues that revisiting trauma brings the opportunity to think and reflect on the traumatic event, which is a positive consequence of verbatim theatre.

In addition, research conducted by Gallagher et al. demonstrated 'how speaking a truth, a story, became a way to be seen and how the drama class became a place of relational art, fearless speech, public pedagogy' (2012, p. 39). In this context, the authors subscribed to Cohen-Cruz's characterization of the public pedagogy of theatre as a 'social call, cultural response,' (*as cited in*, Gallagher, p. 39). Their research showed that in this particular study, which is similar to my own, qualitative research, 'at its collaborative best, greatly profits from the ambiguities and uncertainties of theatre-making processes' and enabled the participants to express topics which may otherwise have remained unspoken (p. 39).

## **Chapter Conclusion**

This section has highlighted the writing conventions used to differentiate between the participant generation pool and generations in general, indicating the framework for the conceptual territory that has informed the development of my documentary theatre production, *Ending the Silence*. This chapter has given a background for understanding what the taboo is in regards to this thesis and has indicated how the pivotal term German War Guilt

ought to be understood within this body of work. The chapter also highlighted the issues surrounding authenticity and representing trauma within documentary theatre. Defining authenticity, and establishing the theatre form's ability to be authentic is important for this thesis due to the controversial material being explored. The genre's ability to represent the traumatic in an authentic matter enables a closer investigation of how aspects of the creative process work together to get closer to the topic of inquiry. By briefly outlining the different topics of research, this thesis endeavours to assess in a new way, the extent to which documentary theatre can better understand historical conflicts and how issues of heritage and inheritance have informed Kiwi/German bicultural identity. This thesis also aims to analyse how engaging with a creative process might enable a closer investigation into topics which are regarded taboo, and give a voice to those who have been silenced due to the pressures of social constructs regarding German War Guilt.



## **Chapter Two: Methodology**

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This chapter outlines the different phases of the devising processes used to create *Ending the Silence*- the documentary theatre project and creative component of this research inquiry. The chapter begins by first outlining the process for ethical approval and then sketches out the participant selection method that was used to identify participants to interview as part of the research project. The chapter then provides an overview of the ethnographic methods employed in the interviewing process. The chapter also outlines of the method used for generating the interview questions, before providing an overview of how interviews were transcribed. The next section discusses the development of the script including how excerpts were selected and how data was compiled into a working documentary theatre script. The chapter then moves to provide an account of how the characters were created. Finally, this chapter outlines the staging methods and mise-en-scene choices of the project. Each aspect of this chapter demonstrates how engaging with the creative process of documentary theatre practice encourages deeper thought and reflection on the themes that arose during the inquiry.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Due to the nature of this research, a human ethics application was completed. The application included an explanation of the project's aims, the researcher's qualifications to conduct the study, a detailed description of the participant pool, an intended methodology, procedures for mitigating harm and descriptions of controversial terms and their meanings for this thesis. This application also indicated that where it was possible, the participants of the research would have anonymity. This was submitted to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee, for ethical consideration. The committee met to discuss concerns of the project. Amendments to the wording of the mitigation process were made and ethical approval was received on May 28th 2015 (Appendix I).

### **Participant Selection**

Creating criteria for the participants was a simple task as I chose to restrict my research to my own family. By doing this a range of limitations and ethical considerations were immediately

mitigated. Karen O'Reilly (2005) discusses the necessity for participation and observation in the research field, stating that it can often be difficult for the researcher to obtain entrance into the intended group. She states that one issue is knowing when to be yourself and how much of yourself you can be. O'Reilly states that within ethnographic research 'access to a group is not something you do once and then you are in. It has to be negotiated' (p. 88). However, I already had established relationships with my participants, therefore I did not need to familiarise myself with them. With this being said, other potential conflicts of interest were considered. These will be addressed in the 'Conducting the Interview' section of this chapter.

Due to my familiarity with the intended participants, a letter of invitation (*see* Appendix II) to participate in the research was sent to those that fit into the participant criteria listed below:

- The participant has a kinship (marriage, hereditary, adoption) to the researcher.
- The participant is perceived to have been affected by German War Guilt and/or intergenerational silence.

After the letter of invitation was sent and positive response was received, I began to arrange interviews with the participants.

### **Interview Process: Introduction to interviewing**

This thesis is a Performance as Research based enquiry. This means that I have pursued a specific line of enquiry by means of performance. This includes the entire creative process from finding a subject of enquiry to, writing, directing, designing and, performing a script. The creative process has been the main means of investigation leading my study and encouraging an exploration into the research question (Hadley, 2013; Nelson, 2013). As such, not being a journalist, and having conducted a limited number of interviews, I began my interview process by exploring effective models of interview techniques within qualitative research. Karen O'Reilly's (2005) *Ethnographic Methodology* offers a basic procedure to undertaking interviews which guided my own interviewing process. While O'Reilly notes the basic conventions of an interview, she also rightly asserts that interviewing can be exhausting. This is because '[y]ou are listening attentively, empathising...and thinking about the implications of what the person is saying...' (p. 143). Interviewing, as pointed out by

O'Reilly, is more than just asking questions; it is 'thinking, planning, writing, discussing with friends and colleagues, sorting through for themes, reading notes and transcripts and thinking again' (p. 145). With this in mind I planned to conduct short interviews, not only for my benefit but also so that the participant did not feel emotionally exhausted upon the conclusion of the interview as well.

### **Generating Questions**

Rubin and Rubin (1995) insist that the interviewer ought to prepare an interview structure, which has fluid elements to it. There should be the main questions, followed by 'probes', concluding with follow up questions. Here a main question can be an overarching question related to the topic. Probes should be understood as the questions which endeavour to go deeper if the participant does not give a full answer. Follow up questions can be understood as questions that are used to understand the wider context of the information given. Keeping this in mind, I began generating my interview questions using the broadest ideas I could think of and wrote out any question semi-related to my enquiry until I had roughly thirty-five questions on my page. From there I categorized the questions into generation appropriate sections (*see Appendix III*). By categorizing the questions in this manner, I could more easily see the range of questions, and was able to reduce my questions into five to seven main questions per generation (*see Appendix IV*). After creating my key questions, I ordered these to create an arch which would later aide the script writing process.

Despite having a structure, O'Reilly (2005), Rubin and Rubin (1995) have similar opinions that humans are malleable, therefore, it is important that the structure is adaptable to the responses that a participant may give. In combination with this, Pam Schweitzer (2007) asserts that it is essential that the director's vision does not promulgate the research process (p. 45). With this in mind I was able to create an interview schedule with an arc, without being set on reaching a particular destination. This ability to adapt my schedule to match the needs of the participants proved to be a successful technique for drawing out the controversial themes and stories of the past with one participant sharing experiences for the first time in seventy years. Instead of following my interview structure for this participant I started by asking if the participant would share stories of growing up in Germany. This showed that I

was interested in their life as a whole, rather than just for my project, making the participant feel more comfortable.

### **Conducting the interviews**

Drawing on practical techniques shared by Rubin and Rubin (1995) I noted that it was important to make the interviewee feel as comfortable as possible. Although my family and I are comfortable with one another, this was an important consideration for me – the topic of discussion had not been openly discussed in our family sphere and I anticipated there would be an atmosphere of awkwardness during the interview. With this in mind, I allowed the interviewees to choose where the interview was to take place, as suggested by O'Reilly (2005, p. 146). Only one participant chose to speak in a public place, the ten other participants choosing to undergo the interview in their own living spaces. While it was important that the interviewee remained comfortable throughout the interview, it was essential to remember that the interview had a purpose and I was constantly pulling the conversation back to the focus of inquiry to explore the participants' experience of German War Guilt.

The interviews were conducted one-to-one with the option of having a support person present throughout the interview. However, only one participant chose to utilise a support person. The support person was not invited to speak but acted as an emotional support for the participant sharing. While this may have inhibited the information the participant disclosed, both the participant and myself agreed that the presence of the support person created a less awkward atmosphere and enabled the participant to easily engage with the questions. Pam Schweitzer (2007), states that often one-to-one interviews are beneficial as they can yield particularly rich, uninterrupted stories. In one-to-one situations, a more detailed account of events and in-depth exploration of emotion can be navigated (p. 43).

I chose not to show the participants the interview schedule prior to the interview. In doing this I may have limited the answers I received, however I did this so as to receive the most honest answers possible. As previously mentioned, I was cautious that there was a conflict of interest within my research, the participants all being family members, and as such, that some participants may have felt pressured to give an academic answer, using language unfamiliar to them, or to give an answer they believed I was looking for, rather than giving an answer they truly believed in. Although this meant I risked receiving disjointed, long-winded responses to the questions I asked, this was the only way I could mitigate this conflict of

interest. I insisted the participants take their time prior to answering the questions – silence was okay, as was ‘over-talking’. Despite assuring participants that there was ‘no right answer’ Participant One was worried whether I was getting ‘good material’, while Participant Six wanted to ‘give [me] a really good answer’ and Participant Eight felt the answer they gave was ‘useless’.<sup>3</sup>

However, as each interview progressed, the interviewees became less concerned with whether their answers were ‘right or wrong’, and became more comfortable with just sharing their thoughts. Rubin and Rubin (1995) assert that the act of recording an informal chat can make some participants wary. However, O’Reilly approaches this by disclosing to the participant that the recording device enables her to be more present, as she can go back and listen to the conversation instead of having to take everything in all at once (2005, p. 151). On the other hand, O’Reilly also points out that in some circumstance the presence of a recorder can stilt the conversation and encourage guarded behaviour. Although an important consideration, this project required all interviews to be recorded, with interviewees being aware of this prior to the interview. However, reminding participants that I was able to be more present using a recording device, eased the awkwardness of being recorded and the participants quickly forgot there was a recording device present.

When conducting interviews, it is essential to be an attentive listener. Sometimes when engaging with documentary theatre the interviewee has been largely marginalised. Joyce Holliday notes that often those being interviewed for this type of project ‘have valid reactions and thoughts, but no one listens not even their own families. People suddenly say, in the middle of interviews, ‘You don’t want to hear this’, because they’ve been told that all their lives, that no one wants to hear’ (*as cited in*, Schweitzer, 2007, p. 43). This was expressed by Participant Two during their first interview. The participant was asked to share stories about growing up in Prussia both prior to and during the event of the Second World War. After spending forty minutes describing life as an adolescent the participant turned and said ‘but you don’t want to hear that, that’s not really stories’. Because I was aware that being an attentive listener was essential to my project, I was able to assure the participant that actually, those stories were what I wanted to hear. Reminding the participant that events

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<sup>3</sup> I have referred to the participants as ‘Participant One/Two/Three’ etc. to protect their anonymity in accordance to the requirements of the Ethics Research Application.

which happened prior to the outbreak of war helped to increase my understanding of the world the participant was living in encouraged the participant to continue telling their stories.

### **Transcription and Scripting**

Having completed interviews with eleven participants, I took to the task of transcribing the interviews. Although it was recommended that I hire someone to transcribe the interviews for me, I chose to transcribe the interviews myself. According to O'Reilly (2005), the interviewer ought to transcribe the interview themselves as it enables a closer understanding, and facilitates the interviewer to identify themes early on, making links as the transcription continues. When transcribing it is important to remember that participants may be saying what they think the interviewer wants to hear, therefore the interviewer ought to validate the answers. I listened to the audio recordings once in full and then in parts as I transcribed. Upon completion of transcribing, I spent time reviewing the audio recording of the interviews and the written transcripts, correcting any mistakes.

### **Compilation of Data**

While transcribing the interviews I had, in my mind, excerpts I knew I wanted to include in the script. Without holding any narrative arc in my mind I selected the excerpts that stood out to me during the transcription process. In a process that Peter Cheeseman describes as letting the 'material decide', I used those excerpts as a platform on which to build the rest of my script (Documentary Arts Report, 1986, p. 8). I noticed that that the excerpts I had chosen during the transcription process were the same segments of the interviews which I had made a note of in my research book. These segments stood out to me for different reasons. Some comments were unique in thought or highlighted a lack of historical knowledge, and others were perceived moments of breakthrough. By breakthrough I mean that the material shared was perceived to act positively toward one or more of my research aims.

Although I had an initial selection of excerpts that I could use for my script, this selection was limited and I needed to ensure I had not overlooked useful material. I printed out each transcription colour coding each one. I then cut the transcribed interviews into sections and categorised each section into themes. The themes ranged from; German identity;

Kiwi identity; guilt; resentment; pride; war times; life before the war, and forgiveness. After collating what I thought was the relevant information from the different interviews I then took to the task of creating a story from the large amount of information both transcriptions and documents combined.

When discussing the script writing process, Cheeseman stated that “[f]irst of all, it’s collect rather than select. The first process is gathering as much material as possible” (*as cited in*, Documentary Arts Report, 1986, p. 8). At this stage, I had collected a range of information and the task was to select, rather than collect. The collection of transcribed interviews created a palette for the creative structuring and editing into a coherent and performable script, but I also had the writings of my great-grandfather and other historical documents I could use to enhance my script.

Using a similar technique to selecting interview excerpts I arranged my documented data into categories. Instead of creating new categories I chose to reduce the amount of information to fit within the themes I had already discovered through the interview process as the interviews were my primary focal point.

### **Drafting a Script**

The method I constructed for this process was less simple than I thought. I collated the script by maintaining the interview structure. I started with all the information that was relevant to Generation Four, then Generation Three, followed by Generation Two and ending with Generation One; essentially creating four monologues that replicated the interview process, without the interviewer present.

Reflecting on this process, I would have been wiser to follow Cheeseman’s steps for structural decision making: “What is the story? Where is there a coherent human statement? Where is there a pattern perceivable amongst this? What would be the dramatic structure?” as my script had no direction which I learnt after a first script reading (Documentary Arts Report, 1986, p. 8).

## **Script Readings**

To aid the script writing process I conducted three script readings. The first reading was held on July 6<sup>th</sup> 2015. This initial reading highlighted the longwinded dialogue and made me question my choice of excerpts. While some excerpts were amazing moments of dialogue, they did not fit into the script as I had intended. The characters in the reading had no names, there was no intended setting, the entire script lacked direction. Despite this, I felt the reading was beneficial to my research. Not only did it show me that I had turned each interview into a monologue, it showed me that I had not yet found a red thread for my script.

On the conclusion of the reading I focused my thoughts around how to condense an hour long conversation into its purest form. Unable to find a clear way to do this, I chose to create mini conversations between the characters with the excerpts. The idea around this technique was to show how the different ideas could work together. Having found a way to get my characters to talk with one another, I restructured my script accordingly and proceeded with a second script reading.

The second reading was conducted with a different group of people to the previous readers. This allowed the new readers to read without preconceptions of the script, and allowed me to hear the characters with a fresh perspective. Hearing the script being read back to me, I was once again able to hear the faults in the direction of the narrative and the confusing points of dialogue. Although the majority of the script had been restructured it was still disjointed- there were too many characters and too many streams of thought. I made notes on the side of my script, crossing out aspects of dialogue, questioning the use of repetition, rearranging the structure of conversation, and highlighting the need to create composite characters.

The third reading was conducted with members of the Massey University Theatre Society, the local student theatre club situated on the Massey Albany Campus, and flowed a lot better than the previous two readings. However, the script was still disjointed. Despite having created four clear characters, establishing a setting, and having a narrative structure the script was tedious to read. One of the actors suggested breaking each point of dialogue into bullet points. I then learnt that this was a technique used by Robin Belfield when creating a verbatim script (National Theatre, 2014). Belfield suggests finding the five most important words from a transcript, which will enable the playwright to grasp the key ideas being

expressed. As I had already worked through the transcripts and chosen the excerpts of dialogue, I went through the newest version of the script to find the key words used by each character. This then enabled me to see the discourse between the characters in a new way and, establish character motivations. I was able to reduce the circular dialogue, condense long monologues and extract more meaning from the transcripts than I previously had.

It was not until after the third reading that I created a fifth character. I had been reluctant to insert the fifth character into the script due to the structure of the play. I felt that the fifth character would change the direction of the text. However, as I read more documentary theatre scripts, I noticed the presence of a narrator, or the ‘interviewer’, in the texts. This character never detracted from the action but rather guided the narrative. Inserting the fifth character meant inserting my voice into the play. While I had been trying to avoid this I was questioned about my intentions. My answers fell flat after realising that I had chosen to silence my own voice within a play, based on my own heritage, that was titled, *Ending the Silence*. Once I had created the fifth character, the script had direction and the conversation between the characters now had a driving force.

### **Creating composite characters**

Some playwrights who engage with a variety of interviews choose to compile extracts from more than one source, piecing them together to create a scripted version. *The Investigation* is a collaboration of witness testimonies, magazine articles and newspaper experts which have been assembled in a manner that reassesses the official version of the 1963-1965 Frankfurt Auschwitz Trials. Playwright Peter Weiss compiled hundreds of witness testimonies into thirty characters, including a Judge, Counsels for the Prosecution and the Defence, Defendants 1-18 representing actual people, and Witnesses 1-9 representing successively quite diverse and anonymous witnesses (Weiss, 2009, i).

Weiss also gathered and composed/structured the documentary material into eleven cantos which each follow a theme. In a similar fashion *Ending the Silence* created five composite characters from eleven participants, journal entries and historical documents. Creating composite characters highlighted the need to verify the data I had collected. By eliciting the same, or similar data from a range of data collections (internal, external or report

comparisons), the characters became more believable in their assumptions. Although only Generation One and Generation Two were easily triangulated with data from other fields, Generations Three and Four were cross checked with the other interviews within their selection pool. Whilst triangulating data is not essential to the script writing process, I wanted to be aware of the historical contradictions and biases within the script especially considering the potential for my own biases. Keeping this in mind, one aim of this project was, not to re-write history, but to give a voice to the silenced. It was most important to triangulate the information from Generation One. I was able to compare and contrast the data with textbooks, lectures and other historical accounts of the Second World War. Although some information did not quite match up with historical reports, I chose to engage with personal historical memory, rather than official historic memory as it was the experience of the participants.

Creating composite characters also made it easier to protect the identities of the participants. I was able to change the names and genders of the participants with ease, by employing a technique similar to that of William Brandt (1994) in his work with Miranda Harcourt on the play *Verbatim* (1994). Brandt and Harcourt used interviews with criminals and their families to create a narrative. After deciding on the storyline, crime and characters, Brandt then reviewed the interviews to find “fragments of text, sometimes as small as a sentence or even a word” which was then used as a platform for the script (p. 27). This meant that even though the words were directly from the interviews and ‘whose words are supposedly reported, verbatim, actually exist’ the characters themselves were fictitious (p. 27). This approach helped me to create my composite characters. Utilising this technique meant that a large portion of my script was directly transferred from the various interviews, with only a small portion of the dialogue having been fabricated in some way. Even though my script did not have to be a verbatim script as I wrote, I discovered this allowed me to get closer to the controversial topic, without minimalising, justifying nor denying the atrocities of that period.

### **The Poster**

An important aspect of the creative process was creating the poster image (Appendix V). I met with graphic designer Richard Westmoreland and explained the concept of the production to him. The resulting poster design represents the main themes of the project. The white mute

symbol was chosen as it highlights the one of the key topics of this project: silence. The swastika which is blended in behind the mute symbol represents the way the Nazi Regime has been an underlying contributor to the silence of Germans. The faded fern is a symbol of New Zealand and indicates one aspect of identity which is explored in this project. Colour was an important consideration for me as it can be extremely evocative. The colours used were all very prevalent during the Second World War as well as being attributed to guilt, shame, neutrality and acceptance; all concepts explored within the script. When considering which symbols to include in the poster I encountered an inner conflict and sought guidance on what would be appropriate. My concern was the use of the (muted) swastika in the image. Understanding that the Nazi symbol is regarded as taboo and is banned in some countries, I was concerned that perhaps I was being insensitive with the use of the symbol. The idea was that the swastika would represent the Nazi Regime. Muting the swastika symbolised the way in which Germans have felt unable to share their experiences and newer generations still claim, or are told they ought to claim guilt of the events of the Second World War. I was advised by Dr. Adam Claasen that my consideration had been well thought out and would be appropriate in relation to the moral quagmire of the period and the difficulties of intergeneration dialogue that my project is exploring. With that advice I concluded that the use of the swastika was a necessary symbol to illustrate the themes of the project.

## **Rehearsal Process**

Entering the rehearsal process I knew that there would be changes to my script. My actors asked whether it was feasible to turn the script into bullet points and allow them to adlib the dialogue due to the large amounts of monologue the script still included and the limited amount of time we had for rehearsals. While this was a plausible idea, I asserted that verbatim relied on saying the words as they were said. Although I had not set out to create a verbatim script, I found myself feeling protective about the information the participants had disclosed and I wanted to respect it as much as possible. Granted this created a new realm of difficulties it also created the chance to engage with witness theory and trauma in performance.<sup>4</sup> I chose to engage with Cheeseman's theory that '[...] the material used on the stage must be primary source material. Words or actions deriving from the events to be described or participants in

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<sup>4</sup> See, Chapter 5, Representing Trauma, p. 51.

those events are the only permitted material for the scenes of the documentary' (Cheeseman, 1970, p. xiv).

Aware that the actors were struggling with the rhythm of the dialogue I researched ways to help the actors understand the world of the play. Director of the verbatim project *Hey U OK?* Robin Belfield asserts that listening to the transcript is an essential aspect of the rehearsal processes. Belfield believes that the recording holds the 'un-scriptable' yet vital parts of the script (National Theatre, 2014). Essentially the actor is able to draw on the voiceprints of the recording. A voiceprint can be viewed as the fingerprints of a person's vocal chords. Voiceprints are described by Caroline Wake (2010) as 'unique and almost impossible to reproduce.' (p. 3). Alecky Blythe pioneered the use of headphones to enable an accurate reproduction of the voiceprints. This involves editing the recorded interview into the desired structure. This is then played to the actors through earphones during the rehearsal process, and on stage in performance. This technique means that the actors do not learn the lines, but rather copy what has been said including every pause, breathe and stutter. Blythe believes that utilizing this method produces the most accurate reproduction of the real, rather than enabling actors to revert to their own idiosyncratic voiceprints (Hammond & Steward, 2008)

During the scripting process, I had thought intently about using this form of theatre within my own project. At first the accuracy of the technique seemed to outweigh the time consuming editing process. However, upon creating composite characters, this method of scripting quickly became impossible. Nonetheless, during the rehearsal process, voice recordings were used when actors struggled to catch the tone or emotion of their character and understand the intent behind a comment.

I chose to begin each rehearsal by gathering the cast around the table and showing them either a video clip, or letting them listen to a sound clip. The video clips I would present to the cast held images which my cast had never seen before. I chose to show them clips from Second World War documentaries with burnt bodies, displaced peoples and bomb deployments. The clips always had a voice-over explaining the historical events. Sometimes the voice over would be contradictory to what the cast was reading and other times the two would line up. By doing this I was able to bring to the forefront of the actors' minds the controversy of the topic we were tackling.

A large portion of rehearsal time was used discussing the way guilt and identity were addressed in within the play. I recall one rehearsal we sat and talked about how we viewed being ‘kiwi’ and what that meant to us. This not only enabled us to engage at a more personal level with the characters, but provided a platform for a wider discussion to take place outside of the theatre space.

During the rehearsal one of my actors landed a role in *The Phantom of the Opera* and was unable to attend rehearsals with the rest of the cast. The actor and I had conversations on the phone, and exchanged messages regarding how I wanted Klaus, the character, to be represented. The absence of Klaus during the rehearsal process was surprisingly effective. When the rest of the cast heard Klaus’ monologue for the first time (at the technical rehearsal), the cast was able to connect with the emotions of the piece in an unadulterated manner. These emotions captured the way the participants felt upon hearing the story during the performances.

## **Staging**

Staging *Ending the Silence*, was simple in concept but difficult in execution. During the third reading of the script I was aware that I wanted the play to take place in a family environment but that I wanted the staging to be fairly minimal. Although my natural instinct was to push the boundaries of theatre and breakaway from the staging conventions I had been exposed to in regards to documentary theatre, I realised that simplistic staging was going to compliment the project in a greater way than something extravagant. How to create a simplistic stage without feeling as if I was replicating the interviews and creating a boring atmosphere was a pressing question. I played around with the idea of a proscenium stage; framing the stage and having the audience looking from the outside but this seemed to contradict my aims- I wanted to invite the audience into the conversation not exclude them from it. I then thought about the use of a thrust stage. This would include the audience in the action more but I felt like it was still alienating the audience too much.

I chose to research unconventional staging techniques and was reminded of Rimini Protokoll’s *Call Cutta in a Box* (2008). The transnational play invited audience members to participate in performance that was structured completely around the individual creating a

unique experience for every audience member. The project changed the way people perceived theatre, making them question what theatre really is and what it does. This staging inspired me to think outside the box to create a unique experience for each of my audience members. Revisiting my initial aims and thinking about the context of the play, I decided to seat the audience on the stage amongst the action. This created challenges for the lighting director and the actors, practising interacting with food, drink, and envisioning other people at the table during the rehearsal process. Despite the challenges, this staging meant that the audience was directly invited into the conversation with actors being directed to ask questions to the audience members, allowing the audience space to respond. In combination with this, the audience were both included, and alienated from the conversation; they were simultaneously part of the family and part of the 'other' which added a new dynamic to my research.

### **Mise-en-Scene**

I used the university lighting designer (David Seaton) to light my production. I put little thought into the lighting design at the beginning of the rehearsal process as this was less important to me than capturing the meaning of the dialogue. This meant that when I met with the lighting designer, I was unable to articulate my vision clearly. Having little understanding of the power of a lighting design I allowed the lighting director to walk me through his vision. Most of which appeared to parallel the ideas in my mind. However, upon the first technical rehearsal it was evident that both lighting director and myself had misunderstood one another. Dr. Rand Hazou advised me to think critically about my lighting choices and whether they were necessary to progressing the story. The lighting design that was chosen was a fairly simple design, using a warm light to replicate sitting in a dining room changing slightly to show different moods and finally isolating Klaus at the end of the play. However due to technical difficulties the lights did not transition as smoothly as I desired and the effect became distracting during the performance.

The initial plan was to involve sounds created on stage in the play. Originally the play opened with Leigh playing the piano, moving from Christmas carols to *Edelweiss*, a song which was special to the participants and the topic. However, the use of external sounds began to complicate the script and detract from the narrative. The resulting performance involved no sound other than the dialogue between characters. This ensured focus was on the words that

were being said, and not on extra effects. *Ending the Silence* was performed twice on November 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at Massey University, Albany Campus whereupon on the conclusion of the performance the audience was invited to engage in a question and answer time, which has informed the following chapters. The resulting discussions focused on key themes that emerged in performance. These are explored in Chapters Three through to Five.

### **Chapter Conclusion**

The methods utilised to create the creative component of this project enabled a closer investigation of the key themes. The following chapters illustrate this in more depth by highlighting the key themes that emerged during the construction of *Ending the Silence*, from the initial interviews to the final performance. During the interview and creative process, I realised that identity is a larger topic than I had originally thought. Chapter Three shows the way identity became a central topic during performance. The chapter indicates that the term identity had a different meaning for each participant which meant staging identity would be more difficult than I had anticipated. In combination with the concept of identity, staging the script encouraged me to think more deeply and critically about my previous assumptions, especially regarding guilt. German War Guilt had been a driving focus of the investigation. However, the inquiry and creative process challenged my assumptions and helped me to deepen my understanding of the difference between guilt, shame, responsibility and social stigma, as discussed in Chapter Four. The methods employed meant that I was able to think more acutely about my approach to the research topic.



## **Part Two: Staging the Conceptual Territory**

### **Chapter Three: Considering German/ Kiwi Bi-cultural Identity**

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This chapter explores the issue of identity which emerged as one of the central research themes in the process of creating the documentary theatre performance. The creative process was an opportunity to explore issues of bicultural inheritance and identity as the act of telling a story can access histories in new ways. But the act of re-telling can also tap into emotions which are often avoided in historical discourse and analysis, given their often perceived qualities as fallible or unreliable. Devising the script highlighted that where the two often opposing German and New Zealand European cultures have met, the silence of one has often ensued. During the scripting stage of this research I decided to create composite characters based on the different generations of participants interviewed. Creating composite characters allowed a more transparent representation of the intergenerational dialogue (see Chapter Two, p. 24) Generation Two articulated the way they did not ‘fit anywhere’ within society due to the combination of their cultural identity. Unfortunately, although not necessarily consciously, this meant a continuation of silence was propelled into each new generation, expanding the identity chasm.

#### **Defining Identity**

Identity is a complex concept, embodying both changeable and unchangeable traits as well as external and internal influences. Identity cannot be defined by one factor, but rather an array of factors contributes to one’s identity. In terms of this thesis, what is being explored is a cultural identity, and how one understands, or fails to understand who one is in regards to a wider inheritance of heritage. Culture is, as anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) noted, ‘what we tell ourselves about ourselves’ (p. 448). Biculturalism, similarly to identity, has no definition that scholars can agree on. Notwithstanding, it is important here to note that bicultural individuals are described as those that exhibit normative behaviours from both ethnicities (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000). Investigating theories of acculturation could be a useful study into the dynamics of understanding bicultural identity further, however this is not paramount to this particular thesis.

When exploring the aforementioned topics, interviews were conducted to create a framework for a performance script. These interviews indicated a lack of continuity regarding what identity means. Each participant had a different definition for the term identity with vast differences between how the participants perceived what being a New Zealander meant and what they thought it meant to be a German. This created tension when devising a script because of the vague points of view. For example, Participant Eleven (Generation Four) stated that, ‘identity is the perception of who you are from other people.’<sup>5</sup> The participant then went on to explain that this is because while they have their own understanding of who they are, someone else may perceive them differently. Essentially, the participant explained that their own perception of identity is irrelevant as we tend to rely on other people for affirmation and acceptance. The same participant then went on to state that aside from an individual identity we are also identified by our careers or our social groups. In this case the participant stated that the organisation they are part of has a culture and identity that differs from the other services.

Alternatively, Participant Eight (Generation Four) stated that identity ‘is what makes you as a person’. This particular participant believed identity is not just your physical appearance but also ‘your name your background, what’s shaped you to be the person you are’. Keeping these differences in mind, creating composite characters emphasized the need to have clarity regarding what identity meant. This said, the findings reinforce the general notion that identity is ‘that which makes you who you are’. Although identity is perceived in various ways, limiting the concept to the aforementioned gives this thesis some boundaries to work within. Though it is understood that there are grounds for a wider discussion on identity theory, social identity theory and cultural identity theory, there is not room for such a conversation here.

### **Exploring biculturalism**

Set around a dining table, the course of action followed a conversation that was exploring identity. In a somewhat meta-theatrical fashion *Ending the Silence* openly created a platform to engage with a range of ideas surrounding what identity means asking questions such as ‘what does it mean to be Kiwi?’ and ‘what does it mean to be German?’. The play traversed

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<sup>5</sup> All Participant quotes are from interviews conducted, where these have been included in the script a page reference is provided.

some different avenues but understanding identity underpinned every other theme. Devising a script for performance enabled a closer investigation of this concept.

While the creative project explored the idea of bicultural identity, it is evident that this is an extensive topic and cannot be fully addressed here. One of the objectives of the creative process was to use the artistic methods of constructing a play as a means to facilitate the exploration and investigation of biculturalism in New Zealand. Although biculturalism in New Zealand is usually expressed in terms of Maori/Pakeha relations, this thesis is looking specifically at German/Kiwi biculturalism. To examine this, it was important to ascertain how the participants perceived what it meant to be a New Zealander, and conversely what it meant to be German. Generation Three associated being a New Zealander with safety. Participant Seven stated that ‘it means living in a country where I think is relatively safe and isolated from the rest of the world’. Participant Ten attributed being a New Zealander to location, offering that it is our ‘laid back nature, our seas, our coasts, our close proximity, our hunting, our nature, ...our open spaces,’ that New Zealanders identify with. It is interesting to note here that place seems to play a vital role in one’s identity. Participant Eleven attributed being a New Zealander to being ‘to be the good guy on the international stage’ (Hines, 2015, p. 7). This was reinforced by other Generations stating that being a New Zealander was synonymous with safety.

When discussing what participants thought it meant to be German there was a lack of understanding and knowledge around what that actually meant, with only a few participants answering the question. A participant from Generation Four articulated that ‘it means that I can’t wear my granddad’s medals. When I’m on parade. I’m not allowed [...] apart from that it means that I’ve got great taste in beer’ (Hines, 2015, pp. 9-13). This inability to wear foreign medals coincides with the idea of social stigma which will be discussed later in this chapter. What is important here is that being German was associated with disconnection. Contrariwise a participant from Generation Three disclosed that being German ‘allows you to identify you completely as an individual, it allows you to explore and have a sense of belonging with food, with geography, with culture.’ Nevertheless, this participant also added that ‘we get to have the best of both worlds, because it is there historically’ (Participant Nine). That said, it became evident while collating the interviews into a working script that understanding stories of the past was central to understanding identity, however due to the

aforementioned disconnection with German identity this was made difficult. It became apparent that there was a lack of knowledge and therefore an inability to connect with every part of one's identity. This supports Beverly Southgate's (2009) assertion that 'it has become a truism, a platitude of contemporary life, that history underpins identity' without an understanding of where you have come from, it is difficult to place yourself in the world (p. 126). One of the most poignant responses came from Participant Six who communicated that being German '[is] a concept, with not a whole lot of meaning really' (Hines, 2015, p. 6). Continuing on the participant stated that 'it's probably something as I've gotten old I probably identify with now'. This tension expressed in the interviews was briefly explored within the performance in a couple of different scenes.

Setting the play around a large dinner table during the Christmas period, there was room to address one aspect of identity and the issues of on-going silence. German tradition dictates that Christmas is celebrated on the 24 December, whereas New Zealanders traditionally observe the holiday on 25 December. Again traditionally, Germans gather and feast for an evening meal, while Kiwis tend to gather for a lunch, leaving the afternoon for relaxation in the sunshine. At first glance this seems to have little implication, however, Participant Six indicated that having German roots, but living in a Commonwealth nation left the participant feeling confused, lost and like they did not have a place in the world:

**Jonas:** I think maybe in the beginning but then ... well [*beat*] Christmas was a prime example because English Christmas, Christmas morning Santa Claus and all those sort of things... now German Christmas, Christmas Eve but we didn't actually do either. I mean I can even remember mum and dad going shopping on Christmas Eve, coming home with the shopping standing there wrapping them say well why should we wrap them –here. [*laughs*] Christmas morning, my parents slept in and o-kay... okay well we don't have stocking we have none of that you know where do you fit? You don't. You don't fit in anything.

[*silence lingers*]

(Hines, 2015, p. 12)

This dialogue opens into a small conversation between Leigh and Jonas, which grapples with this tension of not knowing exactly where you fit in because of two conflicting identities. As part of exploring this, during the devising of the performance, there were discussions about what time of the day the play would be set. I entertained thoughts of a glorious feast and engaging more with Dinner Theatre to present the German culture, but I concluded that having a somewhat ambiguous time of evening would best reveal the equivocal boundaries of both cultures. Likewise, it was clear that *Ending the Silence* was a celebration of Christmas, with some presents opened under the tree and others still wrapped. This again mimicked the internal battle between embracing German tradition versus Kiwi tradition. Despite being subtle hints of consideration, engaging with the setting in this manner encouraged a deeper exploration into German customs and New Zealand tradition. It can be assumed here that without re-presenting the interviews in a new a theatrical setting there would have been no consideration of the tension between German/Kiwi traditions, and little engagement with the strain on identity. Each small creative decision had larger repercussions for the understanding of bicultural differences.

If adhering to the idea that identity is ‘that which makes you who you are’, and if taking into consideration the observations that place and past play a large role in understanding, or coming to terms with that, then it is important to note that an identity founded on silence has implications of its own. While Participant Two felt displaced, participants from Generation Four felt grounded in their identity, albeit they only sometimes ‘felt German’. In the play the characters discuss what it means to ‘feel German’. One excerpt of the script in particular illuminates this distinction. After talking proudly about what it means to be a Kiwi the conversation turns to figuring out the German side of identity. The conversation begins with everyone agreeing that they have German heritage but when Leigh asks if anyone has ever felt German the conversation turns to discussing moments of feeling German. Sophie recalls a time that her mother made German biscuits, exclaiming that she ‘felt super German then’. However, after claiming German heritage Sophie states that she is Kiwi, not German. The family then admit that no one wants to admit to being German because, as Sophie states, ‘you don’t know what the reaction is going to be’ (Hines, 2015, p. 8).

This momentary discussion indicates a difference between being German, and feeling German. Analysing the interviews, I noticed that feeling German was associated to good things, food, drink, community etc. However, being German had negative connotations – prompted by the idea of guilt, which will be discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

This scene also illustrates that having heritage is important, which is analysed further in the next chapter. It is a common belief that you ought to know the past to know yourself. However, Generation Four felt that while they did not necessarily know their backgrounds, their sense of self was assured. Perhaps this is because due to the lack of communication surrounding heritage, the youngest generation disassociated themselves from the first generation. That being said, the youngest generation still felt the historical burden and social stigma, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

### **Chapter Conclusion**

As the script developed it became evident that understanding the stories of the past are what help shape identity and how people perceive themselves and others. Ian Buruma (2014) eloquently suggests that ‘without history, including its most painful parts, we cannot understand who we are or indeed what others are’ (p. 5). This notion provides a glimpse of how unarticulated guilt has played a part in the darkness of humanity and in the unknowing of self. Due to the lack of communication around such a sensitive topic the different Generations expressed that there was an absence of understanding and a loss of identity. The creative process as a whole provided a method for engaging with, and reflecting on the events of the past to begin an ongoing process of discovery, constructing a framework for intergenerational dialogue.



## **Chapter Four: Exploring Guilt**

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This chapter explores the concept of German War Guilt and its impact on intergenerational, bi-cultural identity. It begins by mapping out two of the integral conceptual territories which inspired this project. It outlines what is meant by ‘the taboo’ in terms of an anti-German social discourse. It also presents the concept of German War Guilt and charts the impact of this concept on my creative project. I argue that while this term is commonly associated with the First World War, German War Guilt extends into the Second World War. I argue that this shared guilt is passed on through generations and is perpetuated through social silence. My research also suggests that one way to move forward is to create a platform to discuss the events of the past without fear of judgement. This chapter then explores how the creative project and research inquiry was originally guided by notions of German War Guilt, which was assumed to play a role in identity construction, particularly among the older Generations of participants. While the previous discussion shows how guilt and identity have been linked, the conception of guilt that lead this enquiry took on a different form than originally perceived. This chapter reveals how the creative project has illuminated how rather than guilt, it is the perpetuation of a social stigma that has created this divide between cultural identities.

### **The ‘taboo’**

For this exegesis taboo is defined as a topic that has been prohibited from conversation or restricted by social customs. In the context of this research project, the topic regarded as taboo is the experiences of everyday Germans during the Second World War. Society typically negates the stories told by Germans about their experiences in the war due to the perpetuated anti-German sentiment. During war years this sentiment was created in order to gain war bonds and bring an end to the war. While at the time of war this stance may have been necessary, the continued alienation of German people is not. In today’s society we still find it difficult to understand that much like the British, French, and other peoples of other Allied countries, Germans too suffered during the war. German experience tends to be taboo as there is a fear of denying the atrocities committed under Hitler’s rule. There is the fear when talking about German suffering that what is being discussed could be construed as minimising the magnitude of the Holocaust. There is the danger that when commenting on German suffering

one might be tempted to compare the Holocaust with the bombings of German cities or other the atrocities committed against Germans immediately after the war. This thesis attempts to engage with the some of the factors that might contribute to the silence around German heritage without negating the injustices perpetuated by the Nazi regime. Along with the notion of taboo, another key factor that the thesis engages with is the notion of German War Guilt.

### **German War Guilt**

As previously stated, War Guilt is most commonly associated with the First World War and Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles. Article 231 commonly known as the War Guilt Clause, outlines the terms and conditions for German reparations in the aftermath of the First World War. While the clause never actually uses the word guilt, the article states that ‘[...] Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies’ (*as cited in*, Dill, 1970, p. 273). Despite the lack of the term guilt, Germans understood that they were to be held responsible for the outbreak of the First World War: Germans were guilty. For the purposes of this thesis, German War Guilt is being used as a term to isolate the collective guilt felt by Germans due to the atrocities of the Second World War. It is because of this guilt that silence around the events of the past has impacted on generations of Germans, leaving a negative stain on the fabric of German culture.

W.G. Sebald questioned German writers for ignoring the destruction of Germany as a subject of discussion. He noted that ‘our vague feelings of *shared guilt* prevented anyone, including the writers whose task it was to keep the nation’s collective memory alive, from being permitted to remind us...’ (*as cited in*, Buruma, p. 67, my italics). The shared guilt which Sebald mentions is the collective guilt which I am discussing. Authors, playwrights and artists of all kind felt the oppressive grip of guilt and shame. While this thesis is in no way justifying, nor denying the atrocities of the Second World War, this discourse is addressing the impact of the collective guilt felt by generations of Germans, and how this guilt has seemingly forced these people into silence. Being bound to the Nazi term, the German populace rarely speaks of Germany pre-1945. Even today, Germans born in the 1990s still

feel as if the world blames them for the actions of their forefathers. During my travels in Germany, I had discussions with various curious people all whom were shocked that I was exploring such a topic. It was not until I explained that I have German heritage that they were no longer afraid of me or my project. While I was not asking them questions about the war, many of the people I encountered freely spoke of what it was like for them growing up decades after the war, even after the fall of the Berlin Wall. While older generations accepted the events of the past, whether or not they had anything to do with it, younger generations felt they were being asked by the world ‘to bear the burdens of the past’ as if they were occurring today. To them, this felt unfair, especially as a variety of these people had not heard the stories of their forefathers.

Both Buruma and Sebald address the literary silence which echoes this social silence. (p. 182). In the text *Inferno: The fiery destruction of Hamburg, 1943*, Keith Lowe (2007) highlights that ‘[a] modern generation still feels duty bound to apologise for war crimes that were committed not by their parents, or even grandparents but by their great-grandparents’ (p. 303). Sebald states, that ‘the quasi-natural reflex, endangered by feelings of shame and a wish to defy the victors, was to keep quiet and look the other way.’ (as cited in Buruma, 2014, p. 67). This is the way in which the term German War Guilt should be understood for the remainder of this thesis.

### **Staging Guilt**

As interviews were conducted it became evident that while the idea of guilt was something that had affected all Generations to varying degrees, guilt was not as prevalent as first suspected. When participants of Generation Four (the youngest generation of participants) were asked if they felt guilty about what happened during the war, one participant revealed that they did not feel guilty due to a lack of knowledge:

‘Guilt from war. From Germany. About what happened. I don’t know what happened. I’m serious. I know nothing. I mean I know that the Americans did something but. Yeah so I literally know nothing’ – Participant One.

Participant Four asserted ‘I’m not going to feel guilty for it being a part of my heritage because actually the whole of Germany doesn’t equate to my grandfather and what his beliefs

were.’. This claim was affirmed by Participant Three who stated ‘I don’t believe that the actions of past generations um, should really effect who you are going to become in the future, therefore anything anyone has said hasn’t really had an impact on myself.’ This said, my interviews indicated that there is a social stigma that has been perpetuated for decades, which disguises itself, or is mislabelled as ‘collective guilt’.

Literature on social stigmas has been in circulation since Emile Durkheim’s *Rules of Sociological Method* originally published in 1895. Since then there has been vast research into the topic. Social stigma is broken into three different types of differentiation, external deviations (physical irregularities), internal deviations (mental illness) and tribal deviations (Goffman 1963; Durkheim, 1982; Falkner, 2001; Alder-Nissen, 2014). Tribal stigma is the form of social stigma which this project has engaged with. Tribal stigma is qualified when there is affiliation with a specific nationality, religion, or race that constitutes a deviation from the societal norm. An early example of this is being African American both prior to, and during the Civil Rights Movement in America. In terms of this thesis, being of German descent post World War II ought to be regarded as a tribal stigma. This is an important discovery which helps one understand the way German War Guilt has had an impact on German/Kiwi bicultural identity. With this in mind rather than focus on the perceived guilt, *social stigma* became an important research theme that was explored during the rehearsal process. In the play, there is a conversation that engages with this idea. After sharing what they believe it means to be a German versus what it means to be Kiwi, the conversation turns into what being of German descent looks like in today’s society:

**Leigh:** In school, being a mix was hard you know? I was picked on... and well... have you ever like, uh felt bad for being German before?

**Sophie:** You don’t want to mention the fact that you are German –because you don’t know what the reaction to that is going to be.

**Jonas:** I got a lot of shit from various kids at school, so I very quickly got rid of my accent and my parents never sort of talked German at home...

**Simeon:** Yeah absolutely, **absolutely**, I-I-I still remember the feeling I had the first time someone went “eeeew you killed – **you** killed my grandfather” it’s like, uuuuuuum, no I don’t know how to shoot a gun. But I still remember the overwhelming sense of um, shame it was shame that I felt, um, and then all the other

kids joining in and it was just horrible. [*Voice waivers*] I felt so bad, **so bad**. So yeah absolutely.

(Hines, 2015, p. 9)

Continuing on the family discuss the way, even though separated by years, all have been subject to the notion that they, themselves are guilty. Sophie and Leigh exchange comments about how trying to explain that not all Germans were part of the Nazi Party, that not all Germans agreed with the political and military regimes of the State, was almost pointless. Within the space of a few lines, the underlying idea that people did not understand that often history is written from the perspective of the winner, those who deem themselves to be righteous. After the young women share their experiences of school, Simeon, Leigh's father articulates his thoughts asserting that the way history was taught encouraged a one-sided, shallow understanding of the Second World War. The way the curriculum focused on New Zealand meant that Simeon was unsure where he fit, and due to the controversy of having German ancestry he felt that he was forced to keep that side of himself hidden out of fear. Leigh articulates the fear as a fear of 'being an outsider', with which Simeon agrees 'that stigma' (p. 8).

This excerpt from the script reveals the way different generations have dealt with the stigma regarding their heritage. The performance illuminated that even in today's society, over seventy years since the conclusion of the Second World War, being German is not without its negative attributes. As such, each generation was reluctant to assert their bicultural identity. During an interview Generation Three told a story of being accused of murdering a classmate's grandfather, during the Second World War, despite not being alive during the conflict. The participant used the story to illustrate how decades after the Second World War had concluded, the fear of Germans was still prevalent within society. Generation Four also gave examples of similar experiences. It is the generalisation that 'all Germans are Nazis' that has, in my opinion encouraged those with German heritage to remain silent about their history. 'Germanophobia', so to speak prevents *vergangenheitsbewältigung*- the ability to come to terms with the moral implications of the events of World War II (Bonisch-Brednich, 2002). This has led to a growing gap in the inheritance of identity, which only comes with understanding familial history and cultural heritage. The lack of shared knowledge has meant that the histories of such families have been distorted or the experiences of individuals have

been devalued, in order to align with the official history of the nation. While I am not proposing a revision of the national legacy, this project has highlighted the possible need for a reassessment of the way we continue to talk about, or rather neglect to talk about, taboo issues of the past, and even the present. The language and labels we attribute to ‘otherness’ ought to be reassessed.

The script goes on to discuss the way Generation Four is unable to wear the medals of honour that were bestowed on their German ancestor. Although one can understand why Second World War, German medals might be excluded from Commonwealth Military Parades, the underlining issue is that bicultural New Zealanders are only allowed to show one half of themselves. They are unable to honour the memory and the sacrifices made by their ancestors when answering the country’s ‘Call to Arms’, of their ancestors, although it is important to state that this is not limited to German medals of honour.

During the process of creating and staging *Ending the Silence* it became evident to me that perhaps rather than guilt itself, younger generations are learning to live with the legacy that has been left for them. To further understand the way in which German/Kiwi identity has been impacted by social stigma, it is important to distinguish between shame, guilt and, responsibility. According to Dr. Brene Brown (2012), shame perpetuates the idea that ‘I am bad’ whereas guilt asserts that ‘I did something bad’. Guilt, according to Brown, urges one to take responsibility. In a post-performance forum of *Ending the Silence* audience members articulated a different distinction between shame and guilt. Audience members suggested that rather than take on blame and the shame associated with such a position, it was important to recognise the guilt. When guilt is addressed, an audience member offered, it means that you learn to live with the legacy that has been left for you. In other words, one is saying ‘I’m not to blame for the past, but in order to live ethically and responsibly, I have to work to stop that from happening again.’ In combination with this, Dr. Brene Brown also suggests that responsibility can be situated in basic compassion, with its inherent motivation to improve, appreciate, connect, or protect.

## Chapter Conclusion

Collective guilt, or group-based guilt as Doosje, Branscombe, Spears and Manstead (1998) define it, is a social psychological conditioning which allows individuals to feel guilty for harm caused by members of their group, regardless of personal involvement. It is true that during the aftermath of the Second World War Allied propaganda situated all of Germany inside the Nazi Regime, perpetuating the guilt of war crimes across the nation as a whole. As a result of this W.G. Sebald took German writers to task for ignoring the destruction of Germany as a subject. This literary silence echoed a more general silence: ‘our vague feelings of shared guilt prevented anyone, including the writers whose task it was to keep the nation's collective memory alive, from being permitted to remind us’ (*as cited in*, Buruma, 2014). Here, Sebald is addressing the way in which the collective guilt has ushered in a general silence on the topic of the way Germans perceive and understand their involvement in World War II. Chancellor Helmut Schmidt’s speech in November 1977, articulated the way Germans of the time ought to have addressed the social stigma: ‘We Germans of today are not guilty as individual persons, but we must bear the political legacy of those who were guilty. That is our responsibility [...]’ (*as cited in*, Merten, 2012, p. 302). This is as true now, as it was then. Rather poetically, the analysis of the interviews, the crafting of the script and the final performance reasserted the Chancellor’s speech. The play concludes with Klaus, Generation One, stating that ‘Everybody is to blame for this.’ (Hines, 2015, p. 13). What is meant here, is that society as a whole is to blame for the lack of knowledge, the continual perpetuation of ‘germanophobia’. It is the continual suppression of German identity that has an impact on the intergenerational understanding of heritage. The play shows that as a result of social stigma, cultural and historical knowledge has not been passed on with all Generations feeling a loss of identity, as previously specified in Chapter Three.

## Chapter Five: Exploring Theoretical Elements

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This chapter offers some theoretical explorations of key themes that emerged during the devising and staging of *Ending the Silence*, including the binary between history and fiction. This first section of this chapter considers the way historical analysis can limit the way we understand the past and argues that exploring historical events through a creative process can present an idea in a new manner. It demonstrates that although history and fiction are separate disciplines, they can complement each other and present a greater understanding of the human experience. The second section considers the ability of documentary theatre to be authentic. This section briefly looks at the way authenticity is understood within documentary theatre and assesses what I call the paradox of creative truth. It suggests that to be authentic means being transparent in the presentation of information and concludes that theatre can never fully be authentic in stature. A final key theme that this chapter explores is the issue of the representation of trauma. Here I outline the relationship between documentary theatre and trauma. This section indicates that this creative project has demonstrated that there is no formulaic way to express trauma and that documentary theatre as a genre can emphasise the feeling of trauma rather than recreate the traumatic event in simulated detail, which can potentially be used as a healing agency for those who experienced such an event.

### History and Fiction

Beverly Southgate (2009) points out that history is written with one perspective, ‘to make sense of the past – to cast it in a tidy narrative’ (p. 112). Southgate then argues that when history meets fiction, the audience presumes the history to be authoritative due to its derivation from primary sources, especially when these sources are conveyed through eyewitness accounts. However, the audience rarely understands that these histories are assessed for fiction, which means they get blended and moulded to fit a particular narrative for a particular purpose. This, in turn, means evidence is often distorted and therefore becomes detached from the values that historical integrity relies on.

In creating *Ending the Silence* I was confronted with the dilemma of negotiating creative licence and historical integrity. As a student of history I found myself straddling creative liberty and source criticism. Professor Rene Harding argues that historians are forced

to conform to accepted views of history and it is suggested that artists do not (*as cited in*, Southgate, 2009). While the wording of his argument might be problematic, Harding argues that when new evidence emerges, or a new school of thought surfaces, there are implications for how this fits into the orthodox historical narrative. Harding would argue that there are methods for assessing accuracy and validity of evidence that the creative arts are not bound to in regards to creating fiction.<sup>6</sup>

Historians often distance their research from the creative arts as the arts intermingle fact and fiction. As a discipline, history regularly sees fictional intrusions as defilements to the truth. However, Buruma has pointed out that history is becoming a feeling, rather than fact, offering that ‘historiography is less and less a matter of finding out how things really were and trying to explain how things happened [...] Everything is subjective or a socio-political construct’ (Buruma, 2014, p. 12). Despite the disciplinary effort and focus on ‘objectivity’, history can nevertheless be seen as subjectively chosen, interpreted, and incorporated within its narrative of cultural constraints. It is important to note that history is written by the victor of conflict. This is why the oppressors during wartime are often not considered as humans in the discourse of time. They are seen as ‘the other’ which as psychologists have established, creates issues of identity loss on its own, regardless of other factoids. When history is written in this manner, there is a perpetuated sense of what should be left unaddressed, encouraging silence. This is where creativity and history can complement each other well. Where historians are bound to the orthodox historical narrative, artists are at liberty to explore the new evidence and new facets of thought, somewhat freely, as evident through this project. While *Ending the Silence* is not exploring new evidence per se, nor is it opposing the historical narrative, it has highlighted the importance for allowing both sides of a story to come to fruition.

The creative process captures the way we cannot change the events of the past, and illustrates how we can see the past through different lenses of perspective and therefore encourages us to reflect on the taboo in a new way. *Ending the Silence* presented a different dialogue from the norm. While the production did not deny the German role in the Second World War, it did shed light on an individual family’s history. It offered a new lens to view

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<sup>6</sup> For further reading see, Garraghan, G. J. (1946), and Howell, M., & Prevenier, W. (2001).

the past through without distorting the truth. By focusing on the personal narrative it is impossible to deny the experience. In terms of maintaining historical accuracy, triangulating key components of unclassified information with critically acclaimed historical evidence was important and part of the methodology of this research. That said, documentary theatre both depends on and often depicts history, or at least history as it has been recorded. Yet in depicting history, documentary theatre inevitably alters and augments it. The documentary theatre script was a method of exploration into an area of silence, an area regarded as taboo in the history discipline. This is not historical reform, but instead a re-evaluation of the moral discourse and the way in which society understands German identity in New Zealand today.

### **Authenticity**

During the process of creating *Ending the Silence* I was confronted with issues of authenticity. Some of the disclosed information did not match up with verified historical evidence. Thus, I was caught between being faithful to history or faithful to my participants. The tension between history and fiction was brought to light again and again. If I was faithful to history, was this an authentic exploration of the taboo, or was this neglecting to engage with the creative process to explore what this thesis set out to explore? Understanding authenticity emerged as a vital component in choices about mise-en-scene. Before discussing how the pursuit of authenticity influenced the creative decisions in *Ending the Silence*, it is necessary to outline my understanding of what authenticity means.

A literature review indicated the way the definition of authenticity is disputed amongst theatre practitioners. However, Anderson and Wilkinson (2001) provide a somewhat appealing definition of the term as ‘of undisputed origin’ (p. 155). In this case, the actual words are of less importance than the source of the information. Amanda Fisher (2011) also presents a compelling argument stating that authenticity is ‘the yearning for a greater honesty’ (p. 112). Combining these two definitions together, I have come to understand that authenticity is present when there is a transparent presentation of information. This means that authenticity might now be found *in* the content of the story itself, rather than in *how* the story is recounted.

Having decided that there needed to be a transparent presentation of information, and aware of the conflict between established historical fact and remembered history, I came to the understanding that if I discredited the stories given to me by my participants then I was not engaging fully with the creative process nor with the taboo. Choosing to focus primarily on the first-hand experiences of the participants, *Ending the Silence*, was able to give a transparent presentation of the thinking of ordinary people. Although the script was censored for ethical reasons (see Methodology Chapter, p. 16, & Appendix I), the majority of the script was not subjected to the same political censorship as media outlets (Chou, and Bleiker, 2010). Even though the information was difficult to tackle, I chose to remain true to the participants' declarations. As one agency of verbatim is that it is able 'to provide fuel for discussion and complex and differing perspectives' I feel that this was the only way to be authentic (Anderson and Wilkinson, 2001; Fisher, 2011). While the information sometimes challenged itself and occasionally contradicted the official historical narrative, the stories were the truth for the ones delivering them. Due to the slight manipulation and selection of excerpts used to tell the story, there is the possibility for the authenticity of the project to be brought into question. However, the point is that the origin of the account cannot be questioned. By choosing to create a script that relied heavily on the transcripts of the interviews, I grappled with the complexities of representing the taboo authentically and was able to reflect heavily on what voices would do. Rather than to create an elaborate setting and a fanciful narrative, I chose to reduce the narrative arc virtually into its interview schema, being as transparent as possible. The point of this was to follow the way the conversation around the taboo began. Starting with a phone call and a decision to pursue writing a thesis, and ending with Generation One having shared their story, the play was a transparent presentation of the method used to undergo this research. Many of the interviews took place around a table, with food or drink present. All but one took place in a home environment. *Ending the Silence* was essentially a 'rehearsal for reality' in the sense that the conversation that took place during performance, had not yet taken place with all Generations present, but it *could*. Taking the things that are too problematic, too dangerous and too restrictive to discuss in society, the stage created a place to explore the taboo, without extensive limitations. Verbatim places information inside the human experience which gives it a complexity and consequently a greater level of accountability currently outside other readily available sources.

## Representing Trauma

In Chapter Four I explored the way social stigma and the nature of guilt has meant there has been an ongoing silence which has contributed to a loss of identity for the participants involved. The proceeding discussion will outline the nature of trauma, bringing to light the difficulties with understanding trauma and then offer a brief discussion on how documentary theatre and trauma interact.

Although trauma is a contested term, Cathy Caruth (1996) provides a useful definition describing trauma as ‘an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena’ (p. 11). Here it is important to understand that although the return of the event is remembering, and not an actual re-living, it is nonetheless a powerful experience; it seems to be happening again, but it is not. With this in mind, I found it difficult to come to terms with representing trauma on stage. If trauma is not easily defined, how does one re-create trauma?

During the construction of *Ending the Silence*, I experienced a difficulty in producing a conversation of substance; if I tried to replicate the initial trauma felt by Generation One, the essence of this was lost. There were times that I wanted to explore a ‘wow-factor’ to aid the representation of trauma. For example, I had visions of projecting images of bomb-stricken Hamburg on the cyclorama during the closing monologue, to capture the audience’s attention; to give them a visual depiction of what was being described. I initially wanted to have sounds of bombs dropping in unison with flashing lights, anything to exploit the dramatic as much as possible. There was a growing tension between how far to push the boundaries of creativity and authenticity which were marred with ethical considerations. When I reflect on these ideas the desire to re-create that which was, as it was, would ultimately fail to produce anything of substance. A representation of trauma need not be a spectacle but rather ought to be an honest moment where there is a connection between actor and audience. Verbatim is a powerful tool for representing trauma as it uses the words of a primary witness when representing the event. The creative process involved in working with the documentary and verbatim genre placed an emphasis on conveying the feeling of trauma rather than recreating the traumatic event in mimetic detail. This leads me to believe that is not necessarily the event that is of import, but instead how the feeling of trauma is conveyed. I found it more powerful to present the trauma

Generation One experienced, by simply putting all the attention onto that character. By allowing Klaus to deliver an emotion filled monologue, in spotlight, I was able to not only give Generation One a voice, but to bring attention to components which impacted the extent of trauma (Hines, 2015, p. 12). What I mean here is that, the trauma experienced by Generation One was deeper than just experiencing the Hamburg Bombings of 1943. It extended into isolation. By putting Klaus in a spotlight with the rest of the room in the dark, stripping the production of any visual aid and external sound there was a moment of confrontation. Here the participants and audience members were invited to witness trauma. In trauma studies a primary witness is categorised as being present at the scene of trauma, whereas a secondary witness is present at the scene of testimony (Wake, 2010, p. 10). A tertiary witness is a witness to the witness of the testimony (Malpede, 1996a, p. 275). Although an interesting topic, this discussion extends the conversation of my own research too far outside of its parameters and does not warrant further discussion here.

Amanda Fisher (2011) has asserted that ‘the “truth” of a traumatic event is arguably not transparent, knowable or even communicable’ (p. 112). The notion that trauma is an unexplainable experience therefore suggests that there are limitations surrounding the capacity at which this theatre form can respond authentically to the stories which it is telling (p. 112). Furthering this argument, it is suggested that verbatim is methodologically self-limiting. This is because the way in which the playwright pursues the facts of a story determines the truth of the verbatim. Amanda Fisher shows that this limits verbatim’s ability to take into account other ‘truths’ of the traumatic. Much like historians, if it is not verifiable, it is not true and therefore, not authentic. Here, Amanda Fisher defines ‘authenticity’ as ‘a yearning for greater honesty, truthfulness and importantly, a greater correspondence to reality’ (p. 112). Fisher claims that this is where verbatim falls short. Despite this, Fisher’s approach to indicating the limitations of theatre provides a platform for my analysis. By establishing the limitations of documentary theatre in terms of authenticity and trauma I have been able to ascertain my own limitations within my script writing. Whilst Fisher claims that there can be no authentic presentation of trauma, creating *Ending the Silence* has highlighted the importance of presenting an *intergenerational understanding* of trauma. What I mean by this is that without an attempt to explore and represent trauma experienced by Generation One, there will be a continual gap between the ability to understand identity. I would argue here that if authenticity is ‘a yearning for greater honesty...a greater correspondence to reality’

then documentary theatre can present trauma in this matter (Fisher, 2011, p. 112). Although trauma might be unexplainable, the effects of trauma are understandable. Yet in the same breath how can one try to support another who has suffered a traumatic event if there is no attempt to understand what took place? This is what representing trauma does.

I have come to the understanding that the truth of trauma is that it is inherently incommunicable. Playwrights, poets, artists all attempt to represent the truth of trauma, however there is no formulaic way to do so. This is because trauma, as with other emotions is an abstract noun; it cannot be seen or touched but it is an intrinsic feeling. That does not mean to say that there should not be attempts to represent trauma, but rather that this representation ought to be expressed in the words of those who experienced the event, rather than an attempt to recreate the event itself.

## **Chapter Conclusion**

It has become apparent through this project that the idea of fact and fiction being intertwined is appealing to those that have once remained silent or withheld knowledge of taboo topics, or issues which are controversial. On top of this, the development of a documentary theatre script also enabled a closer reflection of German War Guilt. Each stage of the script writing process included interaction with people outside of academia. This led to a need to articulate my understandings in a clear manner but also meant that a range of previously unidentified questions were asked. As such the idea of German War Guilt was challenged and considerations regarding authenticity and witnessing trauma became more prevalent within my research than originally anticipated. The creative process then saw the words of the script be performed. Here a variety of audience members were able to engage with and reflect on taboo topics in a greater way. After the production one audience member wrote that ‘after viewing the play I spoke with both my family and friends about guilt and stigma. It was an excellent conversation starter and it’s a topic that people had a lot to say about without it being something that comes up in normal conversation’. Another stated that, *Ending the Silence* offered a platform and ‘spurred on conversations with my wider family and friends about German war guilt but also around other factors or involvement from other nations and concentration camps etc.’ A third audience member expressed that ‘it did spark conversations in my own world initially when describing the experience, but more so I’ve found myself

referring back to the play and reflecting as my world triggered similar themes.’ There is a greater emphasis on the reflection of identity and guilt, and less importance given to authenticity and witnessing trauma.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusion**

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This thesis has begun an exploration into how documentary theatre might enable a closer exploration of the way German War Guilt has impacted an understanding of German/Kiwi bicultural identity. Through ethnographic methods of enquiry and the devising of a script for performance, this project has explored themes of identity, guilt, history and fiction, and authenticity and the representation of trauma. This chapter brings attention to the limitations of the study focusing primarily on researcher bias and the difficulty of self-reported data. This chapter then indicates possible avenues for future research demonstrating the opportunity for a wider participant pool. The chapter then summarises the overall findings of this performance as research thesis, claiming that documentary theatre can and does enable a closer look at taboo historical topics.

### **Limitations of Study**

One of the limitations of this study is the size of the participant pool. Due to the topic of enquiry, the number of participants selected for the analysis was small, however because this research is qualitative, rather than quantitative this has had minimal impact. That said, a larger participant pool would have enabled the research a larger range of experiences. By limiting the research to one family sect, this prevented more contradictory and conversely complimentary stories. However, by selecting a smaller sample size, the participants were more likely to be heard.

Conducting a qualitative research study and gathering the data myself, I engaged with self-reported data. This form of data collection has a range of limitations which need to be noted. It is extremely difficult to verify information gathered as self-reported data relies on what the participants have to say. Interviews contain several potential foundations of bias. Firstly, the potential for participants to engage with selective memory, remembering specific events and not others, is an issue to this research as the potential for important information to be withheld is high. Another issue is telescoping, which is when a participant recalls events that occurred at one time as if they occurred at another time. This causes problems when maintaining historical accuracy. Thirdly, the act of attributing positive outcomes to one's own agency, and negative outcomes to external factors can distort the information. Finally, in self-reported research there is a highly likely case for exaggeration when recounting events. Being

aware of these limitations was essential during the interview process, but became less important as the creative process began due to the decision to allow transparency of information, rather than direct the gathered information down a pre-empted path of enquiry.

### **Future Research**

This project is the first of its kind in New Zealand. In terms of looking at German/New Zealand heritage there has been little research into the topic. Using Brigitte Bonisch-Brednich's anthropologic writing to propel the research and support claims of a loss of identity, this thesis has begun a discussion on the way society engages with the issue of German War Guilt. New Zealand's documentary theatre environment is small in comparison to larger countries. This research is an addition to the growing documentary theatre realm in New Zealand.

This project was approached as an exploratory research method and therefore all findings and assumptions ought to be considered as preliminary, rather than absolute. Future research could investigate whether this form of theatre can be used to broach a wider variety of historically taboo topics. It has been suggested that perhaps one could manipulate the names and places of the script to represent the experiences of other nations who have suffered the aftermath of bombing, war and oppressed cultures. Previous research has already proven documentary theatre to have provided agency regarding unspoken issues within society. It engages heavily with taboo topics of present events – *CMI*, *My Name is Rachel Corrie* etc. However, can this research be used to re-open, so to speak, the past in order to give space for a fuller perspective on the historical narrative being cautious to avoid broaching on revisionist theory?

This project has indicated a need for wider research into German/Kiwi heritage. Currently research on this topic is very narrow. In order to examine this topic in depth with more accuracy, there is a need for a greater understanding of what it means to be German, what it means to be Kiwi and what a being a blend of both looks like. There is the need to explore, again the impact of social stigma on personal histories.

### **Chapter Conclusion**

Creating *Ending the Silence* has demonstrated that documentary theatre can be a useful device when engaging with taboo historical topics. Despite its limitations this project has shown that

documentary theatre not only enables the researcher to investigate an array of documents and data, it also enables willing participants the ability to share their stories (most of which have never been told), yet still provides an element of anonymity for the participants, as demonstrated through the different phases of the study.

From interview to the stage, each element of the creative process has encouraged not only the researcher, but all participants (interviewee, actor, audience) to reflect on the notion of German War Guilt. Although it was not anticipated, *Ending the Silence* highlighted the necessity of understanding the difference between, guilt, shame and responsibility. The research highlighted that responsibility is about accepting the past. It endeavours to prevent and protect the future whereas, guilt ought to only be accepted when someone commits a specified or implied crime. The research highlights that because of this it is impossible for younger generations to claim guilt, but not to claim the historical responsibility. The creative process brought to life the tension between history and fiction, showing that there is a strong reliance on narrative for meaning, and suggesting that perhaps, creativity needs to be fused with history for a deeper connection with historical narrative.

In a post-performance forum actors suggested that the staging of *Ending the Silence*, created a social sphere where it was okay to discuss the unspeakable. Engaging with the creative process has provided a platform to engage with the taboo without extensive limitations. From the interview process through to the final performance of *Ending the Silence*, a space for intergenerational dialogue has been created.

Notwithstanding, it is important to note that as this research has only touched the surface of such a rich topic of investigation and, by no means does this research assert that documentary theatre is the best tool for reflecting on, and exploring taboo historical topics. This research merely emphasizes that there are positive consequences to utilising this theatre form, in this manner.

After viewing *Ending the Silence* a participant of the project stated that it was ‘a very powerful way for you to tell a story, you know as I say, history is what you hear about in school and, what people say but you don’t have the emotion... you don’t actually realise what-what it’s all about.’ Taking this into consideration, it is clear to see how documentary theatre could be used across a range of platforms; political, theatrical and therapeutic. There is an element of closure, an element of unknowing and an element of self-realisation. Augusto

Boal offered that 'theatre is the capacity possessed by human beings... to observe themselves in action' (2002, xxvi). I believe documentary theatre provides opportunities for us to observe ourselves in action and this is what this project has ultimately achieved.

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## Appendix II: Information Sheet



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES  
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
TE KURA PŪKENGĀ TANGATA

### Ending the Silence: A documentary theatre response to the impact of German War Guilt on intergenerational identity in New Zealanders

**INFORMATION SHEET – Please take your time to read through this sheet and do not hesitate to ask me to clarify any point at any time.**

I am conducting research into my personal history as part of my Masters degree in English at Massey University. As part German/Kiwi I have always been intrigued by the events of 1939-1945, which have shaped my personal and familial identity, and what not talking about those events have meant for understanding our heritage. As you are aware, this is what my project is aiming to investigate. My project is proposing to investigate our family history and the impact of the Second World War on our identity as a bicultural family, through a creative process. The project is aiming to:

- I. better understand historical conflicts and how issues of heritage and inheritance have informed Kiwi/German bicultural identity,
- II. analyse how engaging with a creative process enables a closer investigation into topics which are regarded taboo and,
- III. give a voice to those who have been silenced due to the pressures of social constructs regarding German War Guilt.

This project involves a series of interviews in order to gather information that will then be turned into a documentary theatre script. Documentary theatre is a form of theatre that involves utilising a range of documentary material (newspapers, diaries, photographs, interviews etc) as material for a script. In this case, the information gathered from the interviews will be used to create a script to explore intergenerational silence as a result of German War Guilt, and how this has impacted on my personal and familial identity. This script may then be used in performance for the purpose of "Ending the Silence", as part of the requirement for the completion of my Masters degree.

German War Guilt is being used as term to isolate the collective guilt felt by Germans for the atrocities of World War II. This form of guilt is the result of sharing a social identity with others whose actions represent a threat to that identity; in particular the Nazi participation in the Holocaust, and the label which has been attached to German generations in the following decades.

I would like to extend an invitation to you so that you may be involved as an interviewee in my project. It is important that you understand that your participation is voluntary and you have the right to decline this invitation.

The recruitment method for this project is based on criteria listed below:

- The participant has a kinship (marriage, hereditary, adoption) to the researcher.
- The participant is perceived to have been affected by German War Guilt and/or intergenerational silence.
- I am hoping to interview at least 11 other family members (extended and immediate) to gather different perspectives and understandings on this topic.

As previously stated this research will mean that you will be involved in a series of interviews. These interviews will be conducted by me, in a location of your choosing. These interviews will vary in length depending on how much information you wish to disclose at any one time. No interview conducted will exceed 30 minutes, unless you as the participant wish to continue. You are not obliged to commit to more than 1.5 hours of interview time. All interviews will be recorded electronically using a voice recorder and may be documented with



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still image or video. If you wish, certain excerpts from your interviews that will be included in the script/performance will remain anonymous. With this in mind, it is essential that you understand that absolute confidentiality is not possible due to the nature of this project and all information will be made available to my supervisors in order to allow their expertise on the topic. It is important to understand that while I can provide anonymity in performance and in the written exegesis, this anonymity is limited. Limited anonymity means that any persons outside of the family sphere will not be able to identify you, but family members may be able to recognize your words. Any questions regarding this can be answered in full prior to signing the consent form.

All data gathered may be used to guide the creative process, and may also be used to enhance a performance of the script, but it may also be deemed inappropriate for this project. All information presented in a script will involve limited public release and involve small and selected audience members.

Upon consent to partake in this project, I, Rebekah Hines, reserve the right to manipulate extracts from the interviews and blend them with other extracts of documentation during the creative process in order to explore the topic in depth and produce a creative performance.

Any information collected may be used directly in a documentary theatre script which is then subject to performance. All information may also be used in the writing of my thesis for evaluation purposes. Information that is obtained will be recorded and evaluated for its usefulness to the project as stated above. Any information that is deemed irrelevant or not useful for the purposes of this project may still be kept in a family archive but not used during this project. Information stored in the family archive will be accessible on the conclusion of the project. Any information disclosed and stored becomes the property of Rebekah Hines and may be used in further projects. All data will be stored electronically in a secure server and on an external hard-drive as a backup.

It is essential that you understand your rights as a participant in this research. You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- *withdraw from the study by July 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 by contacting me with your request for withdrawal;*
- *ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;*
- *decline to answer any particular question;*
- *ask for the recording device(s) to be turned off at any time during the interview;*
- *provide information on the understanding that your privacy will be respected as per the signed consent form;*
- *be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.*

#### **Project Contacts**

If you have any concerns or queries regarding the nature of this project, please contact myself, Rebekah Hines on

(09) 428 -2168  
021 024 99 317 or  
[kah.hines@gmail.com](mailto:kah.hines@gmail.com)

or my primary supervisor Dr. Rand Hazou on

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## **Appendix III: Draft Interview Questions<sup>7</sup>**

### **Generation One**

1. What was life like for you, before the Second World War?
2. How has the Second World War impacted you as a person? How did life change during the war?
3. What was Germany like after the war?
4. Did you ever feel responsible for the second world war?
5. Do you think you could have done something differently?
6. Was immigrating to Canada scary
7. Do you feel like you subscribe to German War Guilt? Please explain your answer.
8. Poppa used to try to tell me stories of the war when I was a little girl. I remember one particular occasion when you said “that will bore her Herman” and you gave him a pointed look so he stopped. Did you really think I would get bored or was there another reason you didn’t want him to talk about it?
9. What was it that encouraged you to remain silent about the events of the past?
10. How do you think talking about the war would have been received in earlier years?

### **Generation Two**

1. Did your parents ever talk to you about their experiences during the Second World War? If yes, what types of experiences did they share?
2. How did the Second World War impact you as you were growing up?
3. Do you feel like you subscribe to German War Guilt?
4. Why do you think Nana (and Poppa), chose not to talk about the war with their great-grandchildren?
5. Have you ever engaged with your German heritage?
6. Do you feel like you understand your German heritage?
7. What does identity mean?
8. Do you think our family identity has been affected by the silence of our heritage? What implications do you think this will have?

### **Generation Three**

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<sup>7</sup> Some questions overlap due to versatility.

1. Did Nana Schluter, or Poppa Schluter ever talk to you about their experiences during the Second World War? If yes, what types of experiences did they share?
2. Do you think their sharing was beneficial to you in terms of understanding your identity, or your heritage?
3. Did you ever openly enquire about the Second World War? Why or why not?
4. Did Nana Doris ever talk about how the war impacted her life? If yes, how did that impact you?
5. Have you ever been interested in, or encouraged your children to learn about German war guilt, it's impact and our German heritage?
6. Have you ever engaged with your German heritage?
7. Do you feel like you understand your German heritage?
8. Did you ever learn German? Why/not?
9. What does identity mean?

#### **Generation Four**

1. How do you perceive the lack of knowledge of our family heritage has impacted your identity?
2. Have you ever taken offence to the way society blames Germany for the Second World War? Why do you think this is?
3. Did Nana Schluter, or Poppa Schluter ever talk to you about their experiences during the Second World War? If yes, what types of experiences did they share?
4. Do you think their sharing was beneficial to you in terms of understanding your identity, or your heritage?
5. Did you ever openly enquire about the Second World War? Why or why not?
6. Did Nana Doris ever talk about how the war impacted her life? If yes, how did that impact you?
7. Why do you think you haven't tried learning the German language as I have? What made you learn other languages instead?
8. What comes to mind when I say the word Nazi?
9. What comes to mind when you hear WWII?
10. Do you think history is accurate?

## **Appendix IV: Final Interview Schedule**

### **Generation One**

1. What was life like for you, before the Second World War?
2. How has the Second World War impacted you as a person?
3. Do you feel like you subscribe to German War Guilt? Please explain your answer.
4. Poppa used to try to tell me stories of the war when I was a little girl. I remember one particular occasion when you said “that will bore her Herman” and you gave him a pointed look so he stopped. Did you really think I would get bored or was there another reason you didn’t want him to talk about it?
5. What was it that encouraged you to remain silent about the events of the past?

### **Generation Two**

1. Did your parents ever talk to you about their experiences during the Second World War? If yes, what types of experiences did they share?
2. How did the Second World War impact you as you were growing up?
3. Do you feel like you subscribe to German War Guilt?
4. Why do you think Nana (and Poppa), chose not to talk about the war with their great-grandchildren?
5. Do you think our family identity has been affected by the silence of our heritage? What implications do you think this will have?

### **Generation Three**

1. Did Nana Schluter, or Poppa Schluter ever talk to you about their experiences during the Second World War? If yes, what types of experiences did they share?
2. Do you think their sharing was beneficial to you in terms of understanding your identity, or your heritage?
3. Did you ever openly enquire about the Second World War? Why or why not?
4. Did Nana Doris ever talk about how the war impacted her life? If yes, how did that impact you?
5. Have you ever been interested in, or encouraged your children to learn about German war guilt, it’s impact and our German heritage?

### **Generation Four**

1. How do you perceive the lack of knowledge of our family heritage has impacted your identity?
2. Have you ever taken offence to the way society blames Germany for the Second World War? Why do you think this is?
3. Did Nana Schluter, or Poppa Schluter ever talk to you about their experiences during the Second World War? If yes, what types of experiences did they share?
4. Do you think their sharing was beneficial to you in terms of understanding your identity, or your heritage?
5. Did you ever openly enquire about the Second World War? Why or why not?
6. Did Nana Doris ever talk about how the war impacted her life? If yes, how did that impact you?
7. Why do you think you haven't tried learning the German language as I have? What made you learn other languages instead?

**Appendix V: Final Poster Image**



## **Appendix VI: Ending the Silence Script**

### **Ending the Silence**

Written & Directed by Rebekah Hines

2015

A documentary theatre script presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
of

Master of Arts

in

English

At Massey University, Albany, New Zealand



### **Character List**

Klaus; Representing the oldest Generation in the family, 90 years of age. Uncle to Jonas. Klaus lived in Germany during the Second World War. This character listens but appears to be distant.

Jonas: Jonas 66 years old and is an only child and the father of Simeon. Jonas was born in Germany early after the war ended. This character is very family orientated. Having moved out of Germany at an early age, Jonas no longer has his German accent.

Simeon: Simeon is the son of Jonas and Leigh's father. He is 43. This character is sarcastic.

Sophie: Sophie is Jonas' grandchild, Simeon's niece and Leigh's cousin. Sophie is 20. This character uses hand gestures when speaking and is sometimes caught in a spout of nervous laughter.

Leigh: Leigh is the daughter of Simeon. She is also 20. Leigh is curious.

## Scene 1

**Leigh:** *[on the phone]* I want this, more than I have wanted anything in my entire life, but being in that -in that classroom made me realise that I need to get some life experience and then maybe try again. *[pause]* I – *[sigh]* I am going to withdraw my application– *listens* – really? You’re going to... Wow, I don’t know what to say. Yes of course. I’ll be in touch. Thank you, *[beat]*.

I’m going to keep studying.

**Simeon:** What?

**Leigh:** I dunno Dad does it matter? Something that blends everything together. A play.

**Simeon:** What?

**Leigh:** That thing we were talking about... the impact of German war guilt on intergenerational bi-cultural, identity in New Zealanders. Or something like that.

**Sophie:** smart arse.

**Simeon:** *[ignoring the topic]* You didn’t get the scholarship?

**Leigh:** I... actually ... I don’t know, I withdrew. But, this could be fun... I could you know, try and get some stories before it’s too late.

**Jonas:** I think it’s a wonderful idea.

**Simeon:** What’s a wonderful idea?

**Sophie:** Leigh is being a smartarse again.

**Leigh:** Well someone has to.

**Simeon:** Cut it out. What are we talking about?

**Jonas:** A play about something in history. *[Simeon nods in recognition]* *[beat]* I mean I’ve got photo albums and-

**Simeon:** There is that book too

**Jonas:** You could go Germany

**Simeon:** The only hard thing would be actually getting Klaus to talk. *Pause.*

**Leigh:** What if I just asked?

**Jonas:** You'd have to be very careful.

**Sophie:** Even I know it's a no go zone.

**Leigh:** It's worth a shot though right?

**Simeon:** You'd be lucky. Everyone else at this table has tried. We've always had to you know (*elbows person next to him and whispers*) "what have you heard" and then... sort of piece it together I guess.

**Leigh:** What if I pieced together all the stories?

**Jonas:** How?

**Leigh:** Well, I'll combine all sorts of things like the photographs, historical documents, the book... I'll do interviews and things like that... and then blend it altogether.

**Simeon:** Mash it up to explore it or something?

**Leigh:** Yeah.

**Sophie:** You'll never get anything.

**Jonas:** It will be hard.

**Simeon:** You'll have to be careful.

**Sophie:** What are you gonna do? Just ask about the war?

**Leigh:** The truth is people stop talking when you talk about the war. Everyone knows what those three letters mean no matter what language they speak. I noticed it when I was travelling. When you say it, they stop. They stare. They don't mean to, especially around tourist areas. To be honest, I think most people wouldn't even notice but I noticed the way the world froze whenever that word slipped out of anyone's lips, as if they were waiting for the cursing that was bound to come out.

*[to Sophie]* Soph, do you feel guilty?

**Sophie:** Guilt from war? From Germany? About what happened? I don't know what happened. I'm serious. I know nothing. I mean I know that the Americans did something but. Yeah so I literally know nothing. *[looks to Jonas]*

**Jonas:** I tend to keep things, way down there...

**Klaus:** *[to audience]* You know they, they carry it without really realising it.

**Jonas:** But I don't feel that I should have to.

**Sophie:** It wasn't me.

**Leigh:** Maybe that's why they would ask me if I felt proud to be English, or guilty to be German.

**Sophie:** Huh?

**Leigh:** When I was travelling, they'd ask me if I felt guilty. I'd say "I feel defensive and somewhat ignorant." I tried explaining that I wasn't there to talk to them about it. I was just exploring, visiting friends and researching the history you know?

**Simeon:** And how did they take that?

**Leigh:** Fine enough I guess. Lolle's boyfriend-

**Simeon:** Lolle?

**Leigh:** Dad, the friend I stayed with? Yeah, well her boyfriend, he was surprised I wanted to talk about it, I remember he said something like "we don't talk about it 'cause we are taught that we are hated, that it is us. I had a part. But I was not alive, how can I be punished? It is unfair, it is cruel."

**Jonas:** It wasn't me either.

**Leigh:** It wasn't any of us right? But I told him that even the bad parts of life shape who I am today. And how can I figure that out, if I don't know the stories right?

"I wish I saw it like you do. "He said "Maybe I would have more to say. My Oma and Opa didn't – will **not** talk about it. It hurts. All of us. But, why should I care? Well, the walls tell you, the graffiti walls tell the story like no other story can." I can't get his words out of my head.

**Jonas:** What did he say?

**Leigh:** "die Graffiti versteckt den Schmerz der Vergangenheit. Es lenkt uns von denken, was diese Wände müssen gesehen haben, die Gräueltaten der Vorfahren. Die Musik, die Sie hören gibt uns Hoffnung für schöne Dinge wie Erlösung, aber wir sind immer daran erinnert, dass es wieder passieren könnte."

**Sophie:** Translation please?

**Leigh:** The graffiti hides the pain of the past. It distracts us from thinking of what these walls must have seen, the atrocities of our forefathers. The music you hear gives us hope for beautiful things like redemption, but we are always reminded that it could happen again.

*[silence lingers across the table]*

*[to Jonas]* What was it like when you went?

**Jonas:** I went back to Germany when I was about ten and what I remember about that was the -the um shabbiness at that point because everything was being rebuilt and all the cathedrals were being rebuilt and seeing the kids still in their you know *[awkward pause]* stuff, where we were trotting around in all our new stuff. I can remember visiting dad's mother and I mean I'd never really been in an apartment before that and I remember out the back there was the stables and there was a pig and some rabbits and you know, in the back of their apartments, everyone was trying to figure life out. The whole thing felt foreign. But apparently that was meant to be home.

**Simeon:** When I went overseas it was quite interesting because they were able to say, or show me "this was the lake that we used to swim at before, they came and took our house" or "this is the place we used to have dances before it was bombed"...things like that, but it wasn't 'this is what happened'. It was 'this is where', **before.** *[to Sophie]* You never asked did you?

**Sophie:** *[to Jonas/Simeon]* I felt like, I can't just quiz them.

**Leigh:** It's been real taboo hey?

**Simeon:** True. That feeling of taboo has remained and I think that, that the generations that haven't shared their stories, regardless of how painful they are, have denied, uhm, future generations an understanding and, uh I think that's really hard on you guys actually, cause all of us at some stage, like I said before have had to play Chinese whispers, and piece together the stories.

## Scene 2

**Leigh:** We couldn't ask – didn't ask *[beat]* but now with everything going on I reckon we'd get something. *[sighs]*. Um, so do you guys think that I should go with this guilt idea or... *[everyone looks blankly at Leigh silence]* Okay well, have you ever felt guilty about it... uhm, being German?

*No one wants to talk. Jonas breaks the silence.*

**Jonas:** Well, *[beat]* you watch a movie and the Germans are the bad guys and the English people were the good guys, so not having that surround of German, why would I identify with the bad guys? I was a good guy. You know, I'm not German... We moved away from Germany and did English history and we learnt the English version of history about how this happened and the Germans did it and of course the English didn't hurt anybody over there... you know nothing happened.

**Klaus:** It is an example of history in its typical form. It confirms that 2X2 can make 5.

**Jonas:** and I mean you know, you read something like, the boy in stripped pyjamas – *(to the audience)* you've read that? Yeah you read something like that and it puts... okay it's okay to be German all of a sudden you know?

**Leigh:** But what does that mean? Being “German”?

**Jonas:** Uhm, it's a concept, with not a whole lot of meaning really.

**Simeon:** But because you're the losing side, there is this honorary badge of guilt that you wear and you take it and you wear this badge for some reason which I find really, even today, I just find it sad.

**Sophie:** Apart from that it means that I've got great taste in beer. So, just ignore the export gold sitting there...

**Leigh:** Do you think that, uh, that the not talking about it has impacted us like, *[beat]* like our identity, or understanding of it?

**Sophie:** That's a very leading question – there is only one answer to that question – that is called a leading question, because you can't say no to that question.

**Leigh:** Good thing this isn't court then isn't it.

**Jonas:** I- I think to some degree; it was a- it was a loss of identity. I sort of regret that because it would be nice to know you know, more of the German side of me and how and why and so forth.

**Simeon:** In terms of it being, from all of us, I think we have all had that kind of loss – that lostness because there has always been that kind of blank space, there hasn't been any knowledge of it, there hasn't been any discussion there hasn't been a connection

**Sophie:** It's been a big thing, like in terms of my identity – I think its strongly impacted it, I don't even know my background, and it's not me, but it's part of who I am.

**Leigh:** And you didn't learn German like I did? But you're part German...

**Simeon:** *[Sarcastically]* What? I'm part German?

**Sophie:** I don't know anything.

**Leigh:** We did the same course when I was 4.

**Sophie:** I know the basics like um, thank you and thaaank you. Oh yeah. I can still count to 100 in German, I'm quite proud of that.

**Simeon:** Yea, languages as it turns out are not my forte. Luckily I have google translate.

**Sophie:** I dunno, I guess it wasn't, I didn't feel like it was *[3 seconds]* needed. To learn it. I could talk to my grandparents in English and we didn't call them, Oma and Opa. We called them Nana and Poppa. So I think **they** kind of distanced themselves from the language. I know at one-point mum kind of pushed us to try and learn some. But, I mean I enjoyed when we were doing that little home school course in German. I liked it, making Kartoffelpuffer – potato fritters- and getting that little bit of culture... but I'm **not** German. I'm Kiwi, right?

**Leigh:** What does that actually mean though? To be “kiwi”?

**Simeon:** *[sarcastic interjection]* It means a very long beak and lots of feathers, flightless

**Leigh:** *[under her breath]* Daaaaaad.

**Sophie:** To be kiwi you're safe. It's being the good guy on the international stage. For example, when we were in Afghanistan. The, the initial orders to start with was that, that the Aussies, Yanks, Brits, they all went over in full kit. So webbing, body armour, weapons full ammunition, grenades all freaking had grenades with them, um machine guns, helmets, ballistic glasses, everything. When we went up, we'd take our body armour and vests, but we would just be wearing baseball caps, and no sunglasses, because we were being personable. So, you show that you are here to keep the piece, not fight a war. That's what it means to be a kiwi. **It's being the good guy.**

**Jonas:** It's actually the place I am and the place I really- the place I call home.

**Simeon:** Everybody has come from somewhere um, and it's a case of we are who we are and we are who our experiences have made us and as a half grown person it's really firmly ingrained in me as a person that I am half German and that it's okay to be half German and I'm really proud of that heritage and I'm proud of the people that I have come from.

**Leigh:** Do you ever feel German though?

**Sophie:** Oh yeah. A couple of Christmases ago, mum made these things for Christmas. Biscuit things.

*Klaus begins to look interested.*

**Jonas:** So good.

**Sophie:** They were super freaking easy and they were freaking delicious and they were just this German biscuit. He really liked them *[points at Klaus]*

**Klaus:** They were good biscuits.

**Sophie:** I felt super German then... but I'm. Not. German. I'm Kiwi.

**Simeon:** Look around the table [*everyone looks around the table*]. Some things we do as if we were a German family in terms of feasting and bringing people together and having cuckoo-clocks and eating sauerkraut and bratwurst and drinking beer. I mean even in terms of looking after the elderly for example which had historically been a very European thing to do, you know everybody looked after everybody but apparently if you do it in New Zealand you are bicultural. So I am bicultural definitely. German- Kiwi and, that's what makes us who we are.

**Leigh:** In school, being a mix was hard you know? I was picked on... and well... have you ever like, uh felt bad for being German before?

**Sophie:** You don't want to mention the fact that you are German –because you don't know what the reaction to that is going to be.

**Jonas:** I got a lot of shit from various kids at school, so I very quickly got rid of my accent and my parents never sort of talked German at home...

**Simeon:** Yeah absolutely, **absolutely**, I-I-I still remember the feeling I had the first time someone went “eeeew you killed – **you** killed my grandfather” it's like, uuuuuuum, no I don't know how to shoot a gun. But I still remember the overwhelming sense of um, shame it was shame that I felt, um, and then all the other kids joining in and it was just horrible. [*Voice waivers*] I felt so bad, **so bad**. So yeah absolutely.

**Sophie:** Same. I used to get frustrated because like I know that a). I have family background and I know that they were good people and I know that they didn't want to fight in the war so they did everything that they could to fight against it and actually that's part of my heritage/

**Leigh:** /So when people would say all Germans are Nazi's/

**Sophie:** /I would knock them out. Oh, I'd fucking teach them a lesson and then talk to them about it afterwards, if they wanted to, and if they didn't I'd just hit them again. And you know people were kind of scared of me in school so they tended to shut up after that.

**Leigh:** Because you hit them or because you were part German?

**Sophie:** Yeah, because I was German “watch out for Soph, she'll get in the Luftwaffe”. I think I've got maybe, like, righteous anger. You know, probably a little bit angry about people blaming the whole country or judging me, basing their judgements on Nazi Germany... the best way to know where it's come from, and I don't know exactly where it's come from but you know what they say “He who wins the war, writes history” that simple.

**Leigh:** Churchill.

**Sophie:** Whatever.

**Simeon:** Absolutely and I felt that it was very slanted information because I mean in every story there is two sides and that wasn't a side that the New Zealand curriculum at all discussed um it didn't even suggest there was another possibility.

It was always hard at times like ANZAC and stuff like that because you would always be at school doing ANZAC and the poppies and you know this grandfather got this medal and this grandfather got this medal and da-de-da-de-da and always felt torn because, we didn't really [*sigh*] cause I didn't feel that I could fit within that ANZAC point of view when I knew that the other side, that the Germans and my, my family had suffered and had been bombed and had been killed and all these things so yeah, that was always really hard. [*Sniffle, tears*] I mean unless you were an ally, you were really frowned upon. So I guess people tended to keep their cultures really hidden I guess.

**Leigh:** That fear of like being an outsider

**Simeon:** That stigma, "look what **you** did to my family." [*Beat*] Which I mean you still get today.

**Leigh:** How?

**Sophie:** I can't wear my family medals. When I'm on parade. I'm not allowed. However questionable it may be for Germany, those medals were earned. And I'm not allowed to wear those on ANZAC day so I'm not allowed to show my, my history, my heritage, or my families pride from that side of the family, so I'm not allowed to do that, which sucks so... [*4 seconds*] so, like I dunno like, it's just rude as well saying that all Germans were Nazi'. I hate it. Because not everyone was obviously/

**Simeon:** /The book, what did was in it again? Go get it. [*Leigh goes to get it*]

**Sophie:** /We had people from both sides of the family who flew in different sides of the war. They used to live in the same house at one point. And people would ask, 'How did that go down?' Eh... Interestingly. [*beat*] They are both dead now.

**Leigh:** This part? [*reading passage*] I was politically unreliable. Marching and listening to political speeches was not my scene. Our unit was sworn in while I was recuperating in hospital. They took the oath to serve Hitler and country. I was never sworn in, never signed a paper to that effect. I often wondered what would happen if I deserted, legally I was not bound, however I never did put this to the test. [*passes book to Simeon*]. Good thing too... Even when defeat was inevitable deserters were executed

**Jonas:** Think about it. In the movies, the Germans bomb a city and that's... not okay? But the Allies do it and... they're heroes?

**Sophie:** What do you mean?

### Scene 3

**Jonas:** Nobody talks about what happened in Hamburg, or Cologne or Hannover or anywhere, where a thousand people got killed in one night and you know....

**Simeon:** *[reading from the book]* While bombs were falling, we jumped out of the train. We helped dig five people out of the rubble, heard some groaning, searched and found a man half buried, tried to dig him out with my hands. 5 air raids involving 1500 planes with 15000 bombs and 1800 brand bombs had taken its toll. This was the price only one city paid for this insane war. *[the book makes it to Klaus]*

**Jonas:** Yeah that. No one talks about it.

**Simeon:** Your parents didn't... Not until the book, and even then they didn't talk about it.

**Jonas:** I didn't even know about that until I was probably a late teenager, which, I mean they never really talked about it. Even when I asked.

**Leigh:** At all?

**Jonas:** Some stories I guess, especially the ones written down, about what he did and what he didn't do and so forth and you know but it was always removed... you know?

**Leigh:** Like they were just stories from story book?

**Sophie:** I remember stories like those. Ones about being in one of the camps and it was like covered in snow and he had to like fight to like survive basically because they didn't really get given much. And - there was like, that was like after they found out he was doing something but I can't remember what. *(to audience)* Is that right?

And the time they took the aeroplane and drove it *[begins to chuckle]* in the wrong direction and then were like "oh whoops, we are in the wrong direction, we're going to need to turn around and reeefuel."

**Jonas:** Yes, stories like that, and you know, the people were just names to me. They didn't mean anything.

**Simeon:** The stories would be funny stories of things that they got up to, but not so much the really painful stuff. I mean, the sleeping behind the haystack used to be the story we all got told.

*Collective agreement.*

**Leigh:** They always seemed like fairy tales... They would start, “once upon time... um”

*(lights dim slightly taking the cast into the story)*

**Leigh & Simeon:** Once upon a time, there were three soldiers hoping to make it to the end of the stupid war. For three nights they followed at the back of

**Klaus:** *[reading from book]* An advancing American column, while in the day time we were hiding. During the fourth night we crossed a river swimming, the bridge was guarded, daylight was breaking, a haystack in a meadow close seemed to be the best place to hide. We clawed our way to the top, laid some of our clothes out to dry, stretched out and fell in to a drowsy uneasy sleep, dreaming about food which we had been without for three days. An American reconnaissance plane passed low over our haystack, before we could decide if we had been spotted or not, three American jeeps came racing across the field. An American soldier called out in German “Raise your hands up and come out of the hay”,

We didn’t respond and stayed absolutely quiet, hoping he was just bluffing. However, he meant business and fired into the haystack with a machine gun mounted on the jeep. Bullets lose their velocity in hay and do not do much damage so we still did not move, but when the American set the hay on fire we did. The three of us slid down in a hurry, I was barefoot, I had taken the shoe off to dry. I pleaded with the German speaking soldier for my shoes, his first response was “The U.S Army has plenty of shoes” but he gave in...

**Leigh:** And the oldest soldier ran into the burning hay and retrieved his shoes before they set off on their next wartime adventure.

**Klaus:** *[stops reading]* But they weren’t fairy-tales. They were... yeah.

**Jonas:** They were real events.

**Simeon:** They never talked about it to me.

**Sophie:** The fairy tales, they were stories about the war?

**Jonas:** Yes.

**Simeon:** Every time. He was pretty badass.

**Jonas:** So you know the stories.

**Leigh:** Not all of them.

**Sophie:** Wow. I didn’t realise. I mean after reading the book I guess I knew. But – he had to do it so *[pause]*... yeah.

**Klaus:** He was just waiting for the stupid war to end.

**Simeon:** He wanted his story heard I think. But, he never felt could. He never felt that it was okay to have been in that position, maybe it came from guilt of what did go on, um but they weren't proud of it so they didn't really want to talk about it.

**Leigh:** Um Pop... before- before you talked about supressing your German anything. Was that because of you know, propaganda and stuff like that?

**Jonas:** I think maybe in the beginning but then ... well *[beat]* Christmas was a prime example because English Christmas, Christmas morning Santa Claus and all those sort of things... now German Christmas, Christmas Eve but we didn't actually do either. I mean I can even remember mum and dad going shopping on Christmas Eve, coming home with the shopping standing there wrapping them say well why should we wrap them –here. *[laughs]* Christmas morning, my parents slept in and o-kay... okay well we don't have stocking we have none of that you know where do you fit? You don't. You don't fit in anything.

*[silence lingers]*

**Leigh:** Do you think maybe we've given up that piece of us? *[Beat]* I'm a creature of curiosity right, so like, I want to know where we fit. Because we do fit... somewhere. And I think that maybe a story is the way to go. *[to Klaus]* Why didn't you talk about it?

**Klaus:** Children's impressions often stay with them for the rest of their lives.

**Leigh:** We aren't kids anymore...

**Jonas:** Don't push too hard.

#### Scene 4

**Leigh:** I'm uh, writing play, a documentary theatre script, which is like a documentary, but for the stage. And um maybe it will be performed I haven't decided yet...

**Klaus:** First of all, do you know that I never fully realised until I was grown up how fortunate I was growing up in the environment that I did. You take things for granted don't you?

**Leigh:** Yeah, I guess... look, I was wondering, would you tell me about the war? Stories, anything?

**Klaus:** I was working at the railroad to because in those days you either were drafted into the army unless you had a job that was needed, so that's what I did. And what I had to do was, I had a sheet of paper and they were all the railroad station in the province right. And the business people had to ring

me to make an application and I would write down whatever station that was and then at a certain time, when I had got all that done I would ring Konigsberg the main city and give them the demands and later on they would ring me and tell me who got what and then I had to ring all the stations and tell them who got what because most of it was kept for the army they would send their own stuff to the different areas you know the “army clothes” and they would send the clothings and things for the army to the soldiers and things. Now this night, it was day not night, this day also we worked night shift, but it was in day time. Well, they had given me what it had distributed, and I called the station and gave them the things and then next and the next and then the fourth station I couldn’t get through, nobody would answer the phone and the phones were always manned because the railway had their own phones. And so I rang beyond that and I couldn’t get an answer and so I rang beyond that and everything was bare. So I went back and retreated to the first, and it took a long time to get them, and I told them and they said “well of course they are not there, don’t you know the Russians are only 12 kilometres from here.” *[looks around at the table]* You know the Russian troops actually.

But the Russians being only that far away, it had to be done very quick so they were told to just go. Well some did and others of course couldn’t. There was only train that got *[pause]* that got out. And what happened there.... We found out after the war, the things that happened there when the Russian troops came in. you know Do you want me to carry on?

**Simeon:** Yes.

**Klaus:** But that’s not really stories.

**Leigh:** Please keep going.

**Klaus:** We get out and we became refugees. We had. *[beat]* We had relatives in North Germany so we aimed to get there. We were practically the first refugees in that town - they came in droves from everywhere from Mecklenburg from east berlin and things like that. They found us an apartment across from the railway station where my father and I of course immediately reported to. We reported there to the highest authority and when they found what I had done, the wagon control they said “yaaaah” they could use me and of course they could use my father. Then the 7<sup>th</sup> of April came and that was when we had the air raids. *[8 seconds silence]*.

**Sophie:** I never realised - I thought only

**Jonas:** Shhhhh

**Klaus:** We took shelter. It went on for about half an hour I knew what was happening out there, I really knew what was happening. I stayed there and I helped the wounded into shelter from the station

rather than going home and facing what was there. But of course eventually it had to, I had to go. Yea. Darkness filled the streets. The whole house was a rubble. Being right across the station you know and *[prolonged]* And then I walked in there I didn't recognise my mother. She was grey completely grey. She was an old woman you know. And she was wounded herself.

I was 21.

So it was left to me, to take action on the whole thing. *[6 seconds]* I, like so many others, had to identify bit and pieces of hair and a leg with a shoe on it, *[5 seconds]* just bits and pieces of all of them.

I never had time to grieve. I hadn't shed a tear. At that time. All this went down and I just had to keep it, strong. But anyhow. So I never ever, had time to grieve it wasn't until 2001, it was 9/11 or eleven 9 what is that you say?

**All:** 9/11

**Klaus:** It was only a day or two after that. I became aware that just a little away from me, say just from here to the door there, was a group of men and all of a sudden I came aware of what they were talking about and one said and you know the Americans were bombing in, what was it?

**Sophie:** Afghanistan.

**Klaus:** They were saying "good let them get some of their own medicine you know they should see that we are not just taking it down. Let them bomb as much as they can." And without thinking I tore from there into the group of men and I said "you silly guys you just don't know what you are talking about" I said "do you think that they are still there? They're not there" I said "all they are killing is innocent women and children who did absolutely nothing to do with it how can you be so stupid?" and I really you know, let it to them. They didn't say a word. Did you know all this?  
Do you want me to carry on?

**Jonas:** But my parents never –

**Klaus:** I never talked about it.

**Leigh:** Did you ever –

**Klaus:** I never hid that I was German, it's my accent you know, I can't get that off me, so I never hid that. I was proud.

**Leigh:** Can I ask you a question?

**Klaus:** Germany was no longer my home.

**Leigh:** Do you think it's because you felt, um... guilty for being German?

**Klaus:** Everybody is to blame for this.

**Jonas:** It's becoming more and more okay to talk about it.

**Klaus:** It's on the surface, it's still there. But the most important part, the forgiving part but that is last.

**Leigh:** So do yo-

**Klaus:** I think that's enough now. Do you want a tea?

**End**