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**GERMANY, IRELAND AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR IN THE
WORKS OF CHRISTABEL BIELENBERG, FRANCIS STUART AND
HUGO HAMILTON**

**A thesis submitted to
the School of English, University of Dublin, Trinity College,
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

2013

Dorothea Depner

DECLARATION

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SUMMARY

Memory has become a focal point of research across several disciplines, including Irish studies. What remains unacknowledged, however, are the roots of memory's ascendancy in the worldwide engagement with the victims of the Second World War and the progression of critical discourse beyond Pierre Nora's landmark study on *lieux de mémoire*. If, as historian Dan Diner claims, memory of the Second World War and its "core event", the Holocaust, is the point of departure for a shared European memory in the present, how can this legacy affect a country at the periphery of these events? This thesis explores how cultural memory, through texts that particularise the experiences of perpetrators and victims, can overcome the limits of Irish national memory. It does so by examining Christabel Bielenberg's, Francis Stuart's and Hugo Hamilton's respective engagements with their personal or mediated recollections of the Second World War in Germany. Their double vision – looking at German history in order to define their position in an Irish environment – constitutes the ground for testing the reciprocal relations between self and other, past and present.

My analysis is itself embedded in an exchange between two theoretical discourses which shed new light not only on the writers and their texts, but also on their historical and cultural contexts. The combination of cultural memory theory and imagology addresses questions about the connection between memory and history, witness and secondary witness; about the limits of representation and an ethics of remembering; about the role of literature as a medium that reflects on the discourses related to the production and representation of memory; and, finally, about the difficulty of overcoming clichéd images of self and other that derive from a long tradition of Irish and German literary representations. Within this framework, I discuss the possibilities as well as the risks involved in defining identity and belonging in the present with reference to German history as both focal and counter point. I explore the problems that arise when the personal

intervention that is necessary to make the past relevant to the present abandons the necessary critical distance and conflates the positions of self and historical victims. Instead of building bridges across disparate memories, such an emotional identification with the other can lead to a valorisation of victimhood and trauma or to an interpretation of the war and Holocaust as foundational in a self-serving, competitive manner.

Bielenberg's, Stuart's and Hamilton's outsider perspectives on German history have received little critical attention. This thesis aims to contextualise their works in order to understand how each of them has formulated memory in literary forms ranging from memoir to autobiographical fiction to memory fiction. It draws on previously unexplored material from their literary estates in order to chart their changing interpretations of events in response to a changing environment. My reading of Christabel Bielenberg's memoirs, *The Past Is Myself* and *The Road Ahead*, is supported by her diary notes from the war, correspondence, manuscripts, typescripts of two unpublished chapters and two short stories, and a copy of an unpublished interview carried out by an American scholar in 1988. Francis Stuart's diaries offer new insights into his changing interpretation and exploration of the aftermath of the war in his novels *The Pillar of Cloud*, *Redemption*, *The Flowering Cross* and of his wartime experiences in *Victors and Vanquished* and *Black List, Section H*. Finally, my critique of Hugo Hamilton's works refers to the Hugo Hamilton Papers, acquired by the National Library of Ireland in 2010, which include the diaries of the author's German mother, Irmgard, as well as the papers of his father, Seán Ó hUrmoltaigh. These provide an invaluable vantage point on the processes at work behind Hamilton's literary exploitation of his family narrative in his two memoirs, *The Speckled People* and *The Sailor in the Wardrobe*, and behind his approach to German history in *Surrogate City*, *The Last Shot*, *The Love Test*, and *Disguise*. His publication in German, *Die redselige Insel*, and his latest novel on a migrant's experience of Ireland, *Hand in the Fire*, conclude my evaluation of his writing.

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Colette O'Daly at the National Library of Ireland was so kind as to allow me to access the Hugo Hamilton Papers as soon as they had been catalogued in 2010. She also kindly accepted a copy of my translation of the diaries of Hugo Hamilton's mother, Irmgard Ó hUrmoltaigh (née Kaiser), into English and included it with the Library's holding of the six original diaries. Frank Reynolds and his colleague Jayne Dunlop at the library of the University of Ulster in Coleraine answered my queries and accommodated my research on the Francis Stuart Papers. I am very grateful to Audrey Kinch at the Russell Library in Maynooth and to Evie Monaghan at the National Library for their last-minute support. I would also like to thank Maureen Sweeney and Tim Mawe in the Department of Foreign Affairs for giving me permission to access the restricted file on Francis Stuart held at the National Archives in Dublin.

An article based on research carried out for this thesis ("Postwar German Identity Constructions in Hugo Hamilton's *Disguise*") is forthcoming in *Critique*.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family – Depners, Heras and Longs alike – who have supported me throughout the past four years. My brothers deserve a special thank you for making their university library accounts available to me in order to track down media more readily available in Germany. Over the past four years, a second family of sorts has formed around me with the "Hams", my fellow travellers who have led the way towards the Ph.D. (and the challenges that follow) by example. Finally, I owe my deepest gratitude to my husband, Graham: for his encouragement to pursue this thesis, his faith in my ability to complete it, and his patience when my own faith was wavering. And for being my critical reader from first to last.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- PIM*: Bielenberg, Christabel. *The Past Is Myself*. London: Corgi Books, 1988 (1968).
- RA*: Bielenberg, Christabel. *The Road Ahead*. London *et al.*: Corgi Books, 1993 (1992).
- SC*: Hamilton, Hugo. *Surrogate City*. London and Boston: Faber & Faber, 1990.
- LS*: Hamilton, Hugo. *The Last Shot*. London *et al.*: Harper Perennial, 2006 (1991).
- LT*: Hamilton, Hugo. *The Love Test*. London and Boston: Faber & Faber, 1996 (1995).
- DPTG*: Hamilton, Hugo. *Dublin where the Palm Trees Grow*. London and Boston: Faber & Faber, 1996.
- SP*: Hamilton, Hugo. *The Speckled People*. London: Fourth Estate, 2003.
- SW*: Hamilton, Hugo. *The Sailor in the Wardrobe*. London: Fourth Estate, 2006.
- D*: Hamilton, Hugo. *Disguise*. London: Fourth Estate, 2008.
- POC*: Stuart, Francis. *The Pillar of Cloud*. With an Introduction by Hugo Hamilton. Dublin: New Island Books, 1994 (1948).
- R*: Stuart, Francis. *Redemption*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1949.
- TFC*: Stuart, Francis. *The Flowering Cross*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1950.
- VV*: Stuart, Francis. *Victors and Vanquished*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1958.
- BL*: Stuart, Francis. *Black List, Section H*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971.

INTRODUCTION: THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN IDENTITY AND ALTERITY

Interviewed about his vision of Europe's future at the beginning of the 1990s, Paul Ricœur remarked on the insufficiency of economic cooperation and shared political institutions to topple the wall of exclusiveness surrounding national identities. He spoke at a time when European borders ceased to be carefully guarded against outside influences as well as defection from within; a time when an intercultural dialogue could be envisioned that would defy old prejudices and meet the foreign other on equal terms. What Ricœur proposed was an exchange of memories as a stepping stone towards achieving a shared memory, a mutual recognition and respect for different experiences of the past (cf. Kearney 1992: 123f.). There were other voices similar to Ricœur's, and there have been since, warning against the privatisation and commodification of memory and pleading instead for a dialogue between different experiences of the past.¹ John R. Gillis concluded his introduction of *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* in 1994 with an appeal that has lost none of its resonance:

In this era of plural identities, we need civil times and civil spaces more than ever, for these are essential to the democratic processes by which individuals and groups come together to discuss, debate, and negotiate the past and, through this process, define the future. (20)

Dan Diner ventured further, locating the point of departure for a shared European memory in the Second World War and its "core event", the Holocaust (cf. Diner 9). This historical rootedness, he argued, was "not only assuming the salience of an arsenal of remembrance", but "also being transformed into (...) a foundational act" (ibid.). In his opinion, it is

likely, however, that there will be an increasing qualitative extension of memory arising from the growing incorporation of the events of World War II,

¹ See, for example, Seamus Heaney in interview with Richard Kearney in *Visions of Europe*, Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* or *The Essence and the Margin: National Identities and Collective Memories in Contemporary European Culture*, which explores the influence of images from within and from outside the nation on the transformation of its cultural imaginary (Rorato & Saunders).

while the Holocaust will continue to impact and color ever more powerfully the various European national memories. (...) In such a process of equalizing and bottom-lining the various European memories of World War II, the differing experiences and histories of the various nations during the war and its aftermath will make themselves felt. Here, after all, were countries allied with the German Reich, some that collaborated, others that were overrun and conquered, and still others that concealed themselves behind a hedge of neutrality. (17)

Diner suggested that “in a reversal as well as elongation of its historical role as the ultimate perpetuator [sic], Germany will likely become the center and focus of this negatively shared European memory”, its “monuments, memorial sites and memory culture” proving “distinctly paradigmatic” within Europe (ibid.).

As a country on the periphery of Europe and a non-participant in the Second World War, Ireland at first glance seems to hold relatively little stake in an idea of shared European memory that centres on the Holocaust as its unifying, inaugural event. Indeed, Colm Tóibín explicitly thematised the distance which he felt separated him and his fellow members of the Irish affiliation of artists, Aosdána, from the victims of the war, when, in 1997, they rejected the motion to exclude Francis Stuart in light of his collaboration with the Nazis: “No one in Aosdána, as far as I am aware, had lost family in the war. All of us were part of the legacy of Irish neutrality, and all of us, debating the issue of Francis Stuart, were living in a sort of backwater, protected from the terrible pain and anger suffered by the families of those killed by the Nazis” (Tóibín 2001). Traditionally, Irish national memory relates victimhood to its own past of colonisation, and, as Tóibín’s reaction illustrates, the myths and ideologies that sustain it simultaneously close it off to the outside. Over the last decades, however, the central narrative propagating a uniform vision of history, culture and identity has been broadened to include different experiences of the past in order to provide a recognisably heterogeneous group with a sense of belonging. The exposure to diversity at home and abroad encourages the rethinking of the image of the other, overcoming disparate memories and, in the process of doing so, fostering empathy in ways Tóibín found lacking. At this precise point, memory, history

and the dialogic exchange between self and other assume supreme relevance – and cultural memory, which operates through symbolic media that can easily transcend national boundaries, can create solidarity and responsibility across different mnemonic groups. Literature, as a medium that can construct these encounters and particularise different experiences of the past, offers a point of access to examine how personal memories of the Second World War and the Holocaust – this “event at the limits” (Friedlander 3) – have been translated and transformed over time in order to broaden our historical imagination and connect us back to the past by initiating a process of critical reflection in the present.

This is the impetus behind this thesis: a departure from a nostalgic, solipsistic engagement with the Irish past and rehearsed national stereotypes² towards a dialogue which communicates with and incorporates foreign experiences. Not in order to shape them in its own likeness, but to understand something of its own historicity and context. It is, therefore, at the intersection of, on the one hand, cultural memory as a dynamic process and available “arsenal”, as Diner intimates, and, on the other hand, of the correlation between auto- and hetero-images that I wish to position my research on Christabel Bielenberg, Francis Stuart and Hugo Hamilton. These three writers have addressed in different ways the implications of the Second World War for postwar Europe – including Ireland’s understanding of itself – and, in turn, of Ireland’s significance for “the wounded heart of Europe” (Lee 2008). Although their response differs, their writing – be it memoir, autobiographical fiction or memory fiction – is very much informed by the lasting topicality of the Holocaust and the social frameworks that have been established to accommodate the narration and reception of this event. Each writer’s case epitomises the conflict between memory and history, and the difficulties inherent in interpreting and articulating the past and relating it to the present. At the same time, each case highlights the difficulty of escaping stratified and clichéd images of self and other that derive from a

² As explored, for example, in Oona Frawley’s work, *Irish Pastoral: Nostalgia and Twentieth-Century Irish Literature*.

long tradition of Irish and German literary representations. The three writers' literary engagement with their personal or mediated experiences of the war allows me to assess the reciprocal processes between their writing and cultural memory in Ireland and Germany. More importantly perhaps, it enables me to point out the possibilities as well as the risks involved in defining identity and belonging in the present with reference to German history as both focal point and counter point.

A purely imagological approach to this topic would explore the images of Irish self and German other in these writers' works in an effort to offer insights into the constants and variables of literary attitudes and values. I would like to use the Irish-German polarity, however, as a point of access to reflect further on how the dialogue between self and other entertained by these writers is itself embedded in a specific cultural and historical context. For this particular binary relationship is formed in relation to a larger setting of national subjectivities, sympathies and antipathies that are lodged in, and retrieved from, the archive of cultural memory (cf. Dyserinck 1997: 89).³ Since imagology cannot be more than a "theory [...] of national stereotypes – *not* a theory of cultural or national 'identities'" (Beller & Leerssen xv), linking the study of literary representations of self and other with a dynamic concept of Irish and German cultural memory broadens the scope of this thesis. At the same time, it reflects the twofold problem the authors themselves encountered in writing about the Second World War and its aftermath in Germany – that is, resolving the issues that affect both the representation of the past and the construction of self- and hetero-image. Although expansive in its breadth, this approach integrates Bielenberg, Stuart and Hamilton in a more illuminating discursive framework that introduces a novel perspective on their writing and considers it alongside contemporaneous developments outside Ireland. It is a small step towards undertaking the exchange Ricœur

³ See, for example, Ute Mittermaier's thesis on Irish writers' engagement with Spain from the Spanish Civil War onwards to the end of the Franco era ("Images of Spain in Irish Literature, 1922-1975", Trinity College Dublin, 2009).

envisioned and explores the three writers' interpretations of German society's failures and achievements as examples of the challenges inherent in a European shared memory of the war.

In Part One of this thesis, I shall address the conflict between memory and history before exploring its implications for the formation and transformation of cultural memory and of an ethics of remembering in writing about the Second World War and Holocaust. I will then try to elucidate the scope and methods of imagology and outline the context of Irish-German literary relations and perceptions which inform the writing of Bielenberg, Stuart and Hamilton. As I will show in Part Two of the thesis, the perspectives these writers adopt towards the German other are motivated by their awareness of a tradition of literary representations of national self-images and images of Germany in Irish (and English) literature, and, to varying degrees, by their awareness of a tradition of literary representations of German self-images and images of Ireland in German texts. In individual chapters dedicated to each writer, I will outline the interplay between images of otherness, selfhood and home and the ideological and historical contexts that inform their representations. In the case of each writer, I will consider their changing interpretations of the Second World War in its relevance to the present. Placing their creative reconstructions of the past, self and other firmly within the theoretical parameters set out in Part One, I will endeavour to show the potential and limits of their respective engagement with this important chapter in European history.

Neither Bielenberg's, nor Stuart's, nor Hamilton's outsider perspective on German history has received much critical attention, and even where some ground has been prepared, it merits a careful reconsideration. My evaluation aims to contextualise their works in order to understand how each of the writers has adopted memory in literary forms ranging from memoir to autobiographical fiction and memory fiction. I draw on previously unexplored sources from the authors' respective literary estates in order to examine the

changing interpretation of events in response to a changing environment. My reading of Christabel Bielenberg's memoirs, *The Past Is Myself* and *The Road Ahead*, is supported by sources from her personal papers which include diary notes from the war, correspondence, manuscripts, typescripts of two unpublished chapters and two short stories and a copy of an unpublished interview conducted by an American scholar in 1988.⁴ These documents, many of which have never been accessed before, chart the genesis of her texts in light of the author's understanding of their relevance within a postwar context. Francis Stuart's interpretation of events in his diaries offers new insights into his exploration of the aftermath of the war in his novels *The Pillar of Cloud*, *Redemption*, *The Flowering Cross*, and of his wartime experiences in *Victors and Vanquished* and *Black List, Section H*. The Hugo Hamilton Papers, acquired by the National Library of Ireland in 2010, also include the papers of the author's father, Seán Ó hUrmoltaigh, and the diaries of his German mother, Irmgard (née Kaiser).⁵ The latter, in particular, provide an invaluable vantage point on the processes at work behind Hamilton's literary exploitation of his family narrative in his two memoirs, *The Speckled People* and *The Sailor in the Wardrobe*, and behind his approach to German history in *Surrogate City*, *The Last Shot*, *The Love Test*, and *Disguise*. His publication in German, *Die redselige Insel*⁶, commissioned by his German publisher to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Heinrich Böll's *Irishes Tagebuch*, and his latest novel, *Hand in the Fire*, conclude my evaluation of his attempts to draw analogies between past and present.

⁴ I have transcribed a selection of this material for inclusion in an omnibus edition of Bielenberg's two memoirs, published in 2011. For convenience, I have included my transcript of the diary notes from summer 1944 and spring 1945 in the Appendix.

⁵ A summary of my translation of Irmgard Ó hUrmoltaigh's six diaries, written between 1952 and 1980, is likewise included in the Appendix. A copy of the complete translation has been deposited with the National Library of Ireland.

⁶ Although written in English, *The Island of the Talking* has so far only appeared in German translation. The first story in this collection was published in English in *Irish Pages* in 2009.

Part I: Key Concepts of Cultural Memory and Imagology in an Irish-German Context

1. Memory, History and the Processes of Cultural Memory

In the 1980s, historian Pierre Nora embarked on a lengthy project entitled *Les lieux de mémoire*, chronicling over seven volumes – at first with curiosity, later with regret – how the impact of a veritable “memory boom” was fast displacing history with a capital *h* in the wake of the emancipation of ethnic, gender and social groups. In *Theatres of Memory* a decade later, the Marxist historian Raphael Samuel interpreted the individualised appropriation of the past in a “heritage boom” in Great Britain much more favourably as the expression of an expanding, more democratic sense of history. David Lowenthal, by contrast, warned of the dissimilar purposes of heritage – the fabrication of an exclusive notion of the past for self-aggrandising purposes – and history, the methodical and verifiable enquiry into the past (cf. Lowenthal 1998b: 7).

This danger is particularly apparent where Samuel’s “theatres” are staged on contentious ground, as Ian McBride’s *History and Memory in Modern Ireland* shows. Although “questions of collective memory and commemoration ha[d] assumed a new prominence in recent years” (McBride 3) in Ireland, Joseph Leerssen noted a perpetuation of an unrelenting opposition between Catholic and Protestant remembering and pleaded for “at least a recognition of each other’s past sufferings” to allow “some understanding between inimical parties” (Leerssen 2001: 222). Terence Brown, exploring the curious connection between economic success and wealth, on one hand, and an obsession with the past, on the other, proffered two possible explanations: Irish society’s need for self-validation in the present in terms of its past, and the genuine possibility of a delayed resurfacing of traumatic collective memories (cf. Brown 403). Whatever the cause, recollective inspection has become emblematic of Irish literature which uses it as a means

of contrasting individual versions of the past with the dominant narrative. More recently, Oona Frawley has embarked on an exploration of Ireland's cultural memory in her series *Memory Ireland*, which maps the scope of a diverse archive of cultural emblems, historical landmarks, and literary icons.

In Germany, Etienne François and Hagen Schulze have carried out a similar project in their three-volume work, *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*. The preoccupation with the past, presumed by some historians to be unusually strong, has fostered a belief in a special German way (*Sonderweg*) of dealing with memory and continuity, manifesting itself, for example, in a "cult of monuments" (Koshar 215). Yet a look at some of the key public debates of the past two decades⁷ reveals a shift away from an official process of coming to terms with the legacy of the past, in particular of the Third Reich,⁸ to individual preservationist endeavours which delve into the *Alltagsgeschichte* ("everyday history") to restore the narratives of German families. Ten years after unification, as Helmut Schmitz points out in his provocatively titled collection of essays, *A Nation of Victims?*, at the very moment when the Jewish Museum and the Holocaust Memorial in the heart of the Republic's new, old capital demonstrated that Germany had enshrined Holocaust memory in its national memory, German literature witnessed a surge in writing that used the Jewish

⁷ These debates include the Historians' Debate (*Historikerstreit*) of 1986/87 on the permissibility of analogies between the Holocaust and other atrocities, and the Walser-Bubis debate in 1998, a controversy stirred by German writer Martin Walser's warning against a perceived instrumentalisation of the Holocaust in his acceptance speech for the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade. Ignaz Bubis, then President of the Jewish Council in Germany and an Auschwitz survivor, accused Walser of dodging historical facts. The debate continued in the run-up to the creation of a Holocaust monument in the heart of Berlin and is still ongoing in relation to plans for a "Centre against Expulsions" proposed by the German Refugee Council. Although intended to commemorate the fate of war victims in general, it risks presenting the expulsion of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe out of its historical context (cf. Salzborn 94f.).

⁸ In her article on the two very different approaches to commemorating the Holocaust in the Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic, Claudia Koonz points out that the communist propaganda celebrating the glorious victory over fascism had effectively exculpated East Germans from any complicity with Nazi policies prior to the creation of their state. The GDR placed a disproportionate emphasis on commemorating (male) communist victims persecuted by the NS regime to the near total neglect of the vast majority of Jewish victims. Koonz further suggests that, following unification, East Germans were reluctant to reshape their version of the past on a West German model which had accepted culpability and responsibility for the Holocaust. Instead, equating their experience of communism and Soviet occupation with the totalitarian regime of the Nazis, East Germans were eager to have their own victimhood acknowledged (cf. Koonz 272f.). Perhaps it is this shift in focus on their personal suffering and their ancestors' which made it possible for German society at large to address the unresolved traumas suffered by civilians during and after the war.

victim narrative as a template to voice allegedly suppressed German memories of wartime suffering, revealing the force of communicative, family memory more than five decades after the war (cf. Schmitz 2007a: 4).⁹ The successful integration of the witness's perspective into Holocaust historiography and the postmodern acceptance of a plurality of histories have encouraged the expression of individual perspectives on the "perpetrator" side, too (cf. idem 6). However, where such narratives of German suffering are recollected outside the causality of their historical context, they risk continuing to suppress and displace the trauma inflicted by the Holocaust. The precarious *status quo* is aptly summarised by cultural critic Aleida Assmann and historian Ute Frevert as a tendency to vacillate between *Geschichtsvergessenheit* ("oblivion of history") and *Geschichtsversessenheit* ("obsession with history") (see their eponymously titled study).

What this sample of investigations into contemporary memory practices shows is that the way we remember is no longer perceived as spontaneous and authentic, but rather as culturally and socially constructed and, as such, subject to change from within as much as from without. The seesaw reactions to the upsurge in emotionally loaded acts of remembering, encroaching on the objectivity pursued by historians, indicate just how difficult the current rapprochement between history and memory is. As Nora observes in his general introduction to *Les lieux de mémoire*, the two terms "memory" and "history" refer in many respects to diametrically opposed approaches to the past:

Memory, being a phenomenon of emotion and magic, accommodates only those facts that suit it. It thrives on vague, telescoping reminiscences, on hazy general impressions or specific symbolic details. (...) History, being an intellectual, nonreligious activity, calls for analysis and critical discourse. Memory situates remembrance in a sacred context. History ferrets it out; it turns whatever it touches into prose. (Nora 1996: 3)

⁹ Since 2000, an increasing number of literary texts has been published which seek to recover these suppressed memories. The topic of Nobel Prize winner Herta Müller's *Atemschaukel*, for example, is the forced deportation to Soviet labour camps of members of the German minority in Romania after the war. Other accounts include testimonies of mass rape by Soviet soldiers, such as the republished anonymous diary *Anonyma: Eine Frau in Berlin*, and countless personal memoirs and family histories like Sebastian Haffner's widely read reminiscences *Geschichte eines Deutschen*, or Wibke Bruhns's *Meines Vaters Land: Geschichte einer deutschen Familie*.

Yet as Peter Burke reminds us, both memory and historiography are steeped in the social and historical processes in which they are expressed:

Neither memories nor histories seem objective any longer. In both cases we are learning to take account of conscious or unconscious selection, interpretation and distortion. In both cases this selection, interpretation and distortion is socially conditioned. It is not the work of individuals alone. (Burke 98)

Implicated in this complex context are Bielenberg, Stuart and Hamilton, and it remains to be seen in Part Two of this thesis how their works engage with collective memory and contribute to a broader cultural memory. The following chapters will set the groundwork for such an analysis. Retracing the problematic relationship between “objective” history and “individual” memory, I will show how the two need not be mutually exclusive, but can complement each other and enhance the exchange of different experiences of the past. In a further step, I will highlight how the critical engagement with a society’s historical representation of itself can challenge the founding myths of national memory and make room for more inclusive societal frameworks. The significance of these frameworks in the acquisition, formulation and preservation of individual and collective memory will be explored in the subsequent section. In the final part of this chapter, I will investigate the dynamics behind cultural memory along with the capacity of symbolic media, such as literature, to shape the contours and contents of memory by offering access to a supranational platform of discourses of alterity and the past.

1.1. Interpreting the Past

Friedrich Nietzsche addressed the “uses and abuses of history for life”, pondering the issue of how to reconcile a plethora of memories and versions of the past with a nation’s need for a coherent identity in the present. Under the strain of historicism, with its emphasis on empiricism and lack of contextualisation, life threatened to be stifled and the “horizons” of individuality and originality swamped with too much knowledge about the past, making it virtually impossible for history’s latecomers to fashion a distinctive culture of their own.

Modern man, according to Nietzsche's half-humorous, half-serious reflections, lived a precarious existence in which the past exhorted reverence and a dedication to preservation rather than creation. In effect, Nietzsche saw history rendered useless to contemporary life by the methods of objective empiricism, criticising that it lacked all measure, giving "equal importance (...) to everything, and therefore too much to anything" (Nietzsche 19):

The antiquarian sense of man, a city, or a nation has always a very limited field. Many things are not noticed at all; the others are seen in isolation, as through a microscope. (...) There is always the danger here that everything ancient will be regarded as equally venerable, and everyone without this respect for antiquity, like a new spirit, rejected as an enemy (ibid.)

In order to render history of service again, Nietzsche advocated an equilibrium between historical and unhistorical awareness, between remembering and forgetting. The means by which such a balance could be achieved was through "the 'plastic power' of a man or a community or a culture" (7) which allowed them to distinguish between important and irrelevant aspects of the past and thus function as the saving selective mechanism that would limit the focus on the past. Recognising the revisionism at work in every historical assessment of the past, Nietzsche outlined how man's plastic power could be assisted by choosing a convenient perspective on history from among the antiquarian, monumental and critical approaches.

In contrast to "antiquarian history", prevalent in his day, "monumental history" suited men of action, who required examples from bygone days to provide a model for their struggle and to legitimise it by invoking a kindred spirit. However, Nietzsche warned against the wrongs the past would suffer by a method that seized on a few aspects and suppressed inconvenient facts:

Monumental history lives by false analogy; it entices the brave to rashness and the enthusiastic to fanaticism by its tempting comparisons. Imagine this history in the hands – and the head – of a gifted egoist or an inspired scoundrel; kings would be overthrown, princes murdered, war and revolution let loose. (16)

The twentieth century would see the worst manifestations of "inspired scoundrels", wielding a biased view of history as a weapon in their fight against their enemies. It is

hardly surprising, then, that, in the aftermath of the Second World War, “critical history” has gained the upper hand, enabling the historian to evaluate the past according to a recognised set of values developed with hindsight. However, the problem inherent in this approach, as Nietzsche anticipated, lies in the difficulty of “plant[ing] a new way of life, a new instinct, a second nature” (21) from within the tradition that is to wither. Inevitably, elements of the first nature persist, as evinced by the – in some quarters lamented, in other quarters celebrated – lingering topicality of a relationship with the past characterised by reverence and assiduous gathering of all things “past”.

In his presidential address to the American Historical Association in 1931, Carl Becker reiterated Nietzsche’s assertion that all history had to serve life in the present. Instead of invoking man’s “plastic power”, he believed that it was the historian’s role to inject meaning into facts. Reducing “history” to its lowest denominator, Becker defined it as “the memory of things said and done” (Becker 223) and concluded: “Everyman is his own historian”. He argued that the individual’s sense of the present needed to be “deliberately and purposefully enlarged and diversified and enriched” (226) through the artificial extension of his personal memory in anticipation of, and preparation for, the future. In Becker’s view, the purpose of the historian was

to harmonize, as well as ignorance and prejudice permit, the actual and the remembered series of events; to enlarge and enrich the specious present common to us all to the end that ‘society’ (the tribe, the nation, or all mankind) may judge of what it is doing in the light of what it has done and what it hopes to do. (231)

Adapting history to the needs of the present was a contribution to shape the course of history, was “living history” (234) even, and did not preclude the task of correcting Everyman’s misconceptions of the past.

Yet Becker’s contention that the refashioning of the past in light of the present should be but “an unconscious (...) effort on the part of society” (235) appears more than problematic with hindsight, as does his assertion, that “[n]either the value nor the dignity

of history need suffer by regarding it as (...) an unstable pattern of remembered things redesigned and newly coloured to suit the convenience of those who make use of it" (ibid.). Whereas such an understanding of history may have been plausible for "conventional narratives (...) seeking resonant closure" (LaCapra 2001: 16), Dominic LaCapra points out that historiography in a posttraumatic context has seen even the most relativist postmodern historiographers at pains to prescribe appropriate ways of relating "limit events", such as the Holocaust, *truthfully*.¹⁰ He echoes Theodor Adorno's belief, expressed in "The Meaning of Working through the Past", that only "seriously working upon the past (...) through a lucid consciousness breaking its power to fascinate" (Adorno 2005a: 89) will enable progression by strengthening the individual's sense of self (cf. 102). Adorno insists that

[w]e are neither simply spectators of world history, free to frolic more or less at will within its grand chambers, nor does world history, whose rhythm increasingly approaches that of catastrophe, appear to allow its subjects the time in which everything would improve on its own. (Adorno 2005a: 99)

For this reason, "democratic pedagogy", or enlightenment of the individual, is the only effective weapon against "a forgetfulness that all too easily turns up together with the justification of what has been forgotten" (99f.).

This realisation has been accompanied by a growing awareness that archival sources alone could not begin to convey the experience of genocide. The closest approximation was the witness's testimony, giving a voice to all those who did not survive. As Avishai Margalit writes,

¹⁰ Thus, Hayden White, who understands history as but another discourse, writes: "It is because narratives are always emplotted that they are meaningfully comparable; it is because narratives are differently emplotted that discriminations among the kinds of plot types can be made" (White 40). LaCapra ultimately dismisses White's proposition that the "emplotment" of the events of the Holocaust dictates the mode of their narration, pointing out that "life with a determinate ('plotted') meaning, much less a true story, simply becomes a contradiction in terms" (LaCapra 2001: 17). If White were right, a different end to the Second World War would have engendered a different emplotment of the events which, in turn, would have enabled those comical and pastoral representations that White rejects as incompatible with the meaning of the Holocaust. See also Anne Fuchs's criticism of James Young, who compromises his otherwise purely constructivist approach to narrative in order to accord more moral weight to the narratives of Holocaust witnesses (cf. Fuchs 2004: 36f.).

[t]o be a truthful chronicler is to be a perfect historical seismograph, to record accurately the vibrations of history. But a seismograph does not tell us what it is like to be in an earthquake. For that we need a moral witness. (Margalit 2002: 163)

He emphasises that “[w]e are dependent on testimonials in an essential way. This is true for all our walks of life: science, religion, history, court, and of course for our collective memory” (180). Where Nietzsche and Becker sought to render history serviceable to a collective identity by investing the past with an emotional dimension for individual as much as national purposes, the historian’s affective response to the victim’s perspective in recent historiography has introduced an ethical orientation in the epistemological research of history. This creates a bond between witness and historian acting as moral “Remembrancers” (Burke 110) to their society, confronting it with what it would prefer to forget. Incompatible as they may seem, the two supposed opposites, “memory” and “history”, can be seen to motivate and complement each other: where memory provides the emotional bond to one’s *own* past, history offers the tools for the necessary verifications and corrections.

1.2. The Memory Boom: Its Uses and Abuses

This combined approach, however, derives from the painful awareness of the “uses and abuses” to which not only history is susceptible, but also memory. Nora traces the acute sense of an obligation to remember experienced by individuals today to the loss of the “milieux de mémoire” – “settings in which memory is a real part of everyday experience” (Nora 1996: 1) – that is, to the displacement of history’s function as an anchor to a place where memories were shared in face-to-face communities. This loss is aggravated by the emergence of critical history, or what Nora calls the emergence of a historiographical consciousness, casting doubt over the contents of a collective memory fund shared by all in a nation. In his view, these two factors, together with a sense of an “acceleration” and “democratization” of history in the maelstrom of globalisation and mass culture, explain

the current upswing in memory's currency, particularly among groups whose past has remained unacknowledged by mainstream history or runs counter to it. Evidence of a compulsion to remember is to be seen in our efforts to record and archive as much as possible in order to provide a substitute for lost memories (cf. Nora 1996: 9). The loss of authentic memories, passed on by the members of a group, is compensated for by the creation of "lieux de mémoire": places, events, symbols and institutions that retain a residue of memory to comfort and support a nostalgic society. A further manifestation of the memory imperative is, according to Nora, the "coercive force" it brings to bear on the individual for whom "the discovery of roots, of 'belonging' to some group, becomes the source of identity" (11). In the attempt to undo our alienation from the past, we will our reconstructions of history to match who we are in the present (cf. 13). Nora concludes that, whereas memory used to be legitimised either by history or literature, the blurring of the boundaries between the two disciplines has now resulted in history becoming a substitute for the imagination:

History offers profundity to an epoch devoid of it, true stories to an epoch devoid of real novels. Memory has been promoted to the center of history: thus do we mourn the loss of literature. (20)

The right to remember and to voice memories is undisputed, but the essentialist or rivalling claims deduced from memories have been the source of grave concerns. Just as Nietzsche noted that "the world seem[ed] to be full of men who 'serve[d] truth,' and yet the virtue of justice [was] seldom present, more seldom known, and almost always mortally hated" (35), so, too, Nora anticipated isolationism and a vying of different memories for supremacy. Speaking at the annual symposium of the Herbert Quandt Foundation in 1999, he shifted his allegiance accordingly from a "duty to remember" to a "duty to history" (cf. Nora 1999). By 2002, his concerns about the resurfacing of foundationalism in various groups' pretensions to a pure, defining store of memories had intensified, as the following statement highlights: "To claim the right to memory is, at

bottom, a call for justice. In the effects it has had, however, it has often become a call to murder” (Nora 2002). In his assessment of Irish history since the 1970s, Roy Foster, too, warned against indiscriminately applying “concepts of psychotherapy and ‘liberation psychology’ such as ‘collective memory’ and ‘post-stress trauma’ on to the historical experience of past centuries” (Foster 2007: 176). Like Nora, he sees a correlation between this trend and a flaring up of nationalist discourse and cultural stereotyping in Ireland. As his cautioning against “the movement of roots-discovery among people of Irish stock” (177) epitomises, there is reason to be suspicious of “recovery projects” pursued by particular groups which seek to anchor their common identity in lost or hidden memories. Where Nora nostalgically longs for a time before the era of “commemorative bulimia” (Nora 1998: 609), Foster fears that the shift in focus towards collective memory might have paved the way for “nationalism with footnotes” (Foster 2007: 177).

At an earlier point, however, Foster had also acknowledged that history could be divested of its totalising tendency “by rereading it, and by realizing and accepting the fractured, divergent realities, and the complications and nuances behind the various Stories” (Foster 2001: 35). Ricœur and Aleida Assmann promote such an approach which seeks to mediate by placing subjective memories in a wider historical and cultural context instead of merely dismissing them as inauthentic, derivative and dangerous.¹¹ Indeed, the epistemology of history could be enriched by what Ricœur considers its ability to move between the individual scale of memory, the institutional scale of collective memory and the macro-scale of history in the long duration (cf. Ricœur 13). Where Nora laments a ubiquitous duty to remember, Ricœur reminds us that history’s function remains to seek the truth before any such duty can become binding (cf. 17f.). These “truth claims”,

¹¹ Susan Crane’s proposition is similar, stressing the role of the individual (and not necessarily the specialist, that is, historian) as determined by, and simultaneously shaping, both collective memory and historical consciousness: “All narratives, all sites, all texts remain objects until they are ‘read’ or referred to by individuals thinking historically. (...) For any individual, learning about history is a lived experience that becomes part of collective memory” (1381).

LaCapra insists, are relevant not only in their relation to events, but also in terms of the “mutually interrogative relation” between historiography and art:

(...) truth claims are (...) relevant to works of art both on the level of their general structures or procedures of emplotment – which may offer significant insights (or, at times, oversights), suggesting lines of inquiry for the work of historians (for example, with respect to transgenerational processes of ‘possession’ or haunting) – and on the level of justifiable questions addressed to art on the basis of historical knowledge and research. (LaCapra 2001: 15)

With the responsibility to establish and ascertain the truth comes another responsibility, namely that of accounting for oneself, and to do so not only by exploring an alternative point of view on one’s story, but by allowing the other to narrate his perspective on the self (cf. Ricœur 24). Far from being a call to murder, this is the point where counter-memories can, in fact, enrich the dialogue in and between different groups, where the exchange of narratives can occur. For narratives which function as a “path of mourning” (ibid.) not only the losses incurred by oneself, but also those incurred by others, will make it more difficult to withdraw into the sequestered realm of national memory where old battles are fought again and again without once internalising the position held, perhaps, by one’s neighbour. Aspiring to such a mnemonic community, where the “irreducible diversity of perspectives, loyalties and alliances” (Assmann 2007: 270, my translation) would be respected, could help create a historical consciousness that would integrate memories across the different levels of the parochial, national and supranational. This would ultimately result in “the Europeanization of (...) Europe” (Sontag 288), realising in the process what historian Ute Frevert calls “a piece of lived Europe” (Frevert 2003: 13, my translation) – a realm of European memory, offering a cultural home beyond the confines of the nation.

1.3. Nostalgia in National Memory

Traditionally, national memory relies on revanchism and on the suppression of counter-memories in order to conform to the “duties, and (...) common effort” imposed by “a glorious heritage and regrets” (Renan 19). Ernest Renan defined the nation in his famous

1882 lecture as “a soul, a spiritual principle”, working on the “social capital” (ibid.) of a revered, but by no means correct vision of a common past: “historical error”, Renan admitted, “is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation” (11). A decade after Nietzsche postulated that history be made serviceable to the construction of national identity, Renan illustrated how the idea of the nation was effectively propped up by a consensus resting on a set of shared memories. Fragile as such a construct may seem, one could argue, as Lowenthal does, that the shelter national memory provides is, unlike history, less subject to reconstruction, because of the faith it commands among those who take pride precisely in the bias and prejudice heritage enforces:

Falsified legacies are integral to group identity and uniqueness. Those who seek a past as sound as a bell forget that bells *need* built-in imperfections to bring out their individual resonances. (Lowenthal 1998a: 11)

However, in order to accommodate heterogeneity and cultural diversity in its midst, national memories have had to become more inclusive of outsider narratives. In Ireland, recent political developments have attempted to redress the bias in national memory, reflecting what historian D. George Boyce has called “the direction of public memory towards an agreed Ireland” (Boyce 270). He points out that the enterprise of “stabilis[ing] the present” (ibid.) risks smoothing over the rifts in the past, making it in turn more difficult to understand the origin of conflicts in the present. Colin Graham draws attention to the Irish critic’s struggle for a suitable distance from a collective discourse that is trapped in renovations of tradition and the mourning of its own lost identity (cf. 42). Graham suspects that such nostalgia is the driving force behind the continuous deferral of addressing and defining contemporary Ireland into an undetermined futurity (cf. 48). From his perspective, the preoccupation with its past would serve as a means of reference for a society which deluded itself with a notion of being conservative for want of a coherent vision of the future. Yet as Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase point out, the retreat into a cosy inward-looking privacy is a double-edged sword: while being a response to the

powerlessness individuals feel in the matter of changing collective life, their withdrawal in fact cements their lack of influence in shaping the community (cf. Shaw & Chase 3f.).¹²

The preoccupation with a perceived loss of an originary identity in the Irish context may represent a feeling of “absence at a ‘foundational’ level” (LaCapra 2001: 46). Converting absence into loss, LaCapra warns, “increases the likelihood of misplaced nostalgia or utopian politics in quest of a new totality or fully unified community” (ibid.).¹³ Unlike losses, which can be specified, mourned, and worked through (cf. Freud 145-56), absence, and the anxiety or desires it provokes, can only be affirmed in the sense that one learns to live with it. Accepting absence has an empowering potential, for it frees the self from searching any longer for a supposedly harmonious former state. This futile quest, as LaCapra shows, has more often than not justified the scapegoating of the other and legitimised the sacrifice of the latter to society’s totalising purposes (cf. 2001: 58). By recognising absence as untranscendable, however, “one would historicize and problematize” such desires that are otherwise prone to subscribe to “notion[s] of a fall from a putative state of grace, at-homeness, unity, or community” (LaCapra 2001: 77).¹⁴

Rather than settle for a palatable “agreed Ireland”, the task is to ensure the viability of the coexistence of self and other, what Jean-Luc Nancy termed “being singular plural”. If “being” is always and necessarily set in relation to the environment as part of “being

¹² Lowenthal further intimates that the rejection of the present in favour of an adulation of the past is insincere, for “nostalgia expresses longings for times that are safely, rather than sadly, beyond recall” (idem 1989: 28).

¹³ Eric Santner elucidates the dynamics behind anxiety and “narrative fetishism” through his reading of history in light of Freud’s *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*:

It was Freud’s thought that the absence of appropriate affect – anxiety – rather than loss per se is what leads to traumatization. Until such anxiety has been recuperated and worked through, the loss will continue to represent a past that refuses to go away. (...) Fetishism (...) is, by contrast, a strategy whereby one seeks voluntaristically to reinstate the pleasure principle without addressing and working through those other tasks which, as Freud insists, ‘must be accomplished before the dominance of the pleasure principle can even begin.’ Far from providing a symbolic space for the recuperation of anxiety, narrative fetishism directly or indirectly offers reassurances that there was no need for anxiety in the first place. (147)

¹⁴ Graham’s interpretation of the confrontation between Stephen and Leopold in the “Ithaca” episode of *Ulysses* reveals a similar understanding of the dangers and opportunities inherent in the relationship between self and other: Stephen realises that his “status as only-possible-first-principle” is, in effect, “a self-perpetuating sense of [his] own ‘destiny’ which has an alternative and an alterity” (46f.). This alternative is Bloom, as one of so many *others*, who “fulfils his desire and lost hope for responsibility” (47).

with” – “the co-implication of existing [*l’exister*] is the sharing of the world” (Nancy 29), and hence the stress in existence falls on the “co-” or “with” – then the subordination of plurality to a traditionally accepted primacy of one singular is no longer justified. Accepting being in common – the “we” – without common being, I would argue, enables a self-critical dialogue which rejects the objectification and commodification of the past and of the other, testing instead preconceived notions of moral superiority in the observer. Such an open encounter will reveal the complexity and conflict inherent in the national collective’s self-representations in relation to the foreign other. Recent works by Irish historians, cultural critics and poets have charted some scarcely traversed territories of national memory, such as the Irish participation in, and experience of, the two World Wars.¹⁵ In a similar way, my examination of the writing of Bielenberg, Stuart and Hamilton for the first time accords attention to their attempts to rethink concepts of belonging in light of a shared European past.

1.4. Memory’s Frameworks: Neuronal, Social, Cultural

This thesis considers memory’s “embodied-ness” in Bielenberg, Stuart, and Hamilton and the “embedded-ness” (cf. Prager 70) of their works in a supranational historical and cultural context. Memory, as Jeffrey Prager explains, is “embodied” at a most basic level in the individual, whose brain processes the sensory data it receives and performs “a form of complex thought organised and structured by lower-order sensory experiences” (184). Emotions, which carry information on how the body experiences the world, provide the structural link between sensations, perceptions, and memories, giving the latter a sense of certainty and objectivity. In order for memories to be accessed, the individual has to be embedded first in a network of social interaction. Second, there has to be awareness of

¹⁵ Examples include Clair Wills’s *That Neutral Ireland: A Cultural History of Ireland during the Second World War*, John Horne’s *Our War: Ireland and the Great War* and Gerald Dawe’s *Earth Voices Whispering: An Anthology of Irish War Poetry 1914-45*.

cultural forms of communication – so-called “story schemata” – which provide the structures, symbols, stereotypes, and media to formulate episodic memories in narratives (cf. Neisser 178, Schudson 347, also Burke 102ff.). As Ulric Neisser elucidates:

Talking about the past is a *skill*, something one must learn how to do. Like other skills it develops with age, social support, and practice. (...) Those schemata are still not fully understood, but they probably include some representation of one’s continuity through time. The beginnings of the life narrative may be what marks the beginning of the end of childhood amnesia.

(178)

The fundamental role of social frameworks in the acquisition, recall, reorganisation and dissemination of memories was first recognised by French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs in *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*. Turning against the essentialist notion that memories were biologically inherited, he showed how individual memory is formed in communication with, and in relation to, groups – from the family to the nation – who in turn define their identity in terms of shared memories. These social frameworks, and the places they operate in, provide the very arena for “the collective memory to reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of the society” (Halbwachs 1992: 40). Yet for “lived memories” to remain accessible to the collective memory of later generations, they have to be saved beyond the death of the individuals who originally embodied the remembered experience. This, as Halbwachs explained in the posthumously published *La mémoire collective*, could only be achieved by fixing orally communicated memories in symbols and mediated representations, such as writing (cf. Halbwachs 1950: 45).

What Halbwachs considered a less privileged medium, compared to the perceived authenticity of an oral tradition, became the central focus of the German Egyptologists and cultural critics, Jan and Aleida Assmann. Since the 1980s, they have been elaborating on Halbwachs’s ideas, both in the context of ancient civilisations and in relation to contemporary society. Together they have formulated a concept of cultural memory that operates beyond the individual psychology of remembering, demonstrating instead how

shared memories are collectively constructed, circulated and exchanged through cultural processes.¹⁶ By acknowledging mediated sources of information as “the order of the day” (Rigney 14), they effectively leave the dread of being mere *epigones* behind, pioneering instead the opportunities cultural memory can offer across boundaries. According to Jan Assmann, collective memory is constituted by “communicative memory” (or informal “everyday memory”), and “cultural memory”, “a collective concept for all knowledge that directs behavior and experience in the interactive framework of a society” (J. Assmann 126). Cultural memory is formed over generations through “repeated societal practice” (*ibid.*). Communicative memory, as the name suggests, is the practice of oral transmission Halbwachs envisioned and is temporally limited to a maximum of one hundred years (*cf.* 127). The transition from its unfixed, disorganised form to cultural memory is effected through objectivised cultural methods – “texts, images, rites, buildings, monuments, cities, or even landscapes” (128).

From this perspective, the dynamics of cultural memory do not denote a depletion of shared memories in need of repair, as Nora fears, nor a hypothetical original state of plenitude that needs to be regained. Rather, they point towards a vast “store of knowledge” (J. Assmann 130), available much like an archive, the normative and formative potential of which is realised through the actual elements retrieved by a group in an effort to concretise their own identity. Typically, a group will construct its identity around “fateful events of the past” (*ibid.*) in opposition to, and by excluding those whose interpretation of these events differs. To ensure that this past will be remembered by its members, the group will set in place mechanisms of “cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional

¹⁶ Paul Connerton, in *How Societies Remember*, took Halbwachs’s theory of memory as a cultural practice in another direction, focusing on bodily practices (rituals, rites, gestures etc.) as they are incorporated and inscribed into “social memory” and performed in society.

communication (recitation, practice, observance)” (129).¹⁷ Assmann allows for variations in the response to what he calls these “immovable figures of memory” (130), figures akin to Nora’s *lieux de mémoire*, created by the interplay of memory and history. Depending on the context, they can be appropriated, criticised, preserved or transformed. Alternatively, they may recede from the cultural horizon.

1.5. The Dynamics of Cultural Memory

Aleida Assmann elaborated further on two aspects of cultural memory which, according to her, form its foreground/background respectively: “working memory” (*Funktionsgedächtnis*), a society’s active memory, operating on the basis of a small selection of sources from the “storage memory” (*Speichergedächtnis*), an archive that holds data regardless of its present relevance (cf. A. Assmann 1999: 138ff.).¹⁸ As projected by Nietzsche, the selective recollection of the past serves to legitimise an official discourse and to distinguish the community involved in its memorial practices from others. Invariably, in choosing certain aspects from the archive and by infusing them with interest and emotion, working memory neglects, and sometimes consciously suppresses, alternative memories. Yet storage memory, fed by the arts, sciences, archives, museums, and other sources already contains in its repository the elements for future working memories. Renaissance phenomena tap into its abundance, as does any movement promoting cultural change, for it allows the critical distance necessary to assume a different perspective from the canonised version of the past, and to subvert its scope by retrieving events and aspects that differ from those currently valorised. Understood in this way, memorial practices do

¹⁷ Jan Assmann warns in this respect of the danger inherent in “the inevitable egoism of cultural memory that derives from ‘the need for identity’ (...), if the representations of alterity, in their relation to the representation of identity (self-images), become images of an enemy” (130).

¹⁸ However, Ann Rigney reminds us that, just as “many potential memories remain perpetually unnoticed and unrecalled in the archive”, so, too, “some things are ‘remembered’ for which there is no basis in the archive” (Rigney 17). Andreas Huyssen points out a further irony in the use of the term “archive”, namely its connotation of stability when memory is, in fact, a dynamic process which also includes forgetting (cf. 26).

not merely reflect a community's identity, but can define and redefine the way a community conceives of itself.

Adopting the socio-constructivist model of cultural memory proposed by Jan and Aleida Assmann, Rigney focuses on its intercultural potential, exploring the ways in which literature and other media act as catalysts in the promotion of shared memories. Like Nora, Rigney contends that what is perceived as an explosion of memories is in fact a manifestation of scarcity: because so much is forgotten of all the things that could be remembered, the memories that do survive are by definition mediated vicarious recollections¹⁹ which are conserved, repeated, endlessly expanded upon and reinterpreted. Rigney sees the principle of scarcity at work in the selectivity of recall, described by Aleida Assmann with regard to working memory, and in the convergence of memories into sites of memory which, once established, can be invested with further symbolic meaning. A similar economy can be seen in the recursivity of remembrance, which often relies on a combination of different media, such as monuments, texts and images, to repeat and reinforce shared memories. Models of remembrance, too, can prove scarce, in particular when a traumatic or painful experience is to be retrieved and related. A form once used successfully to remember a certain experience may be recycled on a different occasion for a different act of remembrance. This “copy-cat dimension to memorial culture” (Rigney 24) unites different groups in their strategies even as they set out to use the same tools to carve out their particularity. For example, the narrative of Holocaust victimisation and trauma has been adapted to work through colonial legacies and genocides elsewhere and, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, has even served later generations of

¹⁹ While Rigney refers to such memories as “vicarious”, LaCapra resists the act of identification implied in this term, suggesting instead memories that are handed down to us over generations are “virtual”. To him, identification is not only counterproductive for the present, but also unethical: “(...) one possessed, however vicariously, by the past and reliving its traumatic scenes may be tragically incapable of acting responsibly or behaving in an ethical manner involving consideration for others as others” (2001: 28). He maintains that the loss experienced by actual victims is for them to work through and not for secondary witnesses. The latter should resist conflation of their present with past events and maintain an attitude of “empathic unsettlement” in relation to the victims and the past (cf. Part I.2.3 and 2.4).

Germans to address ancestral wartime experiences and to empathise with their parents' suffering. Yet the dynamics that shape cultural memory amount to more than just shared memorial patterns and techniques. The very media that convey representations of the past can not only traverse temporal and spatial boundaries, but can also communicate to societies which, regardless of their actual connection to the events related, can come to identify with other people in an "imagined community" far larger than the social frameworks Halbwachs initially described (cf. Rigney 25).²⁰

Michael Rothberg takes this approach one step further to show the "multidirectionality" of memory at work in the simultaneous emergence of public Holocaust memory and the process of decolonisation in the 1950s and 1960s. In his study *Multidirectional Memory*, he argues that the spread of Holocaust memory across the world has helped other groups in several national contexts formulate and resolve issues of memory and identity in their struggle for acceptance and recognition (cf. Rothberg 2009: 6). Rather than foster a vying of memories for prime spot in collective memory, international awareness of, and critical engagement with, the Second World War and the Holocaust has revealed similarities with other histories of oppression and encouraged the investigation of injustice, discrimination and trauma suffered by other communities.²¹ Rothberg combines Holocaust studies and postcolonial studies to emphasise that "coming to terms with the past happens in comparative contexts and via the circulation of memories linked to what are only apparently separate histories and national or ethnic constituencies" (Rothberg 272). His analysis of works by black American, French-Algerian and European

²⁰ Undoubtedly, there is a danger that the sheer volume of texts and images of the past, consumed superficially, may have the reverse effect and desensitise individuals instead of making them empathetic towards it (cf. Shaw & Chase 10). Huyssen voices this concern, wondering if, "once the memory boom is history, will anyone have remembered anything at all" (21). He further contends that the memory industry is, in fact, feeding contemporary amnesia and takes Nora's claim of an acceleration and democratisation of history to the next level, locating the contemporary "crisis of temporality" (21) in "informational and perceptual overload" (24).

²¹ Huyssen, however, fears that the Holocaust may have become a "screen memory" (19) and that in the ritualised memory of this event, world politics avoids facing up to present atrocities, wars and crimes.

artists illustrates how diverse memories are interlinked and reappear as overlapping multiple layers in different contexts to uncover the persistence of unresolved histories, traumas and social divisions, thus enabling the creation of new sites of concord (cf. Rothberg 308).

Accepting that memory is recursive, recyclable and “multidirectional” rather than competitive, scarce and exclusive has direct consequences for studying Irish literature about the Second World War in Germany. If memory is no longer considered “a zero-sum struggle over scarce resources” (Rothberg 2009: 3), but instead as a productive process of “ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing” (ibid.), it is important to examine Bielenberg’s, Stuart’s and Hamilton’s creation of images of self and other and their understanding of history, trauma and reconciliation in light of the interplay between German and Irish sites and agents of memory. The culturally constructed nature of mediated recollections, as much as the “imagined communities” that form around them, highlight the need for a critical enquiry into the mnemonic readjustments and reformulations the three writers perform. In Burke’s words, “[i]t is important to ask the question, who wants whom to remember what and why? Whose version of the past is recorded and preserved?” This consideration is not only relevant to historiography with its avowed aim of producing an informed representation of the past, but also to literature as a memorial medium in its own right, actively involved in disseminating images and stories of the past in a variety of genres.

2. Writing in the Force Field of the Holocaust

Astrid Erll and Rigney identify three roles literature plays in the production of cultural memory, roles which are by no means assumed in isolation but are in constant interplay: as a medium of remembrance, works of literature represent the past, often by revisioning and rewriting prevailing accounts, and raise the question of how genre conventions, style and perspective influence our view of the past. Literature functions as an object of remembrance in the way texts position themselves, reverentially or critically, in relation to the corpus of earlier narratives. Finally, literature exposes how memories are constructed through the mimesis of individual and group memory (Erll & Rigney 2006: 112f.).²² As a medium for observing the production of cultural memory, “literature reflects upon the epistemology, ethics, and workings of collective memory and, as such, it engages in a dialogue with historians and sociologists regarding the interpretation of the past and the forms appropriate to it” (113). Bielenberg, Stuart and Hamilton, writing at the intersection of German past and Irish present, have each used their vantage point to construct a past *a posteriori* using different modes of literary representation. They range from Bielenberg’s experiential mode of the eye witness, to the monumental mode of myth-making²³ which allows Stuart to present the war as evolutionary progress, to the self-reflexive mode with which Hamilton observes the construction of memory itself and attempts an exchange of Irish and German memories. Their writing offers an opportunity to examine not only how they understand and endeavour to shape the past, but also how their works comment on the

²² First expounded in their introduction to a special issue of the *European Journal of English Studies* in 2006, Erll and Rigney have since reiterated these tenets in their introduction to *Mediation, Remediation and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*.

²³ In “Literature and Politics”, Stuart explicitly states that “serious novelists communicate by myth and parable to their readers” in the hope that some of them may “respond with understanding and delight” and thus set “a counter-current (...) flowing” (1977: 72).

tradition of remembering the Second World War and Holocaust.²⁴ A critical analysis of their works should, therefore, seek to integrate their works into the larger context in which they are embedded and with which they engage. The parameters of this setting are delineated, on the one hand, by the dynamics of memory and history outlined in the previous sections of this chapter. They are further defined by an ethics of remembering which addresses the limits and opportunities artistic expression has encountered in the process of working through the losses inflicted by these historical events.

2.1. Writing Trauma

With increasing distance from the war, and with the gradual transition from the communicative memory of witnesses to objectivised, mediated forms of remembering, the artistic engagement with, and consciousness of, the events surrounding the Holocaust have intensified. This paradox can be explained in terms of the latency of trauma which has entered into a “posttraumatic situation” (cf. Assmann 2006: 93, my translation) where it continues to preoccupy later generations as “a sense of crisis (...) in acknowledged or unacknowledged fashion” (LaCapra 2001: 217). Psychological trauma refers to a wound caused by experiences of violence so extreme, they threatened the individual’s selfhood and had to be sealed off. As Laurence Kirmayer points out, dissociated traumatic experiences are “nonetheless registered and potentially available, indeed, demonstrably affecting past and present behavior and experience by [their] palpable absence” (cf. Kirmayer 179). By comparing the case studies of Holocaust survivors and victims of child abuse, Kirmayer, however, discovered that the trauma of the former group had not resulted in severe dissociation, as was the case with the latter group, but instead given rise to “painful recollections, anxiety, or numbing and emotional disconnection” (183). Even

²⁴ Their works have themselves encouraged further artistic engagement with their perspectives using multiple media. Bielenberg’s memoir was adapted for television by the BBC in the late 1980s, and Hamilton’s novel *Surrogate City* inspired contemporary composer Heiner Goebbels’s symphony *Surrogate Cities*, performed under the direction of Sir Simon Rattle in Berlin in February 2008 (Scally 2008: B7).

where patterns such as depersonalization and duality of consciousness occurred in survivors' narratives, vacillating between reliving the deep memory of the pain and quotidian memory – patterns that closely resemble dissociation – Kirmayer maintains they were employed consciously and in a self-reflective manner by the individual seeking to connect to his ruptured self.²⁵ The key difference between the two responses to trauma, he concludes, is socially conditioned: for the integration of trauma into conscious memory to occur, a suitable frame for remembering is required, offering the victim both narrative structures to voice the traumatic experiences and a sympathetic audience willing to listen and to recognise the crime committed (cf. Kirmayer 186; also Assmann 2007: 94f.). Where these conditions are not in place, the traumatised individual is likely to sequester the memory which society refuses to listen to into a dissociated space (cf. Kirmayer 189).

During the decade following the Second World War, the general lack of interest and comprehension witnesses were faced with forced them to “be selective in their retelling” (ibid.) or else to consign their individual stories to quarantine until an audience emerged that provided a social framework for remembering and narrating their experiences. In postwar Germany, for example, keeping silent over both personal guilt and personal hardships suffered was considered essential to expedite the swift transition to a democratic society. The victims' simultaneous silent struggle to come to terms privately with their pain was misconstrued as condoning this attempt to draw a line under the past (cf. Assmann 2007: 101). However, the claim of a “taboo” surrounding German recollections of the Second World War has come under attack. Research conducted by Robert G. Moeller and Norbert Frei shows that public discourse in the 1950s was centred precisely on German losses and that Germans commonly understood themselves as threefold victims: victims of a war that had been foisted upon them, victims of Hitler's megalomania, and victims of the Allies' retribution (cf. Schmitz 2007a: 9f.). Bielenberg, in

²⁵ Kirmayer does, however, admit that there is no knowing if dissociation occurred at an earlier stage and had since been overcome by the individuals whose cases he examined.

fact, found this mentality on her return to Germany in 1946 so prevalent and infuriating, she was still raging against it many decades later when she wrote her second memoir: “To blazes with their complaints and their suffering! As far as I was concerned they could all take up their worthless share portfolios and go jump in the Rhine” (RA 79). Only in the 1960s did attention gradually shift to the actual victims of the Nazi regime.²⁶

But it was not only the losers of the war who sought to distance themselves from an immediate past in order to attempt a new beginning from an imagined “zero hour” (the famous *Stunde Null*). As Gillis points out, Israel, too, avoided examining the Second World War until it had established itself securely as a State. The narratives of Jewish survivors experienced an upgrading in prestige and privilege in the wake of the media attention the Eichmann trial received in 1963, and again after Israel’s military victory in the Six-Day War (cf. Schudson 350). A “new openness and pride on the part of Jews in their Jewishness” met with the growing awareness that, as living memory of the Holocaust was slipping away, “the only memories that remain are those culturally institutionalized” (ibid.). Both aspects taken together suddenly provided “a powerful reason to commemorate” (Gillis 12) and to bear witness to this human catastrophe.

2.2. Eye-Witness Accounts

Primo Levi’s struggle to have his testimonial, *Se questo è un uomo*, published must have confirmed his worst nightmare in the concentration camp: while still in Auschwitz-Monowitz, he had frequently dreamed of being back among his family and feeling

²⁶ The diaries of Hamilton’s mother incidentally corroborate these findings, in that they contain detailed records of her and her family’s losses during the war (both of material possessions and, in her uncle’s case, of status and employment, for which his widow was later compensated by the Federal Republic), but make no mention of the consequences of Nazi policies or of her experiences as a staff secretary in the army, other than giving her access to luxuries like chocolate and coffee in occupied France and the Netherlands (entries on 17 May and 18 August 1980). She also outlines the hardships suffered under Allied occupation, vividly recalling the shame and fear she felt when forced to steal two bars of soap from her American employers for the children of one of her sisters who were suffering from rashes due to the coarse “sand soap” of the day. The only two references to Nazi crimes in over almost four decades covered in her diaries occur in the early 1960s, following Eichmann’s trial (see Part II.3.1).

compelled to tell them everything about life in the camp, only to notice halfway through his account that nobody was paying attention (cf. Levi 53f.). Indeed, as the postscript to the 1976 edition reveals, it was more than a decade after the barely-noticed first publication of his book in 1947 that an exhibition about the deportation of Jews in Turin suddenly sparked an interest in his testimony among a younger generation. This, in turn, gave him courage to resubmit his work to a bigger Italian publishing house, Einaudi. His work has never been out of print since. Levi's example illustrates the chasm between the survivor's obligation to reveal the catastrophe he has witnessed and the conceptual and representational difficulties his account presents both for him as narrator and for his audience.

In *The Ethics of Memory*, Avishai Margalit dedicates a chapter to the "moral witness" and defines the latter as an individual who has witnessed, if not experienced, "the combination of evil and the suffering it produces" (148) and who has been at "personal risk" (150), either as a potential victim or as witness to the victims' suffering. Unlike the religious witness or martyr, who suffers and dies in the hope that his story will serve a higher glory, the moral witness's hope is "that in another place or another time there exists, or will exist, a moral community that will listen to their testimony" (155), even if that moral community may only comprise the victim and his, by then, older self. Furthermore, the moral witness's "special role in uncovering the evil he or she encounters" (165) is motivated by the self-sustaining need to fight the oblivion that threatens to erase every trace of the crimes committed.²⁷ The ability to tell their story, however, requires a narrative intervention to repair the rupture caused by their traumatic experiences and to reinsert the trauma into a social context. As Kirmayer observes, and Margalit concurs, a major

²⁷ Of course, the motivation behind each testimony may differ from witness to witness. Thus, Margalit concedes that survivors of the camps who had been deported for political reasons may shape their testimony to serve as an indictment of a corrupt system and as a justification for its replacement (cf. Margalit 167). Koonz confirms that the commemoration of the camps in the Eastern Bloc valorised the accounts of anti-fascist male activists to the near total neglect of the perspective of those persecuted for racial, religious or sexual reasons.

stumbling block for traumatised individuals is the sheer inadequacy of language to express their experience *truthfully*:

Traumatic experience is not a story but a cascade of experiences, eruptions, crevasses, a sliding of tectonic plates that undergird the self. These disruptions then give rise to an effort to interpret and so to smooth, stabilize, and recalibrate. The effect of these processes is to create a specific narrative landscape. This landscape must fit with (and so is governed by) folk models of memory. (Kirmayer 181f.)

The caesura represented by the Holocaust thus defies mimetic representation, and for a long time the closest approximation witnesses found acceptable was the documentary style of the first-person testimony.²⁸ Yet even this form poses a problem for the witness, who, by formulating the unspeakable in a coherent structure, discovers he or she has inadvertently reinserted a traumatic experience into a continuum, seemingly refuting its unassimilability. This step, however, as LaCapra emphasises, represents an important transition from acting out to working through trauma: by assuming a critical distance from the narrated self, the narrator has already embarked on the process of mourning the loss sustained in the past with the prospect of letting it go in the present (cf. LaCapra 2001: 66). What the testimonies encode is the “emotional difficulty of retelling and the profound effect of living with memories that subvert the everyday construction of the self” (Kirmayer 182). They do so with particular care for detail, hence the documentary style, knowing that once the narrative is composed, it will leave the realm of the narrator’s authority, becoming a virtual memory to the social community of secondary witnesses that act as its midwife and audience.

James Young explains this experience common not only to memoirists and diarists of the Holocaust, but particularly problematic for them because of the ethical motivation behind their acts of remembering:

²⁸ Ellipsis is another possible technique to convey “how ineffable the experience of radical evil is”, describing “the-moment-before and (...) the-moment-after (...) but avoiding the moment of horror itself” (Margalit 2002: 168).

Evidence of the witness's experiences seems to have been supplanted – not delivered – by his text. Once he withdraws from his words, the writer has in effect also withdrawn the words' evidentiary authority, the only link it ever had to its object in the world. The writer's absence thus becomes the absence of authority for the word itself, making it nothing more than a signifier that gestures back toward the writer and his experiences, but that is now only a gesture, a fugitive report. (24)

As Paul Celan put it in the last lines of his poem "Aschenglorie": "Niemand/zeugt für den/Zeugen" (Celan 1983a: 72) – "No one/bears witness for the/witness". And yet, Celan's elliptical evocation is itself bearing witness. He pointed this out himself in his acceptance speech for the Georg Büchner Prize in 1960: "Aber das Gedicht spricht ja! Es bleibt seiner Daten eingedenk, aber – es spricht. Gewiss, es spricht immer nur in seiner eigenen, allereigensten Sache" (1983b: 196).²⁹ This act of bearing witness involves the reader: it needs him as audience to the process of making the past present again. And it needs him to believe. Witnessing thus brings the past to life for the secondary witness.³⁰ Proof is not the issue; it is the act of faith demanded in the singular experience the witness articulates (cf. Derrida 2005: 83). Although to the witness the insistence on a restitution of truth may be the chief concern – and Bielenberg states this as her primary motivation in her foreword to *The Past Is Myself* – Young maintains that what is really at stake in the testimonies are not the *realia* of the events related³¹, but the witness's interpretation of them in light of his personality and his environment as they evolve (cf. 30f.). Therefore, the witness's perspective needs to be examined not only in light of the knowledge they gained *post*

²⁹ My translation: "But the poem does speak! It commemorates its own dates [or references], but – it speaks. Of course, it only ever speaks on behalf of its own, its very own matter." Adorno, who sees Celan's poetry "permeated by the shame of art in the face of suffering that escapes both experience and sublimation", concludes that "Celan's poems want to speak of the most extreme horror through silence. Their truth content itself becomes negative" (1997: 322).

³⁰ In the chapter "Poetics and Politics of Witnessing", Derrida analyses the poem in this way, seeing it as an act of "bearing witness to bearing witness" (2005: 70). Examining the hypothesis that "all responsible witnessing engages a poetic experience of language" (66), he argues that no one bears witness for the witness because no one can and no one should (cf. 87) – the witness's solitude is "solitude itself and the secret itself (...) It speaks to the other by keeping quiet, keeping something quiet from him. In keeping quiet, in keeping silent, it still addresses" (96).

³¹ Margalit concurs and points out that "the adjective *moral* has to do with the content of the testimony, not with the epistemological status of what the moral witness witnessed" (2002: 163f.).

factum, but also in light of their actions and of their (mis)interpretation of the events at the time they occurred, which shaped the course the events took in the first place.

By inverse analogy, “the inability to mourn”, ascribed to the German people by psychologists Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich in their eponymous landmark study of 1967,³² has to be interpreted on the basis of the perpetrators’ earlier indoctrination which had repressed their empathy and conscience during the war, making it difficult to later feel guilty about what they had systematically ignored or misinterpreted. In contrast to the trauma inflicted on the victims of the Holocaust, the perpetrators experienced “a sudden and shocking confrontation with their individual responsibility and conscience” (Assmann 2007: 97, my translation). Rejecting the notion of traumatised perpetrators, Aleida Assmann instead speaks of a “taboo” surrounding the shame and loss of face following the revelation of the full extent of Nazi crimes at the end of the Second World War and the administration of justice by the Allies. Silence on one’s own implication in the policies of the Nazi state, a concentration on regaining normalcy, and a tendency to attribute blame solely to political leaders were the common response (cf. Mitscherlich & Mitscherlich 2007: 36) – a tactic that will have to be critically examined in Stuart’s interpretation of events in his postwar novels, which dissolve individual responsibility and collectivise the persecution experienced by specific victims of the Nazi regime. The convenient silence was broken at the same time as the testimonies of Jewish survivors began to be heard. Travel had begun to sensitise younger Germans in particular to the incongruity between *Wirtschaftswunder* Germany’s smug self-image and its tarnished image abroad (cf. M. Mitscherlich in interview with Prieger & Das Gupta). In the late 1960s, the Auschwitz trials brought the horrors of the Nazi regime back into the collective consciousness and initiated a process which saw a younger generation distance itself from their parents in order to side with the victims. Their behaviour as “empathy prohibitors”

³² Originally published in 1967, their diagnosis would already be contested one year later by the anti-authoritarian student revolts.

(Schmitz 2007a: 21) has become the subject of a later generation's reckoning after German unification. Both processes can be seen in Hamilton's novels and memoirs, which typically combine the earlier rejection by the generation of 1968 and the sympathetic re-evaluation of the parents' past in contemporary Germany. In common with writers of this latter trend, Hamilton likes to present his expression of empathy for German suffering as the breaking of another taboo.

2.3. Postmemory and Vicarious Remembering

At a further remove, the fragmented memories of witnesses have become a central part of contemporary cultural memory and are perpetuated through textual, visual and architectural media. The unresolved nature of the Holocaust perhaps explains the ongoing "deep personal connection" felt by later generations. Marianne Hirsch considers this the source of what she terms "postmemory", namely

a powerful and very particular form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation. (...) Postmemory characterizes the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated. (22)

What the victims experienced as historical trauma has come to preoccupy their children and grandchildren as part of a structural trauma, an anxiety or aporia which, if misconstrued as a personal loss or lack, threatens to blur the distinction between the self's position in the present and the historical losses sustained by others in the past. LaCapra considers structural trauma to be related to a sense of "transhistorical absence (absence of/at the origin)" existing in all societies and individuals and exemplified in terms of, for example, "the separation from the (m)other, the passage from nature to culture, (...) the entry into language, (...) the anxiety-ridden thrownness of *Dasein*, (...) the constitutive nature of originary melancholic loss in relation to subjectivity" (2001: 77).

This phenomenon manifests itself in literary terms in the probing literature written by the children of survivors, whose interest in the painful memories of their parents and grandparents is driven by a need to reconstruct a lost (or to construct a new) Jewish identity adapted to their environment (cf. D. Lorenz 171). Since the sources of postmemory are culturally mediated, however, they not only affect those with a biological connection to survivors, but can also be felt by the descendants of the perpetrators. In the so-called genre of *Väter-Literatur* that emerged in the 1970s, German writers of the '68 generation imagined a dialogue with their fathers in which they could hypothesise answers to the questions their parents had passed over in silence (cf. Assmann 2007: 102). Hamilton's novel *The Last Shot* is an example of how a narrator living in the present seeks to ascertain his own identity by meticulously documenting the flight of his mother and possible father from the advancing Soviet army in the Czech Republic. His work, however, allows the two narratives, past and present, to coexist, without imposing the latter's superiority over the former. His two memoirs, in turn, exemplify his attempts to locate his identity by trying to reconcile his German background, which he experienced as shameful and fraught, with his Irish background, which, in contrast to his father's prohibitive vision, he comes to define as pluralistic and modern.

In some cases, the mediated nature of postmemory, together with the heightened attention and privilege accorded to certain experiences of the past in a society, have created a degree of responsiveness in individuals that has led them to remember as their own (traumatic) experience what is in fact somebody else's experience. Prager, who has examined such misremembering, or transference, both from a sociological and psychoanalytical perspective, maintains that the greater the "epistemic hunger" in an individual, specifically his need to achieve a harmonious emotional state, the stronger the urge to actively remember (cf. 193). In 1980, the American Psychiatric Association recognised two new diagnostic categories: posttraumatic stress disorder and multiple

personality disorder (cf. Prager 72, 128). Prager contends that both diagnoses subsequently received great attention in American public and scholarly circles alike and turned remote illnesses like shell shock, combat stress, delayed stress syndrome and traumatic neurosis into topical categories of remembering.³³ The media, in particular, made narratives about victimiser and victims ubiquitous (cf. Prager 209), and, in the late 1980s, initiated a veritable “sexual abuse movement” (72) in the United States.³⁴

The eminent example of Benjamin Wilkomirski’s *faux mémoire*, *Bruchstücke* (*Fragments*), published in German in 1995 and in English the following year, excited comment from LaCapra, Margalit and Aleida Assmann as case in point against the usurpation of the victim’s role (cf. LaCapra 2001: 32ff., Margalit 2002: 173f., Assmann 2007: 145f.). Referring to his childhood between 1939 and 1948 as a dissociated complex he had never sought to integrate before writing his memoir, but which he could no longer ignore, Wilkomirski claimed he “wrote these fragments of memory to explore (...) [him]self and [his] earliest childhood” in order to “attempt to set [him]self free” (Wilkomirski 155). By observing agreed modes of recollective writing, he managed to thread together fragmented images of his Jewish childhood in various concentration camps with accompanying sensations and emotions that appeared overpoweringly authentic to his readers, among them survivors of the Holocaust. In an afterword, he expressed hope that his example would encourage others like him “to cry out their traumatic childhood memories, so that they too could learn that there really are people today who will take them seriously, and who want to listen and to understand” (ibid.). Three years after the publication of his prize-winning book, Wilkomirski was exposed as an impostor: he was,

³³ Similarly, Neisser attributes the surge in accusations of childhood sexual abuse to the creation of a new set of implicit theories or schemata through the media and psychotherapy which provide individuals with altered assumptions about their personal narrative (cf. 184).

³⁴ In the case Prager cites, this climate led an individual to seek analysis for an imagined history of child abuse which she had misappropriated into her personal narrative in an attempt to explain her feelings of insecurity and doubts in the present. Once the analyst had recognised the surrogate victimhood adopted at a time of heightened media attention to abuse cases, the actual problems at the root of the transference could be addressed and worked through.

in fact, Bruno Grosjean, an illegitimate child born in Switzerland and raised by adoptive parents as Bruno Dössecker. Despite his protests that he had been switched on arriving in Switzerland after the Second World War with Bruno Grosjean, a DNA test confirmed his identity as the former.³⁵ Wilkomirski/Dössecker had reframed his own childhood experiences within the complex narrative of a child who survived Majdanek, Auschwitz-Birkenau and a Krakow orphanage. Although he may have been affected deeply by evidence of the Holocaust, which he researched meticulously through texts, documentaries, visits to concentration camps, interaction with Jewish survivors in the self-help groups he joined and even through psychoanalysis, the images he recalled of those places were suggestive images he had accessed through cultural memory and not through experience (cf. Maechler 80ff., Assmann 2007: 147f.). Margalit, who stipulates that “one has to have some knowledge by acquaintance to be a witness” (Margalit 2002: 172), therefore dismisses the possibility that the author’s identification with the victims could constitute a shared identity (cf. 173f.). For LaCapra, the hybrid status of the text as *faux mémoire*, which leaves it up to the reader to decide on the veracity and acceptability of its representation, is unacceptable and even undesirable (cf. 2001: 34).

2.4. The Limits of Representation

In the context of historical trauma, LaCapra strongly cautions against an identification of the secondary witness with the victim, and against a confusion of past events and present concerns that lead to “quasi-sacrificial processes of victimization and self-victimization” (2001: 71). He rejects popular generalisations that consider all history trauma (cf. 64) and criticises the “displaced sacralization” and “negative sublimity” (23) with which traumatising events have been invested. LaCapra warns that such events

³⁵ The Wilkomirski case was investigated in detail by Stefan Maechler, who was asked by the writer’s literary agent to establish the truth when fraud allegations arose in the Swiss press in 1998.

may also give rise to what may be termed founding traumas – traumas that paradoxically become the valorised or intensely cathected basis of identity for an individual or a group rather than the events that pose the problematic question of identity. (ibid.)

Similarly, Aleida Assmann declares that the generalisation of different experiences of suffering into an abstract idea of “trauma” that everybody can “share” threatens to supersede a self-reflective engagement with one’s personal and national history (cf. Assmann 2007: 256). The danger of such an uncritical approach lies in the fact that, as Adorno pointed out in *Minima Moralia*, by judging the past in light of an “abstract conception of universal wrong, all concrete responsibility vanished” (27).

Comparing different experiences of suffering along simply moralistic lines fails to acknowledge the necessary historical and political context – without it, however, later generations cannot gain an informed understanding of their ancestors, who were not simply victims, but also political personae implicated in the policies of the time in one way or another. The consequences of such a skewed perception are disastrous, as a study on National Socialism and the Holocaust in German family memory shows. The authors of “*Opa war kein Nazi*” (“Grandad wasn’t a Nazi”) have demonstrated that the “lexicon knowledge” of Nazi crimes coexists in German families side by side with the “family album certainty” of the heroism, suffering, deprivation and victimisation of one’s own relatives (cf. Welzer *et al.* 10, my translation). According to this common intergenerational understanding, there was hardly a Nazi or anti-Semite in Germany during the time of National Socialism. Schmitz draws attention to another problem related to current attempts at representing the “immediacy” of traumatic war events experienced by individuals as a more “authentic” perspective, unimpaired by current values and knowledge (cf. Schmitz 2007b: 198). These representations, he argues, sacrifice critical insight to a sentimental, empathetic identification based on the realisation of one’s own ethical fallibility (cf. 200). The problematic result is that

a perspective of experience is accepted as ‘authentic’ that is, more often than not, cleansed from the Nazi-perspective on the world and by definition amalgamated with the contemporary ethical universe. Consequently, the current perspective of historicist empathy is largely determined by the desire for a German perspective freed from issues of ideology and perpetration.

(Schmitz 2007b: 208).

Decades before this current trend became the object of criticism in German literary studies, Stuart recognised the danger of implication by association and hence the need for creating the necessary parameters that would allow the political persona to disappear behind a smokescreen of glorified suffering, amplified by virtue of “communion” with an innocent female from Eastern Europe. Even more effectively than his three postwar novels, *The Pillar of Cloud*, *Redemption* and *The Flowering Cross*, his autobiographical fiction, *Black List*, *Section H*, succeeded in creating the impression that the protagonist’s stated motivation and beliefs in relation to Nazi Germany were the author’s own. Published in 1971, at a time when the witness’s perspective had begun to gain currency, the novel translated shame and guilt into a dishonour in the sense of a positive self-image and had an effect not dissimilar to a founding myth among its commentators. Yet, as Aleida Assmann warns, an identity resting on the foundations of a mythically sublimated, or indeed surrogate victimhood is locked into passivity and not only resists development which working through trauma would entail, but, in its self-centredness, is also blind to the suffering experienced by others (cf. 2007: 81). This realisation is at the heart of Hamilton’s novel *Disguise*, which explores the motives and consequences of its German protagonist’s wilful reinvention as a Jewish survivor in a case of misremembering similar to that described by Prager and personified by Wilkomirski.

Instead of projective identification with the victim, LaCapra advocates a dialogue between victim and secondary witness based on “respect for the other and the realization that the experience of the other is not one’s own” (2001: 40). He proposes an approach that combines objective reconstructions of the past with empathy for its victims, in the sense that their alterity is recognised and that the contemporary observer neither presumes to

incorporate their experience as his own nor to speak with authority in their place. While he accepts that the self is caught up in “subject positions” or prejudices at the outset of any such dialogic exchange, LaCapra still demands that “identity politics” not be simply acted out and legitimised in the encounter with the other without at least probing their validity (cf. 41). What he postulates for the secondary witness is this:

Being responsive to the traumatic experience of others, notably of victims, implies not the appropriation of their experience but what I would call empathic unsettlement, which should have stylistic effects or, more broadly, effects in writing which cannot be reduced to formulas or rules of method. (...) At the very least, empathic unsettlement poses a barrier to closure in discourse and places in jeopardy harmonizing or spiritually uplifting accounts of extreme events from which we attempt to derive reassurance or a benefit (...). (41f.)³⁶

Empathic unsettlement presupposes the crucial ability to distinguish between structural trauma (absence of/at the origin) and historical trauma, and to resist conflating the former with the latter in an indiscriminate “desire for redemption and totality” (77). Where these limits of dialogue are not respected, LaCapra fears that empathic unsettlement will spill over into dubious routines of methodology or representation expressed in “compulsive repetition, (...) aporia, paradox, or impasse” (47). The result would be an inability to mourn of a different kind, trapped in the backward look of melancholy (cf. 68) and in danger of succumbing to “the notion that everyone is somehow a victim (or, for that matter, a survivor)” (77).

³⁶ Hayden White had suggested that the representation of the Holocaust defied classical realism and instead called for a “modernist style” (52), which would be neither descriptive chronicle nor purely subjective response, but instead a “middle voice”, based on the ancient Greek mode between the active and passive voices. Writing as an “intransitive” activity would mean that “writing becomes itself the means of vision or comprehension, not a mirror of something independent, but an act of commitment – a doing or making rather than a reflection or description” (48). However, as LaCapra points out, modern languages lack a middle voice in their grammar and “may at best allow for a discursive analogue of it” (2001: 19). Similarly, Saul Friedlander insists that “it is the reality and significance of modern catastrophes that generate the search for a new voice and not the use of a specific voice which constructs the significance of these catastrophes” (10).

3. Auto- and Hetero-Images in Irish-German Literary Relations

Subject positions must be re-evaluated not only in the imaginative representation of the past – they equally need to be tested in the construction of literary images of self and other. This thesis, therefore, seeks to complement the analysis of the texts at hand as objects of remembrance and media for perceiving the construction of memory with an exploration of the traditions and fictions at work behind the creation of an Irish self in relation to a German other. Central to this imagological approach, as Jean-Marc Moura stresses, is the realisation that the observing society's cultural memory mediates the way a writer sees and represents self and other (cf. Moura 186). Like myths, images are man-made, but develop an autonomy which allows them to reactivate exemplary memories, to occlude others and to resurface, consciously or unconsciously, in literature (cf. Pageaux 1988a: 375, Dyserinck 1988b: 29). It is, however, not the author's projections onto a foreign country alone which are relative; rather, the very subject under observation is an interactive entity which engages with and reflects the gaze of its observers, revealing in the process the dynamics behind their conception of self (cf. Bock 32). Retracing both directions of perception has the potential to disrupt convenient modes of thinking about the self and to enlarge the frameworks in which representations of self and other are conceived and expressed.

In the following chapters, I will first explain the scope of imagology and its methods. I will then illustrate the stratification of German and Irish national character, paying particular attention to the passage from "nomination" to "domination" (Pageaux 1988a: 373) in the creation of the two countries' respective self-images. These images have influenced the ways in which the Irish or German other is perceived, as I will show in a survey of Irish-German literary relations. The traditions that inform literary representations of German and Irish character demarcate the outlines of the store of images to which

Bielenberg, Stuart and Hamilton have access. Whether they ignorantly perpetuate such images, strategically redeploy them or, in fact, realise their fictionality and struggle to envision an encounter with the other that steers clear of rehearsed patterns will be explored in Part Two.

3.1. Scope and Methods of Imagology

Heralded “un domaine d’avenir” (Guyard 117) in his 1951 textbook, *La littérature comparée*, Marius-François Guyard suggested modern Comparative Literature should cease to analyse nation and national identity as a reality (“tel quel”), but rather as they are perceived through subjective literary tropes, conventions and misunderstandings. He believed that the study of the literary image of the other – “l’étranger tel qu’on le voit” – would teach “aux peuples à se mieux connaître en reconnaissant leurs illusions” (118). Guyard’s proposition, supported by his forerunner and teacher Jean-Marie Carré, was promptly criticised as plunging the entire discipline into crisis by encouraging it to pursue objectives extrinsic to literature and more suited to public opinion (cf. Wellek 151). Dismissing Comparative Literature as being limited to “second-rate writers, (...) translations, travelbooks, (...) foreign sources and reputations of writers” (ibid.), Renée Wellek defended the integrity and originality of works of art against the threat of being subjected to *Stoffgeschichte* and causality. Such mechanistic applications had in the past only encouraged a type of “cultural expansionism”,

a strange system of cultural book-keeping, a desire to accumulate credits for one’s nation by proving as many influences as possible on other nations or, more subtly, by proving that my nation has assimilated and ‘understood’ a foreign master more fully than any other. (155)

Wellek concluded that Comparative Literature, in order to progress methodologically, would have to abandon its “external factualism and atomism” (157) and resume a critical evaluation of literature’s “literariness”, separate from its cultural history.

In response to this fierce critique, Hugo Dyserinck contended that images (and “mirages”) of self and other were not merely disseminated by literature and literary criticism, but very often created by them and permeating them to a degree that rendered an interpretation of certain literary texts dependent on a critical analysis of the national imagery employed (cf. Dyserinck 1966: 110f.). The purpose of such analysis, however, was not to correct “wrong” or unfair attributes ascribed to a “national character”, but to expose the very fictionality of national character. Shifting the focus from writer to reader, Dyserinck likewise promoted research on the effects of national stereotypes on the reception and translation of foreign literature abroad, for literary images of the other had long since been internalised into the *Weltanschauung* and politics of the observing society. Dyserinck’s defence marked the beginning of a new subdiscipline, imagology, which set out to research from “a culturally neutral, (...) supranational perspective” (Dyserinck 1988b: 22f., my translation) the imagotypical macrostructures³⁷ applied among literatures.³⁸ He, as well as fellow scholars from the Aachen Programme of Comparative Literature and from further afield, have since demonstrated how auto- and hetero-images, despite their recognised relativity and origin in discursive practices rather than in reality, continue to “constitute possible identifications” (Leerssen 2007a: 27) that are as problematic to demythologise and rationalise as the relationship between past and present.

As Daniel-Henri Pageaux points out, the image is not just a representation of “real” otherness, but precedes every description of otherness as a set of references or as a secondary language (“une langue seconde”) that defines the relationship between the

³⁷ “Imagotypical macrostructures”, according to Dyserinck, refer to a system of image-relations that comprises at least three literatures (cf. Dyserinck 1988b: 27) or to established polarities such as liberty-authority, Protestantism-Catholicism, north-south (idem 1997: 96).

³⁸ Dyserinck emphasises that the early European focus of imagology must not be misconstrued as Eurocentrism, but as the first results from a laboratory that may benefit the study of intercultural relations on other continents as well (Dyserinck 1988a: 31f.). European macrostructures, for example, have been used in parallel by proponents of the *négritude* theory. Léopold Sédar Senghor and Aimé Césaire based their explication of African-European relations on the already existing model and the accompanying set of images associated with German-French-English relations; that is, they used the same images proffered by German scholars, such as ethnologist Leo Frobenius, who formulated a sense of awakened German national identity in opposition to Frenchness, while professing kinship with English culture (cf. Dyserinck 1988b: 29f.).

society that observes and the society observed (1988a: 368f.).³⁹ In effect, the image of the other country reflects the way “dont une société se voit, se définit, se rêve” (ibid.), but also the opportunity for the observer “à écrire, à penser, à rêver *autrement*” (376):

Impossible d'éviter que l'image de l'Autre, à un niveau individuel (un écrivain), collectif (une société, un pays) ou semi-collectif (une famille de pensée, une 'opinion') n'apparaisse aussi comme la négation de l'Autre, le complément, le prolongement de mon propre corps ou de mon propre espace. (Pageaux 1988a: 368)⁴⁰

Acknowledging the influence of national concepts in the process of forming aesthetic judgements, imagology proposes to examine the origin, function and effect of national images in literature in two ways: first, by establishing the context within which the image is expressed in a given text, and, second, by taking into consideration the historical context of the text itself (cf. Syndram 236f.). On the textual level, this includes an examination of the key words used to describe the other, some of which may have been borrowed from the language of the observed or specifically coined to enhance the flavour of otherness (cf. Pageaux 1988a: 370f.). On a socio-historical level, factors to be examined are the author's persona and intentions (if verifiable), and the time, place and conditions of publication and reception that justify and condition the use of certain national images. Finally, international parallels in political as much as in aesthetic developments must be considered in order to critically evaluate the importance of national images in intercultural relations (cf. Syndram 237, Pageaux 1988a: 377). This aspect of the required contextualisation will be explored in the subsequent three sections which will set the frame for the later textual analysis of the concrete images employed by Bielenberg, Stuart and Hamilton.

³⁹ Pageaux distinguishes three fundamental types of hierarchical relationships between self and other: “la phobie, la manie, la philie” (1988a: 372).

⁴⁰ My translation: “It is impossible to avoid that the image of the other – be it held by an individual, for instance, a writer, or by a society or country or, at a semi-collective level, by a school of thought or ‘opinion’ – should simultaneously become the negation of the other, seeing as it represents an addition to, and extension of, the self's own body and space.”

3.2. The Stratification of the German and Irish National Character

With the demise of the feudal system and the emergence of geopolitical, rationalised territorial contiguities, centred on the power of a monarch, a systematic process of profiling began based on territory, language and character. Over time, Leerssen observes, “ethnocentric registrations of cultural difference have tended to stratify into a notion that, like persons, different nations each have their specific peculiarities and character” (Leerssen 2007a: 17). Informal, anecdotal commonplaces on cultural diversity held in previous centuries were subjected to rigorous classification, as in Julius Caesar Scaliger’s encyclopaedic compendium *Poetices Libri Septem* of 1561, in which nations were distinguished according to different human characteristics. Thus, the Germans were described as “brave, simple, generous with their lives, true in friendship and enmity” (Scaliger 228, l. 25ff., my translation). The characteristic attributed to the Irish⁴¹, on the other hand, along with other Northerners such as Swedes, Goths, etc., is “monstrous” or “beastly”. This description echoes the tone of the twelfth-century Cambro-Norman scholar and cleric Giraldus Cambrensis’s *Topography of Ireland*, which, in order to justify the “civilising” mission of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland, depicted the Irish as barbarians, “intemperate in all their actions, and most vehement in all their feelings. Thus the bad are bad indeed – there are nowhere worse; and than the good you cannot find better” (Cambrensis 79).⁴² Scaliger’s comparative-systematic approach provided a formula for “psychological ordering-by-temperament” in the appraisal of nations which has since “dominated the literary imagination and suffused all of European literature” (Leerssen

⁴¹ Or to the Scots, as the reference is unclear according to the German translators, Luc Deitz and Gregor Vogt-Spira, of the bilingual Latin-German edition. However, as John Hennig points out, *Scotus* commonly denoted the nationality of Irish monks in Central Europe whose monasteries in Vienna, Würzburg, Ratisbon and Nuremberg were referred to as *Schottenklöster* (cf. Hennig 105).

⁴² Karl Stanzel terms this particular pattern of stereotyping the “Lucifer-pattern” (Stanzel 17), Lucifer having been “optimus corruptus pessimus”, and points out that it has been applied almost indiscriminately, over the course of centuries, and in many literatures, to the depiction of racial or national character as well as to social groups, for example to women.

2007b: 65). Drama proved a particularly expedient medium, where classicist playwrights, under strain to adhere to the prescriptive teaching of Aristotle's *Poetics*, strove to achieve verisimilitude by establishing a plausible link between plot line and the personality of a character carrying out a certain action (cf. idem 66.).⁴³ Stanzel, investigating the emergence of the drunken "stage German" in English literature, as, for example, in Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice*, found that an earlier literary source championing the Faustian German image was displaced by the success of the German satire *Grobianus* from 1549. Translated into English as *The School of Slovenrie* in 1605, the play's depiction of its protagonist as a rough, churlish, insipid and drunken German was reinforced by a more venerable source that had been rediscovered around 1500, Tacitus's classic text *Germania* (cf. Stanzel 8f.). Stanzel argues that, rather than represent the experience of common Englishmen with actual Germans, the image of the German character percolated down to the masses from a well-read, educated elite (cf. Stanzel 10).⁴⁴

An incipient national consciousness encouraged the definition of individuality through mutual differences, at the expense of registering commonalities. The Enlightenment briefly stalled this development, for its goal was to arrive at universal, abstract definitions of "man" and "culture", even if its methodology was based on empirical research and comparison (cf. Leerssen 2007b: 69).⁴⁵ Deviations from a universal

⁴³ Jules de La Mesnadière, in his *Poétique* of 1640, stresses the importance of matching the right characteristics to a nationality and helpfully lists the plausible traits by country in an apparently indiscriminate manner still based, like Scaliger's observations, on proverbs, anecdotes and histories (La Mesnadière 122f.). His attributes for Germans allow for "sincères, grossiers, fidelles" characters who are also "banqueteurs, affables, vaillans, amoureux de la liberté" (123). A popular English dictionary of epithets, Joshua Poole's *The English Parnassus*, proving the relativity of national characters depending on the observer, adds other nuances by referring to them as "[f]ierce, warlike, audacious, daring, adventurous, valiant, ingenious, industrious, rebellious, thirsty, drunken" (102). Neither La Mesnadière nor Poole lists the Irish.

⁴⁴ Tacitus's description of the excessive drinking habits of Germanic tribes was itself not a reflection of his experiences (he had never travelled there), but stimulated by an already existing ethnographic topos, developed by other historians preceding him, like Herodotus, who ascribed the national characteristic of drunkenness to various cultures considered primitive by Graeco-Roman standards, be they Persians, Celts, or Thracians.

⁴⁵ One philosopher who was critical of imposing universal standards on particularities was Giambattista Vico. In his *Principi di Scienza Nuova d'intorno alla Comune Natura delle Nazioni* (1725) he argued for

standard were explained in terms of physical (climate) or moral (society) causes. Or, as in Jean le Rond d'Alembert's entry in the *Encyclopédie*, "national character" was defined as a mixture of both:

The character of a nation consists in a certain propensity of the soul more commonly found in certain nations than in others, even though it may not be found in all the members of that nation. (...) It seems very likely that climate has a real influence on general character, for the character cannot be attributed to the form of government that always changes after a certain length of time. Still, one should not believe that the form of government, should it remain the same for a long time, is entirely without influence on the character of a nation. In a despotic state, for instance, the people will soon become lazy and vain, with excessive fondness for frivolities. The inclination toward the true and the beautiful is lost. They cannot be expected to think great thoughts or to perform great actions.⁴⁶

Charles de Montesquieu had incorporated notions of climate and character in *De l'esprit des lois* in order to explain the necessity of different governments suitable for different geographic regions – from the democratic, republican models suited to northern nations, to the middle ground of parliamentary monarchies and, further south, to authoritarian governments (cf. Leerssen 2007b: 70).⁴⁷ David Hume, by contrast, contested the climate theory in an essay published the same year, "Of National Characters". Criticising the persuasiveness of established, if unfounded, national stereotypes, he then laboured the same traditional contrastive patterns before concluding that society and its morals conditioned national character. If, according to him, "the *English*, of any People in the Universe, ha[d] the least of a national Character", this was due to the "great Liberty and Independency" (Hume 279) they enjoyed, which allowed each of his countrymen to

philology to be understood as a "study of the creative and poetic responses of nations to their historical circumstances, each expressive of that nation's character" (Leerssen 2007a: 18).

⁴⁶ Accordingly, the entry for "nation" specifies that

[e]ach *nation* has its own character: the genre of the proverb tells us so: carefree as a Frenchman, jealous as an Italian, serious as a Spaniard, wicked as an Englishman, proud as a Scotsman, *drunk as a German*, *lazy as an Irishman*, duplicitous as a Greek, etc. (emphasis added)

(Both translations were accessed online at <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.351> and <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.095> on 9 February 2009.)

⁴⁷ As Stanzel elucidates, "the original theory of climate stipulated an inverse ratio between geographic latitude and intelligence" which explains "why some English authors sought to shift the burden of Northernness from their own shoulders to those of their northern neighbours" (Stanzel 15f.), some going even so far to call nations to the East and South Northerners (e.g. the Danes, the Dutch, the Germans).

develop their own individuality. Immanuel Kant, in his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, found national character expressed instead in language, dress and types of human activity. He objected that Hume's celebrated attitude, which despised everything foreign as constrained and prided itself on its own inner freedom, amounted to a definition of national character which considered all other nations deviations from the English norm (cf. Kant 226).

Reacting against the Enlightenment's valorisation of universal standards that all cultures should aspire to – and, more specifically, against the hegemony of the French language and culture in the German-speaking territories – Johann Gottfried von Herder argued in his “Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache” from 1770 that the different languages and cultural particularities, developed in a strife to set one group apart from its neighbours, were best adapted to reflect the identity of their speakers (cf. Herder 175, 185). Not content with collecting songs and folktales of the German people as manifestations of their roots, Herder also sought to contextualise literature, for example, in his comparative essay “Von der Ähnlichkeit der mittlern englischen und deutschen Dichtkunst” and to promote other hitherto neglected literatures, such as James Macpherson's *Ossian*, which he greatly admired (cf. “Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker”, 194-234).⁴⁸ Inspired by Herder, later generations of philologists and Romantic philosophers advanced the notion of an underlying “spirit of a people” (*Volksgeist*), breathing life into nations and manifesting itself in their every creative expression (cf. Leerssen 2007b: 73).⁴⁹ Conversely, the study of literature, language, history or mythology was believed to give access to the soul of a nation. A comparative perspective prevailed at

⁴⁸ Another writer Herder championed was Shakespeare, who came to inspire the notion of “genius” so sacred to the German *Sturm und Drang* and the Romantic period (cf. his essay “Shakespeare”).

⁴⁹ Eda Sagarra points out that it may have been less Herder's treatises, which would have been available only to a small readership, than Walter Scott's popular novels that brought to the attention of a German readership the concept of a national character (cf. Sagarra 1994: 10). Leerssen likewise stresses the immeasurable impact of Scott's novels on European national thought in the nineteenth century (cf. Leerssen 2006: 124).

first, but, over time, gave way to nationalist ideologies and the study of perceived creditor-debtor relations, which Wellek later decried in his critique of Comparative Literature.

It is no small irony that among the tools employed to verify national character were the very images derived over the previous centuries from generalising, contrastive taxonomies, and from social and climate theories (cf. Leerssen 2007a: 19). An eloquent point in case of these artificially constructed images, presented as “characteristic” by its observers, is Madame de Staël’s *De l’Allemagne* from 1813. Her description of Germany as a country of poets and thinkers, in thrall to imagination rather than reason, proved influential not only in her native France, but also influenced the German self-image, confirming the alleged divide between rational, cool French *civilisation* and the deep, idealistic German sense of *culture* which recognised a kindred spirit in the Anglo-Saxon mentality (cf. Dyserinck 1988b: 34f.). The flipside to interpreting the German character as the product of passive self-reflection is a lack of active self-enhancement. Nietzsche saw in this roots-seeking movement the very cause for German culture’s second-rate emulation of all things French in the nineteenth century (cf. Nietzsche 25). German fashion, architecture and art being but a poor reflection of another people’s greatness, Nietzsche was wary that the one unique quality Germans took pride in – their “‘sense of substance’ (...) their cult of ‘inwardness’” (26) – remained invisible to their observers and might one day disappear altogether without it even being noticed. Dieter Hensing argues convincingly that the younger generation of German authors writing after the Second World War experienced just such a dissolution of national consciousness and self-image (cf. Hensing 146). In contrast to the demonstrably apolitical stance of an older generation, which kept historical realities at bay by tapping into an idealised prewar tradition, writers such as Max Frisch, Siegfried Lenz, Tankred Dorst, and Günter Grass found little solace in the ruins of the past. Their response was to secularise the third commandment, substituting open images to formerly fixed identities, and to refuse the tempting sublimation of history into the

religious and metaphysical realm by exposing the fictions behind any attempt to restore order in the absurd processes that characterise history (cf. Hensing 150ff.).⁵⁰

The dependence of the German self-image on impulses given from its observers is also corroborated by Sagarra's study on the longevity of the "typical German" stereotype, embodied by the national figure *der deutsche Michel*, from the sixteenth century to the present day.⁵¹ Sagarra surmises that, unlike other nations who deflected negative attributes ascribed to them by virtue of their positive self-images and negative hetero-images, the Germans tended to absorb such negativity into their self-view (cf. 1994: 10f.):

Alone among the European nations, the Germans – *diese verspätete Nation* – adopted a national stereotype which did not embody the collective aspirations of her people, but rather a sense of inadequacy, disappointment or failure. (...) [Michel] has almost invariably been represented by German publicists in a dual perspective, as though to say: 'We are what others think of us'. And these features express themselves in five distinctive and recurrent types: the provincial fellow, either country bumpkin or philistine; the German as victim of 'the Other'; the aggressive, over-lifesized martial German; the idealistic youth; and finally the little lad, who hopes 'they will be nice to him' because it's 'never his fault'. A perennial feature of Michel is the sense that he is not, and cannot be, the author of his own destiny, or that knowing this, he tries to compensate by interpreting everything in politics in terms of power relations. (23f.)

Only after 1980 does Sagarra begin to notice a distancing from, and critical engagement with, the projections and judgements of Germany's observers. This shift enables Germans to see their national stereotype embody both their positive and negative traits (cf. 25).⁵²

⁵⁰ Grass's works, for example, illustrate time and again the futility of interpreting the past teleologically with hindsight. As the titles of his texts suggest, understanding the past and achieving even miniscule progress require Sisyphean perseverance: from the hollow sound of the *Tin Drum* over *Crabwalk* to the process of removing layer after layer in his revelatory autobiographical work, *Peeling the Onion* (cf. Hensing 161).

⁵¹ Michel, the diminutive form of Michael, already implies a trivialisation of the name's powerful origin, namely Germany's patron saint, the archangel Michael. St Michael, whose name means "he who is as God", was charged with the defeat of "the ancient serpent" according to the books of Daniel and Revelation. Sagarra speculates that such a warrior saint "must have recommended himself to the propagandists of the Holy Roman Emperor, whom theology and political theory alike saw as Christ's executive on earth" (Sagarra 1994: 6). Yet the trivialised national figure Michel personifies the discrepancy between the projected aspirations of a nation and their shortcomings in reality, and, more often than not, he has been portrayed as a scapegoat rather than a sword-wielding Superman.

⁵² And yet the continued belief in the actual existence of a German national character was evident in such reactions to plans for unification as Conor Cruise O'Brien's apocalyptically invoked resurgence of the "Fourth Reich" in October 1989 (cf. O'Brien 1992), or in Charles Powell's leaked memorandum of a meeting between the British Prime Minister and a group of experts who unquestioningly agreed the Germans "had certain characteristics, which you could identify from the past and expect in the future" (Powell 234).

In Ireland, the national movement of the nineteenth century brought together various traditions to campaign for self-determination. The remnants of native bardic learning, the alternative histories written by Irish clergy and gentry in exile, an antiquarian scholarship of folklore and tradition, and an interest in Gaelic roots mingled in literature and media to inspire among urban readers an idealistic self-image of Irishness steeped in Gaelic antiquity (cf. Leerssen 2006: 161). Just when authentic *milieux de mémoire* had begun to vanish, cultural and philological arguments, rather than economic and legal ones, appealed to a nascent public sphere and crucially influenced public opinion in its choice between emulating a received, provincial notion of national identity, or radically breaking with such a flawed tradition to remake themselves in their own likeness.⁵³ Leerssen concludes that the cultural revival movement in Ireland opted to reshape the Irish self-image within the parameters already fixed by the coloniser (cf. Leerssen 1988: 110f.). The result, as C. L. Innes notes, was that negative projections were converted into positive attributes, and the dialectic opposition between self and other maintained:

All [former colonies] contrast their spirituality, emotional warmth, vitality, and intuitiveness with a mechanistic, artificial, rationalistic, and sterile Anglo-Saxon or European culture. African and Gaelic cultures, the nationalists maintain, are collective, expressive of the people as a whole, most authentic when associated with music and dance and the spoken word. (11)

As the following chapter will show, the glamourisation of rural Ireland and the Celtic past, in fact, betrayed the same detached enthusiasm for the exotic as had earlier German writers' accounts of backward, but noble Ireland,⁵⁴ or, indeed, Matthew Arnold's

⁵³ Foster stresses the importance of understanding Irish history in terms of a story, with an established beginning and middle, and a preordained destiny – liberation – to be fulfilled. Popular histories of the 1860s, such as A.M. Sullivan's *The Story of Ireland* or Lady Mary Ferguson's *The Story of the Irish before the Conquest*, laid the foundations for a national consciousness and the cultural revival before the more frequently invoked, yet less ideologically suited Standish O'Grady "restore[d] to the Irish their mythological pedigree" (cf. Foster 2001: 12) with a series of impressionist and prophetic histories on which the "literary power-brokers" (19) thrived.

⁵⁴ A corresponding development can be noted in Irish craft industries which showcased antique reproductions of Celtic jewellery and High Crosses as examples of their national designs at the first Dublin exhibition of Irish art-industry in 1853 (cf. Anonymous, *The Exhibition of Art-Industry in Dublin, 1853*: 29, 39, 47, 53, 59). Later, an idealised rural lifestyle was purposefully put on display both at the Irish Exhibition at the Olympia in London in 1888 (cf. Anon., *The Times*, 4 June 1888 and 18 July 1888), and in the two Irish villages at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago of 1893 (cf. Applebaum). On both occasions,

patronising image of the Celt. Conceiving of the latter as essentially “sentimental”, “aspir[ing] ardently after life, light, and emotion” (Arnold 80f.), Arnold found him at the same time lacking the measure and steadfastness needed to achieve success in either art or life. As Leerssen points out, the process by which the “real” Irish character was to be brought to light again “was called, significantly, ‘De-Anglicization’ (rather than the ‘(Re-)Gaelicization which was really meant)’” (Leerssen 1988: 108). Locating “real” Irishness in those aspects which were at the furthest remove, both geographically and culturally, from the imperial centre, however, was often tantamount to rejecting European cultural influences as decadent also.

Declan Kiberd explains the resulting conflict between those revivalists who believed in an Irish essence and continuity (Davis, Hyde, Pearse, a young Yeats)⁵⁵ and those who took a constructivist approach to creating an identity which would be both Irish and cosmopolitan (e.g. Joyce, Synge, Connolly) in terms of Lionel Trilling’s distinction between “sincerity” and “authenticity”:

Sincerity is based on the romantic idea of being true to yourself – it assumes a definite identity which it is the labour of a lifetime to be true to. (...) Authenticity (...) recognises that the real problem is not to be true to a self but first to *find* a self worth being true to. It concedes that a man, or a nation, has many identities, constantly remaking themselves. (Kiberd 1984: 21)

The latter understanding of identity displays awareness not only of the relativity and artificiality of auto- and hetero-images, but more poignantly of the absence of a foundation to national identity as such. It recognises the previously discussed flaws and risks inherent in the assumptions made by national memory. At the same time, it was, as Kiberd admits, “a more painfully modern preoccupation” (ibid.) that had not yet dawned on what he

Ireland’s self-image was presented in terms of a village that contained an eclectic mix of plaster casts of High Crosses and Roman arches, replicas of Blarney Castle and Muckross Abbey, connected by whitewashed cottages where Irish craft could be admired and purchased.

⁵⁵ As both Leerssen and Foster emphasise, however, Yeats’s position cannot be simply summarised as “essentialist” or as blindly subscribing to an idealised Irish history, as he strove throughout his career to open up Irish experience to European and international influences and to fight the dangers of intolerance (cf. Leerssen, 1988: 112; Foster 2001: 35).

concludes was “a nation of apple-lickers – people who, if tempted in the Garden of Eden, would have licked rather than bitten the apple” (22).⁵⁶

The widespread acceptance of such anthropological founding myths fostered various scientific and pseudo-scientific explorations of national psychology. In literature, the ontological belief in nations culminated in the positivistic determinism of French critic Hippolyte Taine, who suggested three primordial forces were at the root of cultural differences and responsible for shaping cultural artefacts: *race*, *milieu*, and *moment*, or hereditary physical and psychical features, geographic and social environment, and *Zeitgeist* (cf. Taine xxii, xxv and xxvii). Renan later conceived of the nation as a state of mind rather than a given. In time, his view came to inspire an understanding of the relation between literature and nation that did not presume the former to express the latter “naturally”, but rather by choice. Quoting Émile Hennequin, French philologist Fernand Baldensperger argued in 1913 that “une littérature exprime une nation, non parce que celle-ci l’a produite, mais adoptée” (Baldensperger 292).

German sociologist Max Weber formulated a similarly voluntaristic concept of the nation at the Second German Sociology Conference in 1912. He revealed the influence of political processes and vested economic interests behind the creation of linguistic unity or language movements, thereby discrediting the use of a common language as being only a media-driven distribution of a national ideology⁵⁷ through the creation of a national myth and providential mission that could be sold to the masses (cf. Bock 19-25). Stripped of their primordial credentials and regarded as the constructions they were, the concepts of “nation” and “national character” ceased to be considered explanations of cultural

⁵⁶ Since this article appeared in 1984, Kiberd’s preoccupation moved from “Inventing Irelands” to *Inventing Ireland*, and, in 2009, to wondering what would come “After Ireland” (12). In this article he expressed hope that Irish literature, given to a backward look, would experience a revival through a new interpretation of its stories undertaken by its immigrants.

⁵⁷ Bock points out that Benedict Anderson’s notion of a nation as an “imagined community”, artificially welded together by a shared language and story promoted by “print-capitalism”, is a perpetuation of Max Weber’s and Robert Michels’s ideas in the early twentieth century (cf. Bock 28).

difference when, in fact, they were but descriptions of it. Before this understanding of national representation and national identity could gain hold, however, two World Wars were fought in the firm belief that national characters existed and explained cultural difference.⁵⁸ As Walter Lippmann observed after the First World War, stereotypes spare us the trouble of having to “see all things freshly and in detail, rather than as types and generalities” (48). More importantly perhaps, they unite individuals against outsiders as the effect of propaganda has shown:

A pattern of stereotypes is not neutral. (...) It is the guarantee of our self-respect; it is the projection upon the world of our own sense of our own value, of our own position and our own rights. The stereotypes are, therefore, (...) the fortress of our tradition, and behind its defenses we can continue to feel ourselves safe in the position we occupy. (52)

After the Second World War, the need to debunk racist thought and ethnically prejudiced pseudo-scholarship paved the way for a constructivist approach which challenged the idea of nationality as an ontologically autonomous category.⁵⁹ This, in turn, allowed literary scholars such as Guyard to propose the study of nationality not as a given, but as a transnational literary trope: a source of convention and misunderstanding as much as of irony and intertextual play (cf. Leerssen 2007b: 74f.). And yet, the realisation and deconstruction of the fictions that sustain self- and hetero-images – in imagology, but also, as has been shown in the first part of this chapter, in history and cultural memory studies – have not been able to prevent the revival of nationalist and culturally-deterministic attitudes following the fall of the Communist Bloc. In the face of globalisation’s supremacy, Dyserinck declares the continued goal of imagology as “une hygiène intellectuelle, dressée contre l’influence d’une pensée idéologique qui se sert des catégories

⁵⁸ Despite the first constructivist definitions of the nation and national sentiment, undertaken by Weber and Michels, German studies of the Irish national character until the end of the Second World War – as most philological studies of nations – remained ethnically-deterministic and did not question the stereotypes that formed the basis of their analyses (cf. Dohmen 1994: 140-147; Bock 13).

⁵⁹ Prevalent as the constructivist approach may be in the social and cultural sciences, it is nevertheless important to note that it never fully obliterated the belief in national characters as an ontological category. As Leerssen explains, “[t]he revival of national attitudes in the 1990s (...) is not so much a reappearance of something that had disappeared, as rather a new upsurge of something which in the previous decades had been unfashionable” (Leerssen 2007a: 25).

nationales et raciales” in order to “faire mourir des théories au lieu de faire mourir des hommes”⁶⁰ (Dyserinck 1997: 95).

As man-made constructions, images of self and other remain deeply lodged in cultural memory and are perpetuated and reactivated through symbolic media according to the rules of working and storage memory. Their persistence may well reflect an important human need to imagine a home for the individual among a collectivity that provides a context of security and intimacy,⁶¹ especially in times of increased mobility and multicultural societies. The works of Bielenberg, Stuart and Hamilton provide an opportunity to investigate how their fiction replicates, reinforces and questions constructions of self- and hetero-images in their disparate attempts to relate their interpretations of the German past to their Irish environment in the present. Their mediation between self- and hetero-image, along with their careful definition of belonging, will be examined in detail in Part II of this thesis, but in order to evaluate their individual responses, it is necessary to expose first the reciprocal structures of Irish-German literary representations that condition them.

3.3. Ireland’s Achill Heel: German Romantic Projections

Most famous among the sources of German romantic projections onto Ireland is Heinrich Böll’s *Irishes Tagebuch*, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2007. To many German readers, the work represents a collection of impressionistic sketches of a quaint but happy people, living on an island unperturbed and untarnished by war and by the flipside of economic progress, consumerism. Some among them may have even used this work as a guide book to the island, although it remains debatable if they were simply attracted by an

⁶⁰ My translation: “a mental hygiene, directed against the influence of ideologies based on national and racial categories”, in order to “dispose of theories rather than people”.

⁶¹ Dyserinck has frequently urged for an examination of this human need for *Geborgenheit*, that is, for protection in a comfort zone, which is at the source of each apperception of otherness in terms of auto- and hetero-images (cf. Dyserinck 1988a: 28; 1988b: 37; 1997: 97).

unspoiled holiday destination rather than, as Hamilton believes, the promise of finding healing for “the wounded German heart” (Hamilton 2005d: 14). Others, like the literary critic Marcel Reich-Ranicki, consider the book to be at heart “ein verstecktes Deutschlandbuch” (“secretly, a book about Germany”), a veiled critique of postwar German society in which Ireland was constructed as everything *Wirtschaftswunder* Germany was not. By ascribing to his Irish characters “humour, sadness, homesickness, all the features that appeared to be missing in Germany since the war” (Hamilton 2005d: 15), Böll implicitly juxtaposed the simplicity and authenticity he claims to have encountered in Ireland to the hypocrisy of an emergent affluent society oblivious of the past in the Federal Republic.⁶² The implied criticism of West German society did not escape Irish critics when the book appeared in English translation in 1967, but the proposition of poor Ireland as an alternative to wealthy Germany seemed hardly tenable.⁶³ Conor Cruise O’Brien, in his review for the *New York Review of Books*, acknowledged that

[t]ravel books are never about the places and people they are supposed to be about, but about the differences between these and the places and people the writer knows best, and about what these differences mean to the writer. (...)

⁶² According to Böll’s journal, the Irish do not manipulate monuments of the painful past, such as the ruins of a village deserted during the Famine, while German “rubble women” could not rebuild their bombed-out dwellings fast enough, thus eliminating every trace of the suffering they and the landscape had witnessed. Where constant worrying and time pressure determine life in Germany, Böll praises the equanimity of the Irish and their wisdom in claiming that God created enough time and that whatever woe betides, it could always have been worse. Money, though not abundant in Irish society, is shared less parsimoniously than in the increasingly affluent Federal Republic. Lifelessness, cold and death, which permeate German society, he only encounters in connection with revered Protestant writers, namely at Swift’s and Yeats’s graves. Their class, writing, and affiliation with the past, all separate them from the pulsating life of contemporary Catholic Ireland. Although Böll admires these writers’ art, he nevertheless prefers the kitsch interior of a Catholic church in the Liberties to St Patrick’s Cathedral’s polished austerity, and the teeming of a small country town to the loneliness of Drumcliff churchyard. His one misgiving about the Irish – their sympathy for Hitler, whom they believe to have been the victim of British propaganda – Böll is willing to cure. Imagining himself as a “peripatetic political dentist” (O’Neill 1985: 241), he is hopeful that he will be loved after administering his treatment not because of his tainted German origins, but in spite of them.

⁶³ Irish criticism of Böll centres mainly on the representation of the Church as a church for the people and by the people. Thus, McNicholl contends that it should not have been difficult for Böll to infer from his own observations that the tight grip of the clergy extended to almost every aspect of their flock’s private lives and not merely to the spiritual realm (cf. McNicholl 72f.). Ni Domhnaill remarks in her essay “Cé Leis tú”:

I have read Heinrich Böll’s *Irische [sic] Tagebuch* in amazement, wondering how the same country at around the same time could have seemed so different to two people. Beyond the time in the hills, it was for me a time of unnameable horror, constructed out of a heady mixture of religious mania, physical violence and a deep dislocation of power between the sexes.

(Ni Domhnaill 133f.)

The traveler's account, based on a catalogue of differences and ignoring the common, must therefore seem wrong to the native. (10)

He conceded that a "favorable account can seem to be a kind of freedom" for a minority people (ibid.), but he, not altogether surprisingly, detested the analogies Böll established and his endorsement of rural backwardness in what O'Brien ultimately dismissed as "this ghastly little book" (11).

However, Böll was neither the first nor the last German author to commend Ireland precisely because it provided the German observer with an opportunity to dream up an alternative to home. A pessimistic attitude towards civilisation after 1945 encouraged the increased publication of Irish fairy tales and myths along with a resurgence of apolitical travel writing which depicted Ireland as the "home of rainbows" and of "elves, donkeys and rebels" (cf. Dohmen 1994: 149f.). Yet contrary to Böll's efforts to use the example of Ireland to persuade Germans to remember their past and to accept it as part of their mental landscape, Ireland appeals to many of these writers and their readers precisely because, there, they do not have to remember.⁶⁴ As I will show in Part Two, Hugo Hamilton reflects this disposition in several of his German characters who spend their holidays in Donegal, Mayo or Connemara in order to temporarily suspend the obligation of having to deal with their own national history.

The representation of Ireland as an island where man and nature still coexist in harmony, verging on utopia, spans several centuries⁶⁵ and found its most powerful

⁶⁴ Eoin Bourke concurs and notes that German travellers to Ireland often consider themselves as individualists, rather than common tourists, who seek out the "the unpopulated spaces, or, in any event, unpopulated by fellow Germans" (my translation) in order to allow the free flow of emotions, ordinarily kept under lock and key in Germany, and to search for a past without the Holocaust, a *Heimat* they need not denounce (cf. Bourke 2003b: 198).

⁶⁵ German texts of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, as for example *Fortunatus* (1509), which contains an account of St Patrick's Purgatory, or Grimmshausen's *Simplicissimus* (1699) portrayed Ireland as a land of marvels. Where their fabulation included material knowledge, Dohmen claims it was based on Cambrensis's or Edmund Spenser's observations on the Irish character and had, therefore, frequently reproduced English stereotypes that portrayed the Irish as barbarians and stressed their otherness (Dohmen 1997: 63). Sagarra, however, doubts that these source texts would have still been known to eighteenth-century German intellectuals and suggests instead that their opinion would have been informed by contemporary accounts, such as Richard Twiss's *A Tour in Ireland in 1775*, translated into German in 1777,

expression in the Ossianic revival during the second half of the eighteenth century when Macpherson's works were enthusiastically read and translated by Herder and Goethe. According to Doris Dohmen, the positive reinvention of "nature" in opposition to "civilisation" pursued by these earlier writers (and only much later by Böll) was crucial for sparking interest in Ireland and its "Celtic spirit" (cf. Dohmen 1997: 64).⁶⁶ First-hand accounts of Ireland by German travellers soon followed, with Karl Gottlob Küttner (1785), Hermann von Pückler-Muskau (1829), Johann Georg Kohl (1843), Friedrich von Raumer (1835) and Jacob Venedey (1844) setting out to verify preconceived notions and to remedy to a general ignorance with regard to Ireland.⁶⁷ Their backgrounds, motivations, the extent of their travels and the impact of their writing differed, yet they shared in common a tendency to promote a compassionate image of Ireland among their readers, often as a result of their critical stance towards England's colonial practices (cf. Sagarra 1992: 187).⁶⁸ More importantly, their encounter with Ireland and the Irish engendered within them, as Sagarra maintains, a reawakened critical consciousness of political and human values (cf. 194).

Küttner's letters from Ireland reflected his limited perspective as tutor to the sons of Lord Tyrone. He spent the summers of 1783 and 1784 in Ireland, yet despite his privileged

and Arthur Young's *A Tour in Ireland*, which appeared in German translation in two volumes in 1780 and 1782 (cf. Sagarra 1992: 185).

⁶⁶ Other scholars who have examined Germany's perception of Ireland include Eoin Bourke, John Hennig, Gisela Holfter, Barbara Schaff, Eda Sagarra, and Andreas Oehlke.

⁶⁷ For a bio-bibliographical list of German travellers to Ireland in the first half of the nineteenth century, see Bourke (2003a).

⁶⁸ Hennig disagrees, stating that "[e]ven the most sympathetic among the early German travel-writers on Ireland failed to see in the native anything but Paddy with the whisky bottle" (Hennig 102). Indeed, criticism of the Irish, where it arose, followed argumentative patterns employed by the English and was based partly on religious explications, and partly on pseudo-scientific approaches such as phrenology. Observers like Heinrich Meininger, Knut Clement, and Julius Rodenberg emphasised the divide between well-educated, thriving Protestants living mainly in Ulster and poor, lazy, superstitious Catholics further south (cf. Holfter 2004: 308). The first to include phrenology in his examination of the "Irish national character" was Kohl, whose perspective gradually shifted from enlightened observer in his 1843 work *Reisen in Irland* to a wholly negative, racially deterministic view which considered the Irish inherently inferior to the English (cf. Dohmen 1995). Later Viktor Aimé Huber, who never visited Ireland, and Arnold von Lasaulx, who travelled there in 1876, followed suit, suggesting that the Celtic lineage was responsible for the underdevelopment and misery in which the Irish dwelled, both at home and as immigrants in America and Australia (cf. Sagarra 1992:191f.).

environment and his distrust of Irish democracy, he did not fail to register the poverty of Irish peasants and to link it to the abuses of colonialism rather than to sectarianism. Kohl formulated an unambiguous reproach which liberal observers, like Venedey and Friedrich Engels, would later reiterate:

There are nations of slaves, but they have by long custom been made unconscious of the yoke of slavery. This is not the case with the Irish, who have a strong feeling of liberty within them, and are fully sensible of the weight of the yoke they have to bear. They are intelligent enough to know the injustice done them by the distorted laws of their country; and while they are themselves enduring the extreme of poverty, they have frequently before them, in the manner of the life of their English landlords, a spectacle of the most refined luxury that human ingenuity ever invented. (...) What a revolution would follow if merely those families were deprived of their estates who are known to have acquired them by violent or dishonourable means! (Kohl 49)

Sensing the incendiary potential of such a remark, however, Kohl hastened to warn that “to right all these wrongs would (...) give rise to so many wide-spread calamities, that every one must wish to see the levelling hand of Time obliterate these painful recollections” (ibid.). His impact on the German public may have been negligible, as Sagarra suggests (cf. 1992: 188), unlike Pückler-Muskau’s letters, published some years earlier.⁶⁹ These were largely responsible for the sudden fascination with the “emerald isle” and Daniel O’Connell’s struggle for Catholic emancipation. During the 1830s and ’40s, the Repeal movement received comparatively wide media attention, especially in the predominantly Catholic Rhineland, and journalists such as Venedey or travel writer Kohl covered O’Connell’s “monster meetings” for their German readers.⁷⁰

O’Connell’s death and the outbreak of the Famine coincided with the disappointment of German nationalist aspirations at home following the failure of the National Assembly in Frankfurt am Main to devise a constitution in 1848. The result was a

⁶⁹ Pückler-Muskau’s anonymously published letters were translated into English in 1832 and have since been re-edited and republished twice, in 1957 and 1987 (cf. Holfter & Rasche 462).

⁷⁰ By contrast, German historians of the period were agreed that the Union was in Ireland’s best interest (cf. Elvert 80). Dietrich Hermann Hegewisch’s *Synopsis of Irish History* (1806) acknowledged parallels between the fate of the German nation and Ireland – the Holy Roman Empire had just been dissolved under Napoleon’s pressure and his ruthless exercise of political power led to despair – yet at the same time supported England and its monarchy (cf. Rix 26f.).

retreat into private life, a dwindling interest in politics and a new appetite for the picturesque aspects of Irish folklore. Crofton Croker's Irish fairy tales, translated by the Brothers Grimm, Lady Morgan's popular literature and Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies* proffered just such a romanticised and typified image of Ireland and the Irish.⁷¹ German writers of the *Biedermeier* period, as, for example, Julius Rodenberg, contended themselves with exploiting, or contributing to, sentimental myths in a similar vein (cf. Sagarra 1992: 193ff.). Engels's letter to Karl Marx aside, none of the few German travel accounts written after 1848 discussed the Famine in any detail (cf. *ibid.*).

Richard Bermann's *Irland* of 1914 broke with this tradition and tried to explain to an ignorant German audience the complexity of contemporary political affairs (cf. Holfter & Rasche 464f.). His endeavour remained fruitless, however, for the beginning of the First World War rendered Ireland a welcome pawn in anti-British propaganda.⁷² Largely unaware of (and uninterested in) Ireland's political situation, German war propaganda promoted a positive image of Ireland first and foremost in order to legitimise a feeling of moral superiority over the British enemy.⁷³ In both World Wars, in fact, the long-established notion of racial proximity between Germans and Anglo-Saxons was quickly revised and the Irish simultaneously acquitted of any suspicion of racial inferiority. From there, it was simply a matter of reversing every negative attribute formerly applied to

⁷¹ Maria Edgeworth's literary engagement with social and political issues in Ireland, however, remained unknown to her German readers who, contrary to Oehlke's claim (Oehlke 1992: 300), appreciated her as the author of moral tales (cf. Sagarra 1992: 182). And whereas the groundbreaking research carried out in the field of Celtic studies by Kuno Meyer and his peers fostered not only an academic exchange between Germany and Ireland, but also inspired admiration for the descendants of the Gaels, it remained limited in impact to scholarly circles and a small number of individuals (cf. Elvert 80).

⁷² On 20 November 1914, the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* published a government message of goodwill towards the Irish people that reiterated Casement's memorandum, *German Intentions towards Ireland and Irish Soldier Prisoners in Germany*, almost verbatim (cf. Sterzenbach 54). Nevertheless, Christopher Sterzenbach's research shows that throughout the First World War, Germany avoided expressing unequivocal support for Ireland's independence movement and stalled on offering material help despite Casement's best efforts (cf. 56ff.). Ireland was considered nothing but "a military diversion" (Sterzenbach 57) in the war against Britain, as Casement learned from Rudolf Nadolny, the German diplomat in charge of stirring up opposition among the different countries in the British Empire.

⁷³ As an indication of how far-reaching German ignorance of Ireland and its political scene was, Enno Stephan cites the repeated attempts to parachute, ship and otherwise despatch German spies to the island – all of which failed, and most of which make for highly amusing reading (cf. Stephan 87ff.).

Ireland by its coloniser so as to justify war against this brutal oppressor of a noble and innocent nation (cf. Dohmen 1997: 65f.). If further evidence was needed, the capture and trial of Roger Casement proved a veritable goldmine for numerous revisions of his fate “as a martyr of English depravity” (Elvert 80), among them one commissioned from Francis Stuart during the first year of the Second World War. Even after the war and the formation of the Irish Free State, Ireland remained “terra incognita”, and what relations existed between the two countries in the interwar period were for the longest time unofficial, left in the hands of individual diplomats, scholars and businessmen (cf. Sterzenbach 454f.). This did not change either after Germany sent an envoy to Dublin in 1923, Georg von Dehn-Schmidt, as its bilateral relations with Ireland were subordinated to policies that sought closeness to Britain (cf. idem 45ff.).

Due to the rivalry between the Minister for Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Joachim von Ribbentrop, both ministries were involved in German radio propaganda abroad, including to Ireland, during the Second World War. The former primarily through the Foreign Broadcasts Division of the Reichsrundfunkgesellschaft (RRG), which was effectively under the management of the Ministry for Propaganda, and the latter through the Foreign Office’s Cultural Policy Department – Radio Division (Kult-R), which assembled regional teams (among them a dedicated *Irland Redaktion*), yet ultimately relied on the RRG to facilitate its operations (cf. Bergmeier & Lotz 183).⁷⁴ Some of the native English speakers of Irish provenance connected to these official outlets were also involved in a third source of radio propaganda, the Secret Stations,⁷⁵ known as “Büro Concordia”.⁷⁶ The latter ran several stations that

⁷⁴ An agreement between the two ministries from 22 October 1941 decreed that Kult-R would communicate foreign policies to the Ministry for Propaganda and no longer issue its own statements. Its radio staff was to be made available to the RRG (cf. Boelcke 97).

⁷⁵ William Joyce, for example, was hired to speak for the RRG on 18 September 1939, but also worked on the Foreign Office’s *England Redaktion*, which recruited Stuart shortly after his arrival in Berlin in January 1940 to write some suitably anti-imperialist speeches for Joyce. Although his recognisable voice made it impossible for Joyce to speak on the airwaves of those secret stations targeting the United Kingdom, he nevertheless wrote most of the content they broadcasted (cf. Bergmeier & Lotz 100, 205). Similarly, Stuart

pretended to broadcast from within Great Britain and disseminated “black propaganda” in an attempt to raise fears and undermine the British government (cf. Bergmeier & Lotz 199f.). The Nazi’s agenda with respect to Ireland was aimed at securing Irish neutrality and care was taken not to tread on Irish toes by presuming to impose concrete political intentions (cf. Holfter 1997: 240ff.).⁷⁷ Francis Stuart’s broadcasts for the *Irland Redaktion* operate within this clearly defined remit, just as the contributions he wrote for William Joyce’s talks between 1940 and 1941 had been in line with German white propaganda. Although Stuart succeeded in persuading his three biographers that he had been inept in this earlier task, the example he typically cites to support his claim – upbraiding Great Britain for its exploitative imperialism in its colonies (cf. interview with Natterstad 1976: 27) – shows that he was, in fact, conforming to standard practice.⁷⁸ On one occasion, however, Stuart violated the agreed policy by dissuading voters from casting their ballot for Fine Gael in the coming election in a broadcast on 8 May 1943. A couple of weeks

appears to have worked for various interconnected propaganda units over the war years, starting out with translations and script-writing for the Foreign Office’s division (cf. O’Donoghue 57), carrying out translations for the news agency *Drahtlose Dienst* until autumn 1941 (cf. M. Stuart 19), speaking to American listeners in June 1940 via RRG (cf. D. Keane), contributing occasionally to the secret New British Broadcasting Station up until 1942 (cf. Bergmeier & Lotz 208), and participating in the newly founded *Irland Redaktion* from autumn 1941 onwards.

⁷⁶ Büro Concordia’s somewhat ironic name given its mission to sow discord derived from the villa that served as its first premises. The secret agency was run from April 1941 onwards by Dr. Erich Hetzler, who, contrary to David O’Donoghue’s claim, had merely lived in England for 13 months rather than 13 years and had risen to his post through his connections to the NSDAP and von Ribbentrop (cf. Bergmeier & Lotz 203). Its English-language section comprised six stations which were targeting different groups within the British population: New British Broadcasting Service, Radio Caledonia, Workers’ Challenge, Christian Peace Movement, Welsh National Radio and Radio National (Bergmeier & Lotz 197, 199).

⁷⁷ Compare to the mission statement in the memorandum drawn up by Adolf Mahr, who was the driving force behind the creation of *Irland Redaktion*, a sub-division of the Foreign Office’s English broadcasting department (memorandum dated 18 May 1941, reproduced in Sturm A60).

⁷⁸ This practice was not dissimilar to that of the BBC, for although Adam Piette claims that “British propaganda, though clearly imitating German techniques (...), was to outwit its enemy by refusing ever to parade as propaganda” (151), he acknowledges elsewhere that “even in Germany” (183) propaganda tried to appear rational, except, of course, when it stirred anti-Semitic feelings. Stuart’s broadcasts for the Germans display the same characteristics that supposedly set the British apart: he, too, uses “[s]traightforward information and news, a certain common-sense manliness and restraint, and deliberate flattering of listeners’ freedom to make up their minds” (Piette 151). On 18 November 1942, for example, Stuart sympathises with his listeners for having to endure “the propaganda that is being poured out through the propaganda machines of the great democracies” (Barrington 95). In other broadcasts he used the “voice of reason” to defend, besides Irish neutrality and the idea of a united Ireland, the occupation of European countries by the German Army and to suggest that these same occupied territories preferred Germany’s idea of a new Europe to being liberated by the morally bankrupt Allies (cf. Barrington 102, 130, 151f.).

later, the Irish Chargé d’Affaires in Berlin, William Warnock, was instructed by his government that

[s]uch broadcasts are an unwarrantable interference in our internal affairs and are apt to prove most embarrassing to the Government. Please act immediately to ensure nothing of the kind will be broadcast in future. (DFA/10/A/72/A)

Warnock duly presented a memorandum outlining the Irish government’s protest to the German Under State Secretary Andor Hencke on 1 June, and

added orally that his government had no objections to the German radio talks about Ireland, e.g. even in an anti-English sense. However, when an Opposition Party in Ireland is attacked by the German radio his government suspects Germany is applying pressure on Ireland to take sides. (DFA/10/A/72/A)⁷⁹

German print media also operated within the parameters set by German foreign policy in relation to Ireland as a survey of the German weekly illustrated magazine *Die Woche* shows.⁸⁰ At the time of Germany’s attempted invasion of Britain, its two Ireland features – aptly named “Das unbeugsame Irland” (“Invincible Ireland”) and “Englands Griff nach Irland – Ein Griff ins Leere” (“England’s Futile Grab for Ireland[’s Ports]”) – emphasised the country’s early Christian heritage, its subsequent colonial oppression and struggle for independence, and its aspiration towards a united Ireland (cf. Pahl 1940: 2f. and Pahl 1941: 2). A later issue again stressed Ireland’s entitlement to ignore her immediate neighbour’s hour of need, reminding readers of the ongoing I.R.A. struggle in Ulster (Pahl 1942: 2).⁸¹ Between 17 June and 19 August 1942, *Die Woche* serialised

⁷⁹ The record of this official protest was discovered by Stuart’s first biographer, Jerry Natterstad, in *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, a translation of sources from the German Foreign Office’s *Politisches Archiv*. He submitted it to Warnock for comment in 1971, but the latter, by that time Ireland’s Ambassador in Washington, declined to help and forwarded the transcript of Hencke’s note to his employers in Dublin.

⁸⁰ This survey stretches from 1940 to autumn 1944 when the magazine ceased publication in order to free up resources for the war effort.

⁸¹ The reviews of Francis Stuart’s *The Great Squire (Der Herr von Baravore)* and of *Irische Freiheitskämpfer*, a collection of six biographical sketches of Irish freedom fighters from Charles Stuart Parnell to Éamon de Valera edited by Ruth Weiland, are couched in a similar language (cf. Brenner 1940: 33f. and Günther 36).

Stuart's *The Coloured Dome* (*Das verschmähte Opfer*)⁸², a story about a fictional war which implicitly reinforced the message of Ireland's need to go its own way. However, it did not publish an article on the I.R.A. which Stuart mentions writing at the behest of the magazine's publisher in his diary on 16 August 1942. Perhaps it was deemed too strong an endorsement of the organisation's activities and another possible threat to Germany's diplomatic relations with the Irish government. In 1944, the map of Ireland no longer served to explore the location of its strategic ports or as a backdrop to a history lesson, but as a template to explore the significance of a country's self-sufficiency at a time of strained resources. Thus, the journalist pointed out Ireland's lack of agricultural diversity and its reliance on grain imports as another ill-effect of British colonisation that had left the country vulnerable in times of famine and during the present war (Anon., "Woher das Brot": 2f.). The last article to consider Ireland – the sarcastically titled "'Fair play' in Nordirland" (Anon., 3 May 1944: 1) – accused "the London police, various secret services, military police and (...) US military police and security personnel" (my translation) of a sweeping operation against Irish nationalists in Northern Ireland. Of course, the indignation with which the author spoke of the arrests of men, women and children without any warrants or judicial proceedings flies in the face of the magazine's silence on the disappearance of thousands of German citizens in such circumstances, as does its contradictory support for I.R.A. retaliation, while simultaneously condemning partisans fighting German oppression.

The more vociferous German reactions to the Troubles from the late 1960s onwards show how successfully the notion of Ireland's oppression and moral superiority had entered the awareness of a German public that believed itself unprejudiced.⁸³ Again,

⁸² Rüdiger Imhof's bibliography of Stuart's works translated into German from 1996 seems unaware of this serialisation, licensed by Keil Verlag, listing *The Coloured Dome* as published in 1943 under the title *Die bunte Kuppel* (85).

⁸³ Holfter notes a general tendency of German writers to portray Northern Ireland, if at all, then as "the other Ireland". She attributes this reluctance to the prevalence of a romanticised notion of Ireland which clashes

Ireland was used as an instrument, this time, however, by writers with clearly leftist leanings in their rhetorical fight against capitalism and imperialism. Publications of the German Solidarity Committees referred to Northern Ireland as “England’s Vietnam”, labelled British policy as fascist and described British soldiers as acting like concentration camp warders (cf. Dohmen 1994: 164f.).⁸⁴ Familiar with the scene of disenchanted German liberals, Hamilton’s character Frank summarises the ambivalent advantages of being Irish in leftist circles in 1970s Berlin as follows:

It was good to be Irish in Germany. As long as they didn’t want to know about Northern Ireland and the *Eeh-Er-Ah* (IRA). As long as they stuck to music or the Cliffs of Moher or smoked salmon or Heinrich Böll or donkeys or red hair and freckles and the agrarian state. (*DPTG* 85)

This exemplifies to what a crucial extent the German onlooker’s self-image and self-interests have determined his vision of Ireland and that implicated in the bilateral relations has always been an invisible third party, England.⁸⁵

Despite Ireland’s transformation in the past decades, Eoin Bourke (cf. 2003b) and Barbara Stamm separately confirm an unabated proliferation of publications that celebrate Irish otherness and a Celtic fairyland even in the face of Celtic Tiger capitalism.⁸⁶ As Stamm wryly notes, even when reality does not live up to the modern travel writer’s

with the brutal reality in the North. This unwillingness to engage beyond journalistic references and politicised publications of the German Solidarity Committees, according to her, would also explain the comparative scarcity of translations into German of literature with a specific Northern Irish theme (cf. Holfter 2004: 311).

⁸⁴ Even during the 1996 Frankfurt book fair, writers with I.R.A. connections, such as Sean McGuffin and Gerry Adams, enjoyed a huge popularity, whereas more subtle voices like Jennifer Johnston’s or Seamus Deane’s went unheard, as they had not been invited (cf. Carty 29).

⁸⁵ Verena Kaselitz’s study of Ireland-directed media coverage in Europe between 1922 and 1985, although partisan in her opinions and lacking in detail, provides some insight into the bias in the German press during the Troubles towards single, violent events at the expense of registering the continuous political processes in the country. The negative focus such coverage engendered prevented the presentation of a comprehensive perspective and ensured that news of Ireland remained permanently linked to its former coloniser, even in matters that did not warrant such a connection (cf. Kaselitz 114f.). Other inhibiting factors were an over-reliance on London-based correspondents, who were likely to adopt a British viewpoint, or solely on news agencies which often translated into a lack of commentary, analysis or background information. Even news magazines failed to offer a rounded picture and thus contributed towards a perception of a country at war or, alternatively, reduced Ireland to stereotypical backwardness and conservatism (cf. 118f.).

⁸⁶ By contrast, discussions in the German media of both the economic boom and the ensuing crisis never failed to remind readers of Ireland’s traditional image as “Europe’s poorhouse”.

expectations, she can still subject it to “her strategy of mystifying spaces, of turning places into a magic fairytale utopia to match her prefabricated stereotypes” (Stamm 472). Following in the footsteps of a long succession of male travel writers, the “German women writers with esoteric and ecofeminist inclinations” (Stamm 473) have discovered the potency of the “sentimental topos of identification with the land” (ibid.). For a time shortly before and after the 1996 Frankfurt Book Fair, a new generation of Irish writers managed to disrupt this German fixation with works that were set in urban contexts, featuring dysfunctional characters, and heavily criticising the negative influence of the Catholic Church and the shortcomings of Irish society. Looking back on this period, critic and literary translator Friedrich Rathjen analysed the temporary boom and the subsequent disappearance of emergent Irish writers from German publishers’ lists for the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* in 2006. He attributes the sudden popularity of writers like Roddy Doyle, Dermot Bolger, Patrick McCabe and Joseph O’Neill to their compelling portrayal of a changing Irish society, and their later failure to sustain their spell on German readers to their inability to do justice to a changed society. He likewise points out how the country’s economic success has created a climate in which culture has come to represent yet another commodity, thereby thwarting the attempt to write critically against the paralysis of reality. Rathjen concludes that the relevance of topical texts about and from Ireland has been reversed in favour of a return to the same old formula that never fails to please Ireland-aficionados among the German public. Thus, the escapist, romanticised concept of Ireland persists, as the success of books in the style of the *Irishes Tagebuch* proves.⁸⁷

The latest instalment in this series, *Die redselige Insel*, comes from the pen of Hugo Hamilton. Hamilton seems uniquely positioned with his awareness of both Irish self-image

⁸⁷ See, for example, Ralph Giordano’s *Mein irisches Tagebuch* (1996) or the less typical (but no less stereotypical) *Glenkill*, a sheep murder mystery set on an Irish farm which enjoyed huge popularity in 2006.

and image of Germany and vice versa⁸⁸ to provide critical insights into contemporary Irish society to his German readers. As he had pointed out earlier in his analysis of the Riverdance phenomenon, the rapid transition “from haystack to hi-tech” gave life to “a marketable new self-esteem”, which in turn transformed Celtic Tiger cubs into “tourists in [their] own country” (“Thanks for Nothing, Michael Flatley”, 1998a). It struck him as particularly ironic that the Irish had come to incorporate into their image of themselves a nostalgic hankering after the days of simplicity and “sincerity” not at all dissimilar to Böll’s portrayal. As will be shown in Part II.3.5, despite his critical observations, Hamilton risks implicitly establishing a dichotomy between an Irish way of life he condones – the “hidden Ireland” living in harmony with nature, preferably outside the suburban sprawl, and pursuing artistic fulfilment – and the modern, consumerist lifestyle of mainstream Ireland he deplores.

3.4. The Importance of Elsewhere: Irish Writers and Germany

John Hennig, exiled in Ireland between 1939 and 1956, remarked in 1950 on the “[t]raditional ignorance of, or lack of interest in, German-Irish literary relations” (Hennig 105), adding that

even those who do not share the belief that Irish-German literary relations as such are a subject worthy of investigation, will derive some benefit from considering these relations at least as one new point of view liable to open interesting vistas on traditional problems. (ibid.)

His bird’s-eye view of Irish-German literary connections traces mutual relations back to three cycles in which the Irish cleric⁸⁹ featured as the first central figure, followed by the

⁸⁸ Hamilton himself repeatedly emphasised the significance of the *Irishes Tagebuch* in several articles he published on the lasting fascination of German tourists with Ireland (cf. *The Irish Times* 1996, 1999, 2005a; *Die Welt* 2004, *The Guardian* 2004, *An Sionnach* 2005d) and had previously starred in the perpetuation of the myth when a German film crew brought him to Achill to shoot him “walking on the side of the mountain, gazing out over the Atlantic” (Carty 29).

⁸⁹ Although he acknowledges the spiritual influence of Irish monks in the Holy Roman Empire, Hennig makes short shrift of the perception of Ireland as the island of the saints and scholars, a concept frequently invoked with pride to reinforce Ireland’s ties with Europe, for example, by Stuart in his broadcasts (cf. Barrington 70, 103, 110). Hennig considers it “a purely Continental tradition originating from the

Irish soldier⁹⁰ and, later again, by the tourist and scholar. Hennig's wish that his "notes would evoke interest in similar studies among those who are in a bibliographical position more favourable than one who works right in the middle of deep Irish bogs" (Hennig 110) was granted in 1985, when Patrick O'Neill published a survey of Irish-German literary relations. Joachim Fischer puts the comparative lack of interest down to "a general neglect of Irish writing about foreign places" (Fischer 2000b: 535) in Ireland:

For decades, Irish literary scholarship has tended to disregard texts by Irish authors which do not deal in any substantial fashion with Ireland or with specifically Irish issues such as the 'Irish question'. The particular colonial or post-colonial relationship with Great Britain has occupied Irish historical and literary scholars to such an extent that interactions with the world outside these isles have certainly not received the necessary attention, the United States and Australia perhaps excepted. (ibid.)

However, as he points out, eminent figures in the Irish national movement such as James Clarence Mangan, the self-styled "German Poet"⁹¹, and Thomas Davis entertained important connections with Germany.⁹² Brigitte Anton explores some of these in her study of the extensive translations of German poetry published in *The Nation*.⁹³ Interestingly, she reveals a penchant for militarist ballads not of the contemporaneous liberal *Vormärz* movement, but of the earlier Romantic *Junges Deutschland* generation, whose poets Ludwig Uhland, Friedrich Rückert, and Theodor Körner had accompanied the Wars of Liberation. "What interested Young Ireland particularly about Germany," Anton maintains,

misinterpretation of the Roman expression *Insula Sacra* and from the erroneous identification of the Irish word *noibh* (*illustris*) with *sanctus*" (104). He maintains that the Irish tradition in the German Catholic Church would have been almost "completely unknown in Ireland" (idem 107) as late as the seventeenth century.

⁹⁰ Records include those of Irish mercenaries in the Thirty Years War, like Thomas Carve's *Reyssbüchlein*, published in Mainz in 1640 (Fischer 2000b: 537).

⁹¹ See Mangan's signature on a manuscript he gave his student Catherine Hayes on 4 March 1834 (National Library of Ireland, Dublin: MS138 (microfiche)).

⁹² Anton disputes the popular claim that Davis had travelled to Germany in the 1830s or indeed to the continent (cf. Anton 164). The leader of the United Irishmen, Wolfe Tone, on the other hand, did spend some time in French-occupied Rhineland in 1797. As Fischer points out, his diary entries reveal a disdain for the Catholicism he encountered there typical of British Protestant travellers to Germany (cf. Fischer 2000b: 539f.).

⁹³ According to Hennig, the *Nation's* rival, the *Dublin University Magazine*, likewise accorded special attention to German literature and culture and published translations of poetry, among them Mangan's series *Anthologia Germanica* (cf. Hennig 109).

“was their belief that Ireland in the 1840s was at the same level of its ‘national awakening’ as Germany at the turn of the nineteenth century” (Anton 165). Germany as a *Kulturnation*, and not its actual political struggles in the 1840s, served as a model for Ireland:

History, metaphysics, æsthetics, criticism, prose fiction, dramatic, didactic, and lyric poetry, in all, Germany has *in one century* succeeded. What cheering to all humanity – but especially to an infant nation – shines from this fact! But in nothing has Germany expressed her heart and training more than in her ballads. (...) It is no slight gain for us Irishmen (either as new-comers into the family of nations, or as souls thirsting for the divine) to obtain an insight into this German poetry. (Anon., “German Anthology”, 1845: 715)

Realising the potential of ballads to captivate the illiterate masses and to create a unified national consciousness, Young Ireland proceeded to select poems for translation that corresponded to its own desire to foster a national culture and to develop a martial spirit.⁹⁴ By and large, contributors to *The Nation* were less interested in contemporaneous political developments and remained, in all likelihood, oblivious to the fact that the German liberal student movement, which had superseded the Romantic nationalists, admired Ireland’s oppressor England for its advanced democratic system (cf. Anton 176).

Young Ireland’s attitude reveals the same underlying influence of politics and religion in the encounter with Germany which Fischer documents in his study of Irish travel accounts in the nineteenth century (2000b). Comparing the observations of Anglo-Irish aristocrats passing through on their Grand Tour to Southern Europe,⁹⁵ and of Anglo-Irish students in German universities, Fischer notices a shift from a patronising and sentimentalising approach before 1848 towards rejection and vilification coinciding with the rise of Germany as a unified political power competing with the British Empire. Before

⁹⁴ These were poems that “expressed a love for the fatherland and a patriotic attachment to landscape and nature” (Anton 167) or poems that avoided a contemporary context altogether in favour of an idealised medieval setting. Some of these cast the poet in the medieval role of keeper of a society’s cultural memory, similar to the Irish bardic tradition (ibid.). Others celebrated the idealised medieval figure of a benevolent ruler who matched Young Ireland’s idealisation of Gaelic antiquity. These poems also glorified the virtues of self-sacrificing heroic warriors. All these features are recognisable in the writing of influential Irish nationalists and of the Celtic Revival and reveal the dynamics and exchange of cultural memory in the nineteenth century.

⁹⁵ Early documents include the journal of Melesina Trench, grand-daughter of the Bishop of Waterford, who travelled through Germany between 1799 and 1801, Catherine Wilmot’s letters from 1803, and John Singleton’s diary from his tour in 1816 published in 1988 (cf. Fischer 2000b: 537).

1848, journeys through Germany had been experienced in terms set by Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, the John Murray travel guides and Mme de Staël's *De l'Allemagne*, and had emphasised German Protestantism, idealism, romanticism, and artistic talent against the backdrop of a backward, preindustrial society. Favourite tourist destinations typically included the Rhine, with its romantic ruined castles on mountain tops conjuring up German myths and Gothic intimations, and, before Goethe's death in 1832, Weimar. The Revolution of 1848, however, contradicted the prevailing notion of an impractical, submissive people, given to thought rather than action, and alarmed Anglo-Irish observers who were disinclined to share the same privileges of a parliament and free press with the less worthy Germans (or Irish, for that matter) (cf. Fischer 2000b: 542). Charles Lever, a former medical student in Bonn and Göttingen, whose contributions to the *Dublin University Magazine* initially promoted romantic stereotypes of Germany, shifted his tone from satirical and benevolent to scathing following his acquaintance with the democratic movement in Germany during his last stay there in 1845. Under the pseudonym Lorrequer, he concludes his unfavourable impression of a dinner with a German Grand Duke with a persiflage of Goethe's "Kennst du das Land" and these disparaging remarks:

To give such people the form of constitutional government is to legalize anarchy, and to confer the liberty of the press is to guarantee the right of libel. It is a country with little to suggest hope, and still less to create esteem. Flat, stale, and unprofitable as a residence, dull to live in, and only delightful to leave. (Lorrequer 543)

Lady Wilde, who had translated more radical *Vormärz* poems by Ferdinand Freiligrath, Georg Herwegh and others for *The Nation*, later formulated a similarly negative image of Germany and its people (cf. Fischer 2000b: 543). In her travelogue, *Driftwood from Scandinavia*, she describes the ordinary subjects of the newly formed Empire as "submit[ting] very apathetically, according to their nature, to the iron hand of the autocrat, and consol[ing] themselves with beer and philosophy – a dreamy philosophy,

vague and colourless as their plains” (Wilde 280).⁹⁶ Her explanation, borrowing from Hume and Arnold, puts this down to the fact that “[i]ndividuality, romance, poetry, philosophy, love of art and beauty, belong to a higher Teutonic development, and also to the Celtic race in an especial degree” (276). The tenor of this attitude is still recognisable in Bielenberg’s ridiculing of bourgeois, worse-for-wear Hamburg society, where she went to train as a singer in 1931, as well as in Stuart’s deprecation of most Germans he encounters as small-minded bureaucrats and gain-driven herd animals. Neither seems particularly aware or troubled that their perception of supposedly genuine German characteristics is influenced by a strategically constructed hetero-image of the nineteenth century.

As the British-influenced image of Germany and the Germans worsened, albeit allowing for some respite for admirers of Richard Wagner and German music,⁹⁷ the Irish nationalists’ view of Germany improved. Despite a Protestant Prussian monarch, Catholic nationalists found inspiration in the political power the Catholic *Zentrum* party wielded, and Catholic journals did not tire to advertise the beauty, piety and simplicity of rural Catholic pockets of Germany. One such enthusiastic endorsement proclaimed: “Let the Gael, who wishes to spend an ideal holiday abroad and loves what is ancient in monument and music, go to Rothenburg” (Cassidy 386). Interestingly, these Irish writers employed

⁹⁶ Whereas she praises the beauty of Hamburg and its denizens, she remembers nothing but the dullness and ordinariness of people and landscape alike in the rest of Prussia. Applying her own measure of phrenology and nutritional advice she pronounces a crushing verdict, from which, of course, both English and Prussian royalty are exempt:

In fact, the German head, face, and figure are only suited for homely life, not for the light elegancies of fashion or the majesty of queens; neither the diadem nor laurel wreath would suit them. (...) [Germans] seem a people made for the common, work-day life. (Wilde 270f.)

⁹⁷ Among these admirers were George Moore and Edward Martyn, who travelled to Bayreuth for the Wagner *Festspiele*, and J. M. Synge, who studied violin and piano in Würzburg and Oberwerth in 1893/94. Anthony Roche proposes that the figurehead of the Irish National Theatre tried to integrate Irish and European literature years before James Joyce during his stay in Germany, where he found his first inspiration for what would later be known as his Irish “peasant plays” (cf. Roche 11ff.).

much the same phraseology as the revivalists would use to describe the West of Ireland,⁹⁸ or, indeed, as the civilisation-tired German travellers used to idealise Ireland:

The Ammergauers are an ideal peasantry, sturdy, well-clad, and of simple rustic manners. (...) What a peaceful Catholic republic was this in the Bavarian Highlands, whose wants were so few, whose habits were so frugal and temperate! While their spiritual wants are well looked after by the parish priest and his curate, their Burgomeister (...) is chief guardian of the small community, whose duties are surely very slight in a village lighted by oil-lamps, and the peace of which is never disturbed by shrill voices crying out the daily papers, with its latest murder or suicide! (Dallow 901)

Fischer found that Catholic pride and national pride were closely interlinked in these and similar accounts published in the *Irish Monthly*, the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* and the *New Ireland Review* after the foundation of the second German Empire in 1871.⁹⁹ In marked contrast to the British view, these contributors developed a hetero-image of Germany which purposefully reduced the country to the select regions of Bavaria and the Rhineland where Catholic tradition, conservatism and provincialism could be admired. Fischer explains this superficial representation, which continued well into travel accounts of the interwar period and beyond (cf. Fischer 1996, Sagarra 1979), in terms of Irish nationalist identity politics: many Irish travellers went to Germany not to encounter a foreign country, but to boost their national confidence (cf. Fischer 1996: 451). Reflecting the nationalist myth of rural Ireland at home, Irish travel accounts hence seek out traces left by Irish monks and scholars that reaffirm Irish culture's role in Western civilisation and make no mention of any modern industries and enterprises or of contemporary socialist developments in their preferred German regions. Industry, modernity, unfriendliness are exclusively encountered in the decadent, Protestant, Prussian North, as Katherine Tynan's

⁹⁸ This reverse romanticism mirrors German ideological projections even in the forced endeavour to establish closer relations between Bavarians and the Irish by proclaiming both subject to the same "strong element of Celticism" which finds expression in the "striking conservatism" and "insular narrowness" both are perceived to share in common (Cassidy 386).

⁹⁹ During the Franco-Prussian War, Irish Catholics had still sided with France, while Protestants felt aligned to Prussia (cf. Fischer 2000b: 544).

account from 1925, *Life in the Occupied Area*, makes clear (cf. Fischer 1996: 451).¹⁰⁰ In Fischer's opinion, it was most likely this one-dimensional view with its lack of interest in German realities that eventually led Irish visitors to underestimate the rise of fascism in Germany (cf. Fischer 1996: 453), seeing in the Nazis nothing more than, as Mícheál Mac Liammóir wryly noted about a holiday in Berlin in 1931, "a mildly Gaelic League-ish affair on a large scale concerning itself mainly with a revival of *Lederhosen*" (Mac Liammóir 1961a: 118).

Fischer's doctoral thesis on Germany's image in Ireland between 1890 and 1939 provides an in-depth analysis of Sinn Féin's involvement with Germany leading up to the First World War and the Easter Rising. Contrary to popular belief that Germany was merely to supply arms for an Irish insurrection, Patrick Pearse, Thomas Clarke and Joseph Plunkett could imagine an Irish future under a German prince in case of German victory (cf. Fischer 2000a: 181). The Irish Free State's isolationist policy, on the other hand, surrendered only to advanced German technology, commissioning Siemens-Schuckert to launch Ireland into the technological era with the construction of the Shannon electricity plant in the 1920s.¹⁰¹ Irish attitudes towards Germany in the 1930s continued to depend on the common denominator England and were motivated by what appeared to be politically opportune (cf. Fischer 2000a: 46).¹⁰² Criticism of Nazi Germany was expressed mainly in

¹⁰⁰ Conversely, Irish Protestant interest, while also conservative at heart, focused on the industrialised parts of Germany to delineate a path for Ireland's economic development. Robert Smyllie published a series of four articles in *The Irish Times* in October 1929 on "The New Germany" in which the work ethics of German workers and the respectability of the German proletariat are held up as a model to the unruly Irish labour movement:

Slowly but surely the Germans are recovering their pre-war position in Europe. The process is difficult, but no people who are working as the Germans are working could fail to succeed eventually. (...) They [the directors of Krupp whose steel works he visited] asked me about economic conditions in Ireland. What could I say in face of this?

("At Work and at Play", 19 October 1929)

¹⁰¹ The stage German professor/linguist modelled on Kuno Meyer thus received a new companion in the form of the stage German engineer, as in Denis Johnston's play *The Moon in the Yellow River* of 1931 (cf. Fischer 2000a: 339ff.). In the latter, Bavarian engineer Tausch, true to his surname, tries to persuade an enclave of Irish eccentrics, Republicans and never-do-wells in the West of Ireland to exchange their irrational traditionalism for the benefits of modernity and progress.

¹⁰² Fischer argues there is an urgent need to study the sympathies that existed with National Socialism among the ranks of state officials, extreme nationalists and Catholic clerics – pointing out that Nazi-Germany's

the communist magazines *Irish Workers Voice* and *Republican Congress*, both of which ceased publication in 1936 (cf. Fischer 2000a: 400, 434-40). Nazi Germany's disregard for the Catholic Church's prerogatives also caused occasional critical reactions, notably in the Jesuit magazine *Studies* (cf. Fischer 2000a: 429ff.). Although a number of religious and social groups campaigned on behalf of refugees from "greater" Germany before the outbreak of war,¹⁰³ Ireland, Dermot Keogh notes, "at a generous estimate (...) took under 300" (38) of the 432,000 Jewish emigrants between 1933 and 1940. Ireland's policy towards aliens imposed almost impassable obstacles for Jewish refugees from the continent, supposedly in an attempt to keep anti-Semitism at bay, as the following line of reasoning from Minister for Justice, Patrick Rutledge, evinces:

There has never been in this country any feeling against Jews on the scale which has shown itself in some other countries but there *are* anti-Jewish groups in the country which would be only too glad to get an excuse to start an anti-Jewish campaign and those groups could get no better slogan than that the native Irish worker was being ousted by cheap imported labour.

(quoted in Keogh 42)

The Office of the Controller of Censorship ensured that evidence of anti-Semitism in Ireland as well as news of the extent of the Nazis' persecution of Jews on the continent were suppressed in the national media. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that censorship meant Irish people remained ignorant of the existence and purpose of Nazi racial policies (cf. Douglas 220f.). The official Irish stance in part resembled that adopted by the British during the war, for in both cases the atrocities committed in continental Europe were wilfully ignored as much as possible, as they were counter-productive to the individual's pretensions of rationality and to the two governments' concerns about an impressionable public (cf. Piette 193). This attitude, Adam Piette argues in relation to British society, was itself indicative of a general suspicion towards the victims of Nazi propaganda, thus perversely sealing their fate by consciously discounting anything

authoritarian form of government, its chauvinism, anti-Semitism and anti-Bolshevism appealed more to Fianna Fáil's wider circles than to the Blue Shirts and Fine Gael (cf. Fischer 2000a: 455).

¹⁰³ See my discussion of such an appeal in Part Two, chapter 2.2.

remotely related to German racialism as “propaganda” (cf. 195). The result was a dulled sense of personal responsibility and, in Ireland at least, an increase in anti-Jewish sentiment during the second half of the “Emergency” (cf. Douglas 128f.). Piette’s following judgement of British attitudes could, therefore, equally be applied to Irish ones: “The insular outlook, magnified a thousandfold by being cut off from the Continent by the war, look[ed] into the eyes of war’s victims and [saw] the reflection of its own profoundest contempt for the Jews” (194).¹⁰⁴

Smyllie, as editor of *The Irish Times*, launched a new series on Germany in November 1936 entitled “Germany under Adolf Hitler”. Although alarmed about the persecution of the Jews and critical of censorship and the suppression of the opposition, his conservative stance still finds many admirable achievements in Nazi Germany – tidiness and orderliness, the promotion of public health, the improvement of the working man’s status – which he proposes as examples to Irish society, much as in his earlier articles on the Weimar Republic (cf. Fischer 2000a: 444ff.).¹⁰⁵ Among the measures he considered worthwhile emulating, organised charity would be the one the Irish would soon have the opportunity to bestow on the civilian victims of these lauded German policies.¹⁰⁶ Sagarra’s summary of Irish opinion during the three decades after the Second World War¹⁰⁷ shows

¹⁰⁴ R. M. Douglas cites various media reports prohibited by the censor in 1943 and 1944, because they quoted blatantly anti-Semitic comments made at political events or because they related incidents where anti-Semitic messages like “Jew” or “Perish Judah” had been scrawled in yellow paint on the shop windows of Jewish businesses in the middle of Dublin.

¹⁰⁵ Other Irish citizens at the time were equally misguided in their evaluation of Nazi Germany. Thus, Monica Schefold, John Hennig’s daughter, recounts how her parents were frequently upset in their Irish exile by well-meaning people who would greet them with “Isn’t Hitler a great man!” and wished him well in his war (cf. Schefold 252).

¹⁰⁶ Cathy Molohan’s account of the *Save the Children* initiative chronicles the efforts made to accommodate German children after the war. Although Fischer credits Molohan in his review of her work with providing information on the two countries’ relations gleaned from both cultural and political Irish sources, he condemns the lack of reflection on the biographies of several right-wing activists and Nazi sympathisers, both in Ireland and Germany, who were involved in the shaping of the “two nations’ friendship”, as her book’s subtitle suggests (Fischer 2001b: 265).

¹⁰⁷ According to Sagarra, the GDR received little coverage in Ireland and if it was mentioned, then in a negative context or disparagingly (cf. Sagarra 1979: 109). Fischer, on the other hand, lists several Irish-language journalists who sought to rectify this imbalance and wrote about the GDR in *Comhar* as early as 1961 (cf. Fischer 2001a: 389ff.).

that the conservative image of Germany promoted both by Smyllie and Catholic nationalists would prevail (Sagarra 1979). Until de Valera's departure from government, leaving Seán Lemass free to reorientate Ireland towards a global economy, Irish observers were generally content to view Germany in terms of the same old historically-romantic notions as "a Christian bastion against the pagan hordes of the East" (Sagarra 1979: 109, my translation). Following Ireland's accession to the European Economic Community in 1973, this image was quickly replaced by a business-minded reinterpretation of Germany and the Germans (cf. eadem 111f.). This conception still informs the latest *Irish Times* series on Irish-German relations, "A German Complex", published between 25 and 31 August 2012 (cf. Scally 2012). Although intent on updating the Irish hetero-image of contemporary Germany, the articles in the series reiterate and reinforce already existing preconceptions of Germany's economic know-how and its sentimental involvement with Ireland, advising Irish readers on "how Germany can get us back in the game" (31 August 2012) and reassuring them that "German love of all things Irish persists" (30 August 2012).¹⁰⁸

According to O'Neill and Fischer, the impact of the Second World War is by and large not reflected in Irish writing of that period (cf. O'Neill 1985: 241; Fischer 2000a: 441), except in Denis Johnston's *Nine Rivers from Jordan* and Samuel Beckett's *German Diaries*. The latter represent, as James McNaughton suggests, "a private protest" (102) against the presentation of history as a sweeping narrative and its deterministic interpretation. Written during his travels in Nazi Germany between October 1936 and April 1937, Beckett's diaries comprise six notebooks in which he recorded long reflective meditations alongside almost antiquarian lists of books he received, paintings he saw, galleries he visited, and walks he took in numerous German cities along his way from

¹⁰⁸ As one reader complained after the lead article in the series was published accompanied by a poll on 24 August 2012, the approach taken by the newspaper was both divisive and regressive "at a time when Europe-wide solutions [were] needed" (cf. Woodward 13).

Hamburg to Munich via Berlin (cf. McNaughton 108; Nixon 12). Whereas Mark Nixon sees in these notebooks mainly an early indication of the self-interrogation and self-notation of Beckett's later characters (cf. 21), McNaughton convincingly argues they foreshadow a reconciliation of

[Beckett's] early conviction that abandoning historical sense and cause-and-effect judgment represents a political liability and his later awareness that rationalising the chaos of history can generate irrational historical narratives that lead to censorship and war. (McNaughton 108)

In *More Pricks than Kicks*, Beckett had explored the failure to rationally conceptualise experience in the face of the rise of totalitarianism. His real-life encounter with Nazi propaganda and politics upon his return to Germany in the autumn of 1936, however, made him wary of any attempt to link artistic expression to historical circumstances:

I am not interested in a 'unification' of the historical chaos any more than I am in the 'clarification' of the individual chaos, & still less in the anthropomorphisation of the inhuman necessities that provoke the chaos. (...) I say the background & the causes are inhuman and incomprehensible machinery & venture to wonder what kind of appetite it is that can be appeased by the modern animism that consists in rationalising them. (...) I want the old fashioned history book of reference, not the fashionable *monde romancé* that explains copious[ly] why e.g. Luther was inevitable without telling me anything about Luther, where he went next, what he lived on, what he died of, etc. I say the expressions 'historical necessity' & 'Germanic destiny' start the vomiting moving upwards.

(Notebook 4, 15 January 1937, quoted in McNaughton 107)

Yet this documentary style provides only limited satisfaction, for Beckett soon realised the absurdity of his attempt to stem the tide of providential historical myth-making with his private record of facts:

The little trouble I give myself, this absurd diary with its lists of pictures, serves no purpose, is only the act of an obsessional neurotic. Counting pennies would do as well. An 'open-mindedness' that is mindless, the sphincter of the mind limply for ever open, the mind past the power of closing itself *to everything but its own content*, or rather its own treatment of content.

(Notebook 4, 2 February 1937, quoted in McNaughton 109)

As McNaughton points out, the diaries evince Beckett's oscillation between trying to preserve the memory of objects, people, and places that threaten to be obliterated by a totalising power and repudiating the logic of fascism by rejecting a coherent interpretive

narrative (cf. 111). His subsequent artistic endeavour to rid language of its ideological mystifications and his refusal to give historical content a stable form amounts to a resounding rejection of the artist's complicity in shaping historical data which could serve preordained nationalist or fascist narratives.

Róisín Ní Mheara's fragmentary autobiography, *Cé hí seo amuigh?*, represents the antithesis to Beckett's careful positioning. Referred to by one reviewer as "by far the nastiest book I have ever read in the Irish language" (Mac Coille B6), the book displays that doubtful defence of the Nazis which Böll sought to end as "peripatetic dentist" in rural Ireland. Ní Mheara (originally Muir, later O'Mara), who had been orphaned during the First World War, grew up in English aristocratic circles with sympathies for the rising Nazi movement (cf. Fischer 2001a: 392). After a study trip to Germany in the 1930s, she stayed on to participate in anti-British German radio propaganda where she could vent her scorn for all things British alongside Francis Stuart, with whom she had an affair in 1940/41, and William Joyce. Dedicated to "the Irish people", her book purports to reveal inconvenient truths about the Second World War, yet, as Fischer demonstrates, relies mainly on second-hand information and anecdotes that serve as Ní Mheara's springboard to relativise the Nazi crimes and to question the existence of extermination camps:

Ihren Zweifeln an den Vernichtungslagern, in Deutschland als Auschwitzlüge bekannt, berüchtigt und strafbar, kann Ní Mheara ungestraft im Mäntelchen der Minderheitssprache Irisch Ausdruck verleihen. In ihrem Buch steht wenig über die Untaten der Nazis, aber viel über die ungerechten Strafaktionen der Alliierten am deutschen Volk gegen Ende des Krieges. (Fischer 2001a: 392)¹⁰⁹

The ease with which she could integrate fascist ideology into her understanding of Catholicism as well as the racist potential of her nationalism highlight the need for further investigation both into the relationship between certain aspects of Irish cultural and religious discourses and fascism between 1933 and 1945, and into the fascination with

¹⁰⁹ My translation: "Under the guise of the Irish minority language, Ní Mheara can express unpunished her doubts about extermination camps – known in Germany as the infamous 'Auschwitz-lie' and punishable as such. Her book contains little about the Nazis' atrocities, whereas the Allies' retaliation against German civilians towards the end of the war is expounded in detail."

Hitler and the Nazis founded on ignorance and anti-British sentiment.¹¹⁰ These areas remained largely unexplored in the wake of the controversy stirred by Ní Mheara's book in 1992 (cf. Fischer 2001a: 393), and were brought back to the centre of attention only later by Stuart's election as Saoi of Aosdána. However, by the time of Hamilton's publication of *The Speckled People* and his disclosure of his father's anti-Semitism and involvement with the extremist movement Altirí na hAiséighe, interest in this specific aspect of the Irish past had waned again as the absence of enquiry into this topic would suggest.

What Ní Mheara's work also reveals, albeit in a negative instance, is a stronger preoccupation with Germany in contemporary Irish-language publications than in Irish literature in English, where France or the United States feature more prominently (cf. Fischer 2001a: 405).¹¹¹ Fischer attributes this to the lasting influence of German philologists on Irish studies, a circumstance that encouraged Irish students to travel to German universities well into the second half of the twentieth century. These scholars, in turn, promoted a positive image of Germany among their own students¹¹² and maintained a direct link to continental Europe (Fischer 2001a: 387). The German connection simultaneously enabled Irish-language writers to bypass the pressures of an Irish-English dichotomy and to update Irish identity and culture by incorporating diversity and the

¹¹⁰ In response to a contentious letter to the editor of *The Irish Times* by Michael Hennessy from 1 August 1984, the German literary translator Hans-Christian Oeser, who lives in Ireland, addressed what he perceives as an "ill-concealed esteem for a political system ruled by a charismatic leader" among a small section of Irishmen and -women. Like Schefold, he reports equally worrying incidents of being greeted with the Hitler salute by ill-informed Nazi sympathisers on his first visit to Ireland in 1974 (cf. Oeser 9).

¹¹¹ For a detailed discussion of the image of Germany and the Germans in contemporary Irish-language journals, poetry, prose and drama, along with bibliographical information on the range of translations from German into Irish, see Fischer 2001a. For research on German exiles in Ireland between 1933 and 1945, see the conference contributions by historians, cultural critics and eye witnesses gathered by Holfter in the 2006 publication, *German-Speaking Exiles in Ireland 1933-1945*.

¹¹² Fischer lists only a few examples of Irish-language writing that exploits racist prejudice and an oversimplified notion of recent history in its description of Germany and the Germans, the most notable among them being Máirtín Muilleoir's *Krauts* (1992).

experience of elsewhere – be it through translation, through observations on German culture or through exploring a German outsider’s views on Irish society.¹¹³

The appeal of elsewhere and the attempt to internationalise Irish literature is, of course, neither exclusive to Irish-language writers¹¹⁴ nor to German-Irish encounters. What is peculiar, however, is a tendency to engage with otherness not in order to dream the self differently, but to reinforce allegiance to the established self-image.¹¹⁵ Mac Liammóir, for example, experiences the postwar German landscape as alien and mysterious, but at the same time vital to his (no less constructed) notion of Ireland. Significantly, his appreciation of Germany ends where his romantic images of “Gothic majesty”, “endless forests”, “powerful music” and “cleanly towns” (Mac Liammóir 1961b: 62) are intruded upon by the people who inhabit his fantasy world:

But for Germany I have a great deal of affection: not altogether for its people, so many of whom resemble fussy, unkind, excitable, educated sheep: but for Germany itself. Maybe this is because in its essence it is to me so profoundly alien: in no other place on earth do I find myself such a foreigner: in no other country do I feel so completely and so entertainingly Abroad. (ibid.)

Adapting Philip Larkin’s poem “The Importance of Elsewhere” slightly, one could conclude that the experience of Germany provides a privileged feeling of being different:

Living in [Ireland] has no such excuse:
These are my customs and establishments
It would be much more serious to refuse.
Here no elsewhere underwrites my existence.

¹¹³ One such example is the inclusion in *Deirdre* – the first Irish-language magazine for women founded by Gearóid Ó Cuinneagáin, the leader of the extreme right-wing movement Ailtiri na hAiséirghe – of Irmgard Ó hUrmoltaigh’s piece of advice to Irish women. In her article, she seeks to promote German housewifely efficiency and thriftiness among Irish “women of the house” (Kaiser 12, my translation from the original German text included in her diary NLI MS48,168/2) as a way of supporting Ireland’s bid to catch up with Europe’s leading economies.

¹¹⁴ Imhof, for example, highlights the inspirational influence of Goethe’s *Wahlverwandtschaften* (*Elective Affinities*) and Hugo von Hofmannsthal’s *Ein Brief* on the theme and structure of John Banville’s *The Newton Letter* (cf. Imhof 336f.). Likewise, he points out the variegated German influence in Aidan Higgins’s works, ranging from literary references and quotes from German literature in his texts to the inclusion of German characters, settings and phrases (cf. 341ff.). The latter, in Imhof’s opinion, are often ambiguous due to Higgins’s insufficient command of the language and serve no inherent function.

¹¹⁵ Writing about the experience of elsewhere in contemporary Irish fiction, Roberta Geffer Wondrich argues that the experience of living in a foreign place with its own troubled history helps the disenchanting Irish “exile” understand the need “for a negotiating, less rigid attitude towards that complex, multiple site of allegiances which ‘home’ – their Irish ‘home’ – has become” (Geffer Wondrich 15).

Hamilton explains this ambivalent position in *Die redselige Insel* in similar terms, albeit quoting a line from Paul Durcan's "The Far Side of the Island": he sees the Irish as used to thinking of themselves as part of a larger world, yet at the same time as separate from it, as "globally sad" and "locally glad" (Durcan 11). In contrast to Böll (and to many German observers before and after him), who liked to dream of alternatives to Germany from the outpost of Achill Island, the sojourn in Germany for Irish writers acts as midwife to their renaissance as distinctly Irish. With this realisation, every "return *becomes* homecoming" (Gefter Wondrich 15), and, in the case of Bielenberg's, Stuart's and Hamilton's writing, every return to the German past serves as an anchor in the Irish present.

4. Summary

In Part One of this thesis, I have elucidated the theoretical background that will inform my analysis of the works of Christabel Bielenberg, Francis Stuart and Hugo Hamilton. As works which engage with German history from the perspective of both witness and outsider, their writing highlights the need for an enquiry into the ways in which individual memory is dependent on cultural memory and participates in the creation, perpetuation and challenging of concepts of the past and of the other. In the first part of the chapter, I have charted the trajectory from early relativist approaches to history in Nietzsche and Becker to the present constructivist discourse which informs concepts of history and cultural memory, thus positioning the subject of my thesis within the parameters of a supranational historical and cultural debate. Nora's concept of the memory imperative and the dangers of a memory inflation were expounded, as they characterise the present relation to the past in the aftermath of a "democratisation of history" which, while opposing monolithic national histories, threatens to replicate the same patterns of exclusivity and divisiveness on a new scale. LaCapra's argument against the conflation of absence at a foundational level with historical losses and trauma was introduced in order to highlight the risk nostalgia poses to

a society or an individual that seeks a unity that never was and scapegoats the other for not achieving it.

The critical distance necessary for evaluating the formation and motivation of memory, I have argued, is provided by the socio-constructivist approach conceived of by Halbwachs and developed by Jan and Aleida Assmann. Their proposition that group and individual identities are constructed from an archive of mediated memories and images of self and other reveals the potential of symbolic media to bridge linguistic and cultural boundaries and to communicate and incorporate experiences beyond the “imagined community” of one particular social group. This exchange of memories provides an opportunity to challenge definitions of national memory that rest on the perpetuation of the polarity between self and other and on the foundational myths of its collective memory.

However, different versions of the past necessitate a critical examination of the “truth claims” they make and encourage a mutually interrogative relationship between historiography and art. In the second section of Part One, I have, therefore, addressed the implication of this premise for the different ways in which literature can function as a memorial medium. The traumatic events of the Second World War and Holocaust have engendered an ethics of remembering which affects the different genres of recollective literature, ranging from testimonials to the gradual mediation of events in various forms of fiction. Based on the ethical postulates formulated by Margalit, LaCapra, Young, and A. Assmann in relation to trauma and postmemory, I have mapped out the critical context within which the works of Bielenberg, Stuart and Hamilton will be considered and highlighted potential areas of conflict.

The third section of Part One complements and completes this theoretical setting with the further dimension of an imagological perspective which conceives of national character and national stereotypes as constructs created in, and disseminated through, literature. Arguing that subject positions must be examined not only in the recollection of

historical events, but also in the representation of Irish self and German other, I have delineated the construction and function of self- and hetero-images as a literary trope in an Irish-German context. In the process, I revealed some of the underlying structures that inform the German self-image and gaze on Ireland – its romantic projections and desire for alternatives, especially after the Second World War – on one hand, and the affirmation the Irish self-image seeks by observing Germany, on the other. This broad outline of Irish-German literary relations has prepared the ground for an analysis of how Bielenberg, Stuart and Hamilton engage with established notions of self and other in their texts.

**PART II: "... AND MEET THE TIME AS IT SEEKS US"¹¹⁶: MEMORY, HISTORY
AND THE OTHER IN THE WORKS OF CHRISTABEL BIELENBERG, FRANCIS**

STUART AND HUGO HAMILTON

In an interview with Janet Watts of *The Observer* about the fall of the Berlin Wall, Christabel Bielenberg noted a certain similarity between the contemporaneous elation over the demise of the GDR and the euphoria she had witnessed at the end of the Second World War when the vision of homecoming had seemed tangibly close. "It was a time when the concept of Home took on almost transcendental qualities," she remembers in her second memoir, *The Road Ahead* (58). Popular songs in German, English, and French had all expressed that universal longing. By historical analogy, she cautiously inferred that the promise of this surprising turn in history in November 1989 would not be easily kept either:

No home-coming could have reached the heights that we had in our minds. And one wonders if it will be the same with this cry of freedom. That enormous word! Will it live up to what they expect? (Watts 35)

Earlier in that decisive month, just one day after the German-German border fell, Hugo Hamilton wrote an article for *The Irish Times* in which he posed a similar question: "What is this freedom the silent herds want so badly?" (1989: 6). In his estimation, the mythical term "freedom" boiled down to purely materialistic desires in most East Germans (in which, he conceded, they resembled their Western contemporaries). His negative assessment was shared by Francis Stuart, whom Hamilton first met at a literary festival in a former part of East Berlin in autumn 1991. As Hamilton recalls, "[Stuart] appeared to

¹¹⁶ Austrian writer Stefan Zweig chose this epigraph from Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* (Act IV, Scene 3) for his autobiography, *Die Welt von Gestern* (*The World of Yesterday*), written in exile and published posthumously in 1944. Rejected by wartime Europe and too tired for "another wholly new beginning", he ended his life in Brazil in 1942, having submitted a day earlier the manuscript of his *Erinnerungen eines Europäers* ("Memories of a European"), as the book is subtitled in German. Zweig's epigraph epitomises the challenge of representing the past in light of a changed personality and environment and the importance of a receptive audience.

acknowledge with mute satisfaction that history was just starting over again” (Introduction *POC*: 1). Temporarily returned to the city which had offered them shelter when they sought to escape their life in Ireland – Stuart in 1940, Hamilton in the mid-1970s – both writers were judging contemporary events in view of a far larger historical spectrum, based on personal and mediated memories of the Second World War. Yet unlike Bielenberg, who had emphasised the liberating and unifying potential of both historical events, the two men, sitting “in armchairs only recently vacated by the GDR leadership and *Stasi* personnel, drinking tea from the cups they left behind” (*POC* 1), arrived at a different understanding of the correlation between past and present. Just as “the sweet air of victory” after 1945 had conditioned a “stench of defeat” (*POC* 2) that clung to both of them in the postwar years because of their connections with Germany, so they now felt they “were bearing witness to the very same high-moral stance of the capitalist triumph over communism at the end of the Cold War” (*POC* 3).

In Part Two of this thesis I shall examine the three writers’ responses to the German past and their meditation on its implications for the Irish present, outlining the ways in which their works are not just examples of literature as a memorial medium, but also sites of multidirectional memory. They not only engage with the past and the perception of the German other as an essential reflection – or necessary “elsewhere” – that underwrites their self-image, but are simultaneously deeply embedded in, and responsive to, the historical and cultural developments at the time of writing. In the following three chapters, I propose to analyse the different approaches they proffer to building bridges between German and Irish cultural memory, thereby initiating a recontextualisation of Irish writing within a European exchange of memories.

1. Christabel Bielenberg

Despite their popularity with readers, Christabel Bielenberg's two memoirs, *The Past Is Myself* and *The Road Ahead*, have received only scant critical attention, amounting to two essays by Elaine Martin, published in 1993 and 1995 respectively. Martin included Bielenberg in her analysis of German women's autobiographical writing in light of the Third Reich. She based her study on *The Past Is Myself* and a private interview she conducted with the writer at her home near Tullow on 1 June 1988. In this unpublished interview, Martin asked many probing questions on issues that had remained unclear or unaccounted for in the first memoir, questions that had never surfaced in previous interviews and reviews (nor would they in later ones). Whereas media coverage of Bielenberg's works has been broad over the years, it has also been rather one-sided and prone to reproducing an astounding number of inaccuracies.¹¹⁷ A brief outline of the writer's life and legacy at the beginning of this chapter will, therefore, provide helpful background information for the discussion of her works. The following introduction consolidates available sources – ranging from newspaper articles in German and English,

¹¹⁷ Perhaps the most striking example is the ill-conceived description of the TV series *Christabel*, which had inadvertently been advertised in *The Observer* as “the story of an Irish woman who married a Nazi during the Second World War” (Brooks 3). Less offensive, but indicative all the same of the kind of superficial reading her first memoir, in particular, has been subjected to by some journalists and reviewers, is the claim by Neal Ascherson in his review of 1968 that her husband, Peter Bielenberg, “was one of the group around the July plot” (Ascherson 25). This view, although not borne out by the memoir itself, has since been frequently repeated as a fact in many over-simplified summaries. Thus, Janet Watts maintains in her article from 1989 that Peter “was arrested for complicity in the plot to kill Hitler led by his friend Adam von Trott on 20 July 1944” (Watts 35, emphasis added; for similar statements see Maher A4, Donovan 13 or Kevin Myers's exultant eulogy in *The Irish Times*, 7 November 2003). Other errors of fact are reproduced in Fergus Pyle's 1982 article in *The Irish Times* which claims the Bielenbergs moved to Ireland in 1946 (they moved in 1948). Poor attention to detail is also apparent in Gillespie's article, where the Bielenbergs are deprived of one of their three sons. In Monohan's article, the couple only wedded in the late 1930s (they married on 29 September 1934), in Browne's review of *The Road Ahead*, she stipulates Christabel only moved to the Black Forest with her children after her husband was arrested in August 1944 (they moved there in autumn 1943). Mulcahy's 1982 article misdates the publication of *The Past Is Myself* to 1975 and maintains Bielenberg was born in Co. Clare (she was born in London). Grove, in turn, moved the law firm of Peter's father from Hamburg to Berlin, while Hand alleges the entire Bielenberg family lived in Graudenz when in fact only Peter did. Also, in Hand's interview with Peter, the Bielenbergs' neighbour Langbehn becomes “Labeun”. Finally, in Peter's obituary in *The Independent*, a wrong birthday is initially given (the correct one appearing at the end of the article), and earlier, in Donovan's aforementioned article, she wrongly claims the couple were the same age (Christabel was two years older than her husband).

audio interviews collected, and in one case conducted, by the Imperial War Museum, to the author's literary estate (chapter 1.2), which has been accessed and exploited for the first time. In the interest of accuracy and completeness, the papers related to Bielenberg in the Chatto & Windus collection held in Reading University Library's Archive of British Publishing and Printing have also been consulted at the Random House Library and Archives in Rushden, Northamptonshire. Following this outline, chapter 1.3 clarifies the circumstances in which Bielenberg's memoirs were written and received and examines their emergence in the context of eye-witness recollections of traumatic events as addressed in Part I. Chapters 1.4 and 1.5 elaborate on the discussion of Bielenberg's memoirs as media of recollection by analysing her attempts to navigate between the positions of engaged witness, war victim and outside observer. Her representation of a German hetero-image and her formulation of a hybrid Anglo-Irish self-image with hindsight form part of this evaluation which seeks to explore her ambivalent self-image. Finally, the last chapter considers her motivation to bear witness decades later from the vantage point of a specifically Irish historical context and shows how the author uses her experience of the past as a platform for assessing and commenting on topical historical developments in her life.

1.1. Biographical Outline

Christabel Mary, eldest daughter of Christabel Rose Harmsworth and Lieutenant Colonel Percy Collingwood Burton, was born in Totteridge, Hertfordshire, on 18 June 1909. Both her parents' families originally hailed from Ireland: the Burtons had been settled in Buncraggy, County Clare, since 1611 (cf. *RA* 135, also Frost). To the young Christabel visiting on summer holidays, her Anglo-Irish relatives seemed somewhat isolated and quaint in their attempts at "[p]utting up a show, keeping up the side" (cf. *RA* 137). Her mother's family, on the other hand, had left Dublin "in the poor days", in fear of "Fenian

rioting” (abandoned chapter on her mother for *RA*, now included in the Appendix to the 2011 omnibus edition), for London, where the two eldest brothers, Alfred and Harold, later made their fortunes in the media. Christabel was the second of four children and grew up in relative comfort, first in Totteridge, then in Great Nast Hyde, Hatfield, in a home which she described as upper middle class and not “at all well off” (Manu 1). This understatement is instantly given the lie by her mentioning, *en passant*, the staple features of a life which included several retainers, gardeners, a chauffeur, nannies and governesses, education at boarding school, her presentation as a debutante in London and at Court, a finishing year in Paris “at incredible expense” (Manu 2: 2), a car and trust fund to ensure her independence from the age of seventeen onwards (cf. Martin 1988: 30f.), and, in 1931, the liberty of studying singing in Hamburg under Alma Schadow, teacher to the famous sopranos Lotte Lehmann and Elisabeth Schumann.¹¹⁸ This privileged upbringing instilled in her an imperturbable sense of security and confidence which she found lacking in most of her German middle class peers who, under the strain of a lost World War and several economic crises, had been left feeling the perennial victims of developments quite outside their control (cf. *PIM* 20).

After two consecutive stays with impoverished middle-class German families in Hamburg, Christabel took up lodgings in the well-to-do Reinbek suburb where she met her future husband, Peter Bielenberg, at a ball in the spring of 1932 (Manu 3). The son of a lawyer, Peter was destined to take over the law practice for which his father “had sacrificed his health in the effort to hand [it] over to him (...) flourishing” (Manu 4). Briefly, however, the young couple entertained hopes of him entering the diplomatic service instead – and Christabel already fancied herself in the role of the German ambassador’s singing wife (Manu 4). Their marriage in London on 29 September 1934 (Anon., *The*

¹¹⁸ Bielenberg does not mention in *The Past Is Myself* that she was chaperoned by an aunt during her stay in Hamburg, a detail she only disclosed in an interview for the Imperial War Museum in 1995, thus creating an impression of perhaps rather more independence and liberalism than her parents and her class background permitted.

Times, 1 October 1934: 17) put paid to this dream, as it automatically excluded Peter from the diplomatic corps.¹¹⁹ At the same time, it required Christabel to relinquish her British passport for a German one, as her nationality was now determined by her husband's.¹²⁰ Peter's temporary traineeship at the German Embassy in London – one of the prescribed stations in his three-year long training before being called to the bar – enabled the couple to live in England again in 1935 and to “have things two ways” (Manu 5), at least until the birth of their first son, Nicholas, in August.

When Christabel returned to live permanently in Hamburg that autumn, the situation in Germany had deteriorated noticeably. Peter's refusal to swear an oath of allegiance to Hitler and his open aversion to the Nazis had given him a bad track record and placed his final exams in jeopardy. In order to improve his patriotic credentials, he volunteered for the Air Force (cf. Bulloch & Bielenberg 38f.). However, once he had qualified as a lawyer, Peter's willingness to pursue his career in a *de facto* rogue state diminished, and the couple began to consider emigration. Their decision ultimately fell on Ireland, not least because they hoped the economic crisis there would make buying a farm affordable (cf. *PIM* 35). In 1938, just as Christabel had begun scouting for a suitable farm, their charismatic friend, Adam von Trott zu Solz,¹²¹ returned from travels in China and the

¹¹⁹ The reason for this, as Bielenberg humorously explains in an earlier draft of *The Past Is Myself*, went back to “some English woman married to a German diplomat during the 1914-1918 war [who] had had a high old time passing on state secrets to the British” (Manu 4). Her indiscretion had ensured that “there was not much future in the German diplomatic service for one, however gifted, should he happen to be possessed of an English wife” (ibid.). These rules must have been subject to revisions, for Peter was able to join the Foreign Office at the beginning of the war, and Bielenberg mentions in her memoir that Botho von Wussow, a civil servant in the Foreign Office, and his English wife Mary were despatched to the German embassy in Portugal after Mary's gaffe in front of the wife of a high-ranking Nazi (cf. “A Dangerous Tea Party”).

¹²⁰ Miriam Rürup's research shows that “[u]ntil far into the twentieth century – in international law until 1957 – a woman's nationality was based on ‘derivative citizenship.’ That is, her citizenship depended on who she ‘belonged to,’ be it her father in her country of origin or her husband of a different nationality” (119). Following Germany's defeat, the Allies revoked the laws passed by the Nazi legislators (Gesetz des Alliierten Kontrollrats Nr. 1, betr. Aufhebung von NS-Gesetzen, 20 September 1945), among them those governing German nationality and citizenship, as they had been devised to discriminate against certain groups of the population. The suspension of these laws, which also decreed that a wife's nationality was determined by her husband's, must have left Bielenberg free to apply for British citizenship upon her return in late 1945 despite her marriage to a German.

¹²¹ Although not a leading figure among those involved in the July 1944 plot, von Trott's life is considered to be the best documented and researched of German resisters in English (cf. Daniel 409). A Rhodes scholar in

United States. He persuaded Peter to stay in Germany and to become involved in the civilian opposition which was plotting to put Hitler out of power with the help of some army generals (*PIM* 38). When the Bielenbergs eventually left Hamburg in February 1939, it was therefore not for Ireland but for Berlin, where Peter worked in the Department of Trade and Industry and later briefly served on the England Committee of the Foreign Office (*PIM* 56).

Adam sought to secure support for the German opposition in England twice that summer, using his diplomatic cover for meetings with Stafford Cripps, Lord Halifax and even Chamberlain in order to impress upon them the utmost importance of stopping Hitler from going to war and of giving the German opposition more time to depose him (cf. *PIM* 45, Daniel 417f., Bulloch & Bielenberg 47f.). As a third visit to England would have exposed him to too much scrutiny from the German authorities, Peter took his place in mid-August 1939, just two weeks before his own mobilisation, and travelled to London with a brief of promoting the idea of sending a last-minute royal envoy to Hitler (cf. Bulloch & Bielenberg 49f.). He teamed up with Adam's friend, David Astor, yet their efforts as "amateur diplomats" (Daniel 418) remained unsuccessful.¹²² After the outbreak of war, the opposition's readiness to stage a *coup d'état* faltered, especially among those

Oxford between 1931 and 1933, he had met and impressed many eminent English scholars and personalities (A. L. Rowse, Isaiah Berlin, Christopher Hill, David Astor, Sheila Grant Duff, Maurice Bowra among others), and even leading politicians (Lord Halifax, Neville Chamberlain and Sir Richard Stafford Cripps). His decision to return to Nazi Germany at the end of his scholarship in order to support "the other Germany" baffled many of his English friends, and his later attempts to put out "peace feelers" and to influence the Allies' position favourably to the inner opposition against Hitler met with incomprehension and suspicion on their side. Their inability to distinguish between his patriotic loyalty to his country and the nationalist attitude of the Nazis, Silvia Daniel argues, directly translated into his tarnished reputation in Britain beyond his death. Daniel's compelling study of decades of often contentious scholarship on Adam von Trott provides an authoritative account. It combines her reading of secondary material with a careful analysis of archival sources from the von Trott Estate in the German Federal Archive, the Christopher Sykes Estate in Georgetown University, the Isaiah Berlin Estate in the Bodleian Library, various correspondences held by Balliol College, and the relevant records in diplomatic archives in England and Germany as well as the FBI's file on von Trott in the United States.

¹²² Christabel's own explanation for Peter's failure to meet anybody during his risky mission in August is one of bad timing, as she believes the grouse shooting season had lured anybody of consequence away from London (cf. *PIM* 47). In fact, national sports had nothing to do with it, for, as Sykes reveals, Lord Halifax, whom David Astor had written to upon Peter's arrival, was in the Foreign Office at the time, but apparently unwilling to hear any more about sending a special envoy to Hitler (cf. Sykes 280f.).

involved in the military. Nevertheless, Adam undertook another attempt to alert the British and the Americans of Hitler's intentions to break with Stalin and to wage a world war. While participating in a conference at the Institute of Pacific Relations in the United States in late 1939, early 1940, he drafted a memorandum of the German opposition with the help of John Wheeler-Bennett, who was to convey it to President Roosevelt and to Lord Lothian (cf. Daniel 419f., *PIM* 74). In Adam's absence, Peter liaised with different members of their loose resistance network in Berlin (cf. Bulloch & Bielenberg 53ff.).¹²³ The Bielenbergs had placed great hopes in this new demarche, but when no reaction came from abroad and the German generals failed to act after Hitler declared war on Russia, Peter grew disillusioned with the resistance (cf. Bulloch & Bielenberg 65). As his wife pointed out much later, he was not an idealist like Adam but rather a practical, positive person who had wanted to effect a change (cf. Martin 1988: 18). Following a gaffe in front of an influential Nazi superior, Martin Luther, he left the Foreign Office for a managerial position with a subsidiary of Unilever in a fish processing plant in Bodö, Norway (cf. Bulloch & Bielenberg 58). In 1943, his Berlin neighbour Carl Langbehn, a well-connected lawyer involved with the resistance circles, secured him a job in an aircraft repair plant of the Messerschmitt AG in Graudenz, West Prussia, which effectively spared him from active service throughout the war (cf. *idem* 62).

In the meantime, Christabel and her two sons (a second son, John, had been born in 1937) tried to temporarily escape the air raids over Berlin by spending the summer of 1941 in Austria at the Grundlsee. A third son, Christopher, was born in Berlin in 1942, and the following summer, she and her three children moved permanently to the Black Forest where they at first took up lodgings with peasants near Rohrbach, and later moved into the

¹²³ This loose group was later named Kreisau Circle (*Kreisauer Kreis*) after Count Helmuth von Moltke's estate in Kreisau, where its members occasionally met.

local inn.¹²⁴ Christabel intermittently fled rural life to check on their home in Berlin-Dahlem and to visit friends in the capital or to meet Peter. The news of the failed bomb plot on 20 July 1944 reached her over the radio in the “Adler” inn. Although she soon heard of Adam’s arrest (as well as the arrest of other acquaintances), she only received a brief note from Peter on 8 August and otherwise remained without news for weeks, until a friend notified her of his arrest at the beginning of September (cf. diary entry for 2 September 1944, Appendix 1.1). As it would emerge later, Peter’s secretary had denounced him to the Gestapo after the failed plot, remembering a telex from Adam von Trott which had arrived on 16 July, asking Peter to come to Berlin at his earliest convenience. Peter, who had not been able to leave his post before 28 July, had duly notified Adam of his coming. Adam was arrested three days before his arrival. Through a secretary in the Foreign Office, Peter learned the time and route of the car that brought Adam to interrogations in the Gestapo headquarters each day and resolved to free his friend at gunpoint.¹²⁵ His plan was to return to Graudenz, arm himself with machine guns from his company’s arsenal, shoot Adam free, and then help him hide out with Polish partisans in a marshland near Graudenz. However, Peter was himself arrested directly after his return from Berlin on 6 August before he could put his plan into action (cf. Bulloch & Bielenberg 68f.).

Upon hearing of Peter’s arrest, Christabel resolved to do everything in her power to save her husband and travelled to Munich to solicit the help of his employer, Friedrich Wilhelm Seiler, owner of the private bank Seiler & Co. and shareholder in the

¹²⁴ Christabel had a friend in nearby Castle Wilflingen, Lady Camilla Acheson, daughter of the fifth Earl of Gosford. Her husband, Dölt Schenk von Stauffenberg, was a cousin of Claus Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg who carried out the bomb attack on Hitler on 20 July 1944. Christabel and her sons had spent Christmas in Castle Grüningen, Riedlingen, in 1942 (see Red Cross note posted on 20 November 1942 among her papers), and in June 1943 Christabel received an invitation to spend Christmas in nearby Wilflingen (Bielenberg’s estate, letter to Elsa von Rosen from 12 June 1943).

¹²⁵ Missie Vassiltchikov, who was also employed in the Foreign Office and a friend of Adam’s, recorded Peter’s plan in her diary on 3 August 1944 (cf. 195). The secretary who told Peter of the specifics of Adam’s interrogations was Princess Loremarie Schönburg, a friend of Vassiltchikov, who had wangled her way into Adam’s department, attracted by the promise of conspiracy and action (ibid.).

Messerschmitt AG. The latter, however, informed her that his priority was to help several other associates who also had been arrested rather than the close friend of a hanged traitor (cf. *PIM* 165). The revelation of Adam's execution convinced Christabel of the urgency in Peter's case, who, given his bad relationship with the local Gestapo, was in danger of being casually murdered in their Graudenz prison. She travelled on to Berlin in order to persuade a well-connected friend in the Cavalry SS, the guileless von Brösigke, to expedite Peter's transfer to a prison in the capital (cf. *PIM* 178). Her mission succeeded and on Christmas 1944 she returned to Berlin to visit Peter in nearby Ravensbrück concentration camp and to see his interrogator, Inspector Lange. During their short encounter, Peter managed to slip her a small cigarette box containing a minute list with his rehearsed answers during interrogations. These she repeated in her interview with Lange, insisting that she and her husband had been close friends with Adam but otherwise completely politically naïve. She also convinced him that her family in England was powerful enough to guarantee him immunity after the war in exchange for his cooperation. In late February 1945, Peter was released from the concentration camp, and, although assigned to a punishment squad at the front, a glitch in the administration saw him issued with a permit to travel home first. He survived the remaining weeks of the war by hiding out in the forest around Rohrbach, aided by his family and reliable villagers (cf. Bulloch & Bielenberg 76).

Following liberation by the French, the Bielenbergs moved to Frankfurt in the American zone in July 1945 where Peter found work in the Chamber of Commerce and the de-Nazification programme. In November, Christabel and her three sons were repatriated by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and reunited with her family in Codicote, Hertfordshire. She applied for a visa to Ireland for her family upon arrival, but then learned of the possibility that Peter may, in fact, join them in England (cf.

letters to Peter from 10 and 24 January 1946).¹²⁶ However, as her husband was only allowed to follow in October 1946, Christabel returned to Germany in the spring of that year as a special correspondent for *The Observer*. The newspaper, which Waldorf Astor had purchased from her uncle, Lord Northcliffe, in 1911, had been under the management of his son, David, since 1941. David Astor pursued an anti-fascist, pro-Jewish course and included among his staff several German refugee writers, for example Sebastian Haffner and Arthur Koestler (cf. Cesarani 43). Her only traceable article made the newspaper's front page on 19 May 1946. It revealed the mistreatment of German POWs in British camps in Belgium and warned about the danger to the Allies' claim to moral superiority over the defeated German population if they were found to dehumanise their prisoners in similar ways to the Nazis (cf. RA 90f., A Special Correspondent, *The Observer*, 19 May 1946: 1).¹²⁷ In October 1946, she became a British citizen again, this time by naturalisation.

¹²⁶ Bielenberg mentions in her later letter to Sir Eady from 5 June 1946 that she had learned through a German acquaintance in London of the "possibility of near relations coming from Germany to [England] should they be destitute." Prior to that, the Irish official reply to her enquiry about visas for the Bielenberg family via Senator Joseph Johnston had been positive, as a letter dated 19 January 1946 from Gerald Boland, Minister for Justice, shows (cf. author's Estate).

¹²⁷ Unfortunately, an attempt to identify Bielenberg as the indisputable author of this article submitted by "A Special Correspondent" was unsuccessful. Archivist Mariam Yamin of Guardian News & Media explained that, due to the number of changes in ownership over the years, the *Observer* archives were rather patchy (email from 15 July 2010). Nonetheless, I would argue that the content of this article tallies exactly with Bielenberg's brief as described in *The Road Ahead* (90f., 94f.) and that it is almost certainly the one article she mentions writing. In the article from 19 May 1946, the correspondent mentions that "[r]ecently in Germany I met several men released from these camps. All told the same story of starvation diet, disease and harsh treatment." In her second memoir, Bielenberg recounts a meeting with Dölt von Stauffenberg, husband of her friend Lady Camilla Acheson, who had just been released from a British POW camp in Belgium (cf. RA 90). Whereas he had been treated well in captivity in England, the treatment in the Belgian transit camp had been very harsh and the prisoners were robbed of their few belongings, for example, their watches, by their British guards. His account horrified Bielenberg, and she immediately informed her newspaper who gave her the go-ahead for her story, providing her also with the respective numbers and locations of these camps and the contact details of a British officer who was openly critical of the conditions in the camps (cf. RA 90f.). All these details – the reference to one prisoner's testimony which explicitly mentions stolen watches, the camp numbers and locations in Belgium, and the criticism of British officers – are included in the *Observer* article and make it highly likely that it was written by Bielenberg. In her memoir, she then mentions that the only blank left for her to fill in was to obtain a statement from the War Camps Commission in Berlin before her article would appear on the newspaper's front page the following Sunday. A spokesman was indeed given room at the end of the article to present the position of the War Office on these allegations and the article from 19 May was indeed published on a Sunday and on the title page. However, so was a follow-up article from 26 May 1946. This article, too, covers the situation of German internees and includes a reply from the authorities at the end, but, unlike the earlier article, it offers more general background information on conditions in internment camps in *Germany* (and not in British transit camps in Belgium).

As Peter hated being “an underdog” in England (IWM interview with Christabel from 1995, also stated in interview with Watts 35) and Christabel abhorred the thought of living in postwar Germany, the couple reactivated their plan of farming in Ireland, which had been on the cards again after the war had ended (cf. letter to her parents from 1 October 1945¹²⁸). In 1948, they found an affordable, if dilapidated, “gentleman’s residence” near Tullow. They completed the purchase in February 1949 and made a new home for their family at Munny House (RA 167). This home, in turn, they then opened to many guests from abroad, among them children whose fathers had been executed for their involvement in the German opposition.¹²⁹ While Peter was rapidly acquiring the expertise needed to run their farm successfully, Christabel developed an interest in the history of her ancestors, local folklore, and Irish politics. Eventually, she took on Irish citizenship (RA 197). Her involvement in Irish current affairs is evidenced by numerous letters to the editors of *The Irish Times* and the *Irish Independent* over the years¹³⁰ as much as by her attempt to promote the cause of the Civil Rights Movement beyond Ireland’s shores (cf. her article for *Die Zeit*, 22 August 1969). In many of her contributions, she used her experience of Nazi Germany as a seismograph to record and interpret contemporary developments.

The second article also explains why these camps are deemed necessary within the context of the “de-Nazification” process of the German population. Whereas the first article sounds the alarm and ends by proposing a thorough investigation into the mistreatment of POWs in British camps, the second article gives an overview of the situation and management of camps for mainly political internees and suspects. Bielenberg mentions that she would still occasionally travel to Germany in 1948 to assist *The Observer’s* main correspondent there, the German *émigré* Sebastian Haffner (cf. RA 151), but the only article she mentions typing up and telexing to London, with some difficulty and not without the aid of more experienced colleagues in the Press Camp (cf. RA 97), deals with the mistreatment of POWs in British camps outside Germany.

¹²⁸ A later letter to Peter from 13 December 1945 voices her concern that the sudden popularity of Irish property with other British buyers was going to drive up the as yet moderate prices beyond what they could afford.

¹²⁹ Through David Astor’s intervention, they also took in the children of Tcheledi Khama from Botswana, Leapeetswe and Sekgoma, who became their “honorary sons” (RA 212).

¹³⁰ In these letters, Bielenberg appealed on behalf of Hungarian refugees, voiced criticism of censorship and abortion laws, cautioned against Emergency Legislation and cover-ups in the press, argued for the better protection of Dublin’s monuments and advocated the development of a suitable infrastructure for tourism.

In the late 1950s, a different historical project demanded her attention, namely the preparations for a more sympathetic and better-informed *vita* of Adam von Trott. The “Trott committee’s” first meeting took place in Berlin in November 1961 (cf. Daniel 432). Apart from the deceased’s widow, Clarita von Trott zu Solz, the Bielenbergs, David Astor, and several other well-appointed friends were present. Christabel summarised the group’s principal aim two years later in a letter to fellow committee member, historian Hans Rothfels, as “to produce in the truest possible form a lasting picture of Adam” (letter from 12 July 1963 among her papers). This was considered necessary in order to correct the damaging portrayal in Wheeler-Bennett’s 1953 study, *The Nemesis of Power*¹³¹, and in a harmful campaign in the British press in 1956, which had cast doubt on Adam’s missions abroad just before and during the war (cf. Daniel 432).¹³² The interviews conducted by Bielenberg and by Rothfels’s assistant, together with the private papers gathered and ordered by von Trott’s widow, were eventually made available to Christopher Sykes who commenced work on the biography in October 1963 (cf. Bielenberg’s letter to Rothfels, 12 July 1963).¹³³ Sykes, though not acquainted with von Trott, had been chosen for his

¹³¹ In a report written in 1943 for the Political Warfare Executive, entitled “Adam von Trott and Peace Feelers”, Wheeler-Bennett revised his previously supportive position and rejected cooperation with von Trott, who he now claimed was a nationalist (cf. Daniel 421).

¹³² On 27 May 1956, the publication of the sixth volume of *Documents on German Foreign Policy* contained a report by von Trott submitted to Hitler about meetings with Lord Halifax and Prime Minister Chamberlain in Cliveden in June 1939. Unofficially, von Trott had sought to secure the support of English politicians for the German opposition, which, he hoped, would accomplish a *coup d’état* if only war could be averted for a little longer. The carefully worded “official” version of his trip to England, however, was intended to persuade Hitler that the British would not accept an attack on Poland. According to Bielenberg, the document was intercepted by von Ribbentrop who purposefully deceived Hitler about England’s readiness to declare war on Germany should it invade Poland (cf. Bielenberg’s letter to the editor of *The Manchester Guardian*, 7 June 1956: 8, also Sykes 257). On 28 May 1956, the “discovery” of von Trott’s report received surprisingly wide media coverage in Britain and served as a basis for an attack on him and on all those who had associated with him, chief among them David Astor’s parents, Lord Waldorf and Lady Nancy Astor (cf. Daniel 427f.). This character assassination, in turn, spurred von Trott’s friends to rise to his defence and to reveal the true nature of his sustained, if thwarted, endeavours to create contact between the German opposition and the Allies.

¹³³ Sykes’s work, Daniel suggests, was hampered by his insufficient command of German which made access to sources and research on the resistance in German rather difficult. As a result, he remained chiefly influenced by British studies in the tradition of Wheeler-Bennett (cf. Daniel 434). Sykes, moreover, found himself in the unenviable position of being dependent on the Trott committee for access to privileged information, while trying to maintain an independent attitude towards his subject.

experience as a biographer, yet his ambivalent portrayal in *Troubled Loyalty* failed to satisfy the expectations of those who had commissioned him.¹³⁴

As chapter 1.3 will show, her interviews with Adam's former friends and contemporaries in England and elsewhere convinced Bielenberg of the need to explain life in a dictatorship to all those who had not experienced it. At the same time, she felt that the cover-up approach taken by many in West Germany after the war likewise needed to be confronted with the facts of their recent history (cf. speech dated 15 July 1988). Her personal account of life in Nazi Germany, *The Past Is Myself*, was eventually published in 1968. The book won the Richard Hillary Memorial Prize (cf. Mullane 8), a small but particularly sweet irony considering Bielenberg's lack of enthusiasm for borrowing Hillary's *The Last Enemy* from von Trott at their last meeting in spring 1944. To her relief, she later discovered she had pocketed a book with a more uplifting quote for a title by mistake: Eric Knight's *This Above All* (cf. *PIM* 148).¹³⁵ Although *The Past Is Myself* faced some difficulties in 1969 – copies were temporarily withdrawn from circulation to avoid libel suits while a third impression was prepared that omitted contentious references – and copies, by Bielenberg's account, remained hard to come by throughout the 1970s, when the book eventually found a publisher willing to reissue the memoir in paperback in 1983, its impact proved wide and lasting.¹³⁶ Boosted by the publicity surrounding Dennis Potter's

¹³⁴ Whereas some members of the committee terminated all cooperation with him before the work's completion, Bielenberg expressed her disappointment in more moderate terms and pointed out the most glaring errors in his manuscript before it went to print (cf. undated draft letter to Sykes in Bielenberg's papers in response to receiving his manuscript; also cf. Daniel 435).

¹³⁵ Bielenberg misattributed the title to Frank Knight, a mistake the American copy editor noticed, but which was not changed in later English paperback editions (cf. letter from Mrs Melville E. Stone – literary agent and editor Naomi Burton Stone, a cousin of Bielenberg's – to Evan Thomas from 6 June 1970, Reading University Archive, CW224/14/2).

¹³⁶ By September 1979, *The Past Is Myself* had sold 7,600 copies according to publisher Norah Smallwood of Chatto & Windus (cf. her letter to Bielenberg from 14 September, CW376/6), but her publisher's attempts to sell the rights for a paperback edition in the UK had failed (cf. numerous rejections from publishing houses collected in CW224/14/1 and CW376/6). Correspondence between the author, Smallwood, and Ian Parsons's successor in Chatto & Windus, Hugo Brunner, shows that Bielenberg was determined to bring her book back to life and at the same time rid herself of her literary agent. To this end, she bought up the last 97 copies of her book in hardback in July 1981. Once it had gone out of print, the copyright reverted back to her and left her free to negotiate a paperback edition (cf. note and receipt from Iris Taylor, Royalty Manager, from 15 July 1981, Reading University Library, CW376/6). Poolbeg Press in Dublin expressed an interest, and, in the

dramatisation of her memoir for the BBC, her book sold 350,000 copies and secured her, as one of only three Irish writers, a place among the top 100 paperbacks sold in the United Kingdom in 1988 (Tóibín 1989: 2 and Gardner 18). In 1995, Bielenberg came in 33rd place in a ranking of “100 Women who Shook the World”, published in *The Observer* on Christmas Eve, and *The Past Is Myself* remains a point of reference for many English-language works on various aspects of life in Nazi Germany.¹³⁷

A second memoir, *The Road Ahead*, covering the intervening years between her liberation and her seventieth birthday, appeared more than twenty years later, on the author’s 83rd birthday in 1992.¹³⁸ The reconciliatory impulse which characterises this work is also evident in Bielenberg’s activities over the decades, for example, in her participation in the Peace People Movement in the 1970s. Likewise, it determined her campaigning on behalf of the descendants of those executed for their part in the German resistance (cf. *RA* 66f.). To this end, she helped David Astor and Diana Hopkinson set up The July 20 Memorial Fund on the premises of *The Observer* in Tudor Street, which operated under the patronage of Lady Cripps and the Bishop of Chichester, George Bell.¹³⁹ Bielenberg was

end, it was the Ward River Press which published the memoir in 1982 in paperback. It was reissued by Corgi in 1984.

¹³⁷ An excerpt from her first memoir was later included in Sayre P. Sheldon’s anthology *Her War Story* (Urquhart 32). Bielenberg’s memoir was also adapted for the Heinemann Educational History Eyewitness Series to support teaching in the UK and Ireland, although seemingly without her knowledge (cf. her letter to her contact in Bantam Press dated 29 July 1996, on file at Random House Library and Archive, Bielenberg, Christabel – *The Road Ahead*). It remains, moreover, a point of reference in many studies of life in Nazi Germany, for example, in Fabrice d’Almeide’s *High Society and the Third Reich* (2008), in Mark Rawlinson’s *British Writing on the Second World War* (2000), and in Adam Piette’s *Imagination at War* (1995). Miranda Seymour has also considered Bielenberg’s experience in the course of carrying out research for her forthcoming publication on British-German relations, *The Pity of War*.

¹³⁸ Although only published in June 1992, Bielenberg apparently had begun writing her second memoir even prior to her participation in Ireland’s first National Writers Workshop in Galway in January 1976. Poet and lecturer Gerald Dawe was a fellow participant in that workshop and recalls her reading out chapters from the manuscript (Dawe 2001: 17). He dedicated a commemorative lecture to her, given in Trinity College, Dublin, on 24 April 2010.

¹³⁹ The sequence of events is somewhat confusing in *The Road Ahead*, for although it would appear that Astor and Bielenberg initiated the fund directly after her return to London in the winter of 1945/46, a letter appealing for the support of their countrymen and -women for The July 20 Memorial Fund, signed by Isobel Cripps, the Bishop of Chichester and Lionel Curtis, appeared in *The Manchester Guardian* only on 20 March 1947. It was published in *The Times* the next day and in the *New Statesman and Nation* on the 22nd (see also Settle 7). A large volume of correspondence among Bielenberg’s papers also suggests that she was heavily involved only from spring 1947 onwards, both with writing to people who had made donations and to the German families who received these.

also a frequent participant in the Anglo-German Königswinter conferences (cf. Press Release of the German Embassy from 2 March 1987 among Bielenberg's papers) and her efforts to, as she wrote, "try to find a way of diffusing the postwar atmosphere of hatred and mistrust between Britain and Germany" (RA 71) in time earned her the Commanders' Cross of the Order of Merit from the Federal Republic of Germany. It was awarded by President Richard von Weizsäcker on 10 December 1986 and presented to her in Dublin on 4 February 1987.¹⁴⁰ A gold medal of merit from the European Parliament followed on 4 September 1993. Christabel died on 2 November 2003, two years after her husband Peter.

1.2. Literary Estate

In the course of writing this thesis, I was able to access and to make extensive use of completely new material connected to Bielenberg's writing on, and engagement with, the Second World War. It forms part of her literary estate which is located in four filing cabinets at Munny House, near Tullow in County Carlow, where her eldest son, Nicholas, now lives. The contents of these cabinets are roughly ordered by drawer into relevant categories (drafts and manuscripts, correspondence, material on the German resistance, Peace People movement, speeches, and so on). Three of these filing cabinets were originally housed in the basement and some of their contents had been slightly damaged by flooding during the winter of 2009/2010. On the whole, however, the author's papers were in good condition and showed only minor signs of foxing and wear and tear. All four filing cabinets were moved into two different rooms on the top floor on 10 July 2010, the day of my first visit, where I could consult and photograph relevant material.

The first filing cabinet,¹⁴¹ the contents of which are most pertinent to Bielenberg's writing, contains the following documents: handwritten chapters from her two memoirs;

¹⁴⁰ Susanne Bos-Eisolt, Manager of the Office of Medals, Office of the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, confirmed the exact dates in her letter from 28 June 2010. See also the Press Release from the German Embassy in Dublin from 2 February 1987 among Bielenberg's papers.

¹⁴¹ It can be identified by its four drawers as opposed to the cabinet beside it with only two.

seven typewritten chapters of her first memoir, referred to as “Manu 1”, “Manu 2” etc., with extensive background information on herself and Peter, and deliberations on their decision to live in Nazi Germany, which were drastically shortened in the published work (cf. chapter 1.4);¹⁴² a draft version of the “Prologue” to her first memoir with a cover sheet containing different possible titles, and a draft of the chapter “A Jew Story”. There is also a manuscript version of a chapter excluded from *The Past Is Myself*, called “A Luncheon Party (Summer 1940)” (cf. chapter 1.4). Chronologically, this chapter would have fitted between “Cold Interlude I & II (Winter 1939 – Spring 1940)” and “A Dinner Party (Autumn 1940)”.¹⁴³ In this episode, Bielenberg recounts her meeting with an NSDAP “bigwig”, Ambassador Walther Hewel, at the exclusive *Garde Kavallerie Club* in Berlin. Adam had invited her and other reliable friends to charm the approachable Anglophile Hewel in order to find out more about Hitler’s intentions with Britain.¹⁴⁴ At the time, the invasion of England seemed a likely prospect and what was left of the opposition in the Foreign Office, Bielenberg claims, was trying hard to infiltrate the England Committee. Bielenberg for her part was willing to play an active role in his preparations for a joint English-German insurrection, showing her willingness to become personally involved long before Peter’s arrest in August 1944. Finally, among the papers in this cabinet there is a manuscript of a chapter in which Bielenberg reflects on her mother following the latter’s death in 1967. Its contents appear condensed into one page in *The Road Ahead* (209f.), but the chapter has now been included in full in the Appendix of the 2011 edition of her

¹⁴² In hand-written notes her editor, Ian Parsons, commented on this section, titled “The Years Before”, that it should be omitted altogether, as it made her sound “a dull uninteresting person” in contrast to the rest of her story. He also dismissed Bielenberg’s opinions in this section as “ordinary and ordinarily expressed” (Reading University Library, CW224/14/1).

¹⁴³ Parsons’s notes as well as the correspondence between him and Bielenberg prior to the book’s publication suggest that the principal reason for the chapter’s omission was her editor’s concern that it was too “spun out” (cf. Reading University Library, CW224/14/1). Bielenberg had intended to include it in the German translation, as she had been advised that German readers preferred longer texts, but neither the first nor subsequent German editions contain this chapter. It is now part of the Appendix to the 2011 omnibus edition.

¹⁴⁴ Either Bielenberg’s grasp or her representation of von Trott’s relationship with Hewel is incomplete, for he had approached Hewel offering to use his connections in England in order to prevent a war directly after his return to Germany in 1938 (cf. Conze *et al.* 302).

memoirs.¹⁴⁵ Also contained in the bottom drawer of the first cabinet are two satirical short stories set in Ireland after the country's accession to the EEC (cf. chapter 1.6).

The first filing cabinet further contains: correspondence with her editors and publishers;¹⁴⁶ correspondence from 1947 in her capacity as secretary to The July 20 Memorial Fund (letters received from English donors and German recipients as well as copies of letters issued by the organisation); Dennis Potter's film script of *Christabel*, a TV mini-series, broadcast by the BBC in 1987, and some correspondence with him; copies of theses, books and pamphlets sent to Bielenberg on the subject of the German resistance; and correspondence and notes from the 1960s in relation to the biography of Adam von Trott zu Solz commissioned from Christopher Sykes (cf. chapter 1.3).

The second, smaller filing cabinet beside it contains a few more typewritten versions of chapters from *The Past Is Myself* as a work in progress; correspondence (in German) with her mother-in-law in Aumühle, near Hamburg, during the war years, including a letter dated 11 August 1944 in which she seeks to reassure Peter's mother that whatever dangers her husband may be in, his innocence would certainly prevail; a few short cards and two notes sent through the Red Cross to her parents in England;¹⁴⁷ further correspondence with her publishers and receipts of royalties; some official documents, including her certificate of naturalisation from October 1946, and documents which relate to moving to Ireland, and to Munny House.

The other two filing cabinets contain her notes for speeches (some handwritten, others typewritten and dated); the aforementioned copy of the 43-page long interview with Elaine Martin (with Martin's request for some clarifications); newspaper clippings with reviews of her works in English and German (also obituaries of David Astor); ample

¹⁴⁵ There was an earlier attempt to give her mother's influence on her life more space in an equally abandoned chapter for *The Past Is Myself*, "Pre-War I" in Manu 1.

¹⁴⁶ A more complete collection of her correspondence with her original publisher, Chatto & Windus, can be accessed through the Archive of British Publishing and Printing at the University of Reading Library.

¹⁴⁷ The word limit for these Red Cross messages, according to a British Postal Censorship notification sent to her parents, was 25 words.

correspondence in her capacity as an active member of the Peace People Movement; and largely empty (day-by-day) diaries for several years in the 1950s.

At a later date, in October 2010, I was able to survey and photograph a small collection of correspondence from the war years and 1946 that had been removed from Munny House by Christabel Bielenberg's grandson, Andy Bielenberg, at an earlier point. This collection complements the very few notes and cards sent home in the second cabinet and comprises the following: two letters to her mother from Hamburg written before her engagement and a letter to Peter from 1933;¹⁴⁸ one letter written by Bielenberg to her parents in 1941 and copies of three letters to a Swedish friend, Johnny,¹⁴⁹ from 1943; three notes from Peter posted to his parents-in-law from Sweden on his way to and from his workplace in Norway between 1942 and 1943; one note from Peter to his mother after she visited him in Ravensbrück concentration camp in winter 1944; and a handful of letters from several of Bielenberg's friends living in neutral Sweden and Switzerland who were passing on news to her family in England. These were her Swedish friends Elsa von Rosen, Elsa's husband, Count Gustav Fredrick von Rosen (a Swedish diplomat in London), and Outram Mott, a friend from music school in Hamburg, as well as her Swiss friends Jenny Thurneysen and André de Blonay, General Secretary of the European Student Relief Fund. Included in this collection are also two notes from British Postal Censorship. The first reminded Christabel's parents that "the despatch of printed matter, photographs (...) to certain countries is prohibited, except under Permit." The second made them blatantly aware that their information channels through neutral countries were being watched and "that it [was] contrary to the Defence Regulations to communicate with [enemy] territory by any other means than through an authorised intermediary."

¹⁴⁸ The letter is not dated, yet Christabel mentions learning Spanish. This would have been in preparation for a trip to Spain her mother took her on following an appendicitis operation in early 1933 (Manu 4).

¹⁴⁹ The content of Bielenberg's letter, for example a reference to Koberg Castle, the residence of Elsa von Rosen's parents (*PIM* 107), suggest that "Johnny" was a nickname for her Swedish friend Elsa.

The remaining thirteen letters date from after the end of the war: the earliest ones deal with the necessary preparations for her and her children's repatriation and are addressed to her parents and André de Blonay. Later ones are Christabel's letters to Peter following her return to England in November 1945 and discuss their plans for the future in, alternately, Germany, England or Ireland. The Bielenbergs' involvement with members of the German resistance is mentioned both in a letter by Captain Pecquet to her parents from 11 July 1945, which he wrote after meeting Christabel in Frankfurt, and in her own letter to Sir Eady from 5 June 1946, in which she pleaded for a revision of the Home Office's initial rejection of Peter's visa application.

Undoubtedly the most exciting discovery among Bielenberg's papers is a German notebook, found in the first filing cabinet, with Bielenberg's diary notes from July to September 1944, handwritten on a few loose pages, along with notes from April to July 1945 penned into the notebook (cf. chapter 1.3 and Appendix 1.1 & 1.2). Although Bielenberg mentions diary notes from the war years as her source in the foreword to her first memoir, her family had never actually seen these. The period covered on the fourteen loose pages included in the notepad dates from 20 July to 8 September 1944. The notes from summer 1944 vividly record Bielenberg's disappointment at hearing the plot had failed, her anguish at not receiving any news from her husband Peter in the weeks that followed, and, after she heard of his arrest, her decision to travel to Berlin and to see Peter transferred from the Gestapo in Graudenz to another prison. The pages still attached to the actual notebook form part of an incomplete record (a number of pages have been torn out at the front of the pad) which begins in mid-sentence with the departure of the German army from Rohrbach in April 1945. Her entries from that time chronicle the chaos that followed, the liberation by the *Grande Armée* and the terror marauding French troops brought to the countryside. The last entry is from 8 July 1945 and contains some darkly humorous reflections on the insatiable appetite of the French occupying forces for booty.

There are clear indications that these are genuine diary entries and not an attempt to recreate scenes from the past at a later stage: first, unlike the other notebooks among her papers, this one is of German provenance, with *Schreibblock* (“notebook”) printed on the cover in letters strongly reminiscent of the edgy writing style popular at the time.¹⁵⁰ Secondly, this notepad is aged and faded like none of the other papers and documents contained in this drawer. “Mami Bielen” is written in block letters in a child’s hand into the fold at the top of the pad. Bielenberg’s second son, John, was born in 1937 and would have been in his first years in school in 1944/5. Thirdly, the entries are ordered by dates, written in the present tense and seem to respond directly to the events and people around her in a way the corresponding sections in the two memoirs do not. Finally, Bielenberg explicitly reflects on keeping this diary. For example, she remarks on 30 August 1944: “The days have clipped by but I have been too worried to write this diary” (the last entry had been on 8 August). Similarly, after a pause between 5 and 26 May 1945, she admits: “I haven’t written for some time because everything that I have done has left a nasty taste.”

Of course, it is surprising that Bielenberg should have kept a diary at a time of great danger for her and her family. Following the failure of the July plot, she expected Peter to be arrested because of his friendship with von Trott and his connections to resisters. Indeed, in her introduction to a new edition of Marie “Missie” Vassiltchikov’s *Berlin Diaries* from 1991, Bielenberg explicitly stated her relief that she was unaware of Missie’s habit of recording events, as “to commit anything whatsoever to paper would have seemed to me, at the time, not only foolhardy but nothing less than downright dangerous for all concerned” (xii). However, a manuscript version of the chapter “A Jew Story” contains this deleted last paragraph: “I did not record this event in my notebook at the time. Perhaps I hoped to forget about it, more likely I knew even then that I would not forget as long as I

¹⁵⁰ A photograph of the cover is included in the 2011 edition of Bielenberg’s memoirs. Efforts to clearly identify the manufacturer of the notebook, “WWP”, as a company which operated in the 1930s and 1940s were unsuccessful.

lived.” As the chapter is set in winter 1942/43, this would suggest that Bielenberg was already keeping notes before July 1944, although none of these earlier records were among her private papers. It therefore remains unresolved whether she had already been in the habit of recording events throughout the war or whether the sheer weight of the failed July 1944 plot and the anguish she felt for her husband and friends, coupled with the lack of a confidant in the Black Forest village, compelled her to seek an outlet in writing. Certainly, by the time the German army retreated from Rohrbach in April 1945, at which point the second set of notes picks up again, it was obvious that liberation was imminent and that the new beginning merited recording. This supposition tallies with the explanation Bielenberg gave for her notes in interview with Martin, even if her statement seems to deny the existence of earlier notes from summer 1944:

I had a few queer notes, because at the very end of the war – but it was only then because I had been too busy doing other things – I began to realize that I was living history. I was English, I was in Germany, and I was going to witness the end of the war in Germany as an Englishwoman. (...) At the time it was much too dangerous to keep a diary; even the notes that I kept were under the floorboards in the [Hotel] Adler where we lived. By that time I was so wary of anybody or anything. (...) The notes were partly on shopping lists: I’d put down ‘carrots,’ ‘bread,’ or ‘butter,’ and then one word which would give me a hint, a word that would open up a whole vista of things that I wanted to remember. (Martin 1988: 5)

These coded shopping lists have not survived either, but there is another item of interest, a draft letter from 3 September 1939, addressed to her parents in Hatfield. In it, Bielenberg picks up where their telephone conversation had ended the previous day and captures her mood after hearing England had declared war on Germany. She registers both the discussion between her husband and von Trott in the living room and the night’s smells and sounds outside in the garden where she is writing, before musing on the implications of war for her and her relatives: “I agree with you that this war complicates matters enormously, you see we Germans are so blasted good at wars, but one thing is certain we must not give up. It is not our war and if Adolf wins or loses——”. At this point, her writing is interrupted by somebody objecting to the lights illuminating their house: “Licht

aus' [Turn off the lights] a loud shout came from across the road and I saw Adam start and go to the switch. The garden was plunged in darkness and I hurried in. War – blackout it had started.” In the space left underneath this faded letter written in pencil, Bielenberg wrote down years later – this time in neat handwriting and with a ballpoint pen – a remembered version of these events which would become the “Prologue” in *The Past Is Myself*.

Bielenberg’s insistence, with hindsight, on both an outsider status (“Englishwoman”) and a witness’s perspective is indicative of the conflicted positions she straddled in recollecting the past and reveals the need to carefully examine the ways in which she constructed her self-image in her books. The sources in her literary estate are crucial to this re-evaluation, providing new insights that add nuance to the literary legacy Bielenberg created and encouraging a closer look at the underlying tensions beneath the surface of her best-selling memoirs. As the first review undertaken on this scale, it benefits from previously undiscovered material, in particular Bielenberg’s diary notes, the excluded chapter “A Luncheon Party”, earlier draft versions of *The Past Is Myself* with detailed family histories and explanations, the interview with Martin, and the unpublished Irish-themed short stories. All of these sources provide valuable support for better understanding Bielenberg’s memoirs in light of imagology and a dynamic concept of cultural memory in the following four chapters.

1.3. From Diary Notes to Memoirs

Bielenberg’s first memoir, *The Past Is Myself*, was published in 1968, more than twenty years after she had left Germany. She dedicated the work to her three sons as well as to the many other children who used to spend their holidays with her family in Ireland, some of whom had lost their fathers after the failed July 1944 plot. It was her express wish that her personal memories of the period she had witnessed would help “to throw new light on

what [she] believe[d] to be for the Germans a still undigested past, and for the English an incomprehensible one” (Foreword *PIM*). Beyond this responsibility to later generations as a survivor and moral witness, which Bielenberg repeatedly invoked (cf. Watts 35, Gillespie 1982: 11, Martin 1993: 191, *RA* 217), the act of remembering and writing about her life in Nazi Germany also served as a painful, yet timely, catharsis for herself (cf. P. H. S. 10, Anon., *The Guardian*, 28 April 1969: 7, Gillespie 1982: 11, *RA* 210). The book’s epigraph, a quotation from Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Essays of the Road* which Bielenberg found in her late mother’s Victorian birthday book for the pivotal date of 20 July¹⁵¹ (cf. *RA* 210f.), seems to suggest as much: “The future is nothing, but the past is myself, my own history, the seed of my present thoughts, the mould of my present disposition.” The calm acceptance of, and emphasis on, continuity between former and present self, and the exclusion of future personal developments are striking, although not altogether surprising at the stage in life Bielenberg had reached by 1967, the time she settled on this title in preference to the sensational but generic *Diary of an Enemy Alien*.¹⁵²

Jean Améry, the Austrian Holocaust survivor and lifelong exile, elucidates the connection between ageing and the growing need to remember in his essay, “Wieviel Heimat braucht der Mensch?” (“How much home does a person need?”), first published in 1964. As one’s purchase in the future diminishes, he argues, the individual realises that the once future-oriented notion of the self has shrunk to a bare existence (“ein nacktes Sein”) in the present. This limited realm can be comfortably padded out by most ageing people by reverting to the story of their past. Yet the past of those persecuted in the Third Reich,

¹⁵¹ As her mother died on 11 June 1967 (Anon., *The Times*, 13 June 1967: 18) and *The Past Is Myself* was published in autumn 1968, Bielenberg would have discovered the suitable title when she was approaching sixty.

¹⁵² This is the title typed on the cover of an undated manuscript found among Bielenberg’s papers which is attached to the two-page-long Prologue. Another possible title, “Enemy Alien: Some Experiences of an Englishwoman in Germany 1939-1945”, is noted in pencil on the title page and is similarly reminiscent of a particular genre of war literature in English. Listed, in ballpoint pen, are also the titles “Aryan Interlude” and “The Past Is Yesterday”. All these suggestions, including the typed title, are crossed out and replaced with “*The Past Is Myself* by Christabel Bielenberg”. The title in the left hand corner on the first page of Manu 1, “The long long trail”, strikes an altogether different chord.

Améry points out, remains contested, and their former self lost somewhere in the ruins of the years 1933 to 1945 (cf. Améry 113f.). This complication denies the survivor an all too peaceful recourse to memory as he or she grows older. Hence Améry's outspoken revolt, in a preface to a new edition of his essays in 1976, against all tendencies to rationalise and to confine the past in neat historical fact files:

Was geschah, geschah. Aber *daß* es geschah, ist so einfach nicht hinzunehmen. Ich rebelliere: gegen meine Vergangenheit, gegen die Geschichte, gegen eine Gegenwart, die das Unbegreifliche geschichtlich einfrieren läßt und es damit auf empörende Weise verfälscht. Nichts ist vernarbt, und was vielleicht 1964 schon im Begriffe stand zu heilen, das bricht als infizierte Wunde wieder auf. Emotionen? Meinetwegen. Wo steht geschrieben, daß Aufklärung emotionslos zu sein hat? Das Gegenteil scheint mir wahr zu sein. Aufklärung kann ihrer Aufgabe nur dann gerecht werden, wenn sie sich mit Leidenschaft ans Werk macht. (18f.)¹⁵³

On the face of it, Bielenberg's title and epigraph suggest a harmonious, authoritative relationship with the past, but her engagement with the horrors of the war was motivated by the same emotionally fraught effort Améry and other survivors experienced: how to confront a sterile historiography, produced by people with little or no first-hand experience or understanding of day-to-day life and its accompanying compromises in Nazi Germany, with the witness's perspective. Bielenberg came to the following conclusion:

Intellectual achievement, I decided, rests on very narrow and immature emotional foundations. To study history was an intellectual exercise; to live it was beyond my listeners' comprehension. No one could understand what it was like to live under a dictatorship unless they had experienced it themselves. (RA 208f.)

The self-assured acknowledgement, "the past is myself", can therefore barely disguise the passionate struggle behind her attempt to salvage from the ruins of Nazi Germany her former self and to testify to the suffering and loss inflicted at the hands of a totalitarian regime. Significantly, a note written in capital letters on the flyleaf of one of her notebooks

¹⁵³ My translation: "What happened, happened. But *that* it should have happened cannot be accepted that easily. I rebel: against my past, against history, against a present which allows the inconceivable to be frozen historically, thus falsifying it in a most outrageous manner. Nothing has scarred over, and what may have already been in the process of healing in 1964 is opening up again as a festering wound. Emotions? So be it. Where does it say that investigation has to be free of emotions? I believe the opposite to be the case. Investigation can only then serve its purpose when it approaches its task with passion."

expresses a very similar disposition to Améry's: "Remember, this is your story, and must be told your way. Sometimes 'emotional truth' is a better way of saying it than strict historical accuracy."

Bielenberg's indignation about postwar historiography led to her involvement in a first literary project, albeit in one addressing the life of Adam von Trott zu Solz. In time, I would argue, this first step encouraged her to rise to the challenge of bearing witness herself. As a fact-finder for the von Trott biography, Bielenberg travelled to England, Sweden and France at her own expense in the early 1960s in order to interview former friends from his Oxford days and people he had contacted on behalf of the German opposition during the Second World War (cf. Bielenberg's letter to Hans Rothfels from 12 July 1963, also *RA* 208). One of those she interviewed was an Oxford don and historian whom she identified in interviews as Alan Bullock (cf. Mulcahy 1986: 13; Hickey 18). According to her second memoir, this interview took place in 1959 and ended with her counterpart suggesting that if she felt so strongly about the misrepresentation of life under the Nazi regime by those who had not lived under its yoke, she should write the missing book herself (cf. *RA* 208ff.) – a challenge she claims she promptly rose to by writing down the most vivid memory from that time and sending it to Bullock: her encounter with a Latvian SS soldier on the train back from Berlin in January 1945 (cf. Martin 1988: 23). However, statements she made in her interview with Martin as well as her eldest son's recollection in a radio interview in 2007 suggest that she only started writing sometime later, between 1963 and 1966 (cf. Martin 1988: 4; RTE Radio 1 interview from 15 May 2007).¹⁵⁴

Considering Bielenberg's simultaneous involvement in the von Trott biography, which was coincidentally published the same year as her memoir – as was a third work

¹⁵⁴ There is also a certain amount of uncertainty as to how long it took her to complete her first memoir. In the interview with Martin, Bielenberg claims she took two years, whereas one review suggests it took her as long as four years to write (cf. Hickey 18).

remembering von Trott, Diana Hopkinson's autobiography *The Incense-Tree* – it is hardly surprising if an early reviewer alleged that her memoir pivoted on the revered figure of the dead resister (cf. Wiskemann 23). Indeed, it had been von Trott who, at their last meeting in spring 1944, had half-jokingly encouraged her to write about her “Life amongst the Huns” (*PIM* 147), to which Bielenberg had replied that if she did, she would make “a blooming ’ero” out of him. What Elizabeth Wiskemann's reaction reveals, however, is a certain amount of conflict in Bielenberg's memoir between her personal need to account for herself and to achieve catharsis (or “emotional truth”), and the wish to simultaneously honour the friends who died, or, like her husband, suffered during the Nazi regime by testifying on their behalf. The more common reception of her book focused on the latter impulse, celebrating it for its “apparent artlessness”, “wry naïveté” and “compassionate” perspective (cf. Anon., *TLS*, 2 April 1970: 356 and James 275), all of which made life in Nazi Germany seem particularly “real” to her English readers. Accepting the writer's position as that of a detached observer made it easy to consider her account in terms of a “homely, chatty book” (P. T. Hughes 19) and contributed to her image as a resolute, no-nonsense wife and mother caught on the wrong side during the war. Her stiff upper lip and unfailing humour left readers at no time in any doubt about her English upper class background (cf. Anon., *Der Spiegel* 50: 193f.).¹⁵⁵ Tellingly, one German reviewer likened her style to that of the Mitford sisters (von Gehren 37) – a far cry, it would seem, from the documentary account of a survivor or moral witness battling with the impossibility of narrating traumatic experiences.

The amalgamation of the private need to work through painful memories with an informed reconfiguration of the past for the sake of an audience removed from the events

¹⁵⁵ This class critique is repeated in Dan van der Vat's obituary in *The Guardian* on 3 November 2003. Thus, van der Vat wonders “whether the doughty Christabel fully understood the extent of her good fortune” (21). His obituary for Peter Bielenberg in 2001 had likewise insinuated that the Bielenbergs were a glitzy couple, accustomed to “string-pulling” and blessed with “blithe, upper-class assumptions that it was not what you knew, but who you knew, that mattered” (van der Vat 20). A reader later expressed her dismay at the tone of this obituary in a letter to the editor (cf. Cowhig 20).

is already inherent in the creation of Bielenberg's work. Talking about her writing technique with Martin, Bielenberg claimed that it came to her "naturally" (cf. Martin 1988: 20) and that none of it was "for effect" (ibid.), which might give the impression that memories came easily and did not need to be coaxed, ordered and embedded within the larger historical context. Bielenberg's memoir is, on the contrary, a careful composition of various sources, of which her own "re-discovered" (Foreword *PIM*; also in Mullane 8) diary notes from the war are one component among others. Already at the time she wrote these, she had intuitively sensed the historical importance of her perspective, as she explained to Martin: "I was living history. I was English, I was in Germany, and I was going to witness the end of the war in Germany as an Englishwoman" (Martin 1988: 5). Bielenberg further expanded on her notes and memories by incorporating her husband's story ("Peter's Story") and the story a friend, Ellen Eiche, told her about mutual acquaintances in Berlin ("The Terwiel Story"). She also supplemented these recollections with research she carried out, for example, in the Imperial War Museum and the British Library, where she consulted German newspapers from before and during the war¹⁵⁶, and through visits to the places where she had once lived (cf. Anon., *The Guardian*, 28 April 1969: 7). Although Bielenberg denies any literary outside influences on her story other than the newspapers she read (cf. Martin 1988: 14), her frustration about the imbalanced views upheld by those she confronted in the context of preparing ground for the von Trott biography suggests that she had a good sense of the general thrust of literature about the Second World War at the time. Her resolve to challenge the dominant working memory with a "missing book" (Martin 1988: 22) would go some way towards explaining why her personal testimony evolved into a more historical account that deliberately stifles the expression of her own emotions at times.

¹⁵⁶ Bielenberg outlines her approach to recreating the social atmosphere of the Nazi era in Martin's unpublished interview from 1988 (cf. 6).

Access to the growing archive of writing on the Second World War also enabled Bielenberg to make certain connections in her memoir, for example, in her recollection of her visit to Peter's boss, Seiler, in Munich to solicit his help. Seiler told her that five of his associates had been arrested after the plot, among them Peter, and that he could not possibly save all of them (nor did he wish to). Christabel surmises that "Carl Langbehn, possibly Schniewind, Bayer" (*PIM* 165) were among the other likely candidates arrested. The company history of the bank Hauck-Aufhäuser reveals that Josef Bayer and Otto Schniewind were both imprisoned and interned in concentration camps following the plot, but both survived.¹⁵⁷ The former was a friend and long-time employee of the Jewish Aufhäuser family, who previously owned the bank until forced to hand over their business to an Aryan in 1938 when Seiler stepped in as a buyer. Schniewind, in turn, was a partner whose name was included on the plotters' list as potential Minister for Finance under chancellor Carl Friedrich Goerdeler. What remains unclear, however, is how Bielenberg, living in the Black Forest at the time the July plot was hatched, would have known that these two men were involved with the resistance.¹⁵⁸

Several draft manuscripts confirm that the published work is a condensed final version which omits autobiographical chapters on her and Peter's family background, and, more crucially, her many attempts to explain and to qualify her and her husband's apparent insouciance in the first half of the 1930s. Far from being "artless", the chapters in *The Past Is Myself* are composed as instructive anecdotes and vignettes with a more or less explicit moral at the end, and are frequently skilfully inserted in imaginative parentheses which

¹⁵⁷ <<https://www.hauck-aufhaeuser.de/page/wegmarke1944?ppid=BhHistorie1921&y=1944>>, accessed on 8 August 2010.

¹⁵⁸ In another interview from 1972, Bielenberg maintains that one of the men dictating their statements in the room in the Gestapo headquarters where she awaited her interview with Peter's interrogator in January 1945 was the Social Democrat Goerdeler (Thames TV, reel 4). Perhaps this identification was only possible with the benefit of years during which she became acquainted with the background history and the faces of the German resistance groups. To my knowledge, this is the only time she made this connection. Goerdeler would have taken over the German government had Hitler been assassinated on 20 July 1944. Although he managed to flee from Berlin after the failed plot, he was later recognised by a waitress and denounced to the police. He was hanged on 2 February 1945.

have the effect of removing the narrator from the events related in the episode by beginning and ending with reflections on seasons, nature or anecdotes from ordinary family life.¹⁵⁹ Bielenberg referred to this strategy as an attempt to frame a picture from her memory in a neat, closed story (cf. Martin 1988: 1). Though a literary novice, Bielenberg also later acknowledged that her musical training enabled her to evaluate her sentences and structures in terms of their cadence and harmony, and to perfect them until they were, like a piece of music by Bach, brought to a satisfactory close (cf. *ibid.*). She herself conceived of her book as “a collection of photographs of [her] life” (cf. Martin 1988: 22) which captured the time and place, yet remained contained within the individual frames she imposed on them. As mentioned in chapter 1.2, she had taken on the habit at the end of the war of adding key words to inconspicuous shopping lists, words “that would open up a whole vista of things that I wanted to remember” (cf. Martin 1988: 5). This visual focus on scenes from the past may explain why some of the chapters have an almost cinematic feel to them: thoughts are counterbalanced by corresponding images in nature, or stories open and close on a scene from family life, thus giving the book an “essentially Tolstoyian” (Blaikie 9) outlook on the events of the time. The artistic effect aside, Bielenberg’s arrangement of her memories in “snapshots” is also, as Martin points out, prone to “emphasize the ways in which she was an outsider rather than the ways in which she shared the fate – and responsibilities – of her German friends and neighbors” (Martin 1995: 122).

This practice of embedding her thoughts in sensual observations on her environment is already apparent in Bielenberg’s diary notes and in the aforementioned draft letter from 3 September 1939. Her reflections on the implications of war for herself

¹⁵⁹ Few reviewers have noted this tendency. Writing for *The Irish Times* in 1968, D. G. remarked on Bielenberg’s “lavish hand with colourful touches” which often had the effect of evoking a film setting (D. G. 11). Thomas Blaikie’s review of the reissued memoir from 1982 recognised that the book’s construction was “most artful and considerate” (9). Gabriele Annan came to a similar conclusion when she compared Missie Vassiltchikov’s *Berlin Diaries: 1940-1945* and Bielenberg’s memoir. She maintains that the latter’s “carefully worked up” structure, together with her “breezy, sensible English decency cannot compare with the poetry and pathos generated by Missie’s personality”.

and her family in England, for example, are interspersed with references which complete the overall picture of the setting in which she writes: "The children are in bed and the faint smell of pine trees from the Grunewald hovers over the garden." Similarly, a passage further on reads: "Moths thump against the window and the blue lights from the U-Bahn flash across the sky." In a similar vein, a rant written against the backdrop of the failed July 1944 plot targeting the many "political fools" in Germany who "don't deserve anything better than to be regimented around by the Gestapo and probably sooner or later by the allies or Russians" leads directly into a lyrical reflection on the rural life around her:

And then I look around this valley and see the patient peasants, simple, kindly, in each farm a missing son or father or husband. They are bringing in the hay now, the old men and women who should have peace, and the children working away in the fields. The orderliness everywhere. (2 August 1944)

Although Bielenberg's musings create a distance between her and the people she observes, they also convey compassion and acknowledge a shared plight in a less restrictive manner than she would later adopt in capturing "snapshots" of the past for her memoir.

Despite her aspiration towards closure in the construction of individual fragments from her memory, the memoir as whole remains a curious blend of the detailed and the inconclusive. This vacillation between disclosure of her past and a simultaneous need to control which aspects of it are revealed is evident from the beginning in the theatrical list of *Dramatis Personae*, many of whom, as Wiskemann complained, remain to a large extent indistinct and under-developed in the subsequent pages. Of course, the reason for this calculated vagueness could be the result of a careful negotiation as to which events to recall and how best to recount them if she wanted to avoid hurting persons (or relations of persons) still alive in 1968 – including herself. Her efforts to avoid controversy with her life story backfired in the case of two people mentioned in the first edition, Wilhelm (William) Roloff, Lexi's (Alexandra, née von Alvensleben) first husband and Peter's one-time boss at Unilever, and Ursula Terwiel, the only surviving member of the Terwiel family. Both objected to their representation and demanded that all references to them be

expunged (cf. Bielenberg's papers for letters threatening legal action from Ursula Terwiel, 17 February 1969, and from Roloff's legal representatives from 16 July 1969). Ursula Terwiel considered the suggestion defamatory that family members had perjured themselves to declare her Jewish mother half-Aryan. She also pointed out factual inaccuracies in Bielenberg's chapter, "The Terwiel Story", including the insinuation that her sister Marie had been a Russian spy.¹⁶⁰ In keeping with popular misconceptions of the time, Bielenberg's chapter suggests that the resistance group *Rote Kapelle* was a Moscow-directed espionage agency, thereby perpetuating the very myth concocted in the Gestapo's reports during their investigation into what were in fact separate groups in different countries, driven by very different political and religious motivations (cf. Danyel 15, 17). Ironically, the Nazi prosecutors' viewpoint regained currency during the Cold War as an expedient way of valorising Western-oriented resistance circles (such as the *Kreisauer Kreis*, to which the Bielenbergs' friends had belonged, and the July 1944 resisters in the military) over groups with leftist leanings. Bielenberg's patronising attitude towards Ursula Terwiel, whom she considered "rather hysterical & most inaccurate" (letter to Ian Parsons from 1 March 1969, Reading University, CW224/14/2), and her portrayal of Marie Terwiel's and Helmut Himpel's involvement with the Harnack/Schulze-Boysen group in terms of a Soviet espionage adventure with a tragic end reflects that bias.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless,

¹⁶⁰ Those arrested in Berlin in autumn 1942 for their involvement in what their investigators termed a "bolshevist high treason organisation ('Rote Kapelle')" (Tuchel 1994a: 224) had formed a loose group around the couples Harro and Libertas Schulze-Boysen and Arvid and Mildred Harnack. Besides their many activities – documenting war crimes, helping forced labourers and Jews, issuing leaflets – the Berlin group realised that the hopes other opposition circles had placed in the Western Allies were futile and tried to establish contacts with Soviet diplomats. Harro Schulze-Boysen unsuccessfully warned them of Hitler's plans to attack the Soviet Union, but the network never entertained a secret connection to Moscow or elsewhere via radio transmitters, as the equipment they received through their diplomatic contact was faulty. Bielenberg relates that the group's broken radio transmitter was found in Helmut Himpel's dental practice (cf. *PIM* 131), but this would appear to be another inaccuracy, as it had been hidden under the piano of pianist Helmut Roloff (cf. Tuchel 1994a: 217).

¹⁶¹ Maria Terwiel, a Catholic, and her partner Helmut Himpel, a Protestant, supported the Harnack/Schulze-Boysen group's activities by reproducing and disseminating critical sermons by Cardinal von Galen (in particular his sermons from summer 1941 in which he attacked the Nazi euthanasia programme) and several other leaflets by post, and by affixing leaflets to walls near the temporary propaganda exhibition "Das Sowietparadies" in Berlin in May 1942. As Johannes Tuchel emphasises in his biographical sketch of the

the English version of her memoir was amended in response to the objections raised,¹⁶² and the German publisher, Biederstein Verlag, excluded the chapter altogether from the German translation (cf. relevant correspondence, Reading University, CW224/14/2). William Roloff, by 1969 a businessman in Canada, objected in particular to Bielenberg divulging in the “Lexi” chapter that he had attempted suicide twice while imprisoned by the Nazis. Such a revelation, he understandably feared, might have adverse effects on his business dealings in North America. In a letter to Bielenberg, he also pointed out that during his imprisonment and torture by the Gestapo, he had been accused of obstructing the war effort by preventing able-bodied Peter Bielenberg from doing active service and of endangering state security by arranging Christabel’s visit to her husband in occupied Norway (cf. letter from Roloff to Bielenberg from 16 September 1969, a copy of which he sent to Chatto & Windus, Reading University, CW224/15). Chatto & Windus, following legal advice, published a notice in *The Bookseller* at the end of July 1969, temporarily withdrawing all copies of *The Past Is Myself* from circulation before the third, purged impression appeared in September 1969 (cf. copy of letter from Ian Parsons to *The Bookseller*, 29 July 1969, Reading University, CW224/15). There was a second attempt to change the chapter on Bielenberg’s friend Lexi in 1988, undertaken by the latter’s second husband, Richard H. Weber, who complained to the BBC ahead of the screening of *Christabel* that Bielenberg had misappropriated aspects of Lexi’s life to make her own life appear more heroic (cf. Bielenberg’s estate for copies of his letter to the BBC, 4 July 1988, and to his stepson Mike Roloff, 1 July 1988). A copy of Bielenberg’s advice to the BBC

couple, their resistance was motivated by their faith, a love for their fellow human beings and a rejection of Hitler’s reign of terror (cf. 1994a: 222).

¹⁶² A comparison of the first edition and the 1988 paperback reveals that all references to Ursula by name were dropped, as was every indication that there was a third sibling beside Marie and Gerd Terwiel, both of whom had perished during the war. Corrections were made to street names, and the claim that “[r]elations and friends of the Terwiels (...) had perjured themselves willingly” on behalf of the three siblings’ mother was replaced by “rallied to the cause”. Likewise, Miss Bayer’s proposal of organising an exchange of spies between the Nazis and Soviets to free Marie in return for 1000 Reichsmark in the first edition was changed into a simple blackmail attempt with no reference to espionage.

from 24 August 1988 suggests that Weber had already threatened to cause trouble as far back as 1968, and that he may be “a bit of a nutcase, looking for money or publicity”. As Lexi had died in Spain in 1968, Bielenberg thought it best to avoid litigation and to persuade Weber instead that her portrayal of his late wife was that of a heroine.

Bielenberg employed several distancing mechanisms in her work which kept her own emotions at bay. If her response to emotional passages in other people’s books was to flip the page (cf. Martin 1988: 28), then it is hardly surprising that she chose a tone of understatement and dry humour to prevent her voice from faltering in narrating painful memories. At the same time, it is impossible not to notice the conflict this creates with her intention of allowing emotional truth to replace historical distance and involve herself in the past as much as her readers through a bond of emotional identification. Other coping mechanisms are more subtly embedded in the choice of which aspects are narrated and which are omitted. Thus, while Bielenberg does not hesitate to relate the grim end of her *Blockwart* and gardener, *Herr Neisse*, upon the arrival of the Red Army in Berlin (cf. *PIM* 60) – presumably because he had no children and it was unlikely that his wife Hilde would still have been alive in 1968 to object to reading about him being hanged from a lamp-post – she does not give the surname of Hans, son of one of her former landlords in Hamburg, who had been a friend and an early supporter of National Socialism (cf. *PIM* 20f.), and who, as she only mentioned in an interview in 1995, had committed suicide after Germany’s defeat and left a letter for her which his mother gave her (interview with IWM, reel 2). Another instance in which she may be misremembering the course of events in order to protect her own feelings can be seen in the scene in which Bielenberg reads of Peter’s arrest in a letter from a friend. In her memoir, it is Peter’s aunt Ulla who breaks down after reading the news over her shoulder (cf. *PIM* 161). Her son Nicholas, however, who was in the same room doing his homework when she opened the letter, later recalled that it was in fact his mother who broke down completely (RTE Radio 1 interview from 15

May 2007, also repeated to me directly on 17 June 2010). Perhaps Bielenberg's most powerful strategy to control her emotional investment in her recollections was (self-) mockery: by laughing her nightmares in the face, she had learned as a child that they would lose their power over her and disappear (cf. *RA* 219, Martin 1988: 28). In keeping with this coping mechanism, *The Past Is Myself* ends with the resolution of years of tension into laughter as Bielenberg describes how she "nearly died laughing" (*PIM* 287) on being finally liberated on 2 May 1945.¹⁶³ The trauma of air raids, human loss, deprivation, and the threat of rapes – all these are palpable in the few diary notes that have survived and in the letters Bielenberg wrote during and just after the war. In her memoir, however, Bielenberg strove to make these experiences *palatable* in snapshots that allow her to frame painful memories. Although she later surmised that this strategy was at bottom a psychosomatic cause for physical pain she experienced in emotionally challenging situations – and partly responsible for a breakdown of her health in 1948 (cf. *RA* 152f.) – she reverted to it in her description of the challenges she faced after the war in *The Road Ahead*.

Concluding her first memoir on a note of exhausted laughter, however, failed to provide a satisfactory close in the eyes of many of her readers. Perhaps it was at their insistence – Bielenberg estimated she received some four thousand fan letters (cf. Introduction *RA*) – that she wrote a second autobiographical work, *The Road Ahead*. Or perhaps it was the result of still being haunted by her past and by a persistent need to position herself as an Englishwoman living in Ireland and a witness to the Nazi regime. According to Watts, who interviewed the Bielenbergs in November 1989, Christabel still found it difficult to speak about the time after the war, although she had allegedly just

¹⁶³ Bielenberg's respect for the *Trümmerfrauen* she encountered in Berlin in 1946 – the women who removed the rubble and debris – reveals the extent to which both she and they derived their energy after the war from their ability to suppress their emotions and memories of the war. W. G. Sebald, in *Luftkrieg und Literatur* (*On the Natural History of Destruction*), argues that the very success of postwar Germany – and the apparent lack of engagement with traumatic events – rested on this decision to leave the dead victims of large-scale destruction unmourned and to rebuild the cities on top of their unretrieved bodies.

completed her second memoir (cf. Watts 35).¹⁶⁴ In parts, *The Road Ahead*, which was only published three years later, may read, as the title of one German review suggests, like another “*Irishes Tagebuch*” (von Gehren 37). The impressionistic snapshots Bielenberg offered of her life after the war struck some reviewers as less resonant and well composed than those in *The Past Is Myself* (cf. complaints raised by Craig, Hawtree and L. Miller). Yet the second memoir serves as a reflective commentary on the creation of Bielenberg’s first book and chronicles her growing engagement with history – both German and Irish. Whereas her first memoir, for all its compassion with “her adopted compatriots” (James 275), seems to seal a rupture with Germany in the very act of testifying for those who had been her friends there, the sequel seeks to explain this move and to rebuild bridges. It commemorates the “goodness and integrity” of the citizens of Rohrbach in the Black Forest who helped the Bielenbergs survive, setting the conditions for the continuation of their story in Ireland. In contrast to *The Past Is Myself*, her second memoir emphasises her personal stake in trying to shape the future – “the road ahead” of the title – a challenge to which Bielenberg rises by considering contemporary contexts within the framework of a European historical consciousness. As a result, *The Road Ahead* is more than an account of the past, as Hugo Hamilton claims in his review for *The Irish Times* (cf. 1992: A8). Rather, as I will show in chapter 1.6, it presents a practical example of multidirectional memory, establishing connections between Bielenberg’s experiences in Nazi Germany and dangerous manifestations of totalitarianism, intolerance or bigotry that she encountered elsewhere.

¹⁶⁴ As will be explained in chapter 1.5, this claim cannot be true, as Bielenberg’s editor informed Transworld Publishers in September 1990 that only the first half of the memoir, dealing with the immediate postwar years, was completed, and that Bielenberg was still writing the second part about her life in Ireland (cf. copy of Antonia Till’s letter from 27 September 1990 among Bielenberg’s papers).

1.4. “Life Amongst the Huns”: Outsider and Victim in Nazi Germany

When von Trott jokingly suggested “Life Amongst the Huns” as a suitable title for a future memoir in the spring of 1944, he openly acknowledged the devastating effect of Britain’s negative German hetero-image which had cost him the trust of many friends abroad. He had felt keenly their suspicion of him and his country, which Churchill subsumed under the sweeping terms “Prussian Militarism and Nazism” (quoted in Kettenacker 22). With his personal involvement in the *Kreisauer Kreis* and the July 1944 plot, of course, he sought to invalidate this very stereotype of the barbarian horde and “to atone for”, as Bielenberg saw it, “the evils (...) perpetrated by [his] country” (Introduction to Vassiltchikov’s *Berlin Diaries*: xiii). Bielenberg did something similar, many years later, by bearing witness to “the other Germany” – that of Adam and of her husband – in her own life story and by lending her credibility as an “Englishwoman”, as advertised on the cover of both the first edition and the latest one. At the time she was writing *The Past Is Myself*, Peter was still barely able to speak about his imprisonment in Ravensbrück concentration camp, let alone write about it (cf. Martin 1988: 17.).¹⁶⁵ The result, I would argue, is a problematic split in the memoir between bearing witness to the story of ordinary or “good” Germans, while simultaneously trying to distance herself from the time, people and place. In the process of this balancing act, Bielenberg goes some way towards identifying with the lot of German civilians in the context of a common victimisation by the Nazi regime. This shared identity is limited, however, and preceded and succeeded by the establishment of firm boundaries founded on national stereotypes. The negative German hetero-images, which Bielenberg absorbed through British media and culture and knew to be fictitious (cf. chapter 1.5), were

¹⁶⁵ At the time she wrote “Peter’s Story”, she believed she would never hear him recount it again (cf. *PIM* 258). In two later interviews, Peter apparently lost his voice completely when trying to speak about his friends who were killed and about his personal experiences and had to leave the room to compose himself (cf. Martin 1988: 17). He did, however, give some interviews (cf. Hand, McElhatton) and even gave a detailed account of his life, including his imprisonment, to the Imperial War Museum in 1995. A transcript of this recorded interview was published by Jamie Bulloch and Katharina Bielenberg in 2002.

reactivated as a result of her aforementioned strategy of dealing with emotionally challenging situations. Confronting incomprehensible circumstances with ridicule, and facing fear with forced jollity was, by her own admission, to be her coping mechanism throughout her life and significantly influenced the tone of her memoirs. In one way, this strategy made her texts eminently readable, as the largely positive, almost relieved responses of Irish, English and German reviewers show. At the same time, the easy acceptance of her writing may signal its possible failure on a deeper level, that is, to convey “emotional truth” and, in this way, bring the present closer to the past.

During the Second World War, as one reviewer pointed out, Bielenberg’s “experiences were those of a German (...) she shared the suffering and the final humiliation of the German people” (Anon., *TLS*, 2 April 1970: 356). The hardships and fear she experienced may explain Bielenberg’s decision to exculpate many of the Germans she met as either non-political and benevolent, or as resisters. Elsewhere, she acknowledged that “[w]e all of us compromised, there’s no doubt about it. Perhaps it is easier for me, as an Englishwoman, to say I did” (P. H. S. 10). The title adopted for the German translation of *The Past Is Myself – Als ich Deutsche war, 1934-45: Eine Engländerin erzählt* (“When I Was German, 1933-45: An Englishwoman’s Story”) – seems to suggest a degree of solidarity for which thousands of her German readers apparently thanked her (cf. Anon., *TLS*, 2 April 1970: 356). At the same time, the timeframe and subtitle indicate the clear temporal limits of such proximity: their shared suffering under Nazism ends precisely at the moment of Germany’s defeat and Bielenberg’s repatriation. Of course, the choice of the German title would have been at the discretion of her publisher, the Biederstein Verlag. In interview with Martin, Bielenberg, in fact, dismissed it as “very ordinary” (Martin 1988: 10).¹⁶⁶ However, she made a similarly explicit distinction between her former and present self in the “Foreword” to *The Past Is*

¹⁶⁶ The provisional title on a manuscript of the German translation among Bielenberg’s private papers, *Vorbei ist nie vorbei* (“The past is never over”), is, in fact, more faithful to the English *The Past Is Myself*.

Myself: claiming first, “I am English, I was German, and above all I was there”, Bielenberg then thanks her husband for encouraging her “to write about *his* country” (emphasis added). I would, therefore, strongly question her readiness to share the burden of responsibility with the Germans. Rather, the transition from conceiving of herself as the victim of a World War, in common with many other innocent civilians, to identifying Germans as the perpetrators of this war, and of its atrocities, indicates her dissociation from her German contemporaries and realignment with a British standpoint.

Prior to September 1939, Bielenberg describes herself as a “pop-eyed” (*PIM* 44) wanderer, shuttling back and forth between England and Germany, with the attitude of a mystified onlooker rather than a participant in events. Throughout her years in Germany (*PIM* 76), she retains her stiff upper lip, marvelling time and again at the cultural and social differences between her new and old home.¹⁶⁷ From the very beginning, she draws direct comparisons which present her English compatriots as more sophisticated than the “fat as butter (...) Siegfrieds and Sieglindes” (*PIM* 44) who have the temerity to consider themselves “the only sufferers in the world” (*PIM* 20). Similar to Lady Wilde’s disparaging attitude towards Germany, its fashions and its people (readily identified with the military power Prussia), there is a constant element of bemusement in Bielenberg’s observations on German customs, be they singing, sports or Sunday afternoon strolls (cf. *PIM* 20, 27). This tendency occasionally turns into condemnation and diatribe as, for example, in her verdict on Austrians and Bavarians as particularly loathsome exponents of the German character (cf. *PIM* 100). Despite a certain amount of self-deprecation on her own side, the German hetero-image she establishes is decidedly inferior to the self-image

¹⁶⁷ This strategy of suppressing fear or incomprehension with forced jollity was to assist (and simultaneously hinder) her throughout her life. Even when marauding French soldiers haunt the environs of Rohrbach in 1945, she tries to maintain a balance between fear and derision:

May 26th The Moroccans are probably the worst because they attack anything female between the age of 15 and 70. Women and chickens are their main sport. Women at night and chickens during the day. When a patrol rides through, they halt, ask for arms, ogle the women, and then off after the chickens. They then ride off with each one or two squaking [sic] birds hanging from their saddlebags. La grande armée. At night the frightened peasant women and girls in the lonely farms are as easy to get as the chickens.

she seeks to uphold. One particular target of Bielenberg's criticism is the unemancipated, frumpy, docile, middle-class German housewife (cf. *PIM* 17, 57) who seemingly accepts her "second-class citizenship" (*RA* 120) in German society. In Bielenberg's eyes, these women's only redeeming feature is their efficiency, a virtue she feels she lacks due to her Irish-influenced "inclination to look quite fatalistically" at household chores (*PIM* 191). Bielenberg was spared the German housewife's fate until the outbreak of war put an end to her monthly allowance from a family trust, which her mother had established for Christabel and her sister Barbara with the inheritance from her brother, Lord Northcliffe (cf. abandoned chapter on her mother). Bielenberg made much of the fact that both her mother and she were named after the British suffragette Christabel Pankhurst, although in view of the latter's birth in 1880, this seems an untenable claim in the case of her mother, who was born that same year.¹⁶⁸ She took particular pride in her mother's "feminism" (cf. *ibid.*, also repeated in several interviews collected by the Imperial War Museum). Feminism, in this case, seems to be equated primarily with financial independence, mobility and modern commodities, for example, having her own car and a nurse to mind her children until she moved to Rohrbach (cf. Martin 1988: 31ff.; letter to "Johnny" from November 1943). Yet few of the privileges she enjoyed over German middle-class women are mentioned in the memoir, perhaps so as not to call into question her superiority. The women Bielenberg does express an affinity with in her book are either stylish and unconventional (for example, Mary von Wussow, the English wife of a German diplomat, and Lexi) or tough and witty like the Berlin market vendors, Frau Muckle, the inn-keeper, and her maid Martina, and, after the war, the *Trümmerfrauen* in Berlin.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Elsewhere, Bielenberg modified this claim and stated she was named after Pankhurst who was in prison at the time she was born (Barrett 13).

¹⁶⁹ Her appreciation of women's can-do spirit in adverse situations also comes across in her brief reference to her involvement in the Peace People movement (cf. *RA* 212; also Bielenberg's numerous letters to the editor on this matter and her private letter to Mairead Corrigan).

Bielenberg's encounters with Germans in the eight years before the war, such as she records them, were at first restricted to Hamburg's well-to-do society, which, she notes, considered itself a cut above the rest of the country. Her husband's college friend Adam is the first person she meets from a Germany she admits she hardly knows (cf. *PIM* 40). A bright and charismatic young aristocrat from Hesse, she portrays him as a somewhat Anglophile, morally superior individual – "the conscience of the race", as she would later call him (Bielenberg 1990: A9). Through Adam, she and her husband befriend other resisters, for example Helmuth James Graf von Moltke, and meet many other illustrious figures affiliated with the Foreign Office, among them the White Russian "socialite" Missie Vassiltchikov.¹⁷⁰ The close-knit intimacy of this insider set is enhanced by the fact that Bielenberg chooses not to introduce Hannes, Teddy, Spitzzy, Dohnanyi, von Einsiedel, von Throta, and others, whose names she drops in the course of the book (cf. *PIM* 79ff.), and who, without considerable background knowledge of the German resistance, remain just ciphers. Only one star guest in her Dahlem villa, Hubertus Hohenzollern, is given away as a descendant of the *Kaiser* and cousin of the Prince of Wales (cf. *PIM* 80). The impression she inadvertently creates is that of an exclusive world of resisters which partly explains the sarcastic title "Tee und Widerstand" ("High Tea and Resistance") of a German review of her book (Anon., *Der Spiegel* 1969). The same article bluntly points out that, much as the regime may have been ridiculed, criticised and attacked in the circles Bielenberg commemorates, very little was actively done against it (cf. Anon. 193).¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ Although Missie is not mentioned in Bielenberg's books, the latter recalls in her Introduction to *The Berlin Diaries* that they first met at a party in 1941 at the Bielenbergs' villa in Berlin-Dahlem (cf. xi). The only party mentioned in *The Past Is Myself*, however, took place in autumn 1940 ("A Dinner Party"), at which many employees of the Foreign Office were indeed present. There is no corresponding entry in Missie's diary which would reveal more about this first encounter, although there is a record of a "supper with friends in Dahlem" for 30 September 1940.

¹⁷¹ In October 2010, a commission of four eminent historians appointed by Joschka Fischer five years earlier published their findings on the history of the German Foreign Office during the Third Reich. *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit: Deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik* puts paid to the long-held belief – perpetuated, for example, in Missie's *Diaries* and in Bielenberg's memoir – that this department was a seedbed of the German resistance and practically exempt from the effects of Nazi doctrines. On the contrary, they describe von Trott as an outsider within the Foreign Office (cf. 302) and maintain that the overwhelming majority of German diplomats assisted in the implementation of the deportation and

Asked by Martin why she did not take on an active role among the Hitler opponents who met in her house, other than serving coffee and listening (cf. *PIM* 71), Bielenberg professed that, as a foreigner, she did not feel as concerned, nor was she used to the straightforward German way of discussing issues (cf. Martin 1988: 17). This statement appears surprising in view of her express disapproval of both the German wife's submissiveness and the German public's acquiescence. If the excluded chapter, "A Luncheon Party (Summer 1940)", is taken into account (cf. chapter 1.2), it would even seem contradictory, for in it she clearly outlines her readiness to take on an active role in the opposition's attempt to overthrow Hitler. Without this chapter, however, her position in the memoir remains more ambiguous. An episode in the second chapter of *The Past Is Myself* exemplifies this ambiguity. During an unpleasant incident in a German restaurant in the early 1930s, in which a group of storm troopers start harassing Jewish patrons, Bielenberg becomes "aware quite suddenly that [she] was a stranger in the place, born and bred in a country where communal activities and also communal protest belonged as much to a way of life as cricket or Christmas pudding" (*PIM* 25). Yet just before dissociating herself from the people around her in this manner, she admits that her own instinct had been to avoid trouble and to restrain Peter, who *instinctively* had come to the aid of the Jewish group. While she expects courage and democratic commitment from her fellow German citizens on a scale comparable to what she believes would be normal in Britain, she feels exempt from becoming involved herself. Her contradictory stance is epitomised by her assertion that "there could be no standing on the sidelines" in Nazi Germany, only

extermination of Jewish citizens in German-occupied territories. Some aspects of this work have been criticised by other historians, for example by Johannes Hürter and Hans Mommsen. According to Mommsen, *Das Amt* is misleading in its exaggeration of the German Foreign Office's active participation in the process of decision making on "the final solution" (cf. Mommsen 11) and suffers from flaws in its methodology. Hürter criticises the study's sole focus on the Foreign Office's role in the Holocaust, arguing that by leaving its involvement in other war crimes and atrocities unexplored, the authors were not only oversimplifying the bigger historical picture but also facilitating an unreflected process of "negative identification with the perpetrators" (94), which risks effacing the distinction between different kinds of complicity and responsibility.

to then add that it was up to each individual's conscience to decide "how far they should go and no further" (*PIM* 98).

The ambivalence in her reaction to the growing difficulties encountered by her Jewish fellow citizens is also apparent in her resigned acceptance of their fate after the Nuremberg Race Laws were enacted in 1935. It is summed up in the statement that they had overnight become "a mutual embarrassment" and were much better "safely off [her] conscience overseas" (*PIM* 30). The exodus of Jewish citizens actually helps her to acquire a home in Berlin, a villa she purchases from a Jewish couple in need of "some welcome English pounds" (*PIM* 46) for their emigration. Significantly, when Bielenberg buys the house, she describes it as "a refuge" for her and her family, a place where she, wrongly, hopes to escape the "impending catastrophe" (*PIM* 46). At the same time, she almost immediately jeopardises her safe haven by opening her doors wide to members of a small group of resisters who meet there regularly to discuss Hitler's overthrow (cf. *PIM* 71). Her justification for her shifting stance is twofold: on the one hand, she adopts the convenient standpoint that these were not her "countrymen who were going so swiftly around the bend" (*PIM* 34). On the other hand, she falls back on the excuse of female impotence and victimhood. The most striking example of this behaviour is related under the emblematic title, "A Jew Story"¹⁷²: when a *female* friend asks her to harbour a Jewish couple, Bielenberg is inclined to show her true colours and offer help, yet with her husband abroad on business, she feels obliged to seek the advice of her neighbour, Carl Langbehn, who has vouched for her as an alien. He, in turn, insists that, as a foreigner and mother, she is "not a free agent" (*PIM* 114) and hence not in a position to do as her conscience commands. Although she obeys him, she grants the couple two nights' stay in her cellar. As if to

¹⁷² The corrections made in the American version of *The Past Is Myself*, published by W. W. Norton as *Ride Out the Dark*, give a clear indication of a different sensitivity to Bielenberg's references to Jews (cf. letter from Evan Thomas from 21 May 1970 to Bielenberg, a copy of which went to Norah Smallwood at Chatto & Windus, Reading University, CW224/14/2). For example, the title of "A Jew Story" was changed to "Star of David", a reference describing Ingrid Warburg as "a lovely Jewess" became "the lovely Ingrid Warburg" and "a Jewboy" was rendered in italics in German as "*Judenjunge*" to emphasise the word's proper place in pejorative Nazi language (*Ride out the Dark* 23).

heighten the impression of facing overpowering forces, Bielenberg finishes the episode by fastening her memory's eye on a pot of forsythia twigs she had left in the cellar to blossom in time for Christmas and then forgotten, and which the Jewish couple had moved in front of the barred window, perhaps to brighten up their hiding place. All she can see, however, are the plant's "sickly green leaves" (*PIM* 115) which remind her of her ineptitude in the face of a concrete reality that will neither stop at the threshold of her home nor of her identity. This incident becomes oddly submerged in the overall context of her narration, possibly precisely because of the pain it caused her to remember and write about it. Bielenberg may have been trying to keep memory at bay, even if she knew all along, as she says in the deleted last paragraph in a draft of this chapter, "that I would not forget as long as I lived". Unable to resort to her habitual coping mechanism of comic relief, Bielenberg has to contain this emotionally fraught episode within manageable images and acceptable explanations. Yet despite her attempts to frame, explain and shape the narrative, she is unable to impose a sense of closure. Looking back down the cellar stairs of her former home and into the past, Bielenberg the writer comes as close to conveying "empathic unsettlement" as she can bear.

Annemarie Tröger has researched the tendency among German women to narrate their experiences of the war as a catastrophic, apolitical event, operating beyond their sphere of influence. She argues that the effects of the war can be traced in the very way women remember it, and in the survival of "the strange ideological hybrid of Nazi womanhood, the tough but submissive female" (294). Typically, the women she interviewed experienced an intense conflict between needing to be exceptionally strong to survive the war's hardships, and their simultaneous feeling of weakness and helplessness in the face of air raids, warfare and a dangerous political system. When recalling situations of huge stress, they tended to give in to the pull of these regressive needs and deliberately infantilised themselves in their recollections. Consequently, the notion of victimhood

dominates women's accounts of the war to the extent that they often do not feel responsible for any aspect of it:

Pleading 'not guilty' in all political matters is their favorite answer when they are confronted with their role in the rise of fascism. That victims are responsible too, even for their own victimization, is never allowed to enter their minds. They are dazzled and bewildered when held accountable. (Tröger 299)

Bielenberg's response to the challenging situation in "A Jew Story" is not dissimilar, in that she, too, emphasises her weakness by having a strong male figure tell her what to do. After she delivers her negative reply to the Jewish husband, she becomes physically sick and, like a child, has to rely on Langbehn and his elderly mother who, "radiating expertise, bustle, and comfort" (*PIM* 115), nurses her back to her senses. Although she openly admits her personal failure and self-loathing, she tries to qualify these by insisting that she was a victim of circumstances beyond her own creation. This feeling of victimisation increased when she later learned that the Jewish couple was eventually arrested: "When I heard from this friend that they had got caught, I most certainly loathed National Socialism more than ever in my life because I felt he [Hitler] had involved me in murder" (Martin 1988: 24).

There are other instances long before this crucial episode in the memoir which spark off a similar reaction in her. A chance encounter with the housekeeper of her former Jewish paediatrician, who allegedly committed suicide in the Netherlands, leads her to hurriedly compile a long list in her mind to justify her non-involvement: her youth, the lack of political guidance from her "elders and supposedly betters", and the fact that, because she was not Jewish, "it was easy to bury one's head in the sand", although she and her husband "had tried often enough to fumble our way through the confusing fog of fact or fiction" (*PIM* 32). When war breaks out, she has other things to worry about:

Then we were very busy trying to keep alive ourselves. If you're going through that period yourself, you haven't got enough room in your emotions really to involve yourself highly emotional with Jews, if I'm going to be honest. That it was happening, that it was awful, but then the bombs came night after night – certainly after 1942 which was the Holocaust period. (Martin 1988: 25)

Thus, she could assert almost five decades later that she had no guilty conscience, except in relation to the Jewish couple (cf. Martin 1988: 8, 24). In her self-defence, she cited a seemingly insurmountable argument: “I challenge anybody who has not lived under a dictatorship to understand what it was like, or how they would react themselves” (Martin 1988: 24, reiterated in *RA* 209).¹⁷³ In contrast to this rebuttal, Frances Welch’s interview five years later refers to *The Past Is Myself* as “one of several acts of atonement (...) that Christabel felt necessary for what she saw as her part in the German war crimes”. The use of “atonement” (much like the use of “catharsis” in other articles) would suggest that Bielenberg’s view on her life in Nazi Germany and on her implication in its policies was more complicated than her affirmation in interview with Martin suggests. Her reaction to a very unpleasant confrontation with anti-Semitism in her own family after the war gives an indication of the ongoing need to negotiate positions between private and public persona. Although her uncle’s inexplicable revulsion against Jews (cf. *RA* 126f.) embarrasses her, this does not affect her respect and affection for him personally. When she takes pity on Victor Gollancz and allows him to use the attic in her uncle’s home for his “Save Europe Now” fund, she does so behind her relative’s back so as not to challenge his prejudices, expecting Gollancz and his staff to move around the large mansion as unnoticeably and anonymously as the Jewish “submarines” in Berlin¹⁷⁴ who had sought shelter in the cellar of her villa (cf. *RA* 128f.).

¹⁷³ In later years, Bielenberg confronted the question of how much she knew about what was happening to the Jews in Germany more directly. In a handwritten draft for a speech given in the Synagogue in Terenure, Dublin, as well as in interviews recorded by Thames TV and the IWM (reels 2 and 4 respectively) she remembers how the Dutch head of Unilever, a Mr Hendriks, arrived perturbed at a dinner party one night, telling of a strange sight at a railway station in Czechoslovakia where his train had been stopped alongside another train: he had seen children’s hands sticking out of the slats of cattle trucks before he was ushered back inside his train by an SS soldier. Despite the horror his tale struck in his listeners, and despite knowing about the deportation of Jews to Poland, Bielenberg maintains it was beyond them to conceptualise the notion of mass extermination before the existence of the death camps was revealed to them by the Allies after the war.

¹⁷⁴ *U-Boote* (“submarines”) was the German term for Jews who removed the Star of David from their clothes and went into hiding.

However, if Bielenberg intended her memoir to be an instructive lesson for her children and all those who did not experience life in Nazi Germany themselves, adopting a stance of dissociation and victimisation risks undermining her message. Perhaps it is justified to suggest that, in writing about the past, she was not merely undergoing a catharsis, but also, like the women Tröger interviewed, actively reshaping her former self within acceptable forms of narrating her experiences of the Second World War. Yet if what is at stake in Bielenberg's testimony of the Second World War is her interpretation of events in light of her evolving personality and context, then her perspective needs to be examined not only in light of the knowledge gained with hindsight, but also in light of her actions and of her interpretation of the events at the time they occurred. The following excerpt highlights her resolute reaction, recorded in her diary, on hearing of her husband's arrest:

*September 2nd [1944] (...) I have decided to leave for Berlin tomorrow. The Americans are coming daily nearer and the journey is long and dangerous and perhaps I shall be cut off from the children but I must go. The last time I was in G. [Graudenz] Peter showed me those Gestapo brutes and said they were after his blood. I know they've got him. There is no thinking what they may do to him. I think I will go first to Munich and see Seiler. And then up to Berlin. Let's hope no alarms. There is of course a chance that I'll be arrested too. I have written to Mummy and Pom in case. I want the children to go to England if anything happens to us. I have decided that should I find out that they have definite proof on Peter then I must try to bribe Lange. If he forgets P's *Akte* [file], then I will see if I can help him after the war. I think the end must be near now, and he must know it too. There is of course the chance that he will arrest me too, but I must risk that. Sometimes I find myself wishing I didn't know so much. I have no idea how I will react to third degree or those injections. The best thing I think is to read and soak myself in 'Völkischer Beobachter'¹⁷⁵ until I talk N. Socialism in my sleep.*

Her mind is made up to do everything in her power, despite realising the dangers for her husband, her children, herself and others should she be injured on her journey or arrested and tortured by the Gestapo. When marauding French troops roam the Black Forest in the spring of 1945, Bielenberg is even less prepared to become a victim of the all too common fate in those days of many women around her:

¹⁷⁵ Official newspaper of the NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers' Party).

May 26th (...) When Moroccans come, I stand there and chat away about ‘Anglaise, poules Anglaise [sic], maison anglaise’ and when they ask where my husband is, I always say he is with the Commandant and will be back any minute. Being large and fat the blacks seem to have a particular liking for me which makes things rather difficult. One of the funny things is that the oldest and stringiest of the females in the village are the most frightened of being raped. Aged spinsters and grandmothers barricade themselves in everywhere. Tante Ulla is certain they’ll have a go at her one day and Ellen’s mother won’t stay alone in the house.

These notes highlight the change in Bielenberg’s attitude between the time when these events happened and the time when they were recalled in her memoir: from feeling an active agent, she becomes a victim of the war and Nazi regime with hindsight and eventually dissociates herself completely from the disgraced perpetrator people.

1.5. “British to My Irish Core”: Formulating a Self-Image with Hindsight

Bielenberg maintained that what distinguished her memoir from that of German contemporaries writing about their experiences in Nazi Germany was that, unlike them, she was not pleading either her innocence or her bad conscience, as she was neither guilty nor in any way accountable (cf. Martin 1988: 15). Forgetting her unpublished chapter, “A Luncheon Party”, she insisted: “Of course one has a conscience, but in the back of the mind I was always thinking: ‘This is not my people going around the bend.’ It wasn’t my people” (eadem 16). The three extant versions of the draft chapter *Manu 4*, however, show the struggle behind her attempts to explain why she both failed to realise the implications of the changes in Germany and to act on her personal negative experiences. “Why was it that we did not leave?” she asked, and then crossed out, at the end of the first, short version of this chapter. “In mitigation,” Bielenberg argues in an extended version, “it would have to be added that we were united in our ignorance at the time with a distinguished company of elders and supposedly betters, not only in Germany, but also in Europe and beyond the seas” (11). Although this may sound like an exculpation of sorts, the real plea at the bottom of Bielenberg’s memoir is her need to assert her difference and to define her belonging. Part of her ongoing negotiation of her self-image was, as the previous chapter has shown,

the reactivation of received national stereotypes in her characterisation of her German contemporaries and her temporary recourse to victimhood. Her expression of allegiance to a positive, predominantly British-influenced auto-image in *The Past Is Myself* is complicated both by her lived experience, which would contradict simplistic notions of self and other, and by a further probing of her Anglo-Irish connection in *The Road Ahead*. I would argue that positioning herself in relation to her English roots, her German past and her Irish home is a second important balancing act Bielenberg undertakes in her works and results in the creation of images of self and other that chart the passage imagery describes from “nomination” to “domination”.

Looking back from the vantage point of her seventieth birthday at the end of her second memoir, Bielenberg notes with satisfaction “the exploding of many (...) national myths” (RA 215) in the second half of the twentieth century. One-sided history lessons, such as she and her husband had received, in which emphasis was only laid on the exploits and achievements of one’s own nation, seemed a thing of the past. Yet her memoirs themselves chronicle the fraught progression towards that stage where the explosion of national myths could actually be considered edifying rather than debilitating, revealing the longevity of national stereotypes, the lasting influence of propaganda, and the persistent need to conceive of the self in opposition to, and as superior to, the other. In the “Prologue” to *The Past Is Myself*, Bielenberg recalls how the outbreak of the Second World War instinctively brought back the anti-German propaganda of the previous one, instilled in her as a child by the British media – an implicit reference, perhaps, to her uncle, Lord Northcliffe, Director for Propaganda at the time:

(...) I had been given to understand that the only good German was a dead German (...) There was the postcard too of a row of little pigs in brass-spiked helmets, goose-stepping smartly into a pigsty, propelled from behind by the boot of a huge laughing Tommy (...). (PIM 14)

These anti-Prussian notions resurfaced in 1946 when she had to establish contact with the manager of the Hohenzollern Estates, Count Hardenberg, who, together with his wife, was

one of the founding members of the charity Hilfswerk 20. Juli 1944, which coordinated donations received from the July 20 Memorial Fund (cf. Toyka-Seid 159). With some surprise she records his function, “for (...) having burned the effigy of the Kaiser every Guy Fawkes’ Day during my childhood, I thought we must have got rid of the Hohenzollerns and their possessions once and for all” (RA 113). Despite this identification with “we”, the victors of both World Wars, Bielenberg knew when she returned to England in 1945 that she was inevitably compromised by having lived in Nazi Germany, that she had even been considered an “enemy alien” during the war.¹⁷⁶ She was “branded by Hitler, by war, by failure, almost by the fact that [she] had not ended in a gas chamber” (RA 64). Her position, in short, was not very different to that of other Germans, who, like her, longed for the return to a prewar *status quo* and an untainted relationship with their home country. As a result, Bielenberg’s insider perspective on life in Nazi Germany emphasises the ordinariness of most Germans during the war. Two aspects which certainly helped her mingle with relative ease among them were, firstly, her proficiency in German,¹⁷⁷ and secondly, the fact that, by her own admission, she was neither considered nor treated as an *Ausländer* (“alien”) by other Germans (cf. Martin 1988: 29). In part this may be due, as Bielenberg maintains in *The Past Is Myself*, to the fact that the Germans had no deep-rooted hate of their enemies in the war (cf. PIM 145). On the contrary, her Anglo-Irish background impressed many people she met, either because of their positive hetero-image of England or because of their romantic ideas of Ireland. This is most notable with Peter’s

¹⁷⁶ One practical implication of her “enemy alien” status was that her income from the family trust would have been seized by the British government had her father not changed it into a voluntary trust (cf. Martin 1988: 30).

¹⁷⁷ In her introduction to Missie’s diaries, Bielenberg somewhat misleadingly claims that the two women switched to English at their first meeting in 1941, as neither of them spoke very good German (cf. xi). This may have been true of Missie, who repeatedly remarks in her diary on being criticised in work for her poor German orthography, yet it would hardly be true of Bielenberg, who had been in Germany more or less continuously since 1931. Indeed, Bielenberg emphasises elsewhere that she spoke German well (Martin 1988: 31), and in her interview for the Imperial War Museum, she sometimes bungles up her sentences because in speaking about the war period, she inevitably lapses into German expressions. Certainly, her regular letters to her mother-in-law in Aumühle suggest a good command of German, as does the fact that she was able to communicate with villagers in Austria and in the Black Forest, whose dialects and accents would have been difficult to follow even for native German speakers.

interrogator, Inspector Lange, and the unnamed Latvian SS soldier she meets on her return journey in winter 1945. Although Bielenberg felt at best “pseudo-German” (RA 24) even after years of living in Germany, she was tactful not to behave “very British” either (Martin 1988: 31), unlike other friends married to Germans who refused to learn the language and who ignored certain precautions necessary in Nazi Germany, thereby endangering themselves and others (for example, Mary von Wussow in “A Dangerous Tea Party”). Bielenberg identified with the ideals of her German friends (cf. RA 151) and felt alienated by the British government’s reluctance to engage with the German opposition.

Whereas these factors complicate and qualify her image of her national character, Bielenberg feels compelled in her writing to bolster her otherness and allegiance to her place of origin. *The Past Is Myself* succinctly records her endeavours to cultivate an outsider status that allows her the personal detachment needed from the past, while simultaneously lending her testimony credibility with her countrymen. Her recourse to cultural memory’s storehouse for stereotypical images of self and other not only participates in perpetuating literary constructs of national character in yet another text, but, more importantly, it also reflects the persistence of a deep-felt human need to imagine a home for the self among a group that provides a setting of security and intimacy. Bielenberg’s difficult negotiation of the outlines of such a comfort zone is highlighted by two very different responses to her sense of belonging just before and during the war. A false alarm in 1938 that saw her flee to Denmark with her children reinforces her belief, upon her return, that she “surely belonged” to Germany, “my home, the people I loved, Lance-Corporal Bielenberg” (PIM 37). Once Britain enters the war, however, Bielenberg registers an urgent need to define herself in relation to the historical events around her by virtue of her English background:

I realized then that I was alone, having somehow landed myself rather precariously straddling a fence. (...) In national terms, I had the sneaking feeling that by ‘good’ I had things British in mind, by ‘evil’ any foreigner stupid enough to dispute the matter. (...) I sensed that the road ahead might be

a lonely one, for nothing would be black and nothing white, and if I wished to travel it with any confidence I would need repeatedly to return to my roots, to re-establish my identity almost, before I could arrive at some tentative conclusion as to how I was to carry on. (*PIM* 47)

In practice, this engagement with her roots amounts to withdrawing into “some private no-man’s-land” (*PIM* 142) and dreaming of being “back home” (*PIM* 107) and “amongst [her] own people” (*PIM* 137). The letter Bielenberg sent to her Swedish friend Elsa from Rohrbach on 12 June 1943 offers contemporaneous proof of her disposition:

Sometimes I get so homesick I don’t know what I am going to do. I think of all the lovely times we had and remember every detail. Playing golf with Pom at Porters, or going up to town with Mam, and the flowers Mam always put in our room when we arrived, or wandering over to see Bar, or the talks with Bas and John – it was all so good – it must come back. (...) Sometimes one feels like bursting.¹⁷⁸

Writing about the events decades later, Bielenberg diagnoses her condition as “invasionitis”. She recalls crying when Churchill addresses the nation on her birthday in 1940, speaking of “England’s finest hour”, because she could not be with her countrymen (cf. *PIM* 75) and felt nostalgic for the notion propagated by British radio of “us, social and personal, fish and chips – that was where I belonged” (*PIM* 244). As Piette remarks, the emphasis placed in broadcasts on collective experience and stoicism was itself the result of the propaganda technique favoured during the Second World War in Britain; a technique which, in contrast to the crude images stirring national hatreds of the First World War, emphasised rational facts and figures, a horizontal group connection, integration over agitation and the necessity to defend a particular lifestyle rather than the political aims of the government (cf. Piette 183). Coverage of, for example, the Blitz is a prime example of the sophisticated media approach.¹⁷⁹ The Blitz myth promoted “a generalised story of fire-fighting, underground existence and communal effort” (Piette 73), effectively dispelling

¹⁷⁸ Feelings of homesickness also assail her in the run-up to Christmas 1943 (cf. letter to “Johnny” from November/December 1943, included in the Appendix of the 2011 edition of her memoirs).

¹⁷⁹ Her son Nicholas pointed out that her reference to “carpet bombing” in her diary note for 30 August 1944 highlights his mother’s awareness of new terminology, picked up from BBC broadcasts. Indeed, the OED lists a *New York Times* article from 1944, quoting a US military source, as the earliest mention of the term.

any description of how individuals actually experienced the air raids, providing them instead with a convenient way of expressing the inexpressible and taking heart in their being part of a “common exaltation” (cf. Piette 71) – an exaltation Bielenberg, writing about the period in the 1960s from her desk in Ireland, wished she could have shared in wartime Germany.

The execution of those she considered best in Germany following the failed plot in July 1944 (cf. *PIM* 243) works as a temporary antidote to the escapism she describes in her memoir and rouses her into action to save her husband. Yet on her return journey from Berlin, Bielenberg makes a point of distancing herself again, describing herself as “utterly alone, a stranger, an outsider, for (...) I knew that I did not belong to the defeated people about me” (*PIM* 243). At the time, of course, her instincts were divided between rejection of the “political fools” and sympathy for the people around her – the boys, women and old people she mentions in her diary notes, but also the soldiers on the run from the French whom she helped in spring 1945. Another factor that prevented her from embracing the Allies’ advance wholeheartedly were the air raids which exposed her husband and friends, sheltering in her house in Berlin, to nightly risks which she tried to avert with blessings and prayers (cf. letter to Elsa von Rosen written after Christmas 1943).

Contrary to her representation in *The Past Is Myself*, a comment in Bielenberg’s diary notes reveals that the moment of complete identification with Britain actually only occurred after the war had ended when Sergeant Pecquet and his men appeared in the Adler inn: “I only then realised how I love and miss my country. It came over me like a terrific pain” (26 May 1945). The letters she wrote to her family between July and October 1945 are marked by her growing impatience to be “repatriated”, yet once back home, she wasted no time in taking the necessary steps to build an alternative future for her family in Ireland rather than England. In order to overcome the separation from Peter, she returned to Germany in May 1946 as a special correspondent for the *Observer*, but in donning the

uniform of the British army, she also hardened herself against her former country of residence. Whereas at first her uniform appeared to her like a “phoney” disguise, it helped reinforce the distance between her and Germans, as fraternisation with Germans – even her husband – was not permitted. Although there are instances when she is ashamed of the Allies’ haughty behaviour in occupied Germany, Bielenberg, with the detachment of several decades, lays the blame partly with the repulsive, self-pitying attitude of many Germans, and partly with the French and Russians, who plundered and raped in their zones under the pretence of restoring law and order (cf. *RA* 17, 79, 101). Closer to the actual occurrence of these events, however, her diary entry from 26 May 1945 shows that her reaction echoes that of the community affected: “It would be easier if they said that they’ve only come for that [looting and rape], but they then seem horrified at what the Germans did in France and are doing exactly the same.” Similarly, a letter to Peter from 25 August 1946 highlights the softer cadences in her gradual realisation that her experiences in Nazi Germany had had a traumatic impact which made a return impossible:

I think it would be a good idea if we visited Ireland when you come. In fact I think we will have to. (...) It is really lovely to be able to write ‘when you come’ and to know that it is now certain. The horrible failure of all our plans after 20th July, makes one always surprised if anything succeeds and has given me a sort of complex almost about it. I suppose deep down we have taken a big knock which will take years to recover from. But it is no use grumbling or getting depressed, we have just got to build up again, and try to learn from our despair. I don’t think that that would be possible for us in Germany because we would be continually chafing against the stupidity either of the occupying power or else of the remnants of second class Germans who will be running the show.

However, as my analysis of her first memoir’s emergence has shown, rebuilding their life in Ireland and suppressing the memories of the past was not as simple a task as her pep-talk suggested.

Bielenberg’s engagement with her Anglo-Irish background in her memoirs – just like her relationship with her English roots and German past – is equally subject to the interplay between, and skilful manipulation of, auto- and hetero-images. In *The Past Is*

Myself, her Irish roots are invoked only in passing as varying explanation for her temperament, haphazardness, and charm (cf. *PIM* 43, 143, 191). A reference in a letter she sent to her parents in July 1945 via her Swiss friend André de Blonay further accentuates her concept of Irishness in terms of a spirit of cunning and endurance: “Food is slightly difficult, but I’m not an irishwoman [sic] for nothing, & the last six years have given me good practice!” During her last visit to Berlin in winter 1944/45, at a point of extreme danger, Bielenberg felt it opportune to stress her Irishness in all her encounters with potential or outspoken Nazis: she confuses Inspector Lange with her Anglo-Irish ancestry, which, interpreted in analogy with Aryan tenets, makes her Irish “by blood” (*PIM* 235). She introduces herself to *Herr* Lemke, a stranger she meets at the train station, as being of Irish parents, raised in England and married to a German (cf. *PIM* 245). Finally, she charms the SS soldier with whom she shares a carriage by admitting that “my people come from Ireland” (*PIM* 251). He then confesses his participation in atrocities to her precisely because he thinks that she, coming from Ireland, may understand his motivation in joining the Germans to fight against the Soviets’ occupation of his small country (cf. *PIM* 251). In *The Road Ahead*, Bielenberg’s attitude to Ireland, and her positioning herself in relation to its history and society, bears certain similarities to the coping strategies earlier employed in characterising Germans as sometimes bewildering, sometimes bemusing and sometimes downright frustrating. The effect is, again, one of precisely defining the areas where identification and overlap between her self-image and her Irish hetero-image is desired, and where she wishes to keep her distance. On the one hand, Bielenberg claims not to have come in order to perpetuate an anachronistic vision of the Protestant Ascendancy as “châtelaine” of Munny House (cf. *RA* 177).¹⁸⁰ She feels free of the “‘Big House’

¹⁸⁰ Whatever her proclamations in her memoir, to several Irish journalists who met her she seemed the embodiment of Anglo-Irishness, and her work consequently represented for them not the originally advertised “experiences of an Englishwoman in wartime Germany” (cover of the first edition), but rather “the unusual standpoint of an Anglo-Irish lady” (Mulcahy, 20 October 1982: 7, similarly Hand 8). Mulcahy even states that “‘Anglo-Irish’ [was] her own tag” (Mulcahy, 26 April 1986: 13). When *Christabel* premiered on Irish television in 1988, the *RTE Guide* garnered Duffy’s criticism for pitching the heroine in the drama as an

syndrome" (RA 177) and the historically fraught identity of Anglo-Irishness, having never lived in Ireland before. On the other hand, she considers the land of her forefathers part of her "racial memory" (RA 177) and "own make-up" (RA 171), expressed in certain characteristics she believes she shares with the Irish, for example, disorganisation, optimism and anti-authoritarianism (cf. RA 150), qualities that contrast nicely with her perception of the German character. Her anecdotes, interspersed with snatches of Hiberno-English and Irish, and her attempts to understand Irish life emphasise the eccentricity, unconventionality and the "gentle Irish voice and manners" (RA 143). The humorous account she gives of the previous owners of the run-down estate she and her husband bought is itself a worthy variation on Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* theme (cf. RA 165ff.). In short, her representation of the Irish character often plays to received images which sit well with Arnoldian notions of the Irish as a poetic and emotional, if sentimental, people, steeped in myth and folklore, and hopelessly ineffectual (cf. RA 144).

Her representation of the Irish national character in these stereotypical terms reinforces the structural division of *The Road Ahead* into two parts, "Germany" and "Ireland". Each part is introduced with an epigraph that conveys her two opposing concepts of old and new "home". The epigraph for the first part of her book alludes to an unattainable German longing for *Heimat*: "In der Heimat [...] da gibt's ein Wiederseh'n"¹⁸¹ is a snippet from the chorus of a soldier's song, typically played at military funerals and on Remembrance Day and weighted with connotations of suffering, loss and death. By contrast, the epigraph to the second, Irish part, is a quotation from W. B. Yeats which affirms the living bond between the members of a community through the

Irishwoman, "as if to have admitted to any other nationality would have diminished her extraordinary courage" (Duffy 18). Despite this valid point, Myers went even further in his eulogy of Bielenberg, elevating her to "a daughter of Ireland's middle kingdom: the Ireland of Goldsmith and of Yeats, of Shackleton and French, an Ireland which most of us now recognise as being as validly Irish as the Ireland of the Gael" (7 November 2003: 21).

¹⁸¹ The line translates as "in the homeland, there we shall meet again", but as the promise is made to a dying comrade, "home" refers to no earthly place.

stories and rituals they share: “The history of a nation is not in parliaments and battlefields, but in what the people say to each other on fair days and high days and in how they farm and quarrel and go on pilgrimage.” Perhaps the long gestation of *The Road Ahead*, which closes on Bielenberg’s seventieth birthday on 18 June 1979, prevented her from fully formulating a symbiosis of these two states of mind as the way forward and out of preconceived notions of self and other.¹⁸² Antonia Till, who was sent to help her finish the book, reported back to Transworld Publishers that Bielenberg was struggling to complete the second, *Irish*, part of the memoir with individual chapters on Munny House as a meeting place for people from all over the world, on her involvement in the Peace People Movement, and on writing *The Past Is Myself* and its impact (cf. Bielenberg’s papers for Till’s letter from 27 September 1990). She stressed that Bielenberg, despite being “discouraged and worn by the pressures of writing”, was eager to write the remaining chapters in order to give a full and true account of her personality. In the end, all these events are only briefly touched upon in the penultimate chapter and Epilogue of *The Road Ahead*. What was lost in the final publication, I think, is the sense that Bielenberg had come to stake out her claim to belonging no longer solely by virtue of her past, but by virtue of her own family’s presence in Ireland: her husband – once referred to as “the only bit of Germany I had any interest in whatsoever” (*PIM* 220) and later as “my special bit of Ireland” (*RA* 172) – and her children and grandchildren, raised around the home they built together. The question the survivor Améry had asked so poignantly in his eponymous essay, “Wieviel Heimat braucht der Mensch?” (“How much home does a person need?”), is answered by Bielenberg in her passionate attempts to locate her self in her experiences of the past, but also in her realisation that in order to influence the future, she needs to remain open to the other. Her manuscript of *The Road Ahead* reveals that she had intended

¹⁸² According to Till, half the book (up to, and including, Peter’s hospitalisation in Birmingham) and the Epilogue were ready for copy-editing. Three more chapters had just been written under her guidance which covered, respectively, Bielenberg’s holiday in Ireland with her sons, the purchase of Munny House, and the first years in their new home.

to preface her “Epilogue” with a quotation from Yeats’s “Meditations in Time of Civil War”, which fuses the disparate German and Irish concepts of “home” and interprets the past in terms of adaptability and continuity outliving destruction: “O honey-bees, / Come build in the empty house of the stare.”

1.6. Reviewing History, Writing the Future

Bielenberg’s proposed epigraph could also be understood as an outstretched hand, inviting the next generation to employ the memory of the witness in a new, contemporary setting and in order to create a liveable “nest” in the present. Given her shifting stance between outsider and spokeswoman, it is not surprising that Bielenberg should have chosen a framework provided by two Yeats quotations for her account of her life in Ireland. In its dismissal of official and traditional history, and in its emphasis, instead, on communicative and cultural memory, the epigraph to the second part of *The Road Ahead* is a poignant example of her own position as a writer. Having left a ruined country behind, she and her husband felt they had to build something new (cf. IWM interview, reel 7). Whereas Peter’s catharsis and legacy were primarily realised through the farm he rebuilt, his wife’s consisted in the factual and fictional home she created for her family, in the stories of her life in Germany and Ireland which anchored them in the present by virtue of their past. In recounting her personal memories within the context of two nations’ histories, Bielenberg gives an insight into the difficulties involved in positioning herself in relation to her English roots, her German past and her new Irish home, and in overcoming convenient images of self and other. Her attempts to rise above the limitations of “working memory” and to explore memory not as an exclusive asset in a competition for hegemony, but as a comparative tool which can be used to understand other histories and communities are an important part of her legacy.

There are numerous examples of multidirectional memory in Bielenberg's writing (some more successful than others), where she extrapolates from her experiences in Nazi Germany to assess manifestations of totalitarianism, intolerance or bigotry in Ireland and elsewhere. For example, she muses in *The Road Ahead* that both her liberal upbringing and her experience of Hitler's regime had left her ill-equipped to comprehend the sectarian divide in Northern Ireland and the disproportionate influence of the Catholic Church on public life in the Republic. Under Hitler, she claims, the Catholic and Protestant churches had at least been united in their resistance against a common enemy (*RA* 194) – neglecting to say that only a small faction from each established church had, in fact, opposed Hitler. De Valera's impossible retro-dream of a self-sufficient, Gaelic Ireland also comes in for much criticism, reminding her of Hitler's sentimentalised dreams of comely Teutonic maidens and sturdy Teutonic youth (cf. *RA* 196). Casting her net even wider, Bielenberg explicitly refers to the Apartheid regime in South Africa in the context of discussing the publication of *The Past Is Myself*. "When I hear the word racialism or see racial prejudice," she admitted in 1968, "it hits me between the eyes. Anyone talking of 'niggers' – to me, that's the beginning of Auschwitz" (P. H. S. 10). A further instance of her readiness to draw direct parallels between doubtful tendencies in the present and patterns reminiscent of her experience in Nazi Germany can be found in her plea for the Irish media to report on the positive developments in Northern Ireland and not just on the violence (cf. letters to the editor of *The Irish Times*, 13 June 1978, and *The Irish Independent*, 23 June 1978). After unification, she saw similarities between the lure of the I.R.A. in Ireland and the rise of neo-Nazis in East Germany, arguing that "the disconsolate young" in both countries were "hooking their discontent onto a political ticket" (Gallagher 20). The analogy she establishes between the means used by the Peace People's Executive to remove some of its leaders (Betty Williams and chairman Peter McLachlan) and those employed by Hitler to

eliminate the opposition in 1933 is by far the most provocative (cf. F. O'Connor 8).¹⁸³ In her role as a witness defending the memory of former friends, she also passionately attacked a group of German historians (Klaus-Jürgen Müller, Hans Mommsen and Bernd Martin) at a conference in Leeds in May 1986 for questioning the democratic credentials and intentions of most conspirators involved in the 20 July plot and labelling many of them as "national conservative" (cf. Klaus). Her letter to the editor of *Die Zeit* newspaper from 8 August 1986 is a harsh rebuttal of their critical evaluation of the motives and backgrounds of the resisters, and an attempt to cement the position of these men as German heroes beyond any shadow of doubt (cf. English copy of her letter from 26 June 1986 among her papers).¹⁸⁴

Yet perhaps the most elaborate attempt to understand the challenges of the present in light of the Second World War is to be found in a hitherto undiscovered foray Bielenberg made into writing fiction. In her interview with Martin, Bielenberg rejected the idea that she could have written about her life in a third-person, fictional narrative in order to achieve more objectivity (cf. Martin 1988: 21). However, among her papers I found two related "Irish" short stories, titled "The Great Irish Short Story" and "The Christmas Room" (with the crossed-out former title "The Generation Gap"). A reference in the second story to "Ireland's rather confused scramble into the Common Market" (2) having occurred in the year the story is set indicates that the stories were written after 1973. Perhaps they were exercises for the writers' workshop in Galway in 1976, but neither story

¹⁸³ Bielenberg's endeavours to understand Irish politics remained frustrated (cf. RA 192), and her involvement in the Peace People Movement ended with disillusionment in 1980 (cf. O'Connor's coverage of the Peace People Assembly in April 1980 and the acrimonious correspondence between Bielenberg and Mairead Corrigan in April and May 1980).

¹⁸⁴ In Mommsen's reply to her personally – he did not wish to answer her publicly, as he felt this would only aggravate a debate which in his opinion lacked all objectivity – he corrected some of Bielenberg's misunderstandings and asked her to refrain from baseless allegations against him and his research in future (cf. Bielenberg's papers for his letter from 18 August 1986). As Ueberschär points out in his review of German historiography on the 20 July plot, Mommsen's work was an important contribution towards a more thorough investigation into the motivations behind the German resistance (cf. Ueberschär 104). Together with Müller, Mommsen laid the foundations for a more differentiated and dynamic understanding of the different forms of resistance in Nazi Germany.

is dated.¹⁸⁵ Both stories deal with the Anglo-Irish Lowry family, who moved to the West of Ireland sometime after the Second World War to live in a run-down “castle” and farm. Just after the war, the family had been stationed in Germany where Major Lowry had been involved, “with ever decreasing enthusiasm” (“The Christmas Room” 1), in the re-education of Germans. Meanwhile, his wife absorbed local customs and adopted the German tradition of celebrating Christmas on Christmas Eve. The first story is set during Advent and humorously relates Mrs Lowry’s frustrated attempts to write a story, only to be constantly interrupted: first, by cravings for tea, then by a phone call from her youngest daughter who wants to bring a “refugee” from Northern Ireland over for Christmas, and, at the end of a day, in the course of which she did not get beyond penning down a title, the need to prepare supper for her husband. In the second story, Mrs Lowry critically surveys her colourful family, assembled for the Christmas dinner on Christmas Eve: the eldest son, who is about to get married to his second wife, an exact replica of his first; her clever and ambitious eldest daughter, who travelled to India and returned pregnant with what turned out to be “a very dark baby indeed”; her solid husband, who is rumoured to be having an affair with a lady in County Cavan or Donegal; her youngest daughter, who achieved only one O level in Sculpture and has a penchant for “unsuitable” partners; the bearded “refugee”, airing his many British-related phobias and rehearsed views “from Mao to the Millenium [sic]” (6); her son-in-law, boring her with “his Stock Exchange woes” (4) and begrudging her another glass of champagne; finally, her grandchildren, who belong to a new generation that appears to her “loyal susceptible as yet untrammelled” (9).

Suddenly, the tables turn and Mrs Lowry feels herself scrutinised by an imaginary tribunal. Her panic attack reminds her of an old nightmare that used to torment her as a

¹⁸⁵ There were typed pages of a third, very short story among Bielenberg’s papers, in which she imagined hosting a dinner party around her table in Munny House with German friends who died for their involvement in the resistance and their English political counterparts, Chamberlain, Eden and Astor. Unlike her “Irish stories”, however, this one appeared in *Country Homes and Interiors* in July 1993 as part of the magazine’s Table Talk section.

child – the same nightmare Bielenberg describes at the end of *The Road Ahead* and in interview with Martin of being trapped in a room where talking walls close in on her to crush her. Since doctors “Frued [sic] and Spock” were not yet to hand to advise Mrs Lowry (or Bielenberg) in her childhood, she learned to cope with this situation by turning on the walls and laughing at them in an “outburst of some deep and basic rejoicing, able to defy and make sport of nebulous fears, half recognised misgivings” (6). This strategy used to work in moments of stress throughout her life, just as it did for the author, yet fails Mrs Lowry on this occasion. As the once sheltering walls that make up her existence move in on her, she hears them mock her ambition in life to “build something solid unshakeable enduring and secure on the ruins of the treacherous war-time years[,] something perhaps to hand on” (8) to her children and grandchildren. Worse, the walls denounce her as a collaborator with the “system” and “the status quo”, which she helped perpetuate through her participation in the war on the side of the Allies. The terrorising voices in her head profess to fight for tolerance and their own definition of freedom, if necessary by violence. Faced with adversarial attitudes of the time, Mrs Lowry does not know how to respond and feels “too old now to explain”. Too old, also, to pass judgement on current events, she merely wants to be reassured of the validity of her life “before retiring to her picture frame” (9). Yet when her old habit of deriding the incomprehensible and alien fails and she risks being left behind paralysed, a new solution presents itself: her grandson comes to her rescue, leading her forward by the hand “into the radiance of the Christmas Room” (11).

Perhaps this story reflects a challenge Bielenberg the witness experienced when, once again, violence broke out in the country in which she had settled. Beyond her involvement with the Peace People Movement, she may have felt a need to justify her legacy and to carry it over the threshold of oblivion and into the future. If so, it is significant to note that her lifelong coping mechanism of keeping the other at bay should have ultimately failed and left Mrs Lowry suspended between two worlds, unable to move

on. Authorial control had to be supplanted by a reliance on an external influence that helps the older generation overcome their alienation and distance from their environment. The human link extending across “the generation gap” signals the necessary progression from old perspectives to new démarches and appears to express the same hope as the epigraph intended for the Epilogue of *The Road Ahead*, encouraging the young to build on the legacy bequeathed to them. In the context of remembering the Second World War, Bielenberg’s closing image seems to acknowledge that her memories of the war live on as mediated recollections, to be engaged with in a continuous dialogue on the interpretation of the past.

2. Francis Stuart

Francis Stuart's life up to the point of his departure from Ireland at the beginning of the Second World War has been well documented. Born in Townsville, Queensland, on 29 April 1902, Henry Francis Montgomery Stuart was the son of two Antrim farmers, Henry Irvin Stuart and Elizabeth (Lily) Montgomery. Following his father's sudden death in August that year, his mother returned with him to live with her sister in County Meath.¹⁸⁶ Stuart's relationship to Lily appears to have been distant, especially after she remarried in 1913, and he seems to have been lonely as a child and, later, as a pupil in various English preparatory schools (cf. Natterstad 1974: 14ff., Elborn 14-18). Despite his apparent lack of academic success in Rugby, his mother and aunt decided he should receive tuition for Trinity College's entrance examinations. After meeting his future wife, Iseult Gonne, at one of George Russell's literary *soirées* towards the end of 1919, however, Stuart soon abandoned those preparations. Iseult, who had been Ezra Pound's mistress the previous year and refused a proposal from Yeats three years earlier, was eight years older than Stuart and, at the time, had literary ambitions of her own (cf. Jeffares *et al.* xiiff., 116f.). Nevertheless, she told Yeats as early as December 1919 that she anticipated getting married at Easter (cf. Jeffares *et al.* 117), romantically casting herself and Stuart as "knights in quest of the graal [sic]" (ibid.). They were married on 6 April 1920, a few weeks before Stuart's eighteenth birthday. Maud Gonne MacBride's correspondence with Yeats in June and July 1920 paints a violent picture of the couple's early married life (cf. MacBride White & Jeffares 402ff.; also McCormack 2005: 213ff.), and Iseult herself readily admitted one year later that her husband often behaved like "a wilful spoiled child

¹⁸⁶ F. C. Molloy tried to establish the family's background in Australia and the circumstances of Henry Irvin Stuart's death, but he found no death certificate at the Registrar General's office in Brisbane. There are, consequently, only family rumours in relation to the cause of death: according to one, Henry suffered a sunstroke and shot himself in delirium while in hospital. His son, however, preferred to believe that he had been an outsider and alcoholic and had committed suicide in a Townsville asylum (cf. Molloy 1986: 30).

with a half unconscious but fierce longing for power” (letter to Yeats in Jeffares *et al.* 120). At the same time, she was willing to see in him “genius” (*ibid.*) and to support him in his struggle to become a writer. He fulfilled some of this promise when he published a first collection of poems (*We Have Kept the Faith*) in 1924, shortly after his release from imprisonment for his involvement in the Civil War on the Republican side. Even Yeats acknowledged his potential and awarded him a prize on behalf of the Royal Irish Academy (cf. Elborn 68).

In 1927, Stuart, his wife, baby son, and mother moved to Laragh Castle in County Wicklow where Stuart first attempted to make a living as a poultry farmer before concentrating his efforts entirely on writing fiction. In the course of the 1930s, he published eleven novels and an autobiographical work, but financial difficulties continued to plague the Stuarts’ marriage and were one reason behind Stuart’s acceptance of an invitation to go on a lecture tour in Germany in 1939 (cf. Natterstad 1974: 53).¹⁸⁷ During his stay there, he was offered, and accepted, a post as lecturer in English at Berlin’s Friedrich Wilhelm University. Although he returned to Laragh for the summer, he proceeded with his travel arrangements after the outbreak of war, procured a visa for Switzerland on medical grounds (cf. his letter to Irish Legation in Paris, 28 October 1939, DFA 10/A/72) and arrived in Berlin in January 1940. He was not hindered by the Irish authorities, who suspected his real destination, as the position held by the Secretary of External Affairs, Joseph Walshe, was to avoid the impression of partiality at a time when many Irish people were travelling to Great Britain in order to engage there in similarly “unneutral” activities, be it in the war industry or the army (cf. reply from Walsh [sic in DFA documents] to Liam Archer, G2 Branch (Irish Military Intelligence) from 8 November 1939, DFA 10/A/72). For the next four years, Stuart’s life revolved around

¹⁸⁷ Writing in his diary on 28 July 1942, Stuart made plans for his life after the end of the war, which to him seemed close at the time, and expressed his reluctance to return to his prewar life in Laragh “under the same circumstances, the worst one of which was *poverty*” (emphasis added).

teaching, writing two novels that would never be published,¹⁸⁸ and around Gertrude Meissner, a student who, in 1954, became his second wife. His simultaneous involvement with German radio propaganda and German Military Intelligence (*Abwehr*), however, resulted in a reversal of the Irish government's attitude towards the legitimacy of his stay in Nazi Germany. His applications for a passport renewal in March 1942, May 1944 and as late as April 1945 were all refused on the grounds that "he [was] regarded as having forfeited any claim to [Irish] diplomatic protection by unneutral and disloyal activity" (telegram from Assistant Secretary Frederick Boland to Berlin Legation from 25 May 1944, DFA 10/A/72). Unable to leave Germany, Stuart and his partner spent the last months of the war in close proximity to the Swiss border. In August 1945, he travelled to Paris on a repatriation programme for Displaced Persons, but, failing to obtain an Irish visa for Gertrude, he returned to her in the French occupied zone in November. They were arrested by the French Allied authorities on 21 November on the charges of having recruited agents for the *Abwehr* and broadcast propaganda for the Germans (cf. letter from French Foreign Ministry to Irish Legation in Paris from 18 July 1946, DFA 10/A/72). Following their release on 13 July 1946, Stuart again rejected offers for his repatriation as long as the Irish authorities refused to facilitate Gertrude's immigration, and, eventually, his family and the government desisted from pursuing the matter further. Four years after Iseult's death, in 1958, he settled in Ireland with his second wife.

Stuart published a first book based on his experiences of the immediate aftermath of the Second World War in 1948, twenty years before *The Past Is Myself* appeared. Yet his literary response to the war seems to occupy a halfway point between the testimonies that slowly emerged after 1945 and the creative engagement with mediated memories of

¹⁸⁸ *Winter Song*, completed at the end of 1941, was translated into German by Ruth Weiland but rejected by the German Propaganda Ministry in August 1942 (cf. diary entry for 20 August 1942). Jerry Natterstad suggests that Stuart recycled some parts in *Redemption* (cf. 1976: 95), which also includes fragments from *The Cave of Peace*, another unpublished novel finished at the end of 1943 (cf. last page in Stuart's notebook entitled "Notes on Shakespeare and Other Subjects").

the war undertaken by later generations. The three novels Stuart wrote in Freiburg im Breisgau between 1947 and 1949¹⁸⁹ – *The Pillar of Cloud, Redemption* and *The Flowering Cross* – subordinate the assessment of the war to the celebration of a new way of life emerging from the rubble of a defeated Germany. Reflections on the causes of the disastrous events of the previous years are displaced, and the war is instead interpreted as foundational and inspirational for an “imagined community” of foreign survivors. Stuart’s return to the setting of Nazi Germany in *Victors and Vanquished* and *Black List, Section H* is an acknowledgement of his need to shape the past in light of changing social frameworks. Whereas the philo-Semitic mould of *Victors and Vanquished* failed to convince – a fact Stuart was ultimately in no doubt about, for he took great care to cross out all statements in his diary expressing confidence that this book would “be the best [he] ha[d] yet written” (diary entry for 13 November 1955) – the perspective of sober chronicler in *Black List, Section H* better matched the expectations of an audience receptive to witness accounts of this period.

In its approach and in the response it has elicited, Stuart’s engagement with the war in these books seems curiously affected by a problem Schmitz diagnoses in contemporary German literature on the Second World War:

The representation of German wartime suffering and traumatising is (...) troubled by two complementary issues, that of *the valorisation of trauma* (i.e. immediacy) and that of *historisation* (i.e. distance [through the use of diaries, photographs, documentary footage]), both of which take recourse to an argument about the purported ‘authenticity’ of experience (...) The danger of such an uncritically empathetic approach is an amalgamation with a sentimental desire for a ‘clean’ or ‘uninhibited’ image of German suffering which can be approached with a gesture of compassion and mourning. (...) This is based on a complex act of attempted identification that ultimately validates the experiential perspective of the suffering Germans by the

¹⁸⁹ Stuart’s first postwar novel, *The Pillar of Fire*, was written in 1946, but was rejected by Victor Gollancz (see diary note for 29 June 1947), Jonathan Cape (15 July 1947), Westhorne and Jarrolds (6 September 1947) as well as by Arthur Knopf and Macmillan, his former publishers in the United States. Comments he made in the diary covering the period September 1945 to December 1946 suggest that the subject of the novel was Stuart’s experiences during the war rather than the immediate postwar environment he dwelled on in his next three books.

recognition of the impossibility of imagining their plight, their existential and ethical situation. (Schmitz 2007b: 209, emphasis added)

All these key elements – the valorisation of suffering, the need for distancing through media or through assuming a detached, “neutral” stance, the redefinition of the self-image and the blending of the boundaries between personal experiences and testimonies of the war’s victims – are discernible in the five works discussed in this chapter. Like the problematic approach to German wartime suffering in recent German literature, Stuart’s portrayal of foreign couples brought together by the Second World War is predicated on a mystically sublimated vision of shared suffering which supports an abstract interpretation of concrete historical events, encourages an undifferentiated notion of victimhood, fails to adequately contextualise their stories, and deliberately expunges traces of personal implication in National Socialist policies. *Black List, Section H*, in turn, is the culmination of a process of mnemonic and narrative readjustments in the vein of “historisation” which began with the rewriting of diary excerpts for an audience located outside Germany. “Extracts from the Journal of an Apatriate”¹⁹⁰ was published in Ireland in 1950,¹⁹¹ a variation on these diary notes appears at the end of *Victors and Vanquished*, and even the documentary style of *Black List* is supplemented with an edited quotation from Stuart’s 1942 diary (cf. *BL* 369f.). Affecting a suitable, dispassionate tone in this work cost Stuart considerable effort, but his third, successful draft (E. Boland 12) convinced Timothy O’Keeffe, who had rejected an earlier version, that the narrative “ha[d] been progressively demythologised over the years so that it now reads much more like straightforward

¹⁹⁰ The cover of Stuart’s notebook for the period June to September 1945 bears the following instruction: “THIS DIARY CAN BE THE NUCLEUS OF DIARY OF AN EX-PATRIOT”. This raises the not altogether futile question of how Stuart conceived of himself in 1950 when he looked back on his life after the war – as ex-patriot, finished with Ireland? As expatriate and simple émigré? Or as apatriate, a stateless person, since he held no valid passport in 1945?

¹⁹¹ Stuart’s submission to *Envoy* is not a faithful reproduction of the actual diary notes from his ill-fated trip to Paris in August 1945 and his subsequent return to Dornbirn in November. The notes written for *Envoy* are included in *States of Mind*, published in 1984, along with an expanded version of Stuart’s diary notes from the war years, which he published in *The Irish Times* on 29 January 1976. In contrast to these heavily revised excerpts, Jerry Natterstad and Bill Lazenbatt have included faithful selections from Stuart’s diaries in their respective special issues of the *Journal of Irish Literature* and *Writing Ulster*.

autobiography” (O’Keeffe 7). Ironically, in effacing the outlines of personal experience and blending it with the narrative models that had entered the frames of collective and cultural memory, Stuart created “autobiographical fiction” which itself spawned many hard-to-eradicate myths about his motivation to be in Nazi Germany and the extent of his collaboration.

The hopeless entanglement of Stuart’s life and his writing emphasises the importance of distinguishing facts from fiction in his work as well as in secondary literature. By imposing strategic frames and filters on his memory, Stuart overwrote his record and made claims which have been the source of numerous misconceptions that have shaped his image in an environment receptive to mediated recollections of the Second World War, but perhaps not sufficiently aware or critical of the processes behind such mediation. A forensic investigation into existing contradictions and inconsistencies is therefore a necessary precondition for a fruitful engagement with the author’s literary legacy. Testing and correcting these “truth claims” in the first part of this chapter is a relevant step in restoring the balance between Stuart’s writing and historical knowledge and research. It is an equally important prerequisite to understanding how Stuart’s interpretation of events differed during the war and after, in his engagement with his wartime experiences in *The Pillar of Cloud*, *Redemption*, *The Flowering Cross*, *Victors and Vanquished* and *Black List, Section H*. Contextualising Stuart’s fiction inside its historical time and place, while simultaneously locating it within the very frames he later imposed on remembering the past, restores the possibility of examining the author’s changing interpretation of events in tandem with a changing environment. The author’s seventeen diaries,¹⁹² covering the period from March 1942 to August 1977, help sustain

¹⁹² This count includes the notebook labelled “Notes on Shakespeare and Other Subjects, August 1942”, which mainly contains Stuart’s attempts to grapple with J. M. Murry’s critique of Shakespeare and his notes on progress with his own manuscript, *The Cave of Peace*, completed on 23 December 1943. Though it remained unpublished and was lost after the war, Stuart recycled ideas and even chapter titles (“The Cave”) from this novel in *Redemption*.

this mutually interrogative line of enquiry.¹⁹³ Although the first two years of his stay in Germany are not included, and although the extant diaries were subjected to successive rounds of censoring before they were acquired by the University of Ulster, Coleraine,¹⁹⁴ they provide a valuable source in evaluating the genesis of these novels. More importantly, they help gauge the extent of Stuart's shifting attitude towards the past by revealing the changes he felt he should make at different points in time, responding to the way in which the Second World War is remembered and amending, in his turn, the way he is remembered. As will be shown, Stuart's mnemonic interventions affect his fiction, most noticeably in his fraught construction of images of self and other (2.2) – in particular, in his problematic vision of “new woman” – as well as in his understanding of the artist's role in relation to historical victims (2.3).

2.1. (Un)Writing Francis Stuart

Stuart's life and work have received more critical attention than Bielenberg and Hamilton combined, but when it comes to examining his writing in the context of the Second World War, it proves to be almost as much uncharted territory as the texts of the other two writers. Notwithstanding the controversies that arose from his decision to return to Germany in January 1940, Stuart's books have until recently not been considered within

¹⁹³ In the past, these diaries have either been only accessible as selections to Stuart's biographers (see chapter 2.1) or used very selectively by critics such as Anne McCartney and Brendan McNamee.

¹⁹⁴ Many of the crossed-out passages become legible again once their digital photograph is enhanced. Often, they reveal positive opinions or ambitions in relation to Stuart's work, completed or in progress, which he later obviously no longer harboured, but they also affect Stuart's self-image in other ways. For example, he took care to remove some comments that might have shown him to be overly concerned with making money, both through his books and inheritance (e.g. *St Stephen's Day* 1942 and 3 April 1955), as well as judgements that might contradict his retrospective assessment of his life in Berlin during the war (“By far the duller city I ever lived in”, 27 December 1942). He likewise censored comments about the belligerents in the war and, conversely, inserted “Germany” or “the Germans” as a distancing method into the text when, at the time of writing “Bad news on all fronts” on 9 July 1944, he clearly needed no such distinction. Stuart also included “S” (“Schumpel”, the nickname of his German partner Gertrude Meissner) with hindsight in all the passages about his plans for the future from which she had been absent. Realising the contentious implications in his use of words like “propaganda” to describe his writing on 11 August 1944, he replaced the last sentence in “Propaganda. Propaganda for one's own soul. That is why I write” with the more thoughtful addendum “After all the other propaganda.” Similarly, Stuart struck out the adjective “libellous” in connection with an English book which raised allegations against him, and suppressed the admission that he had been prepared to take legal steps against the author (cf. 1 March 1950).

the critical discourse that has emerged around literary representations of the past and, more specifically, around representations of the war. Nor have they been subjected to a comparative approach and evaluated alongside contemporaneous texts. Indeed, comparisons to other writers were only attempted in order to confirm that Stuart was in illustrious company.¹⁹⁵ For the most part, his pronouncements on his life in Nazi Germany have been accepted at face value and his writing has been allowed to stand on his own terms, for, as one of his reviewers observed, there is no room for analysis in his books and “one either accepts his vision and lets it sink by the sheer weight of poetic diction deeper

¹⁹⁵ As I will show towards the end of this chapter, Mark Rawlinson’s comparison of Stuart to Henry Williamson is a noteworthy exception. By contrast, Hayden Murphy’s misinformation that Stuart spent a “short spell in the Sante [sic] prison” (10) after moving to Paris in summer 1949 is a claim that in all likelihood derives from Stuart’s reverence for Jean Genet (cf. Cowley, Gillespie 1981: 14, Attallah 319), who had written *The Miracle of the Rose* while imprisoned in La Santé in 1943. One attempt to align himself with Genet occurs, for example, in Stuart’s review of Beckett’s *Company*, in which he explains his shyness about contacting Beckett, a respected and decorated member of the Résistance, in terms of his association with the ex-criminal Genet in La Santé, a mere stone’s throw away from Beckett’s doorstep (1980a: 21). More mischievously, he would later declare in relation to Beckett’s acknowledged contribution to the Résistance: “It was entirely convenient for the French to give a high decoration to a foreign *collaborator*, but I thought it was farcical” (Attallah 317, emphasis added). Stuart, however, offers a better example of an infelicitous, ill-informed comparison to another writer in *Victors and Vanquished*, where his fictional *alter ego* Luke tries to prove his literary credentials to Stuart’s postwar audience by telling his German students in his very first lecture that he had come to Nazi Germany because the aura of Thomas Mann had beckoned. Although Luke deliberately keeps the grounds of his admiration nondescript and adds that he “was a little hazy about the circumstances in which Thomas Mann had left Germany, and how long ago it was” (VV 82), it merits exploring the full extent of the incongruity behind evoking a bond of creative kinship between the Irish character, modelled on its author, and the real-life German writer. Mann left Germany as early as 1933, his German citizenship was withdrawn in 1936 while he was living in Swiss exile – five years later Stuart would use a pretext to travel from Ireland to Switzerland in order to enter Germany – and his stance was diametrically opposed to both Luke’s ignorant nonchalance and Stuart’s invocation of Irish neutrality in order to justify his taking the German side. It appears very likely that Luke’s creator ignored that Mann had stood up against the radical changes other writers had craved in countless speeches and articles such as “Deutsche Ansprache: Ein Appell an die Vernunft” (1930, “German Address: An Appeal to Reason”) or “Achtung Europa!” (1935, “Europe Beware!”). Between October 1940 and May 1945, Mann addressed his German countrymen 59 times in monthly talks broadcast by the BBC, which were collected and published under the title *Deutsche Hörer!* in 1945, 55 years before Stuart’s alleged non-propaganda broadcasts to his Irish compatriots were finally made available to his readers. And for this, Stuart, without the least compunction about his own active support for the Nazi regime, dismisses Mann in his diary as “too much of a professional democrat” (8 August 1944). What he despises even more is the fact that Mann had written “some ridiculous flattery of Roosevelt” (ibid.), arrogantly judging admiration for the American president as a sign of bad taste (also see H’s imagined condemnation of Mann by the *Führer* for this trespass in BL 269). Perhaps it was the revelation of his own worse taste in Hitler which later made Stuart align his protagonist again with Mann, taking the opportunity to rub shoulders with the celebrated writer, despite his disdain for Mann’s pro-Roosevelt stance. A much more appropriate elective affinity would have been with his contemporary Alfred Andersch who emerges from W. G. Sebald’s essay, “Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea”, as a kind of Stuart *Doppelgänger* in postwar Germany: ambitious and confident that through his war experience he would surpass previous writers, Mann included; inventive in his engagement with his personal past; a model “outsider” artist, who went as far as Swiss exile; and a polarising figure – celebrated by his supporters as the man who overcame the Third Reich through his literature and slated by Marcel Reich-Ranicki as a writer of “an unappealing mixture of falsehoods and kitsch” (Sebald 2003: 111). Ironically, Stuart used his review of Andersch’s novel *Winterspelt* as yet another opportunity to revile the Allies as equally “evil” (1980b: 19).

and deeper into one's understanding, or else rejects it from the first as exasperating oversimplification – there can be no compromise concerning him" (Keeri-Santo 87).

Colm Tóibín declares W. J. McCormack's *Festschrift for Francis Stuart on His Seventieth Birthday* as responsible for "set[ting] the tone for Irish writing about Stuart for the next twenty-five years" (2001), and, in doing so, laying the foundation for many misconceptions about the writer. In fact, McCormack had merely reiterated the conviction he had expressed in an article two years earlier that, pecuniary and marital troubles aside, Stuart went to Germany to bear witness and to develop as a person and writer away from the constrictions that governed his life in Ireland (cf. Maxton 1970: 20). Stuart would uphold this claim until the end, stating on Irish national television in 1998: "I have always believed that the sort of writer I am should be at the heart of where things are most intense and that I should report it, unbiased as I hoped to do, primarily for my own people" (Coulter 4). Yet at the time the war reached its climax, Stuart proved exceedingly reluctant to carry out the risky business of reporting from the "heart" of events, as he had heard Hemingway and Saroyan were doing in France, and preferred to write instead his next novel from the safety of his desk in Berlin:

What a blessing it is to be able to write, freely, freely in my own way, even if only a very little, in these days. How much much better than being in the thick of the invasion, reporting it. In ten years the invasion will no longer be the focuss [sic] of life! (diary entry for 9 June 1944)

The inconsistencies in Stuart's alleged role as an important witness to events become further apparent when the merits of his observations are unwittingly called into question by a well-disposed critic, Pierre Joannon, who praises the very fact that Stuart's postwar novel *The Pillar of Cloud* not once mentions Nazism, the Gestapo or the issue of guilt, thus dissolving the concrete historical setting into a generalised, ahistoric blur:

The executioners are anonymous, almost abstract. In fact their presence is permanent, they are part of the natural order. The French captain with his anarchist ideas is basically the same as the Nazi concentration camp warder. (...) Indeed Stuart's novels have something of the timeless. The pulsation of

history is not felt. Individuals are willing instruments of an unchanging order dominated by fear and suffering. (164)

Writing in the same publication as Joannon, McCormack is this time more attuned to the problems Stuart's generalised vision of the war poses, in particular his facile representation of the Jewish victim in *Victors and Vanquished*. He also points out the limits of a sentimental representation of the other in *Black List, Section H*, seeing in the protagonist's "desire to associate with the guilty" an unmistakeable proof of "pride of a fundamental kind, if it confuses those who are morally disapproved of with those who are physically annihilated" (1976: 179). Yet he believes that, in this very way, the issue of guilt is incorporated into the novel and ultimately resolved successfully by showing that H's identity in Nazi Germany rests less on identification with the Jews than "on an intense psychic identity [sic] with Halka Witebsk rather than on any allegiance to the political untouchables." Terry Eagleton makes short shrift of Stuart's "adolescent callowness" (1998: 245) and "elitist contempt" (ibid.) for all those who reject his vision. He also questions the author's skewed valorisation of a brief prison experience "in the aftermath of his quiescence in a regime which butchered and incarcerated so many more" (ibid). But even Eagleton believes in the convenient explanation, proposed in *Black List, Section H*, that Stuart's decision to travel to Germany after the outbreak of war was motivated by a "naïve romanticising of the victim: he believed at the time that Germany would be defeated" (246). Disregarding the possibility that this impression could have been created by the writer *post factum*, Eagleton cannot but credit Stuart for escaping the spell authoritarianism cast on other modernists (cf. 247).

Anne McCartney's examination of Stuart's works, published in 2000, is the first and only book-length study to date. It is informed by feminist literary theory and, to some extent, the author's diaries, but the exceedingly personal connections she makes – both in relation to her own biography and in interpreting Stuart's writing throughout as a candid autobiographical exploration of his own psyche – submerge her criticism in the enthusiasm

of the acolyte. Defending Stuart's life and writing rather than evaluating them objectively, McCartney not only patronises Stuart's readers, but continually underestimates her subject's imaginative powers and, indeed, his need to remember the past differently. Unsurprisingly, she concludes that, despite the admittedly improbable plots, unconvincing characters and clumsy style, "[t]he unique quality of the work (...) is the underlying voice of a profoundly honest and courageous writer who has looked into himself and revealed the essential truths of human nature" (155).¹⁹⁶

The readiness to perpetuate Stuart's myth of trusty witness is also evident in the biographies of the writer published to date. Infatuated with their subject, all three biographers have missed an opportunity to examine the historical and political persona "Stuart" rather than the literary construct. Natterstad tried to shore up his judgement as best he could in 1974, but it nonetheless suffered from his limited access to sources and information.¹⁹⁷ At pains to understand Stuart's decision to return to Germany in January 1940 and to mitigate his later collaboration with Nazi propaganda outlets, Natterstad maintains that "Stuart was not eager to be drawn into still another, and even more damning, kind of entanglement" (1974: 64) in addition to writing broadcasts for William Joyce. He presents a diary entry from 16 July 1942 as proof that Stuart was reluctant to agree to broadcast himself. What Natterstad seems to ignore, however, is that Stuart had at this point already been broadcasting propaganda for at least four months and had done so willingly, as this diary entry from 13 March 1942 shows: "Have been asked to give radio talks to Ireland, speaking this time myself. This is better and for a time at least there are things I would like to say."¹⁹⁸ The question that arose in July 1942 was merely if he would

¹⁹⁶ Unfortunately, the lack of critical thoroughness is also noticeable in the handling of references which sometimes do not correlate to the sources cited (cf. reference to Stuart's diaries 140f.).

¹⁹⁷ See, for example, Natterstad's repeated but ultimately thwarted attempts to solicit information on Stuart's time in Berlin from William Warnock, Irish Ambassador in Washington in 1971 and formerly Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin during the war (DFA 10/A/72/A).

¹⁹⁸ Horst Dickel, writing in 1983 on German foreign policy in relation to "the Irish Question" during the Third Reich, found a transcript in the *Politisches Archiv* of the German Foreign Office attributed to Francis

agree to speak twice weekly. Stuart's readiness to do so is particularly interesting given his belief, at the time, that the war would soon end (cf. 28 July 1942), an outlook which does not necessarily mean he anticipated Germany's defeat, much less her unconditional surrender, but that he was expecting a return to normality without any consequences attached to his actions. Almost a decade before most of Stuart's critics were forced to reconsider their assessment, however, Natterstad revised his opinion in "Locke's Swoon: Francis Stuart and the Politics of Despair", an essay published in 1991. In light of the author's later fiction, he realised that all Stuart's writing was marked by hostility towards modernity, pluralism and democracy. The admiration it expressed instead for the indiscriminate destruction of present institutions in the hope of restoring the primacy of passion and mystery over a rational conception of the world ultimately seemed so irresponsible and thoughtless to Natterstad, it beggared belief that Stuart's decision to go to Nazi Germany could have been motivated solely by a mixture of forced circumstances and the alleged promise of experiencing the war on the side of the losers.

Molloy raised the issue of uncritical reliance on Stuart's own account in discussions of his life in 1987 and demanded "a definitive biography, one which will truly attempt to separate fact from fiction" (140). Perhaps he had hoped to be the one to write it, but in the end Stuart chose Geoffrey Elborn. The latter benefited from less restricted access to Stuart's wartime diaries than Natterstad¹⁹⁹ and tried to corroborate the author's version of events by consulting other writers' estates (for example, that of Sir Basil Liddell-Hart) and

Stuart for a broadcast made on 9 February 1942 (cf. 185). Andreas Roth would later unearth this transcript again in the late 1990s (cf. Roth 2001) and share it with Brendan Barrington. Although Barrington includes this broadcast in an appendix to his collection of Stuart's broadcasts, he expresses serious reservations about Stuart's authorship, in part because of its uncharacteristically overt anti-Semitism. In 2004, Damien Keane published an article on his discovery of a much earlier broadcast made by Stuart to America on 9 June 1940.

¹⁹⁹ The Morris Library of the University of Illinois, Carbondale, which holds Elborn's correspondence and notes for his biography of Francis Stuart, lists his transcripts from Stuart's diaries among its possessions (<http://archives.lib.siu.edu/index.php?p=collections/findingaid&id=494&q=&rootcontentid=7997#id7997>). However, it is curious to note that Elborn should have missed Stuart's comments in his diaries about recording a broadcast for St Patrick's Day 1942, giving the reader instead the impression that Stuart first spoke on the radio on 5 August 1942 (cf. 151). He is further misleading readers when he claims that the talks Stuart gave between 12 August 1942 and January 1944 were literary in nature and similar to a BBC Third Network programme (cf. 164), that is to suggest, irrelevant.

other contemporaries, although his efforts were to no avail in the case of Seán MacBride. The result is a comprehensive biography up to Stuart's third marriage in 1987, but Elborn's acceptance of Stuart's supposed lifelong "search for truth" (8, also McCartney 1) as a driving force behind the more questionable decisions in the writer's life prevents him from noticing the contradictions between this convenient explanation and evidence in the diaries or, indeed, in Stuart's conflicting statements over the years. Although he does not spare the author's vanities – pointing out, for example, Stuart's jealousy of better and simultaneous approval of lesser writers,²⁰⁰ his attempts to promote his own writing on the back of better-known contemporaries (cf. 250),²⁰¹ and his often unfounded contrarianism for the sake of maintaining his reputation as Ireland's *enfant terrible* (cf. 273) – Elborn overly relies on his subject's interpretation of the past. The full extent to which Stuart's perspective colours the biography is obscured by the fact that Elborn does not provide any references throughout the text, making it the responsibility of the reader to discover which of his findings are documented elsewhere and which emanate from Stuart.²⁰²

David O'Donoghue's study, *Hitler's Irish Voices*, sheds more light on the agenda and scope of one of Stuart's employers in Berlin and, in doing so, adds insight into the nature of his involvement with German propaganda and Military Intelligence. Set up by the Foreign Office in autumn 1941, the *Irland Redaktion* (Ireland Desk) was a sub-section within the larger British regional zone and part of the Cultural Policy Department – Radio Division (Kult-R). Its aim was to support Germany's interest in Irish neutrality through

²⁰⁰ See, for example, Stuart's questioning of Joyce's significance in his 1982 article, "Minority Report", his declaration that Beckett's imaginative powers had been steadily declining since his Trilogy (Stuart 1980: 21) and the harsh treatment he metes out to Yeats in *Black List*. His attitude towards the latter, however, remained changeable, for he later conceded that the poet still "looms over my formative years as a luminary in that disturbed darkness" (Kermode 1989: 25).

²⁰¹ This specific criticism is reiterated by Hermione Lee and Aidan Higgins in their respective reviews of *The High Consistory* ("A Freudian Case History" and the irreverently titled "Glencree Bockwurst").

²⁰² Elborn's closing remark in his introduction openly imposes the onerous task of matching information to its sources on the reader: "To avoid cluttering the text with distracting references, these have been omitted, but will be supplied to anyone who approaches the publisher." Such a deliberate lack of transparency creates the unfortunate impression of unprofessional handling both on his side as the "authorised" biographer and on the publisher's, The Raven Arts Press, who commissioned it. See also Roy Foster's slating of the biography on these and other grounds in his review (1993: 304f.).

broadcasts in English and Irish (see Part I.3.3). The circumstances of Stuart's recruitment in 1940 are not entirely clear, as information about it is based on a diary entry Stuart rewrote from memory in 1976. In the excerpt dated 18 February 1940, Stuart notes that he had been approached by Dr. Haferkorn, the head of the English-language broadcasting section in the Foreign Office, but Natterstad's biography from 1974 names a Dr. Schobert, "a former lecturer in German at a Welch [sic] university" (58).²⁰³ Dr. Friedrich Wilhelm Schoberth was the deputy of Professor Hermann Haferkorn and had indeed lectured in German and French at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Liverpool and Cardiff between 1928 and 1939. He returned to Germany as lecturer at Berlin University at the beginning of the war and retained this position even after joining Kult-R in October that year (cf. Bergmeier & Lotz 183), which makes it likely that he in fact first approached Stuart.²⁰⁴ Excerpts from three of Stuart's broadcasts had been cited in Robert Fisk's earlier work, *In Time of War*, and described as "unexceptionable" (385). This was misunderstood as a permission to disregard their contents or significance when Fisk's comment actually implies that Stuart's speeches were completely in line with Nazi propaganda to Ireland. Analysing the first and second broadcast Stuart made, Fisk is adamant that "the references to 'family', 'duty' and 'responsibility' – key words in the litany of fascism – suggested that he had something more in mind than a mere economic market" for a postwar Europe and that "he could have left no one in any doubt that the system of government he was expounding was the National Socialist one" (384). Read in context with the biographies, interviews and other writing published on, or by, Stuart, O'Donoghue's book allows readers to discern how the

²⁰³ Carolle J. Carter, who had interviewed Stuart in August 1969 and August 1971 for her book, *The Shamrock and the Swastika*, likewise quotes Stuart as giving "Schobert" (she subsequently calls him Schaubert) as the name of the person who recruited him (cf. 105ff.).

²⁰⁴ The only mention of his name in Stuart's original diaries occurs after the war, on 10 November 1947, when Stuart tries to brush off the shock of hearing that an Irish-American priest was openly discussing his collaboration with the Nazis in Freiburg by pointing out: "I was accused of being a communist by the Germans, Schobert in particular, and of being a Nazi by the Allies." Since Schoberth was in charge of "political guidance" at the Luxembourg station from September 1943 onwards (cf. Bergmeier & Lotz 183), it is possible that he clashed with Stuart over his talks, possibly demanding, as Stuart would claim in revised diary notes from 1976, a denigration of the Soviets.

writer conformed to the requirements of collaboration at the time and how he later sought to distance himself from association with Nazi propaganda as well as other services he had considered rendering to Abwehr.²⁰⁵ When interviewed by O'Donoghue on 17 November 1989, for example, Stuart denied he and Frank Ryan had been friends (cf. 51), thereby contradicting his claim of close friendship with Ryan in two articles he wrote for *The Bell* in 1950.²⁰⁶ Although O'Donoghue notes the discrepancy (cf. 56), he is reluctant to consider the possibility that Stuart may have been misleading him by reporting Ryan's alleged faith in Nazi victory and pitting against it his own rejection of such an outcome or, indeed, its desirability.²⁰⁷ In particular, he seems unaware that Fisk, who had interviewed Stuart a decade earlier, had portrayed the two Irishmen's attitude towards Nazi Germany as exactly opposite. According to Fisk, Ryan

tried to disillusion Stuart about the nature of the regime but there can be no doubt that the Irish writer was seduced by what he found in Nazi Germany, by

²⁰⁵ Shortly after his arrival, in spring 1940, Stuart gave the German spy Hermann Görtz his wife's address in Laragh as a safe house. Iseult paid for her Irish hospitality with a month in prison before being acquitted on 2 July 1940 (cf. Anon., *The Irish Times*, 27 May 1940: 5, 3 July 1940: 6, *The Weekly Irish Times* 1 June 1940: A1). That summer, Stuart was also enlisted for a later abandoned plan of smuggling provisions for the I.R.A. on board a fishing boat in order to pave the way for the arrival in Ireland of Seán Russell and Frank Ryan (cf. O'Donoghue 51). In *States of Mind*, Stuart misdates this proposal to late summer 1941, by which time Russell was already dead (cf. 34). He likewise assisted Abwehr in its endeavour to recruit Irish prisoners for an Irish Brigade. Stuart's surviving diary records are deliberately vague on the extent of his involvement with Abwehr after 1941. On 29 March 1942, he notes that he received a phone call from agent Haller after a long silence and, although curious to hear his news, Stuart states that he "now know[s] what [he] can do and what it is useless to be entangled in". Yet on 27 January 1943, while Frank Ryan was hospitalised in Charité Hospital in Berlin, Stuart took it upon himself to act as Ryan's deputy, arranging to meet Haller in order to persuade German Intelligence to help the escaped Northern Irish I.R.A. commander, Hugh McAteer, come to Germany.

²⁰⁶ Fisk was likewise under the impression that Stuart and Ryan became close friends after Ryan's arrival from Spain in August 1940 (cf. 382). They certainly seem to have shared similar objectives, and Stuart enjoyed basking in the glow of "that secret revolutionary Ireland on whose fringe I have always been" (diary entry on 10 April 1942). When Ryan's negotiations threatened to stagnate, Stuart did not waver in his commitment to the cause. "It is time to try to do something about the Irish Position here," he noted on 17 September 1942, if necessary by backing the younger Irishman John Francis O'Reilly. A few days later, however, he regretted his attempt to "score off" O'Reilly against Ryan and resolved to settle matters with them. O'Reilly would one year later become one of several German spies parachuted into Ireland and promptly arrested (cf. Wills 385, Stephan 93).

²⁰⁷ Stuart's comments in his diaries in relation to Ryan show considerable affection prior to his death in June 1944. In May 1945, Stuart would mourn him as one of the finest people he knew in a diary entry written after his liberation by the French in Dornbirn. However, apparently scouting for suitable excerpts to put into a selection of diary notes at a later point, he crossed out two positive statements in relation to Ryan ("A really good fellow as S says. I like him.") in an entry written on 30 April 1942, Stuart's 40th birthday, but let the following stand: "One of the few people here (apart from S) I feel any closeness to or warmth for, or on whom I would rely a little."

the order and cleanliness of the place and the sheer invincibility with which the German Army seemed to be invested. (382)

In contrast to Stuart's claim in interview with O'Donoghue of feeling repulsed by the idea of German victory, Fisk writes that his interview partner "remembers feeling 'exhilarated' after the German victories of 1940 but admits that he 'could not help feeling sympathy for the British at the time of Dunkirk'" (ibid.). Even after the invasion of Normandy in 1944, Stuart would still place his trust in rumours of the German *Wunderwaffe* ("wonder-weapon") and express gratification – which he later self-censored – over German strikes on the South of England:

They are fighting back and that is always something that stirs one's sympathy. (...) Terrible as it may be – and one can't yet really say what is happening – [crossed out but legible:] it is a good thing not only for Germany but for us and for the world in general that England is not going to have such an easy time of it as she imagined. It is whenever Germany strikes a courageous, positive blow in the face of great difficulties that one has once more a great deal of one's earlier sympathies for her. (18 June 1944)²⁰⁸

In a similarly surprising change of tack, Stuart denied any real acquaintance with William Joyce in interview with Gillespie in 1981, although they had been colleagues from 1940 onwards. Eight years later, however, he would commend Joyce as "a man of extraordinary courage" in interview with O'Donoghue (43). Interestingly, he borrowed the very same attributes to describe Joyce which his second wife had used in the memoir she published in the intervening years (cf. M. Stuart 23) – a further instance of the cross-fertilisation between Stuart's memory and the mediated recollections of others. Such contradictions have gone unnoticed, however, with the result that Elborn, O'Donoghue and McCartney all subscribe to the preconception that Stuart purposefully sought suffering in Nazi Germany in the interest of his art, aligned himself with the losers of the war and was politically naïve (cf. Elborn 190, O'Donoghue 141f., McCartney 159).²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ Stuart replaced "a great deal" with "some" in the same dark ink he later used to dissimulate his *Schadenfreude* about England's struggle.

²⁰⁹ Also see Simon Caterson's similar conclusion in "Francis Stuart, Hitler and the Lure of Fascism". Elisabeth Schnack's biographical sketch of Stuart from 1991 translates these convictions into German and adds several items of misinformation of her own: according to her, the spy Hermann Görtz was dropped into

A more accurate description could be “politically calculating”, for in a rare moment of straying from his script Stuart once revealed that he had in fact hoped to offer his services as a writer and blossom under the patronage of the Nazi dictator:

Hitler because he was a fascist (...) had no more attraction for me than Stalin had. But I had a dream that some of these warlords had an interest in the writer that ‘professional’ politicians never had. (...) I still cling on to the idea of an imaginative writer coming close to a revolutionary organisation which can’t really achieve its very concrete social objectives without the insights of the imaginative artist. (Stuart in interview with Webb 10)

To some extent, his “dream” of a symbiosis worked out to his advantage: Stuart agreed to the approaches made to him by the Foreign Office and Abwehr and enjoyed, in return, a period which he celebrates over and over as beneficial to his development as a writer, providing him with the time and financial security he needed to read, reflect and write literature as never before:

What a blessing it is that these days in the midst of war I have so much time for my own life and its needs. There will never have been a better time for a writer than after this war – for a writer with a new way of life to reveal. I am glad that I got through the apprentice stage of my books before the war (...) [the following is crossed out:] – after will be the time when there will be a few people eager to read something about eternal truth. (15 May 1944)

Shortly after writing these comments, Stuart once again demonstrates that realism rather than naivety guided his decisions when, following the Allied invasion of France, he makes up his mind to leave the sinking ship and return with his precious gift of “eternal truth” to Ireland. Although cagey about the nature of his proposition to fellow Irishman William Murphy in his diary entry for 30 June 1944, Brendan Barrington has been able to show that Stuart was trying to instigate a revival of the gun-smuggling mission for which Abwehr had recruited him in summer 1940 (cf. O’Donoghue 51 and Stuart’s elaboration on this

Ireland by helicopter, Stuart languished in prison from May 1945 to July 1946, and later lived in Northern Ireland (i.e. County Meath).

topic in an annotation to his diary entry for 30 April 1942).²¹⁰ When this goal proved unattainable, Stuart consoled himself much like the fox in the fable:

But even if I could, I would not like to leave here now. My heart would be heavy at leaving. It is not my war but all the same I cannot shake off [crossed out:] Germany [later replaced with “what is still good in Germany”] as if it has nothing to do with me. Through all these years it has a lot to do with me. (9 July 1944)

This sentiment of solidarity only lasted a little while. Stuart gave his last lecture at Berlin University on 2 August 1944 and knew that his bomb-damaged faculty would not reopen for the next term. As a result, the legitimization his lecturing post provided was gone, as was his student lover’s protection from being drafted into strategic war work.²¹¹ Since it seems neither of them had reported back for duty at the broadcasting service in Berlin following their return from Luxembourg in February 1944,²¹² Stuart must have anticipated further difficulties with his employers. To avoid a confrontation, he organised the necessary travel

²¹⁰ Barrington accessed MI5 interrogation reports from early 1945 in which Murphy stated the nature of Stuart’s suggestion and clarified that his German contacts had no interest whatsoever in facilitating Stuart’s return. Barrington, presumably quoting directly from the British Public Record Office file, speaks of Murphy’s “Reichswehr” contacts, although this term was no longer applicable, the German army having been renamed “Wehrmacht” in 1935 (cf. Barrington 35).

²¹¹ Stuart had taken the precaution of increasing his partner’s work load to include daily duties at the *Irland Redaktion* at the first sign of a worsening of the situation in Germany, just after the defeat at Stalingrad (cf. entry from 31 January 1943). It is not clear if, in the summer months before leaving Berlin, Stuart returned to work at one of the clandestine radio stations which were broadcasting targeted misinformation. According to the report Murphy gave to MI5 in early 1945, the latter mentioned Stuart had not only signalled his interest in reviving the Abwehr’s interest in I.R.A. activities in June 1944 but had also advised Murphy to join him at *Büro Concordia* (cf. Bergmeier & Lotz 219f., Barrington 36) which, in contrast to the *Irland Redaktion*, had not left Berlin. The liaison between *Büro Concordia* and the Foreign Office was Adolf Mahr, the former director of the National Gallery in Dublin, who had lobbied for a “white propaganda” station devoted to Ireland, and it comes as no surprise that native English speakers like Stuart or Joyce, who worked for the official stations, also contributed to the secret stations (Bergmeier & Lotz 199, 208). The flexibility with which native speakers produced contributions for different propaganda outlets (as well as Stuart’s own unreliability as a source) would explain discoveries of earlier broadcasts, such as the one to America from summer 1940 (cf. D. Keane) and the explicitly anti-Semitic broadcast of 9 February 1942 lodged under Stuart’s name in the broadcasting logs of the *Politisches Archiv*.

²¹² Eileen Battersby triumphantly but erroneously deduces from McCartney’s work “the simple point that Stuart was sacked from his broadcasting job” (2001: B14). However, McCartney’s statement is based on her interpretation of O’Donoghue’s findings (cf. McCartney 129). O’Donoghue, in turn, suggests that Stuart’s permission to leave the Irish radio division in Luxembourg was not tantamount to his dismissal but rather a reassignment (cf. O’Donoghue 139). It is very interesting to note in this context that Stuart’s letter of exculpation to Liddell-Hart from early 1949 is very vague on when his broadcasting activity ended, giving a five-month time span of between “January or May 1944” (quoted in Elborn 213). It is possible that Stuart did actually return to broadcasting in summer 1944, although at least for the period in early May, at the time of the telephone threats, the Irish Legation in Berlin reported to Dublin in support of his application for a passport renewal that Stuart was not currently involved in broadcasting “but could not guarantee he might not do so at a later date” (cf. telegram from Con Cremin, Irish Envoy in Berlin, to Dublin from 3 May 1944, DFA 10/A/72).

permits and train tickets under false pretences, and he and Gertrude boarded a train to Munich on 10 September 1944.²¹³ Displaying foresight rather than a masochistic wish to share the lot of the losers, Stuart applied for a visa to the Swiss authorities in November. An air raid ensured his application never even left the post office, but this Stuart learned only later (cf. diary entry for 20 November 1948). With an expired passport and German lover in tow, he tried to cross over into the “Promised Land” (M. Stuart 53), but the Swiss border remained impenetrable to them and instead of escaping through his erstwhile port of admission into the *Reich*, Stuart found himself ushered through “the gates of hell” (diary entry made in Feldkirch, 24 April 1945) right back into it.

Kevin Kiely’s contribution to our knowledge of Stuart’s life in the most recent biography, published in 2007, partly lies in the fact that he fills in the last two decades in the author’s life and brings it to conclusion. His second contribution is based on access to a restricted Department of Foreign Affairs file on Stuart in the National Archives which sheds light on the line Ireland took to Stuart’s broadcasts, his applications for a new passport in Berlin and later in Paris, and on his wife’s endeavours to facilitate his repatriation after the war.²¹⁴ Other than that, Kiely’s account does not add much to the research carried out by his predecessors, and it certainly shows no signs of having tested the veracity of the statements Stuart made to his friend in the course of several interviews. Kiely remains unresponsive to recent findings on his subject, such as the issues raised in Barrington’s introduction to the transcripts of Stuart’s wartime broadcasts, published in 2000, or Keane’s discovery a few years later of a broadcast to America from 1940. Without making the least effort to investigate their assertions, he reproduces as fact claims made in the heavily edited diary excerpts Stuart published in the course of his life and in

²¹³ In another instance of historical knowledge acquired after the event shaping his account – in this case, the awareness of the mass rapes perpetrated by Russian soldiers in Berlin – Stuart asserted in 1989 that he would have stayed on in Berlin to watch the spectacle of the arriving Soviet army but could not due to chivalric concerns for his partner: “(...) it was no place for women, especially if, like her, they were of Eastern European origins” (“Berlin in the Rare ‘Oul Times”, XII).

²¹⁴ O’Donoghue’s and Barrington’s respective bibliographies indicate that they accessed this file before him.

Manna in the Morning, his second wife's memoir. As a result, *Francis Stuart: Artist and Outsider*²¹⁵ is not only marred, as the title already foreshadows, by an uncritical acceptance of Stuart's own take on his life, but also by an indifference to accuracy in rendering basic details.²¹⁶ Among the unverifiable statements Kiely repeats, one is particularly revealing about Stuart's continued expansion of his recollections of his time in Germany. In an interview he gave Kiely on 5 December 1997, Stuart maintains that in the course of his first meeting with State Secretary Ernst von Weizsäcker, in January 1940, they both agreed on Germany's inevitable defeat (cf. 130). The idea that the leading German diplomat should have committed such an indiscretion in front of a complete stranger is, of course, preposterous.²¹⁷ What is striking is that not only had Stuart never made this particular claim before – although he had already intimated to O'Donoghue that a witty remark he made to the State Secretary *à propos* Lord Haw-Haw had impressed the latter sufficiently to suggest him as a suitable candidate to the rival Ministry of Propaganda (cf. 43) – but also that Kiely seems unaware that his revelation conflicts with recent research carried out

²¹⁵ Incidentally, Stuart has hijacked the "outlaw" label Seán O'Faoláin had applied to a whole generation of Irish writers in 1946 who all faced the same problems of censorship and lack of funding and publishing opportunities at home. His fate was, then, not a solitary one and was indeed reversed when he became the recipient of state funding and honours, and when his books were published by the domestic Raven Arts Press, New Island Books and Lilliput Press. Even before these positive developments, W. L. Webb noted in 1975: "Stuart is really no more of an Outsider than he chooses to be for the continuing strategies of his living fiction" (10).

²¹⁶ Kiely, for example, perpetuates the misspelling of the name Schulze-Boysen, which found its way into Stuart's edited diary extracts, and from there into *The High Consistory* and Elborn's biography, and reiterates the ill-informed opinion that the *Rote Kapelle* was "a Soviet Secret Service group" (143). Indeed, he takes this sensationalist reportage, which can also be traced back to Stuart's diary extracts from 1976 and to Fisk (cf. 405), to a further level, ignorantly stating that the SS tortured and carried out the executions of the members of this resistance network (cf. Kiely 143). In fact, they were arrested and questioned by the Gestapo, tried, in accordance with the convenient charge of treason and espionage, in front of the *Reichskriegsgericht* ("court martial"), and executed by the appointed hangmen in Plötzensee Prison (cf. Haase 160-79). Perhaps less pardonable than his mishandling of details relating to German history or his misunderstanding of French documents on file in DFA 10/A/72 (he suggests that the Irish Legation in Paris contacted "the French Cachet de Ministère, who duly replied" (186f.), mistaking the reference to the seal at the top of the page of the communication received by the Legation as its actual sender) is Kiely's failure to discriminate amongst his English sources, misattributing remarks made by Frederick Boland to John Maffey (cf. 184) and failing to know the extent of Stuart's own works. Thus, he seems unaware of the existence of an earlier postwar work than the *Pillar of Cloud* and consequently maintains that the rejection letter from Gollancz Stuart mentions in his diary in June 1947 was in response to this book (which Stuart had not even completed at that point) rather than the *The Pillar of Fire* (cf. 197).

²¹⁷ Half a year later, on 1 May 1998, Kiely mentions how an increasingly fragile Stuart admitted to him: "Maybe when your biography is published I will read about my life and my writings. Since I've told you about all my life, I've forgotten lots of it" (319).

on his subject (cf. Roth 411).²¹⁸ Stuart had laid the foundations for his alleged chummy affiliation with the State Secretary at an earlier stage in the interviews he gave Elborn (cf. 165) and O'Donoghue (cf. 140). Interestingly, these interviews coincide with the first half of Richard von Weizsäcker's presidency, which suggests that the election of Ernst von Weizsäcker's son as German president in 1984 may have felt like an opportune moment to remember a connection between the Irish "outcast" artist, dictating his biography, and the German outcast diplomat. Ernst von Weizsäcker, after all, had retained the reputation of having at least tried to stave off the war, despite his seven-year sentence at "The Ministries Trial" in Nuremberg in 1949²¹⁹ for signing off on the deportation order of approximately 6000 French and stateless Jews to Auschwitz (cf. Conze *et al.* 397).²²⁰ It is plausible that the idea of closeness to von Weizsäcker appealed to Stuart for the same reason that his character Luke sidles up to Mann in *Victors and Vanquished*: from his point of view, both were damaged by their respective involvement with the Nazis/Allies during the war, but both had maintained their aura. Stuart, by contrast, had to construct his own aura after the war and could use both men as suitable material to support his edifice. Elborn and O'Donoghue unquestioningly refer to Ernst von Weizsäcker as Stuart's powerful friend who allegedly helped him in May 1944 when he was left with no travel document, the Irish Legation having continually refused to renew his passport since 1942 and his German identity papers having briefly been confiscated by the police. Neither appears to be aware, however, that von Weizsäcker had left Berlin in June 1943 in order to serve as German

²¹⁸ Official records of the *Politisches Archiv* show that Stuart only met the Head of the Political Department, Under State Secretary Ernst Woermann. Dickel, who made this discovery before Andreas Roth but whose work in German may have been inaccessible to Kiely, writes that the record of the conversation between Stuart and Woermann highlights that the latter was sceptical about Stuart's I.R.A. credentials, despite a glowing letter of introduction from the German Envoy in Dublin, Eduard Hempel (cf. 106).

²¹⁹ Von Weizsäcker was released early, on 14 October 1950, and died a year later following a stroke (cf. Conze *et al.* 434).

²²⁰ He enabled, for example, Adam von Trott's numerous trips to England in summer 1939, as well as Peter Bielenberg's in August that year, in order to persuade the British to send a suitable emissary who would dissuade Hitler from starting a war (cf. Sykes 257, 280, also von Klemperer 357).

Ambassador to the Vatican (cf. Conze *et al.* 272) and was hence an unlikely source of succour, should Stuart indeed have known him.

Stuart's attempts to align himself with strategically valuable (and dead) German contemporaries go back further. In the wake of his growing popularity following the publication of *Black List*, he "reconstructed" six destroyed diary entries from the first two years of the war for the benefit of his Irish audience, into which he managed to drop the names of no fewer than six persons who had become known for their opposition to the Nazis (cf. *The Irish Times*, 29 January 1976: 10). As with von Weizsäcker later, Libertas and Harro Schulze-Boysen – whom he met, although possibly only once at a party – were presented as his *friends*, a fact that for some Irish commentators seemed tantamount to a vindication by acquaintance (cf. A. Cronin 1997: 14 and 1999: 10).²²¹ In his brief introduction to these so-called "Extracts from a Berlin Diary Kept Intermittently between 1940 and 1944",²²² Stuart states that he destroyed the notebooks he kept during 1940 and 1941 following the arrest of the Schulze-Boysens in autumn 1942, as they contained compromising material and he feared his flat might be searched. Fisk helped Stuart cement this misconception,²²³ for his claim that "it took the arrest and execution of two personal

²²¹ Stuart does not omit to "rewrite" entries that also document his recruitment by the Foreign Office's broadcasting department and Abwehr, but these entries are presented as exciting tid-bits alongside the record in which he notes his acquaintance with the Schulze-Boysens (misspelled "Schultze-Boysen"), the publisher Ernst Rowohlt (misspelled "Rowolt"), who had been banned by the Nazis from his profession, emigrated to Brazil but returned to join the army in December 1940; and with writer and director Günther Weisenborn (misspelled "Weissenborn") and his wife Joy, who were both involved in the activities of the Harnack/Schulze-Boysen group but survived. Stuart further mentions a "Colonel von Stauffenberg", who was "obviously highly intelligent and not one of the habitual prevaricators" and, crucially, could have been related to Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg who deposited the bomb in the Wolf's Lair (Hitler's military headquarters in East Prussia) on 20 July 1944. Stuart claims he met the latter in order to pass on the complaints of some of the men he spoke to in POW camps in occupied Poland. Carter confirms Stuart's visits to POW camps as a consultant to the two Abwehr agents Jupp Hoven and Helmut Clissmann. Following Seán Russell's death, the Abwehr decided to implement his suggestion of recruiting an Irish Brigade from among their prisoners, and enlisted Stuart and Ryan in order to help them discern which of the inmates who had volunteered were serious and which were simply looking for a way out (cf. 124f.). However, Carter seems unaware of a complaint Stuart lodged with von Stauffenberg on behalf of prisoners he met during the war. As a deliberate omission of such an intercession makes no sense in the context of her investigation into Friesack Camp, nor in view of her sympathy for Stuart's incarceration after the war, one has to conclude that Stuart possibly never made a formal complaint to a Colonel von Stauffenberg.

²²² They were, in fact, kept quite consistently.

²²³ Fisk further confused chronology and causality in stipulating that Stuart refused to broadcast anti-Soviet propaganda following his visits to POW camps with Hoven and Clissmann and that he was then threatened

friends to teach him that the ‘super-dissident’ he had once admired in fact controlled a ruthless police state” (405) wrongly implies that Stuart was aware of the Schulze-Boysens’ fate at the time. Fisk further states that the Gestapo paid Stuart a visit after finding his phone number in one of the couple’s notebooks, a claim repeated by Elborn. Somewhat improbably, they questioned him on his doorstep about the Schulze-Boysens, “but they left satisfied that he knew nothing about the *Rote Kapelle*” (Fisk 405).²²⁴ This version of events seems to be inspired by the first few pages in Stuart’s 1981 novel, *The High Consistory*. In this book, he imagined a romance between the Irish painter Simeon Grimes and Libertas as well as a Gestapo visit to his protagonist’s lodgings which simultaneously appeared in his own biography as related by Fisk. Grimes, who lives in the same places as Stuart in Berlin and has similar experiences, meets Libertas at the party Stuart mentions in the reconstructed diary entry from 1976, and twice after that. There are several indications that the account in the novel liberally enlarges on the scant facts Stuart knew about Libertas and that connected him to her. For example, he gives a wrong street for the Schulze-Boysens’ apartment, where Grimes meets Libertas a second time, and a wrong name for the estate of Libertas’s family on her mother’s side in Brandenburg. His protagonist believes that his name, telephone number and a letter he sent her were found in her handbag upon her arrest (cf. 19), an assumption that has found its way into accounts of Stuart’s own life. Although plausible in fiction, this course of events is highly unlikely to have happened in reality, as Libertas anticipated her own apprehension after her husband’s disappearance and was careful enough to destroy documents linking the couple to others

with “being sent to a camp” (405). However, these visits took place some time after Russell’s death, that is, in late 1940 or in the first half of 1941, a full year before Stuart began speaking on German radio at regular intervals and more than three years before he noted any telephone threats in his diary from his employers at the broadcasting service.

²²⁴ This version grew legs later, for Kiely would speculate, probably egged on by his interview partner Stuart, that the Schulze-Boysens may have surrendered Stuart’s name under torture (cf. 143). He does not notice the apparent contradiction in Stuart’s claim, made to him on 19 December 1997, that already prior to his visit by the Gestapo, he “had taken the precaution of removing any diary entries that referred to members of the *Rote Kapelle*” (ibid.), although he would have been neither aware of the portmanteau name attributed by the prosecutors to diverse groups in different countries nor that the Schulze-Boysens and Weisenborns were involved in any resistance activities.

(cf. Tuchel 1994b: 148).²²⁵ Yet again, their over-reliance on Stuart's word has made writers like Fisk, Elborn, Cronin and Kiely vulnerable to his changing interpretation of his past and rendered them instrumental in presenting his fiction as fact.

Stuart's diary entry for 1 September 1947²²⁶ paints a very different picture:

Yesterday I read in an illustrated paper that Libertas Schulze-Boysen had, with her husband, been arrested by the Gestapo in Berlin as leaders of a resistance organisation and shot in 1942. This news (already so old) affected me strangely. To think that this girl whom I had held in my arms that [crossed out: evening] night at the Wittenberg U bahnhof [sic] was so soon afterwards destined to suffer all that horror!

His reaction shows that not only was he unaware of the wave of arrests that began with Harro's on 31 August 1942 (Libertas followed on 8 September, cf. Tuchel 1994b: 150), but also that he makes no connection between the news he read in the article and an alleged earlier questioning by the Gestapo. It would seem that Stuart had no idea of their involvement in a resistance network (or of the existence of such a network), nor prior knowledge of their arrest and death. The news of Libertas's execution suddenly ennoble her in his memory, where before she had only figured "very fleetingly" (entry for 1 September 1947). His emotional responsiveness to "this girl" he had only briefly known six years previously (and not once mentioned in his extant diaries), but "who was so soon afterwards destined to suffer all that horror" goes a long way towards explaining why Stuart later chose to transfigure the farewell embrace at an underground station he recalls in his diary into an erotic encounter on the pages of *The High Consistory*. It is a revealing example of how Stuart used hindsight as an expedient way to dramatise both his protagonist's past and his own, appropriating the story of Libertas's suffering to confound

²²⁵ The Gestapo placed a female spy in her cell who gained Libertas's trust and, in this way, learned the names of other members of the Harnack/Schulze-Boysen group (cf. Coppi 201, Tuchel 1994b: 148). There is no good reason to believe that one of the names Libertas gave the spy, thinking she would be able to warn the person, was Stuart's, since he was not a member of the resistance.

²²⁶ The time of Stuart's discovery coincides with attempts made by surviving family members to publicise their relatives' activities after the war. 1947, for example, saw the publication of Elsa Boysen's *Harro Schulze-Boysen: Das Bild eines Freiheitskämpfers* and of Falk Harnack's *Vom anderen Deutschland: Teilbericht über die deutsche Widerstandsbewegung* (cf. Danyel 16).

his Irish audience as much as to entertain token reflections in his fiction that Grimes might have saved her:

Had she had a fragile hope that through me she might escape the fate that by then was closing in on her? If she came home with me, might she not have stayed on and perhaps, with my help, found a room at the pension, dissociating from Haro [sic] and the conspiracy, thus managing to survive? (...) Nothing haunts me so as those to whom I behaved in a manner that I can't now be sure was betrayal or a result of non-culpable blindness (semi-culpable, let's say).
(23, 25)

Stuart's explanation for the missing diaries covering 1940 and 1941 also seems doubtful in light of the fact that his surviving diary entries begin mid-sentence with an entry written in March 1942,²²⁷ that is, several months before the arrests took place. Both in the period between March and autumn 1942 and later, in spring 1944, Stuart's diaries contain the occasional comment that could equally have been construed as compromising, yet they were allowed to stand.²²⁸ Of course, there is no mention of a visit from the Gestapo during the period in question or at any time after the war, and it is noteworthy that Stuart is still in possession of his earlier notes on 8 October 1942, after both Harro and Libertas had been arrested, as he quotes from an entry he wrote on 28 September 1941. In a letter to Natterstad from May 1971, Stuart mentions finding and re-reading this notebook from spring 1942 before sending it off to Kenneth Duckett, the librarian at the University of Southern Illinois in Carbondale who acquired some of Stuart's papers (though not the diaries) following the publication of *Black List* by the local university press. He then launches into a defence of his activities during the war. First, he rejects the notion that he wants to defend himself, inviting more undetermined blame on his head. He proceeds to acquit himself from the very specific charge of fascism, arguing that no imaginative writer of "psychic complexity" (Natterstad 1976: 106) could be called a fascist, although granting

²²⁷ This first notebook, which covers the period between March and June 1942, is missing a considerable number of pages at the beginning which have been ripped out. The first complete record is dated 13 March.

²²⁸ Thus, Stuart writes impetuously on 11 July 1942 after reading some Irish papers: "It is impossible there to criticise the leaders of the church as it is here the National Socialist leaders." In spring 1944, following his failure to report for a new assignment at the broadcasting service in Berlin, Stuart mentions receiving threats over the telephone and defiantly declares he will not allow himself to be coerced into resuming his work (cf. 24 April and 2 May 1944).

that if some writers had come close to embracing or accepting fascism – he volunteers Montherlant and Genet, exempts himself – their misguided sympathies were at least less despicable than “the added nastiness of self-righteousness” (ibid.) which characterises those who believe in democracy. Stuart concludes by giving the all-clear for his own record which, he is happy to report, does not contain many enthusiastic references to the Nazi regime, adding: “Not that I was concerned with these things at all by then.” Following this renunciation of any interest in the society he lived in, Stuart casually mentions that “*some* missing pages contained comments which a little later, when my own situation was somewhat precarious, made me destroy them” (ibid., emphasis added). In fact, the extent of the period erased from the first extant notebook is considerable, for Stuart remarks in his entry on St Patrick’s Day 1942 that he began writing in that notebook more than a year ago. Stuart’s comment to Natterstad does not explain either the absence of the notebook for the year 1940, nor does it establish definitively when or why Stuart censored his diaries. He may have done so during his preparations for departure from Berlin in autumn 1944, at which point he left the diaries in the care of his German agent, Klein. Stuart mentions re-reading his diaries after they were returned to him in March 1947, marvelling about “the strange tale of [his] own development” (19 March 1947), but it is impossible to tell whether he was reading this tale in full or only from March 1942 onwards. He may just as well have decided to get rid of certain contents sometime after the war,²²⁹ even as late as 1971, before posting the notebook to Illinois, in order to obscure the

²²⁹ In April 1948, for example, Stuart was again reading through his diaries with a red pen in hand, adding explanatory notes here and there that point towards his later development. Thus, he singled out Ethel Mannin from his long list of prewar love interests and mistresses in the entry for 17 July 1942 to remark on her role in his life after the war. There is also a page missing between 24 July and 26 July, eliminating the name and nature of his encounter with a person whom Stuart refers to as “[t]he most intelligent German connected to Irish affairs here that I have met (apart perhaps from Helmut Clissmann)”. One possible candidate could be Dr. Hans Hartmann, a Celtologist who had studied at University College Dublin for more than two years before the beginning of the war and who was Stuart’s editor at the *Irland Redaktion*. Alternatively, he may be referring to Ryan’s friend Dr. Edmund Veessenmayer, the Foreign Office’s specialist for coups d’état and sabotage in strategic countries, including Ireland (cf. O’Donoghue 50f.). He was convicted alongside von Weizsäcker for his role in overseeing the financial exploitation of Hungary and in expediting the deportation of Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz (cf. Conze *et al.* 395f.).

extent of his involvement in the Nazis' propaganda and sabotage operations – details that may have clashed with the version of the past he had laid out in *Black List* and which he elaborated on thereafter, for example, in the above-mentioned letter Natterstad reproduced in the *Journal of Irish Literature*.

It is striking that only the first notebook, the notebook with “Notes on Shakespeare and Other Subjects, August 1942”, and the last notebook he filled before his departure from Berlin, covering the period from June 1943 to May 1944, are missing a considerable number of pages. In the latter notebook, the ripped-out pages would have covered the period between 1 July and 23 November 1943,²³⁰ and from this date to just before 28 February 1944. One can only speculate why Stuart removed all traces of what must have been entries written while stationed in Luxembourg, where the *Irland Redaktion* moved in August 1943 to escape the increasingly heavy bombardments on Berlin (cf. O'Donoghue 132). One possible explanation could be that he judged it wise to eradicate all records (as opposed to just tampering with them, as he did elsewhere) of those periods that may have shown him immersed in the full swing of the war effort: 1940 saw his recruitment for radio propaganda and sabotage operations. In 1941, he visited POW camps²³¹ and somehow managed to ignore both the deportation of Jews from Berlin, which began that year, and the foreign reportage on the war to which he had access through his job of translating news items.²³² During the six months between August 1943 and February 1944, he would have

²³⁰ The entry for 23 November 1943, Gertrude's birthday, was written in Berlin following the only air raid Stuart describes in detail in his diaries (and in lesser detail in the extract included in *States of Mind*).

²³¹ Interestingly, William Joyce embarked on a recruitment mission for *Büro Concordia* to a POW camp at about the same time Stuart did (Bergmeier & Lotz, 215), choosing the same location – Thorn in Upper Silesia – that Luke Cassidy visits in *Victors and Vanquished* (cf. 154). Both Stuart's and Joyce's collaboration did not just extend to one act – broadcasting over short waves which may or may not reach the target audience – but encompassed different kinds of support which went beyond the individual and drew in others who were less free to make their decision of working for the Nazis in the first place and often had to pay the price of their ill-luck twice: to their German captors as soon as they no longer had any use for them and then to the Allies, who prosecuted them as traitors (cf. Bergmeier & Lotz's chapter “Voices from Nowhere” which gives biographical details for many British and American staff members recruited from internment camps).

²³² Madeleine Stuart writes that Stuart translated from German into English at the *Drahtlose Dienst* in 1940/41 (cf. 19), but those involved in propaganda had access to current British newspapers in order to be

found himself removed from his ordered, respectable life as a foreign writer and teacher in Berlin and reduced to serve entirely the purposes of German propaganda in Luxembourg. What seems almost certain, however, is that Stuart did not destroy his diaries from the first two war years because of an alleged light brush with the Gestapo following the arrest of Libertas and Harro Schulze-Boysen.

Stuart's diaries allow us to trace the editorial amendments he made to the diary extracts he published in what seems to have been an attempt to steer the reception of his writing and the evaluation of his persona. Contrary to his claims, these extracts are not "direct from surviving notebooks" (*The Irish Times*, 29 January 1976: 10, *States of Mind* 31), as only very few of the entries he chose to publish fully correspond to the actual diary records. This is also true of "Extracts from the Journal of an Apatriate", the story, rather than diary record, of his 1945 trip to Paris and return to Dornbirn, which Stuart submitted to *Envoy* in 1950, shortly after he had settled in Paris. At this point, he had completed *The Pillar of Cloud*, *Redemption*, and *The Flowering Cross*, and it is their atmosphere and thrust, far more than the original entries, which inform the "Journal of an Apatriate". By comparison, in the extracts from the diaries he kept during the war, published in 1976, Stuart grooms the outlaw image of H by modifying historical sources in order to achieve the "uninhibited" and, supposedly, "immediate" encounter with the past of which Schmitz writes. His semi-cleaned record places in sharp relief Stuart's desire to assert his "experiential perspective" to an audience sensitive to narratives of wartime suffering written from the perspective of the victims and survivors. Sometimes, Stuart merely embellishes and dramatises the setting of the original diary entry; at other times, he summarises comments made at different stages in one single entry or misdates entries altogether. The instances in which Stuart purposefully rewrites his notes in order to set

able to direct their counter-strikes effectively, create insecurity among the target audience by showing their familiarity with current, even trivial, affairs and, in the case of secret stations, successfully maintain the illusion of broadcasting locally (Bergmeier & Lotz 214).

himself apart from the common perception of acquiescence or active participation in Nazi Germany are too numerous to include here, but some will suffice to illustrate the general tendency. For example, he added a sentence to an entry from 1 August 1942 which assures the reader that he insisted his propaganda stayed free of any “anti-Russian bias”. On 30 August, he saw fit to say prayers for the safety of the Russian raiding plane he watched in the night sky over Berlin, prayers left unmentioned (or unsaid) in his diary.²³³ Likewise missing from his diary is his modest statement, after receiving praise from the German Envoy in Dublin, Eduard Hempel, on 17 September 1942, that should his “talks have even a minute influence in helping to keep our neutrality they aren’t just a waste, as I often think” (*States of Mind* 37). In fact, at the time Stuart wrote that entry, he was far from thinking his talks irrelevant and instead obsessed about finding the right words and oral delivery for his broadcasts.²³⁴ In his edited diary extracts, Stuart also laments the poor Canadians who lost their lives on the shores of France (*States of Mind* 36) – a concern completely lacking from his downright contemptuous dismissal of the Allies’ first attempted landing in his original entry for 20 August 1942. Similarly, his rather callous reflection on the war as “melodrama” from 11 November 1942 makes no reference to feeling “alone” and “appalled” as it would do in its reworked format under the date 9 August 1942 (*States of Mind* 36). Stuart consistently bolsters his position retrospectively in his dealings with authority, be it the Irish Legation in the matter of his passport renewal in Berlin (and later in Paris) or the German authorities that sought to coerce him to return to broadcasting in spring 1944. In the actual diaries, his German employers do not demand of

²³³ This revised diary entry takes its inspiration from *Black List*, where H even goes a little further in his diary, wishing he could join it “on its long, long homeward flight” (370). Of course, H’s desire to go to Russia is an important step in his alienation from Nazi Germany (cf. *BL* 333), but there remains no proof for Stuart’s claim that he likewise intended to relocate just before Germany attacked Russia in June 1941 (cf. Elborn 140f.).

²³⁴ Colm Tóibín, trying to understand Stuart in light of new evidence Barrington had unearthed, surmised that “Stuart’s efforts at a folksy, common touch must have made him cringe as much as his listeners” (2001), but Stuart’s seriousness about achieving precisely such a heart-to-heart connection to his Irish listeners contradicts this view (cf. diary entry 8 August 1942).

him to “denounce the ‘Asian Hordes’”, nor does he refer to “some fairly well-placed [German] protectors” on 2 May 1944. The brave understatement, “Not that, I think, I was in any great danger” (4 May 1944), was presumably added to impress his Irish readers, but it accidentally damages the credibility of Stuart’s claim to have destroyed his diaries for the years 1940/41 out of *fear*.²³⁵ Another tribute to hindsight, Stuart changed his personal view to echo Adorno’s often misquoted reflection on the difficulty of writing poetry after Auschwitz²³⁶ when he rewrote his entry for 1 May 1944, showing himself aware, if not fully understanding, of the limits of representing the Second World War. Instead of sticking with his own formulation (“There are no familiar trenches, dug-outs, no ‘Journey’s End’ will be possible. Something else, quite different, vaster.”), he pontificates: “Afterwards there will be no war poetry, no *Goodbye to all That* [sic]” (*States of Mind* 41). The vindictiveness he ascribes to the victors affects his own rewriting of his diary notes, for example, when he chooses to replace the original reference to “the peace bells” ringing on 8 May 1945 with bells that ring only for “the official peace” (*States of Mind* 42). Finally, Stuart’s comments in relation to Jews in his edited notes show that he felt quite entitled after the war to criticise what he perceived as their pride or ingratitude and to contrast this with his deeper, Christian appreciation of what he had experienced. His first comment relates to his reading the Old Testament which leads him to conclude that the Jews all too quickly forgot their delivery from Egypt and exile in Babylon. This failure earns them the label of “a stiff-necked people who did not treasure their suffering” in an entry for 8 May 1945, which Stuart specifically devised for *States of Mind* (43). His actual

²³⁵ Barrington also seizes on these particular comments to point out that Stuart had changed his diary notes in such a way as to insinuate that his refusal to further cooperate with Nazi propaganda was motivated out of pro-Russian sympathies and to give the impression that this act of “resistance” had placed him in greater danger from the regime than is actually borne out by the evidence (cf. 43). Even Stuart’s diary entry from 11 November 1947, in which he offsets allegations levelled against him by an Irish-American priest in Freiburg by citing in his favour the suspicion of his erstwhile superior, Dr. Schoberth, does not elaborate on the reasons for his departure from Luxembourg in February 1944.

²³⁶ Rothberg points out that Adorno’s provocative contention “to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric” has been distorted into a clear-cut verdict of “No poetry after Auschwitz” by, among others, George Steiner (2000: 25, 35, 280n2).

reflections to this effect can be found elsewhere in the diary, on 8 July 1945, where they are explored in more detail and his conclusion is expressed with less categorical certainty. A similar air of superiority and scepticism is noticeable in Stuart's fabricated entry for 11 August 1945, in which he contrasts his humble, unquestioning acceptance of copious amounts of food on arrival in a centre for Displaced Persons in Paris with that of "a little Jewess next to me [who] began scraping the sauce from her portion of meat and examining it suspiciously" (*States of Mind* 53). There is no such observation in Stuart's diary of the time, nor is there evidence to support Elborn's slightly differing claim that, on his journey to Paris, Stuart "sat with a Jewish couple who had survived the camps" (181).²³⁷

In fact, Stuart mentions no encounter with, or thoughts on, any contemporary Jews until 4 September 1947 when, after reading Victor Gollancz's *In Darkest Germany*, he marvels if, of all things, it was "his Jewish blood" that made his publisher sympathetic towards the vanquished Germans. This is the first implicit admission of crimes perpetrated against the Jews during the war which had been for Stuart, for the longest time, a "huge melodrama, played out by various characters" he liked in varying degrees (diary entry 19 November 1942). Perversely, Stuart's line of thought confirms the very lie of Jewish racial difference which the Nazis had used to justify their extermination policies. His essentialist notions of racial and national identity²³⁸ in the above diary entry betray the same romantic-

²³⁷ Raymond Burke also fastens on how Stuart's encounter with a Jewish couple, related in Elborn's biography, morphs out of the fussy Jewish eater he had described in his 1950 diary adaptation for *Envoy*. He notes that such a postwar confrontation with Jewish survivors had also featured in the draft manuscript of *Victors and Vanquished*, but was abandoned in the final version as it would have been superfluous in a plot that celebrates the Irish protagonist's fearless love for the German-Jewish Myra. In *Black List*, however, H is again transported into the company of a "flirtatious young Jewess, whom H had no intention to become involved with" (BL 400) in a Paris refugee centre. Here the Jewish woman no longer serves the purpose of establishing a contrast between two different kinds of survivors, but returns as a distraction and minor threat to the German-Polish woman H left behind and with whom he longs to be reunited. Burke cites these examples to point out that Elborn's account may be just as fictitious, since he relies primarily on Stuart as his source, and that it therefore risks perpetuating the author's stereotypical image of the Jewish other (cf. R. Burke 11).

²³⁸ Just how little Stuart's concepts of self and other were disturbed by the war can be seen from the German interpretation of Stuart's use of Irish, English, and Jewish stereotypes in *The Great Squire*, which appeared in translation in 1940 from Scherl Verlag – that is, two years earlier than Imhof's bibliography of German translations suggests (1996: 85). Advertised as the work of "one of Ireland's most important contemporary

myopic outlook that informed his position in the 1924 *Lecture on Nationality and Culture*. In the latter, Stuart demanded a radical rejection of all British influences on Irish society (from red-brick architecture to print media, cinema and radio, but with the crucial exception of the English language) and invoked the examples of other nations that had successfully defended their distinctive cultural characteristics. Austria is held up as a model of citizens uniting against a common enemy, “the Jews”, whom Stuart sets apart as outside and against Austrian society, denying their shared nationality and right to participate in society (cf. 12). His reliance on such stereotypical taxonomies evinces not only the limits within which he conceived his purportedly “visionary” and “revolutionary” postwar novels, but also calls into question his critical and creative ability to probe his representations of self and other. What J. B. Kilfeather pinpoints as “a flaw in his personality that made him self-conscious in the manner of a poseur and self-dramatiser” (23) is evident in the nonchalance with which Stuart levelled all historical distinctions and juxtaposed his experiences with that of the victims of the war, competing against them for the moral authority of “witness” and acknowledged “survivor” (O’Keeffe 7; O’Toole 1996).

A mixture of complacency and laziness, which Fintan O’Toole somewhat late came to bemoan (2000: B9), prevented for a long time a closer scrutiny of the political persona “Stuart” and encouraged a wilful ignorance of the historical and literary context in which Stuart’s novels and autobiographical works are set. Declan Kiberd warned in *Inventing Ireland* that extending “a fool’s pardon” (610) to Stuart for his actions during the Second World War had the infelicitous consequence of suggesting that an artist’s words and actions were irrelevant, as they had no palpable social effect. Ignoring the processes that had led to the imaginative recreation of Stuart’s past in biographies, interviews, diary extracts and his novels may have well suited both those defending Stuart and those

poets” (advertisement for Christmas books in *Die Woche*, 18.12.1940: 25), it was reviewed as “the novel of a people” bravely fighting off racial domination (cf. Brenner 1940: 34).

attacking him, in that neither group had to question what they held as self-evident. Whether these views were incompatible with, or tantamount to, Stuart's, not delving deeper into the history of his involvement with Nazi Germany ensured that the Second World War could continue to be treated as extraneous to Irish collective memory.²³⁹ This ignorance is reflected in imprudent remarks made about Stuart's legitimate status as a "neutral" in wartime Germany²⁴⁰ – implying that neutrality acted as a moral shield – and about the nature of his broadcasts, or, in some cases, in an outright denial of such broadcasts.²⁴¹ It is also dangerously manifest in the misguided attempts to mitigate Stuart's collaboration by seizing instead in a sweeping manner on the failings of democratic states and citing examples of Allied aggression and wrongdoing (cf. McMahon 1974 and 1994).²⁴² Worse

²³⁹ The debates in the media surrounding Stuart's "elevation" (Myers 1996: 17) to Saoi in 1996 and his allegedly anti-Semitic remarks in a Channel 4 documentary screened in 1997 certainly brought to light a rejection of the writer in some corners, but there were almost as many spokespeople taking Stuart's side in the pages of the Irish press, "eager to upbraid his critics as self-righteous moralists" as Terry Eagleton points out (1998: 246). The perception that Stuart has been relentlessly and openly reviled in Ireland (and Great Britain) because of his affiliation with Nazi Germany is neither supported by the corpus of a predominantly positive media coverage from the publication of *Black List* in 1971 to his death in 2000 (cf. Barrington's similar conclusion 54), nor by the fact that Stuart himself contributed to several publications on a regular basis over the same period as a reviewer (sometimes contributor) for *The Irish Times*, *Hibernia* and as columnist for *In Dublin*. He also availed of funding by, and was the recipient of honours from, the "Philistine establishment" (Stuart in Anon., *The Irish Times*, 30 May 1975: 9) in the shape of the Arts Council and Aosdána and celebratory readings in Trinity College on the occasion of his 80th birthday (cf. Tóibín 1987: 12). It is both too simple and patronising on the part of well-disposed critics if they misconstrue the lack of appeal of Stuart the writer – who was, according to Cronin, "after James Joyce the greatest Irish novelist of the 20th century" (1999: 10) – to be the result of readers' hypocritical moral judgement and general inability to appreciate the works of a visionary writer (cf. McCartney 155). Stuart's novel *Memorial*, in fact, topped the bestseller list in Ireland for a while (cf. W. J. McCormack 1976: 175).

²⁴⁰ The assumption that the integrity of non-combatants from neutral Ireland was respected by the Nazis is not only contradicted by O'Donoghue, who mentions the imprisonment of some of Stuart's less fortunate colleagues at the *Irland Redaktion*, but also by David Blake Knox's account of the fate of 32 Irish seamen in the merchant navy who were captured by the Germans in 1940. Following their refusal to enlist in the Irish Brigade or to sign up as "voluntary workers", they were exploited in the concentration camp Bremen Farge as slave labourers where five of them perished. Although the Germans were able to identify them as Irish, their names and stories, Knox points out, remain missing from Irish collective memory because of a flawed historical consciousness which, on the one hand, still resists the legacy of Second World War in its midst, while, on the other, honouring Francis Stuart with the state's highest symbol of recognition (cf. Knox).

²⁴¹ Ulick O'Connor, for example, as late as 1994 believed the suggestion that Stuart had ever made any broadcasts was simply slanderous (cf. 11). Cronin remained under the misapprehension that because Stuart's broadcasts had supported Irish neutrality they were therefore not Nazi propaganda.

²⁴² It is noteworthy that Stuart himself wrote a number of letters to the editors of the *Irish Independent* and *The Irish Times* in 1993 and 1994, expressing his personal gratification that the Irish media was finally overcoming the "hypocrisy" of leaving the crimes on the Allied side unmentioned. In interview with Bill Lazenbatt in 1996, Stuart accomplishes the admirable feat of roundly rejecting the notion that he or his recent works, *Memorial*, *A Hole in the Head* and *Faillandia*, are in any way political, then scampers over "this business – I don't know how much it figures now – about Germany" in order to finish with a broadside

still, it affects the ability to discern historical facts from fiction, as, for example, is the case in Eileen Battersby's interview with Stuart in 1996. It should be pointed out that the journalist did try to draw out Stuart on the issue of the racial persecution that was going on during his stay in Berlin, but neither she²⁴³ nor her editor realised how incongruous her question and how preposterous Stuart's reply were:

While working in Berlin University, did he notice that Jewish academics were either leaving or disappearing? 'You saw things. I remember one Jewish professor saying to me: 'You're ruining your reputation as a writer in the English-speaking world.' I knew what he was saying.' (13)

Not only was Stuart misattributing the very premonition Ethel Mannin told him she had had during the war when she heard him broadcast for the Germans (cf. his diary entry following a letter from Mannin on 13 February 1947), which Battersby cannot have known, but he was insinuating the tutelage of a Jewish academic. Such a colleague would have been hard to find in Berlin University during the war, as Jews and political opponents had been removed from the civil service by a law enacted on 7 April 1933 (the so-called *Berufsbeamtengesetz*, cf. Herzig 51).²⁴⁴ The "Jewish professor", in short, exemplifies again the ready interchange between Stuart's inventions and his memory, this time

against the Allies who, in his opinion, committed "the worst horror" (7) through their "awful hypocrisy" (ibid.) of pretending to fight for a just, Christian cause.

²⁴³ Battersby did not notice either that Stuart's inability to recollect advising his Irish listeners to shun Fine Gael in the 1943 election stood in marked contrast to his freely relating this very story in conversation with Gillespie, also of *The Irish Times*, in 1981.

²⁴⁴ Knox surmises that Stuart was offered a lecturing post in a move to fill the vacancies left behind by all the Jewish staff dismissed after the Nuremberg Laws were passed, which he wrongly believes were passed as late as 1938, but young German scholars would have filled those slots in the intervening years. It seems more likely that Stuart owed his job offer to the lack of better-qualified visiting English academics. The diary of Victor Klemperer, Professor of Romance Languages at Dresden University, who lost his lecturing post in May 1935 (as a decorated participant in the First World War, he had retained his job until then, despite being Jewish), contrasts sharply with Stuart's privileged and opportunistic situation in Berlin and, of course, bears witness to the persecution and deportation of German Jews, neither of which are mentioned in Stuart's surviving diaries. It contains the chilling record of his receiving, without prior warning, his letter of immediate dismissal and of his desperate attempts to emigrate, sending letters of application to the "Emergency Council of German Scientists Abroad" in Zurich, the "Academic Assistance Council" in London and the "Emergency Committee in Aid of German Scholars" in New York – all to no avail (cf. Klemperer's entry for 2 May 1935). Klemperer survived the thirteen years under Hitler thanks to his non-Jewish wife who stood by him and "thanks to" the bombing of Dresden on 13 February 1945 which destroyed the Gestapo's headquarters and deportation lists and encouraged him to remove the Star of David and join the refugees fleeing to Southern Germany – just as Stuart and his partner had done some months earlier. For them, however, the arrival of the Allies was a liberation and not an opportunity to claim the high moral ground of the "vanquished" (cf. Martin Chalmers's introduction to Klemperer's diaries, IXf.).

introducing a figure similar to Dr. Isaak Kaminski from *Victors and Vanquished* into the realm of his personal memories of his activities in Berlin. But it is no less fascinating to see with what ease he could introduce historical inaccuracies into Irish cultural memory of the Second World War.

An inability to differentiate between the chain of events that led to and shaped the course of the Second World War has given rise among Stuart's commentators to a very murky understanding of the war as a catastrophe beyond human influence or, indeed, responsibility. This, in turn, has encouraged credence in Stuart's version of events despite its many contradictions. In the absence of factual knowledge, an emotional response to the past has encouraged a slapdash advocacy of universal victimhood and, paradoxically, equal culpability. The disastrous conclusion is that if all were guilty, then the individual share in such guilt must be negligible and may even be outweighed by the hardships endured during and after the war.²⁴⁵ And who would dare to sit in petty judgement now over all who suffered then, who would be so self-righteous as to withhold "the balm of forgiveness" (Cooney A8) in an age of reconciliation, or to insist on ascertaining historical facts? Nuala O'Faolain argued to this effect in "Black and White Views that Leave Us Blinkered". More worryingly, Hugo Hamilton's pieces on Stuart – his introduction to the reissued *Pillar of Cloud* and his variation on this in a special issue of *Writing Ulster* in 1996 – all display a serious level of misunderstanding fuelled by a desire to recruit an ally against a mainstream Irish society he felt had arrogantly appropriated the high moral stance of the victors.²⁴⁶ His advocacy peaked with an emotional letter to the editor of *The Irish Times* in

²⁴⁵ K. Kiely pursues the more old-fashioned argument, popular in Germany after the war, when he reasons that if Nazi bigwigs like Albert Speer or Hjalmar Schacht received sentences only between ten to twenty years, surely Stuart's involvement did not deserve any punishment, especially as the Irishman had not committed treason against his country (cf. 189). Punishment is not the point, however. What Kiely's argumentation eschews as much as the one which supposes equal guilt in everyone is the need to acknowledge the individual's implication in the National Socialist state. Stuart's way of working through his past was to qualify his actions and misrepresent his motivations rather than face up to and "mourn" his implication in the Nazis' policies.

²⁴⁶ Understandably, Hamilton was smarting from incidents in which he had been subjected to taunts or blamed for events that predated his birth. In his article, "Understanding Francis Stuart", he recounted a recent

December 1997, accusing critics of Stuart's appointment as Saoi of Aosdána of "us[ing] the Holocaust like a moral board game in order to score points" (cf. Hamilton 1997a).

Barrington's introduction to *The Wartime Broadcasts of Francis Stuart* was a first step towards remedying the ignorance shared in equal measure by Stuart's admirers and detractors in Ireland. Stuart had known about the existence of transcripts of his broadcasts to Ireland in the Military Archives since at least 1975, but he seems to have harboured hopes at that time that they would fall under his copyright²⁴⁷ (cf. Webb 10) or, at any rate, remain inaccessible. Otherwise, it is hard to understand why, one year later, he would make the often-quoted claim in interview with Natterstad that his broadcasts were hardly political and mostly literary in nature (cf. 1976: 27).²⁴⁸ Barrington points out discrepancies between the political persona "Stuart" and the imaginative construct of the artist, promoted in particular through his most-read novel, *Black List, Section H*, which both camps had frequently taken as "the full truth of those war years" (McMahon 1974: 21) and "skeleton key to Stuart's life" (McMahon 1995: 39). Perhaps the ebb in literary evaluations of Stuart's works in the twelve years that have followed this publication represents an acknowledgement on the side of academia that there is little to add to the subject. Wills, for example, has no new insights in her section on Stuart (cf. 369-77), and Richard Murphy confines his response in 2004 to the challenge Stuart had raised with respect to the Irish *Bildungsroman* in his 1982 essay, "Minority Report". Certainly, Stuart no longer seems to appeal to scholars and fellow writers who once enjoyed reclaiming him into "the moral Pale" (*BL* 311) of Irish writing almost as much as they enjoyed emphasising his

negative experience with the producers of an Irish arts programme who had interviewed him about his collection of short stories, *Dublin where the Palm Trees Grow*, and had later fused his comments about having been called names like "Eichmann, Hitler, Goebbels" with images of a ranting *Führer*, "goose-stepping Germans and bulging Swastika banners" (1996c: 74f.) in their broadcast. Wrongly, however, he concluded that Stuart was, like him, an *innocent* victim of Irish ignorance and arrogance.

²⁴⁷ Stuart was right in this respect, for the copyright in the broadcasts in Barrington's book rests with Stuart's Estate. The writer's Estate later refused Damien Keane permission to reproduce the transcript of the broadcast from 9 June 1940 attributed to Stuart.

²⁴⁸ See chapter I.3.3 for a discussion of how Stuart's broadcasts as well as his scripts for William Joyce fitted precisely into the remit of German propaganda.

“unforgiven” (Cooney A8) status as the mark of his distinction. What the present silence signals is that a new perspective is needed, capable of addressing Stuart’s writing about the war with the necessary degree of historical and cultural differentiation and within the context of an ongoing dialogue on the representation of the past, self and other.

This is not what Brendan McNamee offers in his 2003 discussion of *The Pillar of Cloud and Redemption*, preferring to ignore context for most of his interpretation only to relapse into old patterns with his unconvincing conjecture that Stuart, like his character Dominic Malone, was urged on by an inner voice “to abandon a life of security and to enter the chaos of Germany at war” (45). McNamee explains the author’s attraction to fascism as the unfortunate result of Stuart confusing his own striving towards more “innocence” with Hitler’s discourse on purity – a theory that again disregards the contradictions between life and work, for Stuart appears to have been attracted not by the promise of chaos but by the orderliness of Nazi Germany, “with its pristine uniforms and cleansing oratory” (Cowley). By contrast, Mark Rawlinson’s essay, “Francis Stuart, Henry Williamson and the Collaborationist Imagination”, is a step in a new direction, emphasising the role of readers who, in denouncing Stuart, avoid facing the challenges his glorification of the scapegoat poses to their version of the Second World War. He argues that Stuart’s deliberate rejection of the “right” side “calls at once for a clear appraisal of the political and ethical errors, distortions and suppressions these novels enunciate, and for a candid reflection on the meanings and consequences of censure” (129). My analysis of Stuart’s writing in light of the external influences that shaped it as well as the vision it expresses pursues this path further and responds to Rawlinson’s invitation to consider the ways in which Stuart’s novels are “part of the cultural process by which apprehensions of the Second World War are reproduced and refocused” (135). This may fly in the face of Stuart’s complaint that “[a] purely literary (academic) critical approach (...) for such a writer as I am isn’t much good” (Natterstad 1976: 108), but it will be more to the point of

understanding how his works participate in the dialogue on the interpretation and representation of the Second World War and Holocaust.

2.2. “On Behalf of Suffering Foreigners”: Postwar Constructions of Self and Other in *The Pillar of Cloud, Redemption* and *The Flowering Cross*

Among the sources Barrington cites to illustrate how the historical persona “Stuart” differed from the imaginative construct is a letter published in *The Irish Times* on 13 December 1938. Stuart had been roused to write it by an appeal, launched in the same paper on 9 December, to help families and young men from Central Europe emigrate by making available funds for their agricultural training in Ireland prior to their settlement in more distant parts of the world.²⁴⁹ The Irish initiative appears to have been a direct response to the pogroms of *Reichskristallnacht* on 9 November that year, although the wording chosen by the organising committee avoided any reference to Jews:

There are in Europe to-day many thousands of Christians who have lost everything except their Faith. Their suffering is rendered peculiarly bitter by the fact that they have nowhere to go. Other European countries, which have already taken thousands of these unfortunates, will take no more. Ireland has so far taken a very small number and should now do her share. (...) In former days, when the great famine and other disasters lay heavy on this land, many of our people sought and received the hospitality of other countries. Let us now show that we, too, can be generous and prove to the world that the Irish people still believe that the Christians of whatever race or blood are sons of the same Father whose brotherhood is shown above all in this, that they love one another. (Anon., *The Irish Times*, 9 December 1938: 8)

Stuart objected to the vested interests he thought were behind this call for aid, berating those involved – the appeal was supported by Cardinal MacRory and Archbishop Byrne along with other leading Irish clerics and academics – for shrewdly mounting a “plan (...) to prove the humanitarianism of the democracies compared with certain countries where

²⁴⁹ Such skills were a necessary precondition to meet the strict quota that governed eligibility for entry into British-protected Palestine and South American countries if the emigrant did not meet the first and most desirable criterion, capital. The Irish proposal was in effect copying the successful model of the Zionist movement, whose youth organisation Haschara had prepared young men and women for the agricultural labour they were expected to carry out in Palestine (cf. Herzog 55).

such an ideal does not prevail” (Stuart, *The Irish Times*, 13 December 1938: 8). Such a campaign “on behalf of suffering foreigners” (ibid.) seemed ironic to him in view of the squalor and misery which reigned in parts of Ireland, so he suggested the do-gooders had better divert their efforts into helping those closer to home.

In reality, the suffering other at home was of no more concern to Stuart than the one abroad,²⁵⁰ both “others” serving simply as an opportunity to upbraid his contemporaries for their alleged hypocrisy. His second statement, written in response to other letters he had provoked, makes it clear that Stuart was anything but the “unprejudiced observer” (ibid.) he had claimed to be, for his instinctively negative reaction to democracy and suspicion of its agenda goaded him into aligning himself instead with its opposing ideology:

When democracy has found some solution to the pressing problems observable in the countries where it is practiced, which I would define as, among others: Unemployment, slums, the tyranny [sic] of money, and the appallingly low level of general culture, then let it sit in judgment on other forms of government. But, in my belief, our bureaucratic [sic] democracies can never of their nature find such a solution, being themselves largely responsible for these evils. (Stuart, *The Irish Times*, 19 December 1938: 10)²⁵¹

Stuart was thus limited in his ability to observe critically what he saw in Germany just before, during, and after the war, remaining trapped in his cynical knowledge, preconceived ideas and his own counter-propaganda. The position he adopted, although intended to distance him from popular consensus, was of course not unique. It can also be traced in the approach the Irish government took in relation to anti-Semitism (cf. Part I.3.4) or in the boost some of his Irish compatriots later derived from interpreting neutrality as a moral stance of detachment from all war atrocities (cf. Wills 398-418). It is also discernible in the attitude of the British “propagandised intelligentsia”, who, Piette has shown,

²⁵⁰ Only much later, in the 1980s, by which time Stuart received a yearly stipend from the Arts Council, Stuart invested some of his time in social work, teaching creative writing in Mountjoy Prison (cf. Kennelly 51f.).

²⁵¹ Stuart would renew his attack on the “democratic clap-trap” and propose an ideological reorientation in an article that appeared in *The Young Observer* on 1 December 1939 under the heading “Ireland a Democracy? The Real State of Affairs” (cf. newspaper clipping in scrapbook of articles and reviews kept as part of the Francis Stuart Collection in Coleraine).

likewise exhibited “an ignorantly knowing ‘incredulity’” towards the crimes committed by the Nazis that “deadened the essential ‘duty to know and to be haunted by your knowledge’” (197).²⁵² The effect was the same in each case, rendering the individual immune to the suffering of the other, specifically the Jewish other. Just as the Office of the Controller of Censorship suppressed stories of anti-Semitism at home and abroad (cf. Douglas 129f.), and as British propaganda refused to use stories of atrocities committed against Jews in an ill-advised bid to resist the racist thrust of Nazi propaganda (cf. Piette 195f.), so too Stuart refused to believe stories he heard in Berlin of extermination camps, dismissing them as enemy propaganda (cf. Elborn 190).²⁵³ In the context of Stuart’s three postwar novels, the subordination of the historical victims to a mere footnote of the war both legitimises the focus on personal individuation through derivative forms of suffering with patent Christian overtones and justifies the valorisation of such suffering as a source of closer communion with God (cf. diary entry for 4 October 1942).

Stuart’s initiation to suffering in Germany entered a first stage in 1941, for one year later he would look back in his diary and reflect on how he had “suffered through love sometimes all that [he] could bear” (11 October 1942). At the end of 1941, however, he left his “desolate loneliness” (8 October 1942) behind and emerged from a phase of emotional and creative stagnation by accepting as his guiding “truth” that “passion is the touchstone for art (or emotion)” (25 September 1942). This revelation was both his licence

²⁵² Piette is quoting from Arthur Koestler’s response to a letter of a reader of *Horizon* who had voiced scepticism about Koestler’s article on mobile gas chambers used in Poland, published in October 1943.

²⁵³ Wills also states that after censorship was lifted on 11 May 1945, Irish commentators found it difficult to absorb and report on the scale of the atrocities perpetrated by the Germans. Sceptical about Allied propaganda, they clung instead to a notion of an equal share of inhumanity on all sides engaged in warfare (cf. 398-403; Douglas concurs 220f.). Stuart would maintain this position throughout his life, expressing indignation to interviewers in old age at the Allies’ temerity to have called their warfare “a Christian crusade” (Attallah 314, also Lazenbatt 7). In effect, he was reiterating the thrust of German propaganda which repudiated the Allies for their hypocritical pretensions. His susceptibility to German war reportage is also evident in his persistent belief that the former American diplomat, John Cudahy, died in mysterious circumstances in Switzerland after leaving Nazi Germany. Stuart repeats the conjecture that he was killed by the British for warning Hitler not to give Roosevelt any cause to enter the war in *Black List, Section H* (cf. 373) and, much later, in interview with Naim Attallah (cf. 315). In reality, Cudahy died following a riding accident on his farm near Milwaukee in September 1943 (cf. Anon., *The Manchester Guardian*, 7 September 1943: 6).

to begin a relationship with his student Gertrude Meissner in late summer and inspired the last part of *Winter Song*, the novel he completed before the year was out. Declaring this book a breakthrough to a new way of writing, Stuart's translation of his misery into an art form on this occasion prefigures the routine recurrence of superlatives of inner suffering over the following years, each time heralding a fresh bout of creative energy and spiritual renewal, each time helping him overcome previous failings and legitimise his continued literary ambitions, and each time sounding a little more forced. Until the end of the war, however, Stuart had to content himself with studying suffering only in the books he read (cf. his diary entry for 12 July 1942), for, on the whole, he led a "strange life of ease and plenty", as he recalled in "Berlin in the Rare 'Oul Times", his contribution for "The World at War" supplement of the *Irish Press* in 1989 (XIIIf.). The trappings of the conventional life Stuart led in Berlin included two jobs that required little actual work but provided a good income; a girlfriend who, when not cross with him, attended to his emotional and physical needs (including queuing for food); time to read up on Shakespeare, Keats, Lawrence and Goethe as well as on a fair number of less canonical writers; recreational outings in summer, occasional small parties, and holidays in Vienna, Munich, the Riesengebirge or Silesia. His encounters with Germans seem to have been few outside the classroom and office, for whereas he notes stimulating discussions with Frank Ryan, there is never any mention of his perceptions being challenged in conversation with locals, least of all by his lover. Admiring him like "a prophet of God" (Stuart's entry for 20 September 1942), Gertrude personifies the merely nominal changes Stuart made to his concept of self and other over time as he rediscovered the appeal of "suffering foreigners" in his life and fiction.

To Stuart, Gertrude was attractive because of her ability to act freely from the heart rather than the head, a quality he perceived as partly owing to her being German (cf. diary entry 13 April 1942). This set her apart from his wife and other Irish and English women

he had known and whom he would later castigate for their coldness in *Redemption*, *The Flowering Cross*, *Victors and Vanquished* and *Black List*, Section H. Her Kashubian roots did not enter the equation, and although they would prove useful after the war, they remained an ill-defined baggage, the contours of which were only filled much later by Grass's novel *The Tin Drum* (cf. M. Stuart 20). A process of complete acculturation was not unusual for those Kashubians who opted for German nationality and it expressed itself right down to German-sounding surnames and first names (cf. Modrzejewski). The Meissners, with their daughters Traute, Gretel and Gertrude (the fourth daughter's name remains unmentioned) were no exception, for as State Secretary Boland learned through a Polish priest in 1947, the names of Gertrude's parents were given as Jan Niedzialkowski and Janina, née Majewska, in the record he had consulted (cf. letter and additional notes from 2 April 1947 from Fr. B. Kolenza (his signature is difficult to decipher), DFA 10/A/72).²⁵⁴ The father's naturalisation had its advantages,²⁵⁵ for example, enabling him to work as a teacher in the then German town of Lauban in Silesia. It also allowed Gertrude as one of four siblings to avail of free university education at Berlin University between winter 1939 and spring 1944 (cf. M. Stuart 19). After their departure from Berlin in September 1944, it was her status as German refugee that provided lodging and ration cards in Munich, and, in spring 1945, in rural Wurttemberg and Austria. In the two months the couple spent on the move before finally finding a room in Dornbirn, Stuart, as a foreigner, lived both in fear of the authorities and at the mercy of locals, who appear to have shunned him as a liability ahead of the Allies' arrival (cf. M. Stuart 51, 53; also Stuart's diary entries for Easter 1945 and 3 May 1945). The despair that seized him during these times of hunger, exposure and tiredness seems most intense on Easter 1945 when he

²⁵⁴ The information was in all probability taken from a marriage certificate in the church register. The priest himself could not explain how Gertrude came by the name of Meissner, wondering if it was "camouflage de guerre" or if Gertrude was "une 'Volksdeutsch' obligée ou volontaire". His source had informed him, however, that she did not speak Polish.

²⁵⁵ As in Bielenberg's case, the German nationality of the husband or father determined the nationality of his wife and children according to German law (cf. Rürup 119).

latches on, in fading ink, to Jesus's promise to his disciples: "In der Welt habt ihr Angst. Aber seid getrost, ich habe die Welt überwunden."²⁵⁶ Gertrude's new role of responsibility changed the power balance between the two and any mention of fights or complaints about her sulking like a spoilt child vanish from Stuart's notebooks only to recur in 1947, by which time they had settled in Freiburg.²⁵⁷ Doubtless, the period between leaving Munich in March 1945 and finding a room in Dornbirn in late April took its toll on both and brought them closer together.

To Gertrude's immense indignation – a sentiment that not only highlights her ferocious admiration for her partner, but also chauvinist airs of superiority – Stuart's status continued to be inferior under the French, who "treated [him] like a Ukrainian worker" (M. Stuart 59).²⁵⁸ Gradually, his status improved and it was her German background which caused the couple to worry she might be expelled from the Austrian village where they had found shelter and sent back to Germany (cf. Stuart's diary note for 24 June 1945). Stuart's foreign status now entitled him to avail of the services offered by the repatriation centre in Bregenz, which supplied food and organised his journey to Paris in August 1945. There, he failed to secure similar privileges for Gertrude or an onward passage for both of them to Ireland. Shortly after his return to Dornbirn in November, Stuart and Gertrude were arrested by the French and their past involvement with Nazi propaganda threatened to

²⁵⁶ John 16:33: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." During the first half of 1945, Stuart had limited access to books and mainly read Master Eckhart and the Gospels in German. Throughout May, June and July 1945, he quotes at length from these in his notebook and even if this habit dwindled after that (Stuart would later cross out many of his religious reflections), he continued to read mainly in German until after his imprisonment when he discovered the French book shop in Freiburg and Ethel Mannin supplied him with a stash of her own books.

²⁵⁷ Whereas Stuart repeatedly suffered under Gertrude's jealousy during their years in Berlin, it seems that in Freiburg he had for once reason to be jealous of her contacts with others (cf. 3 November 1947, 11 June 1948).

²⁵⁸ A few pages before venting her outrage at her lover being treated the same as former forced labourers from Eastern Europe, she describes how these same people roused her pity and induced her to defy the law that forbade Germans to give them food (cf. M. Stuart 42).

catch up with them.²⁵⁹ While Belgian and French collaborators with whom they shared cells were sent to Paris and Brussels for trial, the prospect of “falling into the English [sic] hands” (M. Stuart 76) and being subjected to their justice embittered their hearts like stone (ibid.).²⁶⁰ The few notes Stuart recorded in a New Testament he kept during his imprisonment (and which he transferred into his diary on 22 July 1946) speak of his agony over being separated or transported elsewhere and sentenced, but they do not specify the charges brought against him. It seems that until 12 April 1946, he underwent no proper interrogation, but even after this point he preferred not to spell out what the Allies knew of his wartime activities except in his fiction, where he could imbue visits to POW camps, his broadcasts and, indeed, his imprisonment with subversive meaning. Realising the paramount need for a clean record and an influential ally in Britain, preferably in the military, he contacted Basil Liddell-Hart. The military historian had once expressed admiration for *The Angel of Pity*, as Stuart reminded him in a letter he wrote in February 1946 (cf. Elborn 187f.). In his second letter, he cut to the chase, asking Liddell-Hart for assistance, as his “case had been sent to London ‘for decision’” (idem 188). He hastened to profess his opposition to the Nazis and to stress the adverse effects of his imprisonment on his career:

As you know that I was deeply opposed to Nazism and State tyranny, and my experiences during the war only deepened this opposition. It is not the hardship of detention here, but also the hold up in that work which I believe I could now do, is hard to bear with patience... (quoted in Elborn 189)

Liddell-Hart obliged and made an enquiry into the case against Stuart to the British Foreign Minister.

²⁵⁹ In her memoir, Madeleine would claim that she had been arrested along with Stuart, because the French confused her with a woman named Gerda Meissner whom they suspected of having been a German spy in Marseille (cf. M. Stuart 71).

²⁶⁰ Stuart’s partner blamed the chaos after the war and the unquestioned authority the Allies enjoyed as victors for the months she and Stuart spent in prison without any charges brought against them (cf. M. Stuart 71). In fact, the French *Code de procédure pénale* allowed investigating magistrates to imprison suspects indefinitely without trial and conviction. This practice has only recently been curtailed by successive acts of legislation which have narrowed the number of cases in which provisional detention may be applied and have shortened the permissible duration.

Iseult only heard from Stuart at the end of May 1946 (cf. her instant letter to F. Boland from 29 May 1946, DFA 10/A/72). She and her brother, Seán MacBride, had thought it unwise to write to the Austrian address her husband had given them through a Red Cross card he had sent on 10 July 1945 for fear of drawing the attention of the Allies to his whereabouts. However, by March 1946 Iseult was too worried to wait any longer and contacted External Affairs. One month later, MacBride – anxious to avoid any rumours about Stuart’s possible arrest in the Irish press – agreed to let the Irish Legation in Paris make cautious enquiries with the French Foreign Office. On hearing of Stuart’s imprisonment on 13 May, the Irish Legation was instructed by Boland, who that year succeeded Walshe as Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, to intervene on his behalf and to provide the usual degree of diplomatic protection, legal and humanitarian aid (cf. telegram from 31 May 1946, DFA 10/A/72). The recent decision made by the British authorities not to prosecute another Irish citizen who had broadcast for the Germans, Charles Edward Bowlby,²⁶¹ led Boland to believe that they would not prosecute Stuart either. He assumed that the French, therefore, had no grounds to hold him much longer and it was safe for Ireland to negotiate Stuart’s release without risking any diplomatic embarrassment (cf. his letter to Seán Murphy at the Paris Legation from 13 June 1946, DFA 10/A/72). Not long after that, on 24 May, Stuart and Gertrude were transferred from Bregenz in Austria to a prison in Freiburg im Breisgau, Southern Germany. Boland’s assumption proved correct, for on 11 July the Irish Envoy informed him that the French Foreign Office had indicated that, “unless the enquiries set on foot in the first week of June disclose[d] some grave charges, they [would] support the view that Stuart should be handed over to us.” Two days later, Stuart and Gertrude were released.

²⁶¹ Although born in Cork, Bowlby had spent most of his life in England where he joined the British Union of Fascists. In 1938, he moved to Budapest to work as a teacher, was ordered to leave Hungary in 1941 and was apprehended by the Germans en route to Turkey. He was released in 1943 after agreeing to broadcast for the British section of the RRG. After the war, he was interned in Belgium but spared prosecution on condition he would never return to England. Bowlby settled in Ireland and taught at a preparatory school in Bray before founding his own private school, Glenart preparatory school (today Sutton Park School) (cf. Bergmeier & Lotz 86, Lysaght 15).

As the Irish Legation learned from the file compiled by the French authorities on Stuart in September 1946, he was still likely to face indictment on the charge of being a German spy (cf. letter from 11 September 1946 from Seán Murphy to Foreign Secretary Boland). In light of this threat, his family tried to arrange his repatriation, if necessary against his will, and the Irish government solicited the French to issue a deportation order and escort Stuart to Paris from whence he would be flown direct to Dublin to avoid any difficulties that may have arisen in transit through Britain.²⁶² The French Foreign Office consented to this plan on 5 November and Murphy asked Boland on 6 November for permission to go ahead. Just days before this agreement was reached between the two governments, Stuart was briefly rearrested. Gertrude instantly turned again for help to Liddell-Hart, who at the same time happened to receive a letter written on 29 October with information on Stuart's file in Britain from the United Kingdom Representative in Ireland, Sir John Maffey (cf. Elborn 192). Unaware of the developments in France, Maffey signalled that Stuart's "case look[ed] pretty bad" (ibid.), probably alluding to Stuart's involvement with Abwehr on several occasions during the war which, had any of the plans been successful, would have abetted acts of aggression against Britain and endangered Ireland's neutrality and security.²⁶³ Gertrude also alerted Stuart's mother on 28 October, and on 6 November an anxious Iseult contacted Boland to find out if the arrest was preliminary to Stuart's deportation/forced repatriation. Yet this démarche was never taken, for as Boland notified the Irish Envoy in Paris on 12 January 1947, "Mrs. Stuart has now

²⁶² Boland had remarked a year earlier to the Irish Envoy in Paris that "Stuart's claim to Irish citizenship [was] of a rather technical character", having been born in Queensland, Australia. He added that "quite apart from the fact of his birth in Queensland and the fact that his service to a foreign country in time of war has placed him outside the diplomatic protection of his own Government, he should not count on our being able to give him any help in such a contingency" (letter to Irish Legation in Paris from 16 August 1945).

²⁶³ Through the statement Joseph Murphy made to MI5, British authorities as well as secret intelligence (G2) in Dublin knew of Stuart's willingness to liaise between Abwehr and I.R.A. and to supply the latter with German equipment and guns (cf. letter from Dan Bryan to F. Boland from 17 August 1945 outlining the contents of this report). Undoubtedly, Stuart's involvement in the attempts to recruit an Irish Brigade from among British soldiers of Irish stock had also come to light, although this is not mentioned in the communications between G2 and External Affairs.

realized what she ought to have realized long ago and that, in the light of that realization, neither she nor the family are any longer particularly anxious to get Francis home.”

Stuart’s attempt to position himself at the right end of the perpetrator-victim binary was a necessary precondition to shedding individual responsibility and to leaving occupied Germany behind. His nascent awareness of the kind of self-image he needed to promote was helped by outside prompting. Ethel Mannin, for example, had alerted him to the problem his “attitude during the war” might pose for British publishers, including Gollancz, to whom he had submitted his first postwar book, *The Pillar of Fire* (cf. diary entry 12 February 1947). A day after receiving her letter, Stuart declared in his diary that he

beg[a]n to see that the very difficulties that have arisen out of my attitude during the war have gone to help in my development as a writer. Not only were the war years in Germany necessary to me as a writer but the worse years of the aftermath too and the time of imprisonment. (...) In Munich at the end of 1944 I was still writing stories like the Re-born, not bad perhaps, but which showed that I had not yet found my own sure way. (...) It is not until last autumn in *The Pillar of Fire* that I began to write fairly surely in my own way and well. I shall never regress from that. (...) strange indeed are the ways in which I am led! I can never recall too often that in those quiet years at home I did not as a writer progress – I widened my scope, I tried this and that, but I did not really progress along my path towards truth. (13 February 1947)

However, his failure to find a publisher for the book indirectly showed him how much he would still have to adjust his account of his time in Nazi Germany in order to make his narrative palatable. Taking its cue from an outline he had devised on 14 November 1944 in Munich, *The Pillar of Fire* was the account, in novel form, of his life during the war, illustrating his development, describing the civilian suffering “in the place where these were worst”, but mostly focusing on his personal struggle towards peace “without which”, Stuart anticipated, “the end of the war would bring no peace.” Comparing his subsequent work in progress, *The Pillar of Cloud*, to this previous attempt, Stuart concluded that *The Pillar of Fire* had been a more contemplative work, not sufficiently supported by action or drama to drive home his philosophy (cf. diary entry for 30 June 1947). According to an

unenthusiastic letter from the agent Curtis Brown, whom Mannin had charged with finding a publisher in the United States, the real problem was that “the hero, although being in Germany during the war, having had little feeling about the war and being on the contrary concerned with his own personal life!” (quoted by Stuart in his entry for 7 October 1947). Although Stuart’s reaction was defiant – “If that is the main fault they can find then I am really glad to know it. My God, what incredible people!” – his next books would avoid not only the setting of Nazi Germany, but also cloak his concerns with inner growth in the suffering of the war’s victims.

On Good Friday 1947, having finished reading Henri Troyat’s biography of Dostoevsky, Stuart again reflected on how his experience in prison resembled a kind of death, equating those eight months to the four years of banishment the Russian writer had endured,²⁶⁴ but ultimately concluding, in the words of his literary antecedent (in French translation), that the punishment had been “justice” and God’s own plan for him, “pour que j’y apprenne ce qui importe le plus et sans quoi l’on ne saurait vivre” (diary entry for 4 April 1947). The poetic admission of justice having been served should not be mistaken for an admission of guilt, for Stuart scorned the idea of Allied justice. His cynical suspicion of their motives had been reinforced during the war and his continued rejection of their representation of events as mere propaganda predisposed him to uncritically adopt the stance of their defeated opponents. His reaction to the trials of German war criminals on 16 August 1947, for example, assumes a moral deficit on the side of the prosecutors – echoing the popular dismissal of the legitimacy of the “victors’ justice” (*Siegerjustiz*) in postwar Germany – and implicitly paints the vanquished supporters of the Nazi regime as victims:

²⁶⁴ This was not a new comparison, in fact, as Stuart’s diary notes from autumn 1945 reveal. During his stay in Paris, Stuart suffered intensely from the separation from his lover, “walking on the edge of despair” (27 September 1945) and fearing that a nervous instability inherited from his father might push him over that edge. He found solace and reassurance in reading another biography of Dostoevsky and in going over the passages he considered best in *Crime and Punishment*. Not surprisingly, these are the ones that describe Sonia standing by Raskolnikov after his confession and awaiting the “infinite happiness” that would follow their “terrible suffering” (quoted in entry for 4 October 1945). Later, however, Stuart crossed out most of his enthusiastic verdict in this entry which lifted Dostoevsky’s embrace of love and life over D. H. Lawrence’s “constricted”, cold vision.

“An essential to ranking as a War Criminal is to have lost the war. This fact undermines the whole equity of the proceedings against war criminals. There are no signs of a reign of real justice on earth being any nearer than, say, ten years ago.” Although Stuart does not further specify the reasons for this comment, he was presumably responding to the preparations for the so-called “Ministries Case”, the follow-up to the Nuremberg trials, which began in November 1947 against senior members of the German Foreign Office, including Ernst von Weizsäcker and Ernst Woermann.²⁶⁵ Prosecuting Stuart’s former employers for their role in a war of aggression and crimes against humanity might have taken the pressure off those who did not stand accused, but it could have also had the effect of reminding Stuart of his implication as a cog in the larger war machine of National Socialism. This he could not tolerate, even going so far as to dismiss every mention in the British media of his broadcasting for the Nazis as “libellous” and, despite his limited means and shaky grounds, threatening legal action (cf. diary entries 20 October 1947 and 1 March 1950). Such accusations proved even more disconcerting when they were made in his immediate environment. It came as “[a]n unpleasant shock” to hear that an Irish-American priest in Freiburg was openly discussing his wartime activities in town (cf. 10 November 1947). Stuart’s worries intensified into paranoia that the people around him were beginning to judge him by his past as “suspect, political prisoner” (10 December 1947). The place where he could defy them was his writing, be it in his diary or novels:

²⁶⁵ Ernst von Weizsäcker had been arrested in Nuremberg in July 1947. He and Woermann were both on the list of defendants released by Telford Taylor, head of the Office of the Chief Counsel for War Crimes, in August that year, the same month Stuart entered his reflections on “war criminals” in his diary. Although they were only found guilty in relation to the charges of crimes against peace (starting a war of aggression) and crimes against humanity, charges had been brought against them in all eight categories at the international court’s disposal, which included war crimes and slave labour (cf. Conze *et al.* 389, 392). During the trial, which began in November that year, prosecution was represented by M. W. Kempner, a former German civil servant who, as a Jew, had lost his position in 1933 and had fled Germany in 1935. Incidentally, he hailed from Freiburg im Breisgau, where Stuart was watching on with scorn and suspicion. It is instructive to note that while Stuart liked to portray himself as an outcast for having sided with the losers of the war, it was in fact a victim of the Nazis like Kempner who became an outcast in postwar German society, where the allies of the convicted von Weizsäcker, levelling similar accusations to those in Stuart’s diary entry, ensured that he never managed to resume his career and had to return to the United States (cf. *idem* 429f.).

I am not ashamed of any of my past outward activities (though often of my secret motives and inclinations) and should anyone take offence or turn against us the loss is more theirs than mine. Materially the loss may be ours at the moment, but that is not really important. And in all I lay myself in the hands of God. (ibid.)

His diary had also been the place where, one month earlier, Stuart completed his redefinition of his self-image and bolstered his artistic integrity in light of a more modern template than Dostoevsky – the American Henry Miller. Stuart picked up a copy of *Tropique du Capricorne* at the French book shop in Freiburg on 23 October, sensing a kindred spirit in this “embittered, rebellious (...) ungainly” writer full of passion. He was not disappointed and recognised himself in Miller’s nonchalant protagonist who confidently waits for an exterior force to rock his boat and set him on his journey as a writer (cf. 14 November 1947). The following day, Stuart quoted at length a passage questioning every achievement of civilisation and wished he had had the courage to write it “before this last cataclysm” as Miller had. In marked contrast, however, Miller, a card-carrying pacifist, had fled Paris in July 1939 and returned to New York in January 1940, just as Stuart arrived again in Berlin (Dearborn 231). Unaware of such differences, Stuart hears in the American’s “rallying cry” an echo of his own struggle to “cling to ultimate truth against the huge mass of horror, of lies, of madness, of civilisation, of pretences, smugnesses, human ‘justice’, churches, ‘religion’ and all the rest.” It is not surprising to see all these conventional pieties attacked in *Redemption* as hypocritical (with the institution of marriage added to the bonfire), as Stuart in fact resolved to appropriate Miller’s revolt in his next book (cf. 18 November 1947). Yet Stuart’s reading of *Tropic of Capricorn* had a much more far-reaching impact. Having already demarcated the parameters within which he was willing to engage with the Second World War in *The Pillar of Cloud*, Stuart now laid the foundation which would support his creative edifice beyond *Black List*, *Section H* and until his death:

What I had to wait so long to understand begins to be revealed to me and that is my own place in the whole cataclysm, the war and its aftermath. I see why I

(and S)²⁶⁶ had to go through what I did, had to be persecuted, arrested and kept those frightful eight months in prisons [sic]. *I came under suspicion not because I was a Nazi which God knows I never was, but because I was not on any side, because I did not believe in one propaganda or the other.* Because I had a more or less blind instinct against three quarters of the whole organised civilisation, the machine-monster with all its camouflage of fake idealism, under which I had lived. And if I spoke on the German radio to my own people in Ireland it was primarily to say this. Perhaps I was wrong to speak, perhaps that was identifying myself too much with the horrors of Naziism [sic], and it was a later realisation of this that made me refuse to speak further. *Of course, in one sense, better I had kept clear of the whole business, but had I done so, had I not suffered, I would not have come to my present knowledge.* I had to experience the whole horror at first hand – a horror that was not merely the Nazi horror, but the horror of a world of which the Nazi horror was but a part. Now the Nazi horror has gone but the great horror remains and the same old mistake is of course being made all over again. The whole blame is being laid on the communists, or on the capitalists or on anything but the real core of the matter, which is the fundamental [sic] false basis of our civilisation. No, I am glad that I suffered (and S with me) and I know what I suffered for, because in my blind way I was not ‘on the side of’ the victors. Because I knew there was no real victory.²⁶⁷ And all this became clear to me in reading this book of Henry Miller. Or at least it was becoming clear and this was the final little tear that rent the veil. (18 November 1947, emphasis added)

Not only is Stuart successfully convincing himself of having been at the receiving end of “the Nazi horror”, he is also attempting to reinterpret his former decisions, which led him to collaborate with the Nazis, into a “blind revolt” and act of resistance against the system. The humility with which he emerged alive from the last two months of the war is here heroically magnified as his alibi: “I was not ‘on the side of’ the victors.” With this revision of his past, Stuart had effectively broken with historical reality, which might explain his urgent wish to leave Freiburg after this point. When the wait for the necessary permits proved to last until summer 1949, he anticipated his escape from his immediate environment in the two books he wrote in the intervening months, *Redemption* and *The*

²⁶⁶ This is a regression on Stuart’s side, who had declared only two days before his belief in “Gruscha”, the name that came to replace his lover’s pet name “Schumpel” or “S” in his diaries before her rebirth as Madeleine.

²⁶⁷ McCartney quotes part of this diary entry, but in failing to explain Stuart’s remarks as being inspired by his reading of Miller, she creates the impression that there is no element of hindsight or revisionism in his assessment of his role in Nazi Germany (cf. 158).

*Flowering Cross*²⁶⁸, using them as a testing ground for an engagement with the war that was no longer inhibited by any Nazi connotations.

The dissociation from all German markers and simultaneous identification with the victims is mirrored both in Stuart's and Gertrude's life stories and in the couples who people the panels of the "triptych" (d'Astorg 28) formed by *The Pillar of Cloud*, *Redemption* and *The Flowering Cross*. Coinciding with Gertrude's application for Displaced Person status at the end of 1947, Stuart stopped calling her by the family nickname "Schumpel" (or "S") in his diaries and switched to the Slavonic "Gruscha" (or "G"). This external change may have helped facilitate her identification with a role which, once certified by the Allied authorities, effectively meant "an international recognition of victimization" (Cohen 37). By contrast, the denial of DP status would have been considered "tantamount to a guilty verdict" (ibid.). By happy coincidence, non-Jewish Polish refugees were exempt from filling in UNRRA's rigorous "eligibility questionnaires" (Cohen 37), and Gertrude's birth in Danzig allowed her to pursue DP status as a Polish national. The questionnaires and screenings were designed to establish not only nationality and dates of displacement but also – similar to the de-Nazification questionnaires Germans had to complete – personal war histories. As it was sufficient for Polish refugees to raise "'valid objections' to returning to Communist Poland" (Cohen 37), it seems likely that Gertrude was never challenged on her German nationality or on her previous employment at the Foreign Office's propaganda division.²⁶⁹ Her return to her Polish roots was only one stage in her transformation, however, for by summer 1948 she had already discarded the expedient (but essentially alien) shell of "Gruscha" to emerge as the enigmatic (and erotic)

²⁶⁸ The French setting at the beginning of the novel was inspired by Stuart's close following of events outside Freiburg. On 2 December 1947, he remarks on the "wide-spread strikes and disturbances" in France, which he would later use as the background to Louis Clancy's arrest as a suspected *agent provocateur* in the small miner's town in which he chose to set up his studio.

²⁶⁹ Apart from the special treatment of Polish applicants for DP status, Gertrude may have likewise benefited from the fact that a lack of funding and resources meant that de-Nazification was conducted a lot less rigorously outside the American zone (cf. Conze *et al.* 343).

disciple “Magdalena”²⁷⁰ in the dedication Stuart added to the proof of *The Pillar of Cloud* (cf. his diary entry for 29 June 1948). The protection and recognition her new status accorded her effectively displaced the need on her side, too, to critically reflect on her past, which explains perhaps the vagueness of her memoir.²⁷¹ Instead, it provided her and Stuart with a legitimate basis to cast themselves as victims and cemented an inability to admit, reflect and mourn a personal compliance with the policies of the Nazi regime neither she nor Stuart would now ever acknowledge. Accordingly, when Stuart turned to Liddell-Hart in early 1949 to expedite their departure, he again denied any wrongdoing during the war:

These talks were never addressed to any public except the Irish. They never dealt with Military [sic] matters. My main theme was Irish neutrality which I endorsed and also partition. They were certainly anti-British from an Irish Nationalist point of view but never pro-Nazi. (...) But I said things which I have certainly no desire to defend. (...) Needless to say I never dealt with the German occupation and oppression of other countries, though I claimed that the North Ireland nationalists formed a legitimate resistance movement. (...)

²⁷⁰ Stuart first calls her “my Magdalene” in a note he wrote in his New Testament in prison on 28 April 1946 and which he later transferred into his diary notebook on 22 July 1946. The German version of the name, “Magdalena”, in turn became “Madeleine” when the couple moved to Paris in 1949. Decades later, Stuart briefly relapsed into referring to his partner as “G” in his entry for 26 January 1957, although he corrected his mistake. The background of Gertrude’s biblical role model, however, should not be taken as the measure of her sexual liberality, for in contrast to her as well as to the heroines of Stuart’s postwar novels – all of whom display a remarkably relaxed attitude towards sex, whether as an act of love, of violence or of economic necessity – she was appalled by the suggestion that she should repay the Christmas goose she and Stuart enjoyed in 1943 by sleeping with the hotelier in Luxembourg who had provided it (cf. M. Stuart 36).

²⁷¹ Terence Killeen’s verdict – “Dull would he (or she) be of soul who could fail to be engaged by this memoir” – at the very start of his review completely fails to account for what is a surprisingly clichéd memoir which conforms to the narrative set out by the writer’s husband, even giving preference to quoting directly from his diaries rather than her own to make her point. Alternating between fairytale templates (Cinderella and her prince, cf. 92) and Christian ones (Mary Magdalene, St Thérèse), Madeleine Stuart excuses her own political ignorance with the prerogative of female victimhood, citing in her defence her father’s early death and the hard time her mother had raising four daughters on her own (cf. 23). Despite her professed ignorance and innocence, however, resentment shines through her recollections of Southern Germany, where the locals did not welcome refugees like her and Stuart with open arms, and of the French Army’s treatment of “the so-called collaborators” (75). There is no acknowledgment of the fact that, through her work as Stuart’s secretary, she would have had access to foreign news and thus in all likelihood a better indication of what was happening in Nazi Germany. Her blue-eyed admiration for strong male figures betrays the same drive towards an infantilised state of abandonment and irresponsibility which Tröger describes in her study. Thus, William Joyce impresses her with his fearlessness in the midst of an air raid (cf. 23) and “Tiger” (Stuart) is allowed to mould and shape her in return for renouncing contact with all other women. What her story lacks in critical insight and personal explorations, she makes up with platitudes that fasten on the failings of others (also see her self-defence of the “we knew nothing” kind in interview with Caroline Walsh, *The Irish Times*, 31 May 1985, p.11). The accusatory references to the Allied bombings of Hamburg and Dresden (cf. 33), neither of which she witnessed, serve as convenient examples to point out civilian suffering without having to be specific. Although her sister Gretel survived the Hamburg bombing, Madeleine merely notes she arrived in Berlin in a state of shock and shows no further interest in understanding what happened to her sister, or, indeed, to herself, in the course of such air raids.

this gives as honestly as I can the outward drift of my broadcasts... (quoted in Elborn 213)

Gertrude's metamorphosis is prefigured by Stuart's heroine of the first "panel", *The Pillar of Cloud*, who underwent a similarly deliberate process of renaming from "Klara" to "Céline" (diary entry for 26 June 1947) to "Halka Mayersky"²⁷² in the finished manuscript, endowing her with added connotations of Polish identity. The Irish hero of *The Pillar of Cloud*, Dominic Malone, in turn, while eager to be scapegoated on the general principle of suffering, insists that he had never, "in any way, in thought or deed, sided with the captors against the captives, with the executioners against the victims" (*POC* 46). The German setting itself would recede into the background in *Redemption*, where those left in Berlin are no longer distinguished by their country of origin and have become instead "a little tribe" (43). In *The Flowering Cross*, it would amount to no more than a blurry evocation of Louis Clancy's place of earlier captivity as a Canadian soldier during the war. However, Stuart's portrayal of the German character and characters in his first published novel after the war is strikingly negative,²⁷³ repeatedly attributing observations like these to his protagonist:

To Dominic Germans were still largely a mystery, although he had lived for years among them. They lacked any art of living. Not only now after their defeat, but they had always lacked it. They moved through life heavily, carefully, with the inexhaustible patience of beasts of burden plodding over stony paths. And yet there they were with a strange power in them that he couldn't deny. The women especially had a power in them. The men were like little internal-combustion machines, grinding away, grinding away, and if you didn't look out, Dominic felt, you would be caught by them and ground out too. (*POC* 120)

²⁷² The Polish first name "Halka" is a departure from Stuart's use of the German "Helga" for the female companion in his story about wartime destruction, "The Destroying Angel". A character named "Hella" serves as the German maid in *Victors and Vanquished*. The surname "Mayersky" closely resembles the maiden name of Gertrude's mother, Majewska, and reinforces the impression of Stuart and his partner as "suffering foreigners".

²⁷³ Even *Victors and Vanquished* and *Black List*, Section H, where the Irish protagonists retain an air of aloofness and derision towards the Germans they come in contact with on a professional basis (through academia or the operations of military intelligence), are far less scathing of "ordinary" Germans than *The Pillar of Cloud*.

Here, Stuart borrows and elaborates on the terms of literary antecedents who had shaped an image of Germans as inferior creatures. These terms, which had been devised in the nineteenth century to create difference and flatter the onlooker's self-image as more sophisticated than the graceless cattle-like breed gaining power in Central Europe (see for example, Charles Lever and Lady Wilde's descriptions, Part I.3.4), are now applied to distinguish Dominic by virtue of his Irishness. Stuart's recourse to negative stereotypes also reinforces the sense of an unbridgeable distance between the German locals, representing the old, failed way of life, and the band of foreigners in their midst who are attempting a new beginning.²⁷⁴ His approach inadvertently undermines Dominic's claim of wanting to be on the side of the losers (cf. *POC* 46) as well as his proclaimed affinity with plain, simple people rather than educated contemporaries such as Captain Renier or Dr. Varreau. The friction this causes is most apparent in the ambiguous portrayal of Frau Arnheim, a character modelled on "Mutti" ("Mummy"), in whose kitchen Stuart experienced hospitality and generosity in the first half of 1947 and who gradually disappears from his notebook's radar towards the end of that year. In the novel, she evolves from motherly saviour in Dominic's time of need at the beginning of the story into an object of his scorn because of her reluctance to sanction the promiscuity of male-female relations in the chaotic postwar years which Dominic greets as the real liberation (cf. *POC* 195f.). All three characters, Halka, Dominic and Frau Arnheim, are indicative of Stuart's awareness of the need to incorporate the victims of the war into his representations of self and other, but they remain examples of trading in clichés and half-truths, because Stuart, just as in his letter to *The Irish Times*, remained incapable of seeing the other outside convenient tropes and of critically reflecting on the chain of causality that led to the suffering he seized on as his defining characteristic.

²⁷⁴ In *Redemption*, Stuart again uses basic racial stereotyping to set the representative of the Catholic faith, Father Mellowes, apart by virtue of his "negroid" features (*R* 11, 115, 152) which single him out as different within the highly evolved Roman Catholic Church and explain his advocacy of a primitive, grass-roots Christianity free from established conventions.

Stuart's failure to adequately respond to the other in light of his wartime experiences permeates his fiction and is most disappointing in his inability to create a female character in his postwar works that would live up to his avowed ambition of creating "the new woman". Inspired by his preparations for his last lecture at Berlin University on Shakespeare's vision in his Romance plays of women like Miranda, Perdita, and Marina – who "come like the breath of a new spring (...) like the daffodils that come before the swallows dare" (quoted on 2 August 1944) – Stuart resolved to attempt something similar in his next work (cf. *ibid.* and notes on character "Christine" from December 1944). The source of his idea can be found in Murry's study of Shakespeare, which Stuart had read in 1942 (cf. his notebook dedicated to "Notes on Shakespeare and Other Subjects").²⁷⁵ In the chapter on "Shakespeare's Dream" at the end of his book, Murry argues that Shakespeare's last plays *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* are marked by a "sensation" which

belongs to a man to whom the re-birth of spring has become intolerably tender; a kind of sweet anguish and heart-break, a delicate and despaired-of miracle. 'Daffodils that come before the swallow dares.' What tenderness of hope is in that single phrase! (...) There is a connection, I am certain, between this ache of longing for spring, this exquisite celebration of the miracle of re-born Nature, which is uttered in so much of the loveliest verse of the latest plays, and the imagination of a re-born humanity, which takes substance in the rare women, 'tender as infancy and grace', who are the chief figures of their drama. (385f.)

Murry sees the female characters of the three plays not as opposing representatives of Nature (Perdita) and Art (Miranda), but as ultimates of the same "infallible race" (409), embodying the vision that "men and women do not become their true selves by Nature merely, but by Nurture" (396). Art is the means by which the rest of humanity can be transformed to match these women; love is the activity of such redeemed human beings (cf. 409). The knowing innocence of these female characters is not threatened by contact

²⁷⁵ Stuart later recycled some of the insights he gleaned from Murry's book in *The High Consistory*, where a performance of *The Tempest* on Inisheask island in September 1971 leads Grimes to reflect on Shakespeare's vision of Perdita and Miranda as the "new" women in his retirement (cf. 302f.).

with reality, however, because they remain impregnable to experience. Their innocence “grows on, unbroken by Experience, and comes to ripeness” (410). “That,” Murry points out, “could be only in the world of Imagination; it can still be only in the world of Imagination” (ibid.).

The plot Stuart conceived in summer 1944 and expanded on 11 May 1945 takes up a theme begun and scrapped in Laragh (cf. 11 August 1944). It sketches out various components from which he would borrow heavily for *The Pillar of Cloud* and *Victors and Vanquished* and which would likewise inspire the novels in between: the protagonist Louis Mullane ends up in a rural German hotel following a car accident he deliberately caused after learning of his fiancée’s (or, alternatively, wife’s) unfaithfulness. The fiancée’s death in this accident marks the beginning of his inner process of suffering, abnegation of the self and rebirth, which is guided and channelled into a quest for truth through the older, wiser and mystically endowed woman Z (later christened “Christina/Christine/Christl Polensky”, changed to “Dominica” in May 1945). Z has reached her higher level of being through a suitably thorny path of her own: having nursed a prostitute friend suffering from tuberculosis, she inherits the latter’s money and shortly afterwards decides to enter a convent. When the origin of her dowry is discovered, she is sent away without having taken her vows. She resolves to lead a contemplative life on her own, at which point the injured, remorseful Irishman Louis arrives at the hotel where she is staying and requires her attention. The test of his new sincerity is to marry the young pregnant girl Lilo Freytag (made unattractive by being simple, conventional and a little stupid, like Lisette in *The Pillar of Cloud*) at the behest of Z, who declares this sacrifice will advance him further in his quest for truth and repentance. In a note added on 21 May 1945, however, Stuart decided that instead of separating Louis and Dominica, their “new love” should be allowed to blossom (which by necessity means killing off Lilo/Lisette) and that the war had to enter somehow into their story. Stuart’s concept of Dominica now took its cue from a further

literary source he had found inspirational: Rilke's *Duino Elegies*, and in these, the example of sixteenth-century poet Gaspara Stampa. Rilke's decision to sing of abandoned lovers in the first elegy leads him to question:

(...) Hast du der Gaspara Stampa
denn genügend gedacht, daß irgendein Mädchen,
dem der Geliebte entging, am gesteigerten Beispiel
dieser Liebenden fühlt: daß ich würde wie sie?
Sollen nicht endlich uns die ältesten Schmerzen
fruchtbarer werden? Ist es nicht Zeit, daß wir liebend
uns vom Geliebten befreien und es bebend bestehn:
wie der Pfeil die Sehne besteht, um gesammelt im Absprung
mehr zu sein als er selbst. Denn Bleiben ist nirgends.²⁷⁶

Stuart had read Rilke in Munich and found it both "miraculous" and a "comfort" to have stumbled upon the elegies at the time (cf. diary entry 13 February 1945). When he returned to his own writing in May 1945, he visualised his female character as bearing the stamp of Gaspara Stampa: capable of similar endurance, cognisant of the depths of love and the human condition, and able to explain to man the mysteries of a "hidden God", of "love", of "inner life" and the consequences of man's disobedience (entry for Feast of the Holy Trinity in May 1945).

Although this spells the promise of a strong female figure teaching the male protagonist how to live and love in ways that run counter to his inclinations and intuitions, "Z's" incarnations as Halka Mayersky, Margareta, Alyse, Myra Kaminski and Halka Witebsk in Stuart's postwar novels are troubling, not because they seem vulnerable and defenceless as in Shakespeare's final plays, but because they equate the "new woman" with the "abused woman" and create dichotomies between natural, spiritual, life-enhancing

²⁷⁶ In Stephen Mitchell's translation:

(...) Have you imagined
Gaspara Stampa intensely enough so that any girl
deserted by her beloved might be inspired
by that fierce example of soaring, objectless love
and might say to herself, 'Perhaps I can be like her'?
Shouldn't this most ancient suffering finally grow
more fruitful for us? Isn't it time that we lovingly
freed ourselves from the beloved and, quivering, endured:
as the arrow endures the bow string's tension, so that
gathered in the snap of release it can be more than
itself. For there is no place where we can remain. (333)

and cold, rational, life-negating female templates. “Witebsk has fallen in the East”, Stuart noted in his diary on 27 July 1944, a comment that would prove programmatic for his female characters long before Halka Witebsk was born in *Black List, Section H*. Moulded on Sonia in *Crime and Punishment*, all her antecedents are “fallen” women, violated by men and state or religious institutions, physically deformed or deficient, raped, alone, suspicious of language to the point where they prefer to stay mute, inferior by such standards as social background and education, or, more insidiously, nationality and “race”. By contrast, their male counterparts maintain their physical attractiveness and integrity throughout the war, although they cannot avoid skin diseases in filthy prison cells either and suffer from malnutrition in the postwar years, just like their creator. Like him, they write, sculpt or conduct small-scale research, advancing language, art and knowledge under the admiring eyes of their lovers. They hail from Ireland (or Canada, in the case of Louis Clancy in *The Flowering Cross*), a part of the Western world that, it is implied, has been spared the depredation of continental Europe. They retain a social network at home or abroad, if only to repudiate it. Their one lack or shortcoming by comparison to their female counterparts is courage – the courage to be different *first*, which is explicit in the quote from *The Winter’s Tale* on which Stuart had seized. Halka Mayersky defies bourgeois conventions and prostitutes herself so she and her sister Lisette may survive after the premature death of both parents. She, a half-Pole, risks hiding a Jew, for which she, somewhat incredibly, spends only a few months in a concentration camp. Margareta is a hurt, ill-clad foreigner with hardly any German when Ezra Arrigho meets her in a park in Berlin (cf. *R* 153f.). She sinks even deeper when she is buried under the rubble of a collapsed building. By the time the couple is reunited in Ireland, she is a crippled woman with, as she observes, the sex appeal of “an old cart-horse” (*R* 159) whom nothing much can shock anymore. Yet she grits her teeth at the world and, letting abuse and exploitation wash over her, succeeds in making her way out of destroyed Germany in search of her

lover. Alyse, the blind orphan, is headstrong enough to resent the implication that because of her handicap she will have to spend the rest of her life scrubbing the floors for the nuns who run the institution in which she has been placed. Her readiness to take risks is evident in her role as accomplice in the theft of the collection boxes, her guileless response to the notes she receives from her fellow prisoner, Louis, and in her decision to follow him into an alien environment in London and have a child with him. Myra Kaminski and Halka Witebsk, however, no longer have overblown prehistories – their otherness is conveyed through the superficial markers of origin and sex, unwittingly confirming the racist and gender tenets of the regime in whose shadow they were conceived. They make the essential flaw in Stuart's conception of the "new woman" all the more apparent – that woman as the other has a limited value in his novels when she is subsumed under projections of male fantasies, blossoming when needed and withering when rejected, as the examples of Nancy Arrigho (a cruel portrait of Iseult), Melanie McCabe,²⁷⁷ Mrs Polensky,²⁷⁸ Leonore Cassidy (a more temperate portrait of Iseult), and Iseult in *Black List* show.

McCartney, at pains to reconcile this stereotypical portrayal of the submissive, available woman with her feminist approach, points towards the redemptive power Stuart places in the hands of his violated female characters, giving the victim the ability to forgive and thus to rise above the aggressor (cf. 146). However, the very fact that her degradation and rape – or, in the case of Annie Lee in *Redemption*, her rape and murder – is subordinated to the higher end of facilitating the transformation of a male character is

²⁷⁷ K. Kiely makes an interesting connection between Ethel Mannin's rivalry with Gertrude while visiting Stuart in Freiburg in June 1947 and June 1948, and the unfavourable portrayal of rich and spoilt Englishwoman Melanie he devised in the first half of 1949 (cf. 196), whose wealth and status contrast with the poverty and plainness of the foreigner Alyse. This analogy becomes particularly cruel in light of the vengefulness with which Louis abuses and rejects Melanie.

²⁷⁸ It is ironic to see how Stuart's recycling process of older ideas makes of his erstwhile model heroine from the projected novel, *The Kingdom of Polensky*, her dowdy, depressed opposite in *The Flowering Cross*.

symptomatic of her insignificance as other or as an individual in Stuart's novels.²⁷⁹ Father Mellowes may argue that the knife Kavanagh plunged into Annie's heart in a fit of passion "was not so cold as [the] justice" the judge will mete out to him in the name of the people (*R* 193), but his faulty logic cannot conceal that Annie has to be sacrificed in order for a small community of a chosen few to gather around his improvised altar above the fish shop and to live what they consider a new, better life. Since there is never any question of Stuart's "new woman" exercising the power McCartney believes she has been endowed with in a manner that does not serve the male development – for example, by going her separate way, as Stuart had originally envisioned the future for "Z" – it seems misleading to speak of her as "in control" (McCartney 146). All the more so as the women who do seem to retain their independence are presented as the old and cold breed: Nancy, Melanie, Leonore, Iseult, even Mrs Polensky, who, after her husband's suicide, is given the financial means to start a new life but refused the spiritual credentials that could enlighten it.

The factor that ultimately limits Stuart's vision of the "new woman" is the very condition in which he writes her, that is, by identifying her with him. In the preparatory notes for the novel he hoped to write after the war, Stuart writes: "I can only write from the soul (the spark of real life) when I get down to my own real inner life. This is done by identifying a character with myself – in this case it must be Christina Polensky" (undated note on page 9 of notebook begun on 11 August 1944). Yet the spiritual ideal towards which he intensely strives is "communion" between his male and female characters, a state of oneness that at once redeems the male and fades out the specificities of history and victimhood in the glare of woman's "unfathomable innocence that was on the earth to set over against the monstrous evil" (*POC* 223). With that, her courage and difference are absorbed by the protagonist and questions of causality and guilt become obstacles in the

²⁷⁹ David H. Greene, in an early discussion of Stuart's three postwar novels in *Envoy*, sees the female characters as descendants of Cathleen Ni Houlihan (cf. 20f.). The comparison may be somewhat forced, but it does emphasise the emblematic, subservient role of Stuart's women and shows the limitations of his ability to cast them as an other rather than as a preconceived, convenient image of otherness.

way of spiritual healing. Historical experience is cancelled out by unreal aspirations to innocence; Shakespeare's ideal of "simple human love" (Murry 409) is transmuted into a shield against the outside world by egoistic couples.²⁸⁰ New woman's ability to forgive anything glosses over the rift between victims and perpetrators and implicitly absolves the male protagonist from any complicity or responsibility. Thus, Margareta's pains are figuratively washed away by Ezra, who feels a little guilty at having returned unscathed, although, as he likes to remind his Irish audience (Annie and Kavanagh), he "hadn't completely escaped it", having spent "some months locked away with the others" (R 52) – "it" and "the others" standing in for the unspecified violence perpetrated against an unspecified group by an impersonal "great machine" (R 53). In the act of first washing his lover's feet²⁸¹, then carefully "laving" her body (R 199), he absorbs not only her traumatic experiences but also puts an end to the need to remember them. "All that is over", he tells Margareta as she tries to share with him the details of the price she had to pay to be with him (cf. R 206f.). Romilly's acquiescence in her loveless defloration by Ezra is later justified as a rite of passage out of complacency and into the real world of suffering, giving her a purpose in life by making her fit to marry the unsavoury murderer Kavanagh: "a husband for whom to live in the bonds of charity and peace" (R 196).²⁸² Alyse's loyalty to Louis even after he forced her to have an abortion and humiliated her in front of the rich Melanie McCabe enables him to forget the perfidy of his actions and to persevere in his

²⁸⁰ Although some reviewers have criticised Stuart's overbearing male characters – Augustine Martin, for example, calls Ezra Arrigho a "charmless Prospero" (A9) – only one realised early on that, in combination, Stuart's men and women become doubly irritating (cf. Wyndham 7).

²⁸¹ The biblical overtones aside, the male protagonists' tendency to judge a woman by her feet is a further example of the "pedestrian" binary opposition Stuart creates between the footsore heroines of *Redemption* and *The Flowering Cross* and the well-heeled "proud (...), haughty feet" (R 137) of the women Ezra and Louis reject.

²⁸² Romilly's implausible path is no coincidence given that Stuart was rereading *Crime and Punishment* at the time he wrote the scene between her and Kavanagh (cf. diary entry for 31 June 1948). The influence of *Ulysses*, which he reread a little later, is less palpable, except perhaps in the "sensuality" and sexual transgressions of Annie as a latter-day Molly. Having dismissed Joyce as "minor writer" by comparison to Miller only half a year earlier (cf. 17 November 1947), Stuart came to appreciate his novel at a second, proper reading as "[a] great work of humour and indeed an impressive work which I can only now really evaluate" (14 August 1948).

sculpting “with a pure heart” (*TFC* 189). Yet the act of reconciliation, celebrated in an improvised marriage ceremony in their humble room, is preceded by Louis decreeing that their new beginning – “their own Marshall Plan” (*TFC* 219) for postwar peace and stability – must be predicated on forgiving *and* forgetting all (cf. *TFC* 192). Halka Mayersky’s confrontation with her former torturer in Dominic’s prison cell is particularly contrived in that her fear translates directly into seeking sexual intimacy with Dominic in his dark corner of the cellar, while the ex-concentration camp warder huddles in the opposite corner. This act gives her strength to defy common expectation, forgive the Nazi and refuse to incriminate him in front of the French authorities (*POC* 222). To Dominic, this move confirms her innocence and purity of heart, but to the reader, it reveals an insidious competition between Halka’s near saintliness and Jewish claims of victimhood, as, prior to finding out that the witness summoned against the German suspect was Halka, Dominic’s reaction had been to reassure the fellow prisoner by telling him that “[t]hey won’t condemn you on the evidence of the Jew alone” (*POC* 214). While there is no question in Dominic’s mind that Halka’s testimony alone would have led to the warder’s conviction – for him, the scars left by the whip between her breasts are stigmata that seek their rival – his attitude towards a potential Jewish witness is instinctively suspicious.

The heavy-handedness of Stuart’s approach to creating an inspired female character is also evident in the portrayal of language as a male prerogative. “Women like Margareta,” Ezra ponders,

say all without words and say what words can’t say. How far they are from being capable of ‘intellectual companionship’ or philosophising. (...) No fine phrases, no poetry, almost no endearments, nothing. Darkness and silence, the dim reflection of the street-lamp on the ceiling, and a mute gesture. (*R* 168)

This is a far cry from the poet Gaspara Stampa, who had transcended her condition through words, soaring above the boundaries of love, pain and dependence. By contrast, the female characters’ suspicion of language in Stuart’s novels makes them dependent on “communion” with the protagonist on a level where communication happens, as Keeri-

Santo rightly recognises, through “the language of the heart, intelligible across the barriers of age, physical handicap and the incompatibility of personal backgrounds” (88). There is tenderness in this alternative language and it helps overcome the “isolation” (ibid.) experienced by Stuart’s characters in the postwar setting, but it simultaneously overwrites the “moral isolation” which the author faced after “the ‘revelation’ of the Nazi atrocities” (diary entry for 18 May 1950) and which he ranked second only to the physical hardships he endured. In doing so, it does little to foster novelty or progression. Both would require a dedicated working through the past and a critical dimension to Stuart’s representation of the encounter between self and other that acknowledges alterity without trying to absorb it. Instead, the communion he proposes fills the void felt at the origin of existence with the myth of a new beginning and bears all the risks of distortion and conflation against which Schmitz, LaCapra, Margalit and Aleida Assmann have so emphatically warned.²⁸³

It is in light of the above – Stuart’s submission to stereotypes, his misrepresentation of the Second World War and misappropriation of the Holocaust, resulting in his contrived valorisation of suffering – that one can see the flaws in the very foundation on which he bases his proposed communion between self and other in the three postwar novels. As Stuart’s preconceptions were not overhauled by his experiences during the war, there was no room for a new image of the other to develop. Rather, it was time to harvest and incorporate “the fruit that [he] knew must grow out of the great suffering of the war”, as Stuart wrote after translating a poem by Benjamin Fondane who perished in Auschwitz (cf. diary note 21 April 1947).²⁸⁴ To achieve this, Stuart de-particularised Jewish suffering and

²⁸³ Even Stuart’s idea that future wars could be prevented if nations were composed of different interest groups that could not be easily unified to fight for one cause reveals that he was still working on the assumption of national stereotypes which perceived Jews as much as social outsiders as it did political formations like pacifists, anarchists or communists (cf. diary entry 27 June 1948). It is not particularly heartening either that he counted William Joyce and John Amery as the precursors of such counter-intuitive allegiances.

²⁸⁴ Stuart worked his translation into *The Pillar of Cloud*, where the poem serves the Romanian refugee Petrov as proof that “all those who had suffered and died were martyrs from whose wounds and blood the seed of a new wisdom and love would be nourished” (170). How little the actual confrontation with the reality of the concentration camps lends itself to such a bold proclamation is epitomised in Denis Johnston’s

replaced it with a Christian code of suffering which deliberately obscures both the concrete historico-political context in which the “suffering foreigners” meet and the issue of individual responsibility.²⁸⁵ In marked contrast to Holocaust memory’s refusal to instrumentalise its narratives, Stuart’s postwar fiction resembles instead the misguided search of some German writers for healing or for a foundation myth in the rubble of destroyed cities “in the interest of re-forming an ‘imaginative community’” (Schmitz 2007a: 13). Sanitising the past in this manner allows his couples to contain and redefine it as the basis of their “new” identity. What remains suppressed in Stuart’s postwar interpretation of his situation is the same other who stood at the threshold of his departure for Germany. Not even the reversal of fate after the war, which made him dependent on the charity of others abroad to survive, could change this. In contrast to his declared ideal of letting emotion rather than reason guide his writing – a priority Bielenberg also acknowledged in her note to herself and which she, in her own way, struggled to conform to – Stuart’s postwar novels fail to achieve the passionate overhaul of old taxonomies and categorisations under the strain of careful image management.

diary entry on his arrival at Buchenwald concentration camp a few days after its liberation. The extract was published in *The Bell* in 1950, the same year Stuart began to manipulate the Irish reception of the legacy of the war through his own contributions to this magazine and to *Envoy*. Johnston’s breakdown at the end after realising where his “thirst for fairness and justice” (40) as a “neutral” reporter for the BBC has led him does not end with his rise from the scene of horror to hail the new life that will come from it. Rather, he lets the indelible consequences, the limits of the experience, sink ever deeper into him:

Oh Christ! We are betrayed. I have done my best to keep sane, but there is no answer to this, except bloody destruction. (...) And if nothing remains but the stench of evil in ourselves, that cannot be helped! (41)

²⁸⁵ Stuart’s levelling of distinctions is similar to the reaction of German contemporaries such as filmmaker Wolfgang Staudte (*Die Mörder sind unter uns*) and writer Wolfgang Weyrauch, both of whom leave the specifics of the Nazis’ policy of extermination unmentioned in order to explore suffering without reference to Jews or to the causes that led to the rude awakening after the war (cf. Hans-Joachim Hahn’s essay in *A Nation of Victims?*).

2.3. “The Haunting Mystery of Time”: The Writer as Witness in *Victors and Vanquished* and *Black List*, Section H

Time and again, Stuart returned in his writing to the past “as [he] remember[ed] it” (diary entry for 17 August 1961, following a visit to Bellewstown). He had been confident that he was predestined to write about the war as no other writer in English could,²⁸⁶ but, contrary to his belief, expressed in November 1944, the task of writing the story of his transformation as a person and writer in Nazi Germany would occupy him for much longer than just one or two years after the war (cf. diary entries 14 November 1944 and December 1944). A note added in pencil to the basic plot outline he made in the last winter of the war states: “Begun finally July 1946” – yet *The Pillar of Fire* found no publisher. Another comment in ink avers: “But this I only wrote ten years later.” Started in November 1955, *Victors and Vanquished* was more than a redrafted version of *The Pillar of Fire*, as McCartney maintains (cf. 10, 153). In contrast to the earlier novel, which Curtis Brown had rejected because it failed to deal with the setting of Nazi Germany and the context of

²⁸⁶ Stuart’s remark relates in particular to his ability to relate air raids, but the one story he dedicated fully to this experience, “The Destroying Angel” (published in *Envoy* in 1950 and reprinted in *States of Mind*), falls short of his ambition. By imposing his vision on his recollections, it becomes more important for the narrator Louis to hail the cleansing “wind of destruction” to reign freely “as long as we and a few others are at the same time being kindled to intenser life” (*States of Mind* 51) than to engage with his experience of the bombardments. Lingering on the sight of death is declared “shameless”, a violation of the bodies (*States of Mind* 50). The actual trauma of large-scale destruction is contained in an equivocal narrative of passive, stoic survival which resembles the palliative effect of the Blitz myth (cf. Piette 71ff. and as discussed in chapter II.1.5.). In effect, Stuart proves as incapable of spelling out and bearing witness to the experience of these air raids as his English and, indeed, German contemporaries, who, Sebald would claim in his 1997 Zurich lectures, “did not try to provide a clearer understanding of the extraordinary faculty for self-anaesthesia shown by a community that seemed to have emerged from a war of annihilation without any signs of psychological impairment” (2003: 11). Like them, Stuart created distance between himself and the events, as his observations following the worst raid he had experienced up to that point show:

in the midst of outer destruction one remains emotionally untouched. The only way one can be touched is physically if a bomb falls on one’s own head! Not that there isn’t anxiety and distress for others, but I see that no war-machine or violence can have any effect on the real core of life which is only manifested in prayer, creative work and love. (2 March 1943)

His “inwardly peace” was not shattered either after the building next to the one in which he had been celebrating Gertrude’s 28th birthday took a hit on 23 November 1943, a powerful confirmation of the extent to which the individual could close his senses and lock out images of destruction. Such a reaction was by no means rare. Klemperer, trying to write down his account of the destruction of Dresden on 13 and 14 February 1945 ten days later, concludes that he, an academic who defined himself through his writing, blindly walked through the fire storm, while his wife Eva was able to register the details of the inferno around her: “She acted and observed, I followed my instincts, other people, and saw nothing at all” (838).

the war, *Victors and Vanquished* is infused with what Piette, after Raymond Postgate, calls “Jew-consciousness” (Piette 195, Postgate 55f.) – the attempt to rise above the racist thrust of anti-Semitic ideology only to nurture the anti-Semitic lie of difference by confirming every stereotype in reverse. Although Stuart was convinced at first that the book would be “the best [he] ha[d] yet written” (13 November 1955), a third annotation in ballpoint pen signals another reprise as “(BLACK LIST, Section H)”. In both novels, the protagonist’s quest for renewal in the midst of and in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War is related in less strident tones of religious fervour and with a great deal of hindsight. However, *Black List*’s much slower gestation – from its first stirrings in May 1961 to the submission of *The Legend of H* to his London agent in summer 1967 to the eventual publication in the United States in 1971 – highlights the process of progressively shaping personal recollections with recourse to the archive of cultural memory in order to correspond to the social frameworks set by collective memory.

If Stuart responded to the need to adjust his representation of his wartime experiences and actions by making token references to the persecution of the Jews and to Auschwitz, he was at the same time intent on retaining the ultimate authority over his past as its witness. For the past was also his “protection”, not simply against “too easy a time of superficial interests and contentment” (crossed-out comment in entry for Good Friday 1953), but also against the historical reality of events. Stuart’s decision to replace the construct of the forgiving female Über-victim in his three earlier novels with that of the male witness and writer in his two later ones reflects this desire to consolidate the narrative power in a figure which, by definition, stands beyond the divide that separates fact and fiction. The witness’s testimony is not judged in terms of factual and biographical accuracy but as the act of recollecting a personal experience for an audience willing to listen. Sigrid Weigel, therefore, argues that there can be no “fictitious” testimony, only a “simulated” one (cf. 2002a: 41). For the survivor as witness, however, it is of paramount importance

that the audience believe his testimony. Injecting autobiography into his fiction proved a lasting stumbling-block for Stuart's readers,²⁸⁷ but this does not render *Victors and Vanquished* and *Black List, Section H* impermeable to the test Young describes as the only one relevant to testimonies: that is, probing the witness's response to the events at the time and not simply accepting a perspective adopted with hindsight. Here, the earlier exploration of Stuart's time in Germany during and after the war reveals the extent of the discrepancy between the author's contemporaneous response and the attitude of his witness characters Luke Cassidy and H Ruark. These protagonists no longer rely on the intercession of a female intermediary to back up the validity of their experience, but they guard their privileged status as "suffering foreigners" as jealously as Dominic, Ezra or Louis. Nor is their interpretation of the human catastrophe they witness less relativising than before. Rather, Stuart's intention to "celebrate" in his novels "the ignominious or obscure deaths of the victims (...) as the kind of events that are of vital significance in man's inner development" (letter quoted in Natterstad 1976: 84) displays the same tendency to conflate historical trauma with the search for meaning and individuation undertaken by male characters who, before coming to Nazi Germany, felt lost and stranded. It is obvious that Stuart meant the above comment to reflect positively on his ability to save the victims from oblivion, but, unwittingly, his understanding of his role as superimposed witness again shows his failure to recognise the limits imposed by the suffering other. Unable to conceptualise what lies outside the boundaries of his personal experience,²⁸⁸ Stuart subsumes the annihilation of the other into his testimony in a way that

²⁸⁷ Natterstad, who initially found Stuart's reference to *Black List* as a "memoir in fictional form" (1974: 84) an "apt" description, later struggled with the confusion of fact and fiction in Stuart's novels and eventually revised his opinion in "Locke's Swoon".

²⁸⁸ McCormack, for example, deplores the unconvincing account of all war events Stuart had not himself witnessed, such as the violence surrounding the arrival of the Soviet army in Berlin described in *Redemption* which falls far behind the evocations of hunger and imprisonment in *The Pillar of Cloud* that "seem artistically and morally truer" (1976: 179).

allows him and his readers to derive foundational meaning from the catastrophe and leave the abyss behind.

Luke Cassidy in *Victors and Vanquished* has all the exterior characteristics that qualify him as a moral witness except that his ostentatious modesty in speaking to his audience about the past gives the lie to the survivor's struggle to bear witness and deep-felt need to be believed. He is falsely accused and innocently suffers at the hands of the Nazis for vandalising a propaganda poster with a witticism that he, with his limited German, could not have written (cf. *VV* 242). During his brief imprisonment, he shares the fears and humiliation of those persecuted by the Nazis, and although he is released through the intervention of his acquaintance Dr. Keller, an unsavoury character modelled on Dr. Veessenmayer, he has a risky mission ahead of him in saving the Jewish woman Myra Kaminski. Luke cannot save her father Isaak, however, yet long before being deported to Auschwitz, the old Professor absolves the perpetrators and bystanders of the Holocaust, declaring the Nazi persecution a chastisement wrought by "a jealous God" on his chosen people that will allow him to "melt them again and remould them into receptacles of His Word" (cf. *VV* 192ff.). Although Luke protests at first against such a radical view, he eventually submits to the Jewish authority that expresses it. Attributing these apocalyptic views to a Jewish victim leaves Stuart room to construct Luke as guileless Gentile. This strategy is particularly sinister when the author buttresses Luke's cynical suspicion of the Allies and their motives by having Isaak dismiss "the moral indignation over the persecution of the Jews" in the British papers as "the most dangerous frame of mind" (*VV* 272). In this manner, Luke's testimony qualifies not just the injustice that was perpetrated against Isaak, but also covers up the witness's own past errors of judgement in front of the community to which he reports. In the novel, the protagonist's Irish friend Mike, who, in contrast to Luke, volunteered in the British Army and was captured by the Germans, serves as a suitable test audience. Luke reveals nothing to Mike about his own imprisonment in

Germany, conscious of the need to avoid sounding like the vanquished Germans who were eager to show that they had been opposed to National Socialism and suffered under it (cf. *VV* 260). Since Mike's war experiences lead him to endorse Luke's suspicion of the victors and their arrogant airs of superiority, he condones Luke's "pig-headed" decision to go to Germany after the war as an act that asserted his independence as a writer (cf. *VV* 163f.). Reassured about the validity of his stance, Luke takes over his narrative at the end of the novel to relate, through his diary entries, his perceptions directly to the reader.

Outside the novel, the assumption of an audience sympathetic to such an interpretation of the past proved correct only to a limited extent. Reviewers had no difficulty discerning the romantic, fanciful imaginings that took the place of "on-the-spot recollection from (...) Stuart's shadowed war years" (Anon., *Time* 24 August 1959: 80). Long before Barrington pointed out the divergence between the protagonist and Stuart in all aspects that define their political personae – that is, respectively rendering or refusing services to the I.R.A., German Military Intelligence, and German propaganda outlets (cf. 50) – critics rejected the novel as propagandistic and stereotypical in its representation of both its German and Jewish characters (cf. Wilson 17, F. J. K. 8) and of smacking of an "unearned rectitude" (McCormack 1976: 179). The book's lack of success caused Stuart to cross out many of the confident pronouncements he had made in his diary in the course of writing it. Nevertheless, some scholars seemed convinced that *Victors and Vanquished* was "a barely touched-up transposition of the vivid experiences and memories of Francis Stuart himself", paving the way for *Black List*, which would "dispel any remaining traces of mystery" (Joannon 170f.). Writing in the same publication in which McCormack slates the novel, Joannon sings its praises: "The themes in this work definitely ring sincere, both in their tone and their depth", somehow failing to explain how either a philo-Semitic portrayal of Jewish characters, the preaching of the proud-to-be-an-outcast doctrine by Isaak, or the contrived touches that line Luke's path in and out of Germany can be called

sincere. McCartney, too, makes the somewhat startling claim that the novel only “retells Stuart’s own story, and his concentration on the small personal story, rather than the wider political situation, is justified” (118). What these comments reveal is the extent to which some readers accept the healing and closure Stuart offers to the past in the very act of ostentatiously recollecting in his novel historical crimes that defy such a conclusion.

Stuart’s desire for reconciliation in the novel goes beyond the Holocaust and finds expression in his attempt to imagine a different ending to his failings as a father and husband. In *Victors and Vanquished*, the loss of his first child, Dolores, and the breakdown of his marriage weigh more heavily on the protagonist than, for example, in *Redemption* and *Black List*, although Luke will eventually also completely shed his family ties as an obstacle to his personal fulfilment. Both in his diaries after the war and in his novels, Stuart rejected Iseult’s marital claims on him as those of a blind woman trying to make him feel guilty (cf. his entries for 8 November 1946, 3 April 1947, Easter Sunday 1947, 11 November 1948). He was, of course, oblivious of her continuous efforts on his and Gertrude’s behalf between August 1945 and November 1946. On hearing of their imprisonment, Iseult even went so far to offer to adopt the latter in order to secure permission for her to live in Ireland (cf. letter to F. Boland from 29 May 1946). At this point, however, she was still deluding herself that Stuart “wouldn’t have written of Gertrud [sic] and of the way of the Catholic Church being the only one in the same letter if he was carrying some silly flirtation” (ibid.). There are occasional glimpses of Stuart accepting the charge that he had failed her and the children (diary entry for 11 April 1947), or of remorse, such as when he exclaims after reading a more subdued letter from his wife: “My God, how little I want to hurt her!” (diary entry 1 March 1947).²⁸⁹ Iseult’s account of Maud Gonne’s death moves him to wish their estrangement could be overcome, only to instantly

²⁸⁹ Only a few of Iseult’s letters to Stuart are part of the Francis Stuart Papers in Coleraine, but Natterstad reproduced a bigger selection in 1976 which gives a more balanced picture of her understandable desire for Stuart’s repatriation in 1945, her financial difficulties, her concern about her children’s emotional well-being and her wish to maintain amicable terms with her estranged husband.

gainsay such a possibility (6 May 1953). Even at Iseult's funeral, Stuart notes that the misery he felt in Laragh had less to do with her death than with his sense of isolation and intense longing to be back in London with Madeleine (cf. 2 April 1954). When he brought her to Ireland for the first time in summer 1955, Stuart went in search of his first child's grave and experienced a "revelation about death" (cf. diary entry 24 October 1955). He and Madeleine resolved at the time to settle in Ireland and, a little while later, "not to do anything against the possibility of M having a baby" (31 October 1955).

In fiction, Luke makes the same visit much earlier, in autumn 1939, as he is preparing to return to Berlin, a "celestial city" (*IV* 84) in his vision. The overgrown site, which he can only locate with the help of a gravedigger, is a reminder of his indifference as a young father and husband and of the coldness he has allowed to creep into his marriage. Yet despite his remorse and feeble attempt to open up to his wife, he cannot overcome the distance between them and so he leaves Leonore and Clare, their second daughter, only to find a surrogate daughter in Paris and a fulfilled relationship in Berlin. French baby "Loulou", whom Luke adopts on his journey to Germany, bears the name of the kitten Stuart's second wife found near St Paul's (cf. *M. Stuart* 114) – another baby substitute of sorts.²⁹⁰ Through Loulou, Luke feels he can make good some of his shortcomings earlier in life, and for a time the novel even seems to suggest an altogether different course for Luke than that of witness and saviour. Isaak, his mentor, argues that the best way to demonstrate his transformation into a more compassionate person would be to return to his wife and try to make their marriage work (cf. *IV* 131). Luke accepts with a heavy heart the wisdom of this decree, and an opportunity to follow up on his promise to Isaak presents itself when he is asked to participate in a gun-smuggling mission to Ireland. Happily, he is spared from joining the mission by Loulou, since both men agree it would be reckless to take the baby

²⁹⁰ Stuart and Madeleine's love of their cats and other pets is well noted. Less well documented is the fact that just before they received the gift of their first kitten in Paris, Stuart had been hopeful that, once his lover joined him in Paris, they might finally settle down and have a child (8 August 1949).

with him in view of the Captain's plan to scuttle the boat should it be discovered on its voyage. This is where Loulou's significance ends, however, and she soon dies in Luke's arms in an air raid shelter, leaving him free to shepherd Myra out of what has become "the doomed city" (*VV* 250) towards a safe haven near Switzerland. Interestingly, it is the innocent Myra who suggests to hapless Luke he should ask his wife to agree to a *ménage à trois* in his former home (cf. *VV* 249) – something Stuart had thought possible after the war (cf. Attallah 322).²⁹¹ Leonore comes to meet Luke half-way, but when he steps in front of her in Paris as a new, compassionate man, ready "to ask her forgiveness" (270), he makes it clear that he has no interest in resuming their prewar life. Conscious of having dashed his wife's hope of returning with her to Ireland, Luke restrains his sympathy by focusing instead on her tiring possessive claims on him and her embarrassing concern for financial practicalities. His daughter Clare, by contrast, understands when he tells her he has to return to Myra because his "whole heart and being is where she is" (*VV* 285). Perhaps this was a father's way of reassuring himself that, contrary to Iseult's claim in one of her last letters, his daughter had not suffered too much under the weight of his "going away and losing all interest in her" (letter reproduced in Natterstad 1976: 37). At the time of writing *Victors and Vanquished*, Stuart was given the opportunity to renew the bond with his daughter, a student in Oxford, as Kay would visit him and Madeleine occasionally in London (cf. diary entry 20 October 1956). It was too late to reach out to Iseult, however, who, his son Ian told him two years after her death, towards the end of her life "would have reached out her hand towards the first sign of comfort from anyone" (20 January 1957). What remained was "the haunting mystery of time", as Luke looks into Leonore's "haunted" eyes and is "shocked" (*VV* 280).

²⁹¹ Even after having been told by the official at the Irish Legation that "there [wasn't] the foggiest chance at present" of getting Gertrude to Ireland (diary entry for 14 August 1945), Stuart defiantly wrote: "But it will come about all the same."

Victors and Vanquished ends, like *The Pillar of Cloud*, *Redemption* and *The Flowering Cross*, with silence momentarily filling the present and delaying the inevitable advent of the future. This silence is defined as detachment from “too much concern for the world and its riches and pleasures” (VV 255), as true peace and as meaningful. At the last moment, Stuart expands this moralistic interpretation of silence to also carry “some echo, however hard to catch” (VV 288) from the graves of Dolores, Loulou and Isaak. Silence, Isaak had suggested, would answer Luke’s question about a God who allowed the innocent to suffer and die (cf. VV 193). In contrast to the mixture of pain and passion with which, for example, Améry or Bielenberg broach the past, Stuart’s understanding of silence seems deprived of a sense of “shame of art in the face of suffering that escapes both experience and sublimation” (Adorno 1997: 322). Vivid recollections of the war haunt him, but without “most of the pain and bitterness of those times”, and in the act of writing them down, he discovers that “all is transformed” and under control (diary entry 3 November 1957).

Silence stands, in turn, as “the deep divide between the past and what was still to come” for H at the end of *Black List*: “It might be the howl of final despair or the profound silence might be broken by certain words that he didn’t yet know how to listen for” (BL 425). Although this formulation intimates a more cautious attitude towards literature written in the force field of the Second World War and Holocaust, Stuart, in breaking the silence with this novel, and H, with his ideas for his next project at the end of the book, exude confidence that they will be heard. The protagonist, a self-professed amoral witness, who, “because he could not claim their innocence” (BL 270), would not receive the sympathy Jewish survivors could expect, shows at once a progression in Stuart’s understanding of the dynamics that shaped narratives of the Second World War and their reception, and the continued competition with the war’s victims. H’s psychological development and his struggle to relate, as a writer, his inborn preference for dishonour “to

a wider consciousness" (*BL* 402) were, however, not Stuart's during the war. Where Stuart adapted to prevailing circumstances, H will not be compromised in his dissent. The novel's "extraordinary immediacy" (McCormack 1976: 177), therefore, should not be mistaken for authenticity.

Despite claiming he would never seek to exculpate himself or present his decision to go to Nazi Germany as an act of defiance (cf. *BL* 401), H tries, more subtly than the character Luke, to assimilate the experience of the victims in order to vindicate his mythically sublimated stance of disengagement and opposition. In part, Stuart achieves this by insinuating H's endorsement through a Jewish victim, Dr. Ludovic Weiss, whom H meets in a refugee camp in Paris in autumn 1945. Weiss, who quickly develops into "one of H's heroes" (*BL* 409), seems to be based on a mixture of different people Stuart encountered in Paris in 1945 and later, in 1949. Like Darykov, mentioned in Stuart's "Extracts from the Journal of an Apatriate", he is Hungarian. There is no indication Darykov is Jewish, but Stuart's landlord in Paris between 1949 and 1951, writer Ladislav Dormandi, was a Hungarian-Jewish exile. Later, H comes to believe Weiss may actually be Polish, which, together with his wish to be repatriated to Germany rather than Poland, aligns him with the Pole Melkovsky Stuart mentions in the "Journal of an Apatriate". But Weiss's experience of refugee camps and his title also recall Dr. Bogusky, a Latvian Stuart initially assumed was just another displaced person like himself. However, once he learned that his fellow traveller carried a letter of recommendation with him (he had distinguished himself in the eyes of the Allies in one of the refugee camps), Stuart felt lessened and resentful of the other man's alleged "air of cool superiority" and general purposefulness (cf. diary entry for 4 September 1945 in "Journal of an Apatriate"). None of the men mentioned in the "Journal of an Apatriate" appear in Stuart's actual diaries,²⁹² but it is

²⁹² Stuart crossed out extensive passages in the entries he wrote abroad, but the general theme of his reflections is his loneliness and suffering. No names or encounters with people are mentioned throughout the period from 12 August to 2 November 1945, except "S", Iseult, "N." (Nora O'Mara, his former lover, whom he visits in Menhan on 24 August) and "MacDonald", the official at the Irish Legation. (The period spent in

striking that he acted out his grudge against a character named Bogusky twice in his fiction. In *Redemption*, Bogusky takes on the ambivalent role of Margareta's "helper" in the refugee camp she lands in after the war, busying himself with her application for the necessary permits to travel to Ireland, but, rather sordidly, exacting a sexual favour from the crippled woman in return. In *Victors and Vanquished*, Dr. Bogusky reappears in the diary extracts in which Luke Cassidy's futile journey to Paris in September 1945 is partly described. The extracts are a slight variation on Stuart's "Extracts from the Journal of an Apatriate" and the dates of the individual entries do not match. Yet the situation remains the same, with Luke recognising in the other man a rival victim and instantly attributing to him an arrogant attitude towards the real "outcast", Luke (cf. *VV* 278f.). Dr. Weiss in *Black List* is not portrayed in wholly positive terms either, but this time his failings are such that H can relate to them and feel superior himself, especially as he does not tell his hero about his activities in Germany during the war. Weiss, by contrast, confides in H a paedophile fantasy which involves being locked up with a couple of kidnapped girls, who would be led to believe he was just a fellow prisoner (cf. *BL* 410). This, and the fact that H doubts Weiss is entirely innocent, suspecting he is running away from a crime (cf. *BL* 412), endears him all the more to H and encourages him to see in Weiss an ally outcast against the sanctimonious rule imposed by the victors.

It is disturbing that the common ground between H and Weiss must be the assumption of shared guilt or perversion. Applying to Weiss the same attributes by which H had earlier in the book defined "the Jewish character" as "humble", "realist", "sensual", "hidden", "unheroic", and "critical" (*BL* 64), allows the protagonist to assimilate the other into a hetero-image that correlates to his own self-image. Essentially, H identifies the other as derivative of himself in order to maintain his delusions, justify his own passivity and exult in his role as amoral witness. His infantile self-centredness finds its outlet in fantasies

France is covered from 12 August to 14 September in the notebook "June – September 1945", and from 27 September to 2 November in the notebook "September 1945 – December 1946".)

of revenge that are at the heart of the story he writes while in Paris. In contrast to Weiss's secret dream, H conjures up a scenario where a foreigner from a neutral country, Sam Morrison, winds up in the French capital at the time of its liberation and joins forces with "the blond young Sacha" (BL 401), a daredevil Latvian and ex-SS soldier. Supplied with provisions, guns and ammunition, they set up camp on the rooftops to enact their own anarchic "Judgement Day" indiscriminately upon the departing Germans, the arriving Allies and any other representative of the establishment in sight, be he a policeman or cleric. It is interesting that in this comic book plot,²⁹³ Sam is the follower, going along with Sacha even when he would prefer to take fewer risks and stay with his girlfriend Monique (who would later be submitted to a punishment head shave, although whether this is because of her relationship with Sam or because of earlier relationships with German soldiers is left unsaid). At the "highlight" (BL 404) of his story, however, H, the writer (or Stuart, the author), trips up on his own fantasy and replaces Sam on the rooftop:

[Sacha] confided to H that he'd heard there was to be a victory parade on Sunday to the cathedral, headed by De Gaulle and Leclerc, and slapping his plump white hand to his pajama-clad thigh, he exclaimed in his limited English: 'Boy, what you say to that!' [sic] Sam didn't admit to not sharing in his delight at the prospect of having a shot at one of the French generals (...).
(BL 407, emphasis added)

H is interrupted at this point, so it remains unclear if Sam's disapproval of Sacha's actions would have eventually put an end to their brotherhood or if H, as he had done in his previous novels, would explore the extreme situation further in order to find out how far he could go as a writer "without damage to his psyche" (BL 286). Yet the evidence would

²⁹³ This episode is reminiscent of Harry Haller's first adventure in the "Magic Theatre" towards the end of *Steppenwolf*. Within the context of an imaginary war, Harry wholeheartedly embraces his friend's idea of shooting at anybody from their concealed position high up in a tree (cf. 281ff.). Stuart had seized on a perceived similarity to the protagonist of Hermann Hesse's work at the beginning of the long period of setbacks that eventually culminated in writing *Black List*. In keeping with his despondent mood at the time, he quotes from Hesse on 24 November 1960: "Haller knows that even when the outsider is an acknowledged man of genius it is due to his immense powers of suffering and surrender ... and of his patience." *Steppenwolf*, by contrast, "is resolved to forget that the desperate clinging to life is the surest way to eternal death" (ibid.). The implied commonality misses the point that Stuart was more bourgeois Harry Haller than *Steppenwolf* – even H, the uncompromising outsider artist, appears to flinch when confronted with violence.

suggest that his answer to “the profound silence” (*BL* 425) imposed by the terror of the Second World War would be, yet again, to usurp the victims’ place.

Stuart deliberately conceived this work between two genres, autobiography and fiction, which encouraged many to see in it a “[w]itness-novel or thinly fictionalised memoir” (Battersby 1995: A8). Crucially, however, the witness wants to be believed, and Stuart’s regular quoting from *Black List* as if it were his catechism in the years after its publication²⁹⁴ suggests that he himself believed and no longer intended to leave it up to the reader to decide on the veracity and acceptability of his representation of the past. Referring to himself henceforth as a “ghetto writer” (Stuart in interview with E. Boland 12) or “voice from the ghetto” (Stuart in a letter to Natterstad 1976: 5), he boldly continued the rewriting of his experience for the archive of Irish cultural memory. The kinship this language establishes is made explicit when Stuart – following the *pro forma* attempt to distinguish *his* use of the word (“It used to be a racial term, but we’re not talking about that now”) – then insinuates to his audience that he was imprisoned in “a camp” (E. Boland 12) after the war.²⁹⁵ Transferring terms used in Holocaust discourse to describe his situation in postwar Germany²⁹⁶ not only places Stuart alongside the victims of the Nazi regime, but also erodes the barriers that separate their historical trauma from his structural trauma. In his comparison of Christian de La Maizière, a former member of the *Waffen SS*, to Primo Levi, Stuart went one step further, conflating not only victim and secondary witness, but victim and perpetrator (cf. his foreword to *Ashes of Honour*). Chris Petit (cf. 26) and, most

²⁹⁴ After the publication of *Black List*, there is virtually no interview with Stuart in which he is not quoted as describing his early image of Hitler as that of “an infuriated Samson” (*BL* 279), capable of obliterating what Stuart considered the sham of Western democratic societies.

²⁹⁵ In an ironic twist, Eavan Boland thus perpetuates her father’s wishful thinking who, on learning of Stuart’s arrival at the Irish Legation in Paris, had speculated that his unhindered travel might be proof that Stuart had “rehabilitated himself” in the eyes of the Allies by having been interned towards the end of the war in a Nazi concentration camp (letter from F. Boland to Paris Legation from 16 August 1945, National Archives, DFA 10/A/72). His colleague in Paris informed him on 28 August, however, that Stuart had stated he had not been interned by the Germans.

²⁹⁶ Also see Conor P. O’Brien’s claim, three years prior to E. Boland’s article, that Stuart and his lover “were separated after the holocaust” (10), which, apart from being wrong, creates the impression that the pair had been caught up in the Shoah.

recently, Kevin Kiely (cf. 191) have interpreted his comments as legitimising the incongruous equation of Levi and Stuart himself. Where the specific historical context, setting and causality of the events is excluded from an appreciation of the two writers' works, Levi and Stuart may indeed appear as equal analysts of "a human psyche under extremes of isolation and threat" (Stuart in the Foreword to *Ashes of Honour*, 7).²⁹⁷ Auschwitz-Monowitz and the prisons of the occupying French Army in Bregenz and Freiburg then become interchangeable, as do the experiences of Levi, who fought in the Italian resistance before he was captured and sent to the extermination camp, and of Stuart, the romantic Republican who found Western democracy so dull and deadening he sought renewal in a totalitarian regime. Towards the very end and in the immediate aftermath of the war, first as a refugee, then as a prisoner in the French occupied zone, Stuart did endure acute hunger, homelessness, dependence on the mercy of others, and fear of the authorities. But it is hard to imagine Levi regretting, as André Gide does in the diary Stuart reads and quotes from in 1947, to have known Nazi terrorism, dehumanisation and the daily encounter with death only "comme écho" and without the benefit of personal suffering. It is also hard to think of him as stylising his experience into a source of inspiration, as Stuart does: "I have come so far now that I thank God that I too suffered in my own measure. I am learning the value of that suffering, as in writing I see the treasure of 'l'expérience ininventable'" (diary entry on 19 May 1947).

Stuart's continuous shaping of "an experience beyond invention" proves the tautology at the heart of his writing about the Second World War, which, evidently, was

²⁹⁷ Stuart's supporters have often presented the fact that his publisher after the war, Victor Gollancz, was Jewish as an implicit acknowledgement of the writer's integrity (e.g. McCormack 1982: vi; M. Stuart 85, Dermot Bolger in Donovan 1996: 12). The author himself liked to point out that the director in charge of the Southern Illinois University Press, which published *Black List* after it had been rejected by English publishers, was also a Jew (cf. Stuart 1980b: 14). This line of argument disregards, as Barrington points out, Gollancz's idiosyncratic views and business interests (cf. 55), and it is also infected with the kind of "Jew-consciousness" that has the opposite effect of confirming the racial prejudice of which it purports to be free (cf. Piette 195). Besides, it is equally possible to use this logic against Stuart, since one of the actual victims of the Nazis, the German publicist and art critic Bruno Werner, who had to go into hiding as a half-Jew, appears to have held the father-in-law of his daughter Imogen in very low esteem (cf. Scally 2009: B7).

subject to change. Different attitudes and interpretations of the war in light of the Holocaust affected not only Stuart's literary response, but also that of his audience. His efforts to make this chapter in European history part of Irish memory through his recurring treatment of his time in Nazi Germany,²⁹⁸ for example, only appear to have yielded results after the publication of *Black List, Section H*, at a time when the social frameworks to relate and receive narratives of the war and Holocaust had been established. If this international development enabled a meeting point between a younger generation of readers and Stuart, Stuart's self-image as an artist outside "the moral Pale" (*BL* 311) presented a local template for identification. Just as H had predicted in *Black List, Section H*, a new generation would find his imaginative interpretation of events relevant (cf. *BL* 400). McCormack is right to speak of a temporary "synchronisation between [Stuart's] obsessions" (1976: 182) and the needs and expectations of his audience as the basis of his success. This is where Bielenberg's and Stuart's understanding of their legacy proves diametrically opposed, for where the former invited future generations to probe and engage with her past, the latter seemed more intent on recruiting accomplices who, more often than not, furthered his dogmatic, competitive, and elitist interpretation of events. Stuart's own definitive word, rather than a dialogue, filled the silence he had thrown in the balance between past and present at the end of each of his five novels about the war. The authority he commanded can be seen in Hamilton's introduction to the 1994 edition of *The Pillar of Cloud*. Noting Stuart's "mute satisfaction" (Hamilton in his introduction to *POC*, 1) at the collapse of communism as just "another ideology [that] had been wrong-footed and discredited" (*ibid.*), Hamilton hastens to identify the new target for the contemporary writer:

²⁹⁸ Tóibín, for example, specifies that what appealed to him when he first read *Black List* in the mid-1970s was the fact that it was "*an Irish self*, and a man I had met, who seemed willing to dramatise his own moral awkwardness and his own dark search for a clearing in the forest where these qualities could be, however tentatively, recognised and healed" (2001, emphasis added).

If we can be as honest in our exposure of the new, totalitarian ideologies of fun and entertainment into the next century, if we can approach the blindspots of consumerism and the culture of exclusion, if we can be as much an intellectual 'contra', then we have learned from Francis Stuart, his work and his life.

(Introduction to *POC* 4)

If Hamilton had made it his first task to question the indiscriminate equation of the GDR, Third Reich and consumerism as equal totalitarian ideologies, perhaps Stuart would have known better than to continue peddling his simplistic notion of the past and clichéd representation of the other. Yet despite the storm of protest raised in 1997 after his repetition of a comparison similar to the one evoked in *Black List, Section H* (the dubious compliment that sees in the Jew "a worm that could get into a lot of fine-looking fruit" (*BL* 64)), Stuart emerged victorious from the episode. A call for his resignation from Aodána was not supported by the majority of its members and he also won a libel case against Kevin Myers's allegation of anti-Semitism in his column for *The Irish Times*. Even as he apologised on national television for the hurt which "the misrepresentation of [his] views" may have caused the Jewish community (cf. Coulter 4), there was no indication that Stuart had understood either the fiction behind the stereotypes that informed his image of the other or the unassimilability of the experience of the victims of National Socialism.

3. Hugo Hamilton

Hugo Hamilton became known to a wide readership in Ireland and abroad following the publication in 2003 of *The Speckled People*. Narrated from the perspective of a confused child, the book²⁹⁹ combines immediacy with retrospective insight to explore the author's Irish-German upbringing and to explain the feelings of inferiority and exclusion it instilled in him. The success of this approach prompted one reviewer to subsume his literary breakthrough under the headline "The Past Is Myself", highlighting the ways in which Bielenberg's own memoir has come to shape perceptions about recollective self-writing (Wallace 2003: 8). Another critic congratulated Hamilton for offering "the long overdue revision of the terms (...) 'identity', 'cultural diversity', 'Irish', and 'writing'" (Dawe 2004: 268) at the very peak of a multicultural, booming Ireland.³⁰⁰ A sequel, *The Sailor in the Wardrobe*, followed in 2006, emphasising Hamilton's persistent concern with creating an image of himself and of his country based on his interpretation of the present in light of the past. The excavation of the past and its correlation to the present had already been both the framing device and major theme of his lesser known German trilogy published in the 1990s, although the continuation of certain methods and motifs in his works has remained relatively unexplored, as Hamilton's early fiction has attracted no critical attention aside from reviews in the media and an entry, by Stephen Belletto, in *Twenty-First Century British and Irish Novelists*. This fate also extends to his latest novels, although there is a growing body of criticism on *The Speckled People*.³⁰¹

²⁹⁹ Although not labelled a "memoir" on the title page, it is referred to as such in the description on the book sleeve and on the back of the dust jacket in comments made by fellow writers. Hamilton seems to prefer his work to remain elusive of genre definitions, just as he professed early in his career to taking delight in thwarting reader's expectations and producing writing with multiple meanings (cf. Wallace 1990: 10).

³⁰⁰ Stephen Regan credits the book for representing "new" Irish identities "through radical spatial and temporal shifts" (235f.), a technique that allows the child narrator to explain his existence in several culturally different places all at once.

³⁰¹ In addition to the aforementioned essays by Dawe and Regan, see articles by Tatjana Bijutko, Dore Fischer, Michelle Forness, Aoileann Ní Éigeartaigh, and Eoin Bourke. The recent publication announcement

Hamilton's sustained exploration of the effects of historical events on the lives of his characters and on his own life reflects his exposure to mediated recollections of the traumatic events of the Second World War and his responsiveness to current discourses on the role of memory, postmemory, and history on contemporary identity formation. His preoccupation with the different approaches German and Irish society have taken to dealing with their past would seem to derive from his personal experience as an adolescent of being simultaneously identified with the victims and perpetrators in European history. This simplistic dichotomy was constructed, in part, by his peers, who taunted him as a "Nazi" (cf. Introduction to *POC* 2). More importantly perhaps, he internalised the perpetrator-victim bias by interpreting his Irish-German identity in terms of, on one hand, a history of colonisation, and, on the other, the shameful legacy of the Second World War. Hamilton's experience of such a divided self has sharpened his interest as a writer in the historical and political forces that shape individuals and translates into an insistence, in his literary and journalistic writing alike, on inclusive concepts of self and other. Indeed, his self-appointed task of being, in Becker's words, "his own historian" has come to prove programmatic in his works, if not Sisyphean.

Whereas Bielenberg addressed the past out of her personal responsibility as a survivor and used a questionable coping mechanism that allowed her to contain painful memories and bolster her sense of belonging, Stuart constructed his presence in Nazi Germany as a necessary stage in his literary career and idolised himself as an outcast artist legitimated by his brush with catastrophic events. Hamilton, in turn, grapples with an inheritance he likens to an illness in the working title of his first memoir, *More Homesick than Seasick* (cf. NLI, MS48,116/4-6). Taken from one of the postcards his Irish grandfather sent to his wife in Leap (cf. *SP* 168), the line captures the pain John Hamilton

of *Ireland and Victims*, circulated by Peter Lang at the end of October 2012, also includes an essay on Hamilton's memoirs, strangely referred to as "autobiographies" (Stéphane Jousni, "Haunting Memories and Haunted Narratives: Ghost Languages and Forbidden Tongues in Hugo Hamilton's Autobiographies").

experienced of not being at home. What this rejected earlier title reveals in the grandson, however, is not just the longing for a stable and secure place that possibly never existed. Rather, it is a poignant expression of a further important dimension to Hamilton's relationship with the past and, by extension, to his portrayals of modern-day Irishness and Germanness: nostalgia. In the original sense, "nostalgia" described a complaint affecting men forced to work away from home – typically sailors and soldiers. As Lowenthal explains, it was generally believed that "[t]o leave home for long was to risk death" (1985: 10), and for Hamilton's seafaring grandfather this premonition came true. As a state of mind, however, nostalgia poses the risk of simplification and distortion in representations of the past and the other. This problematic undercurrent makes a careful examination of Hamilton's writing all the more urgent, for without it, critics risk continuing to repeat the same conclusions the author himself proffers in *The Speckled People*. Aoileann Ní Éigearthaigh, for example, interprets the position of the child narrator as essentially that of a migrant and argues that home must be "a fundamental locus of trauma and alienation, for home is always an imagined space which serves only to remind the migrant subject of what he has lost" (117). Rather than reiterate the author's paradigm, it is vital to establish the source of his projections and constructions, for Hamilton, writing in close proximity to the home he never lost, may inadvertently be validating a longing (or nostalgia) for what he construes as an "easy", enviable Irish identity as opposed to the "difficult" duality experienced by his childhood persona.

As the example above shows, background information on Hamilton is prone to ambiguities,³⁰² and the criticism he has received is often compromised by an over-reliance on statements the author made in interviews and in his memoirs – a fraught circumstance

³⁰² One particularly striking example is the often-invoked opposition of Irmgard's family to the Nazis which has led to the exaggerated assertion that the family of Hamilton's mother "helped Jews escape from Germany" (Dwyer). This is neither mentioned in her diaries nor in Hamilton's writing – he only writes of his aunt Marianne's individual displays of courage at a time when she was living far away from her family, in Austria.

given his own *caveat* that they should be read as a dramatisation of his past and not as confessional autobiography (cf. Wallace 2003: 9). A biographical introduction, which traces his present preoccupations as a writer to their source, will provide a valuable backdrop to the evaluation of his texts. This overview will for the first time take into account newly accessible sources of largely unpublished material and papers acquired by the National Library of Ireland in 2010, including the private papers of Hamilton's father Seán Ó hUrmoltaigh and the diaries of his mother, Irmgard. My translation of her notebooks into English not only supplies an additional, and, at times, contrasting, perspective on Hamilton's upbringing, but will also allow critics to better appreciate the extent to which Hamilton's interpretations of his mother's experience and perceptions accentuates those elements that support his personal understanding of an identity located at the intersection of two cultures and three languages. Following the biographical outline, I will examine the techniques Hamilton employs to dramatise his past in his two memoirs and discuss the effects of selecting certain aspects and excluding others from his creative construction of a "working memory". This discussion will form the basis for assessing Hamilton's engagement with history and his construction of images of self and other in his works of fiction, first, in the so-called German trilogy and, secondly, in his novel *Disguise*. I will conclude the chapter with a critical assessment of Hamilton's latest novel *Hand in the Fire* and of his travelogue, *Die redselige Insel*, as two examples of the author's application of multidirectional memory.

3.1. Biographical Outline

Hamilton's parents, Seán Ó hUrmoltaigh and Irmgard Kaiser, met at a leaving party for Irmgard's friend Elsbeth in Dublin in 1949 (cf. National Library of Ireland, MS48,168/1: 13 October 1952). Both women had found employment as household helps in Ireland

through the nuns in their former convent school.³⁰³ Whereas Hamilton has created the impression in interviews and in *The Speckled People* that his mother came to Ireland on a postwar pilgrimage to escape the haunting memories of the German past – prefiguring Böll's repeated sojourns on Achill Island – Irmgard fondly recalls on 23 June 1967 a different purpose for her trip to Lough Derg in August 1949, which she undertook as part of her annual leave from the family she was working for in Dundrum: she had prayed for guidance on whether or not to join a male acquaintance in South America.³⁰⁴ Pasted under this entry is a letter she posted home to her step-parents and sisters, relating her solitary bicycle tours to Cavan and all across the Wicklow Mountains. From this letter, Irmgard emerges as an independent thirty-year old woman, curious to learn about Irish culture and history and very open-hearted in her encounters with the locals and foreigners she meets in the youth hostels along her route. Irmgard's diary records reinforce the picture of an outgoing, sociable person, who, as she recalls in her very first entry, was at first not overly impressed with Seán, the young engineer from Leap, who fell far short of her ideal of a tall, striking man (MS48,168/1: 13 October 1952). However, when she returned to her native town of Kempen in the summer of 1950, Seán, who had organised to go on pilgrimage to Rome during the Holy Year (cf. his travel documents and correspondence in MS48, Box 29), decided to include the Lower Rhine region in his itinerary, and they appear to have grown close during the time they spent sightseeing together near Irmgard's home town. He then continued on his journey to Rome, where he prayed for God's

³⁰³ Irmgard returned to secondary school after the war and, in 1947, passed the school leaving examination which allowed her to pursue third level education. However, her applications to various German universities to enrol in dentistry were unsuccessful, possibly because her results were not good enough (cf. her certificates and copies of cover letters in MS48, Box 34a).

³⁰⁴ Irmgard's options at the time were surprisingly manifold and testify to her open-mindedness, for in addition to the job in Ireland, she had also considered enrolling in university and had been offered an opportunity to accompany an American Colonel, for whom she had worked after the war, to the United States.

guidance on whether to choose the cloth or Irmgard. They were married in Kempen at Christmas.³⁰⁵

Shortly before Easter 1951, Irmgard arrived in the family home in the Dublin suburb Glenageary. Its ramshackle state caused her to express shock in terms reminiscent of the accounts German visitors to Ireland had written more than a century earlier. Although she could see that her husband had done his best to tidy the house, it still remained “primitive” in her opinion and well below the level of comfort she was used to even in postwar Germany (MS48,168/1: 13 October 1952). In many ways, despite her sustained efforts both at home improvement and at ignoring the luxuries her sisters enjoyed in their homes in Germany and Austria, she never overcame her misgivings about the simplicity of her new home nor her exasperation with Seán’s miserly attitude. It is revealing that she used to humorously describe her husband to German friends as a man with “an excellent and broad vocabulary” in German, from which, however, the words “new”, “repair”, and “redecorate” were completely absent (MS48,168/6: 17 February 1979). “Homesickness”, which features so prominently in Hamilton’s explanation of his family’s predicament in his memoirs, could, therefore, be interpreted quite literally as his mother’s exasperation with her Dublin home.

There is, of course, a further facet to Irmgard’s homesickness which resulted less from the meanness of her physical surroundings than from the narrow ideological enclosure her husband raised around his family. His reluctance to welcome their Irish relatives and friends to their home, such as it was, and his insistence that only Irish or German be spoken under his roof ensured that guests were few and far between.³⁰⁶ Seán’s

³⁰⁵ A card the couple had printed after their wedding to send to German relatives and friends announced the marriage between “Seán O h-Urmoltaigh” and “Irmgard O h-Urmoltaigh” (cf. NLI, MS48 Box 34a) rather than “Uí Urmoltaigh”. Private as well as official correspondents, including Seán, addressed their post to “Irmgard O’ hUrmoltaigh” (ibid.).

³⁰⁶ Seán presumably only launched his prohibitive language policy once his children began to talk. While it would have affected all oral communication in his house, both his wife and brother retained their right to address him in English in their letters (see Irmgard’s affectionate closing remarks in English in a letter

intolerant rule also affected Irmgard outside the home, as it slowed her progress in learning English, making her self-conscious in her dealings with Irish people on those occasions when she had to assist her husband in promoting his import business ventures (cf. MS48,168/1: 25 April 1956).³⁰⁷ Despite occasionally concurring with her husband's assertion that he had "all the company he wanted with his books and his family" (MS48,168/6), Irmgard suffered from the lack of guests. The effects of her seclusion became apparent to her over time, for example when the unaffected behaviour of an elderly German guest revealed to her the extent of her own unease in company, making her exclaim in horror: "My God, how reserved (!) I am by contrast, and formal" (MS48,168/3: 26 July 1962). The family's withdrawn way of life also explains her reliance on letters from home – and her frequent disappointment when no post came – as well as her eagerness to accommodate even the remotest relatives and acquaintances from Germany on their visits to Ireland. Yet in spite of her husband's isolationist pursuit of self-sufficiency at the family level, Irmgard managed to establish a relationship of mutual reliance and support with several women in her neighbourhood over the years, women who would, for example, offer to help her finance a trip to Germany after long years of absence from her native home (cf. MS48,168/4: 1 June 1967). Only when the one regular Sunday afternoon guest, Seán's brother Ted (a Jesuit priest), began to stay away in 1969, Irmgard grew disappointed and bitter, acknowledging the temptation to desert her Irish home (cf. MS48,168/4: 27 May 1969). What kept her rooted were her husband and children, and the awareness that the home of her childhood, like her, had changed.

Into this domestic environment Hugo Hamilton was born on 28 January 1953. The second child of six, he was given his father's names, Seán Gearóid, but in the family home,

enclosed at the back of her first diary, and a letter from Ted to his brother under her entry for 26 August 1962, MS48,168/3).

³⁰⁷ These ventures started with an unsuccessful attempt to import party supplies, continued with Christmas tree stands and ended with hand-carved crucifixes. Seán later tried to use his wife's baking expertise to move into the boiled sweets market before turning to his own skills to build the prototype of a pull-cart for children. Unfortunately for him, no toy shop owner showed any interest in his creation.

where his parents spoke German, he went by the German equivalent “Johannes”, or the diminutive “Hanni”, to distinguish him from his father, whom Irmgard called “Hans”. Hugo was his confirmation name (Bourke 2009: 180), in all likelihood chosen in honour not just of the saint but also of Hugo Liedmann, the retired Dean of Neuss, whom the family had met a month prior to his first communion on a visit to Germany in May of 1960 (MS 48,168/3: March 1961).³⁰⁸ The young boy and old man appear to have formed an attachment in the course of what Irmgard describes as a very pleasant afternoon, and the Dean continued to send the occasional card and gift to his young friend (cf. MS48,168/3: 6 October 1962 and 25 December 1962). According to her notes, Johannes was more imaginative, affectionate and bold than his meek older brother Franz (Proinsias) and younger sister Maria (Máire), and hence more likely to get into trouble and be disciplined by his parents. Although Irmgard remarked on the need to chastise her second-born as an often unavoidable daily occurrence (MS48,168/1: 7 March 1956), she also expressed her dismay at the banal offences her husband chose to punish, sensing that his violence stemmed from his intemperate disposition and his inability to tolerate even the slightest opposition, rather than from a legitimate desire to educate the child (MS48,168/2: 8 September 1958).³⁰⁹ She also realised, however, that siding with her children in such situations was likely to enrage her husband further and to increase the number of blows they would receive. It was therefore a relief to her when she could note in February 1959 that Seán had almost completely stopped beating his children for catching them speaking in English.

³⁰⁸ The fact that he gave the protagonist of his novel *Disguise*, Gregor Liedmann, the surname of the very person whose first name Hamilton himself adopted as an adult is another indication of just how intermingled personal and fictional concerns are in his writing.

³⁰⁹ Irmgard, by contrast, derived her parenting advice from a moral guide book written by Friedrich Wilhelm Foerster in 1904, ironically intended for the secular ethical education of young children. She also read Maria Montessori’s *Kinder sind anders* (*The Secret of Childhood*) and recommended the book to a young Irish relative who wished to become a teacher (MS48,168/2: 21 August 1957).

Johannes attended an Irish-language primary school, Scoil Lorcáin, and was sent on a three-month stay with a family in the Gaeltacht in 1962 from which he returned with such good Irish, he impressed his teachers and school principal (MS48,168/3: Christmas 1962). Her children's education was an important concern, and Irmgard did not hesitate to speak to their teachers when she felt they were being overlooked, or to help them with their homework, including in English, if they were struggling.³¹⁰ She likewise took the initiative to advance their reading and writing skills in German, scheduling German lessons over the summer holidays and ordering suitable books from a German bookshop, but the demands of running a household and her children's frequent illnesses often impinged on these commitments. Her own attempt to improve her Irish in order to be able to follow her children's progress in school and to profit more from occasional family holidays in the Gaeltacht had to be put on hold during a fourth pregnancy in 1958. It remains unclear whether she resumed her lessons at a later point, but she was certainly able to understand, for example, the ironies of her younger children's mistakes in the Irish language.

Her diaries reveal that Irmgard aligned herself with what she considered her husband's patriotism and his idealism for the Irish language, facilitating her children's bonding with their Irish heritage as best she could. The following reflection in her diary highlights the extent to which her view had been shaped by her husband's exclusive ideas of Irish identity, reiterating as it does the notion that authentic Irishness depended on the Irish language and Irish traditions:

I myself appreciate the Irish language and feel that the language of the country is like a border, like a fortification. For a good few things that have not grown or been developed on Irish soil have simply been imitated by allowing them free access to the population through the English language. Thus, I consider certain things I see as not authentic and non-Irish, but as imitations, some of which are not in the country's best interest. I wonder if the sacrifices made by the few idealists left will be able to motivate the crowd to change their way of

³¹⁰ Whatever the limits of Irmgard's language skills, and her spelling mistakes suggest that she was writing English phonetically, she was approached on several occasions to carry out translation tasks for various church organisations, which she sometimes completed on her own and sometimes together with her husband.

thinking. At any rate, the Irish language is a defence and a gain for the children. (MS48,168/2: 25 February 1959)

At the same time, Irmgard could not help but notice that the future for many young Irish speakers, be it her young household help Anne, her sister Agnes or the daughter and aunt of their hosts in Connemara, lay across the Irish Sea, in Britain (cf. entries for 11 June 1958 and 19 August 1959).³¹¹ Culture and language were not the only two defining characteristics of “real” Irishness, however, but were complemented by a third, even stronger aspect – Catholicism. Here again, Irmgard allowed her husband to mould her more moderate religious upbringing to correspond to his dominant and domineering understanding of Catholicism. Under Seán’s tutelage, Irmgard’s faith grew so ardent, she did not hesitate to drive across town at the end of a long day of chores to participate in the Novena of Grace in Gardiner Street. The numerous devotional cards and newspaper clippings relating to the activities of the local and global clergy in her diaries attest that she considered these events every bit as memorable as her children’s school reports or the family photographs pasted beside them. Her German relatives’ derision notwithstanding – they let her know that they considered her and her husband “utter fools” for their chosen way of life (MS48,168/2: Good Friday 1958) – she repeatedly expressed gratitude and humility for being able to raise her children in backward, God-fearing Ireland and was appalled at the thought of her youngest sister’s children attending a Protestant kindergarten. In one of her entries, written during a stay in hospital after a miscarriage, she noted with satisfaction how much more gratifying religious literature was to her compared to reading a frivolous novel (MS48,168/1: 20 January 1956). As in her support for her husband’s Irish language patriotism, Irmgard proudly typed up his virulent letters to various Irish editors (cf. S. Ó hUrmoltaigh 1962: 7), in which he stylised Cardinal Stepinac

³¹¹ When her daughter Maria finished school and had difficulty finding a place as a trainee nurse in a Dublin hospital, Irmgard notes that the only two options available to her were to either find a place somewhere in the country or in Germany, as Seán was opposed to the idea of her going to England like so many Irish women (see entry on 11 August 1973).

as a Catholic saint and denounced a Radio Éireann broadcaster for sympathising with Milovan Djilas, once the communist vice-president of Yugoslavia and later a victim of Tito's persecution (MS48,168/3: 10 May 1962).

It is, of course, particularly ironic that despite his parents' very best joint efforts to establish a strong bond between their children and their home, Ireland, Johannes felt – as Hamilton confesses in a publication written before *The Speckled People* – that he was being identified as German by his environment and that he also saw himself as such (*Unschuldsgefühle* 14). Whereas *Unschuldsgefühle* translates as “a sense of innocence” and retains an optimistic promise of deliverance, it is noteworthy that Hamilton's original title in English, *Birthmark*, conjures up a morbid preoccupation with indelible taintedness due to his background. The implication of this autobiographical essay is that Hamilton's shameful “birthmark” was only transformed into a source of empowerment through the act of re-evaluation and narration of his childhood and adolescence he undertook in this very publication, and, more thoroughly, in *The Speckled People*.³¹² Without the retrospective intervention, then, his hybrid upbringing would remain the root of all his shame and feelings of inadequacy. This conclusion seems questionable in its convenience, for what was later configured as a “birthmark” cannot have simply been inherited as the product of Irish-German parentage. Rather, what “marked” Johannes and singled him out seems to have been his father's very peculiar and punitive brand of nationalist fanaticism that could not tolerate the dominant, English-speaking and English-influenced culture in Ireland. As Bourke rightly points out, the boy's upbringing could have very well been an enriching experience for Johannes. That it should have instead instilled in him a sense of blame and shame he had to hide from the world was the result of his father's isolationist policies and

³¹² *Unschuldsgefühle* was published by the German Academic Exchange Service as part of a series that documents the writing progress made by the organisation's writers-in-residence in Berlin. Hamilton's work in progress while he was part of the programme in 2001/2 was *The Speckled People*.

their enforcement through “Black Pedagogics”³¹³; that is, the purposeful breaking of the child in order to mould him (cf. Bourke 2009: 188). It should also be noted that nowhere in Irmgard’s diaries is there any mention of her being aware that her children were victimised or ostracised for being half-German. This could, of course, either imply that she, an otherwise sensitive mother, remained ignorant of the fact or that she preferred to suppress this inconvenient truth, but it may also mean that her children were not perceived as radically different by their peers after all. Indeed, the aspects she lists as defining her family are characteristics they would have shared with other Irish families at the time. This is particularly true of the family’s devout Catholicism, but also of the most common source of disagreement between her and her husband, which was neither the result of cultural differences, nor of their alleged homesickness for idealised places of the past, but of practical, financial worries. It is likewise striking that her diaries contain very few reflections on the Second World War and on German guilt, two major preoccupations attributed to her in *The Speckled People* and *The Sailor in the Wardrobe*. There are, in fact, only two occasions on which Irmgard refers to contemporary discussions of the Nazi past. First, she mentions her brother-in-law’s contention, uttered after Eichmann’s execution, that everybody shared responsibility and could no longer rely on the excuse of having followed orders (MS48,168/3: 23 June 1962). However, she does not supplement this statement with any thoughts of her own, other than stating that she enjoyed the conversation among her male guests. In a second instance, she records her own conclusion, based on an article in a German Catholic journal, that Nazism was a form of “politically applied Darwinism” and that the German “unresolved past” could only be resolved “by clearly negating any form of biologism” (ibid.: 24 June 1964). While Irmgard was occasionally critical of developments in contemporary Germany, noting the surge of

³¹³ The term, as Bourke explains, was coined by Katharina Rutschky in 1977 with reference to the old-fashioned parental methods popular in Germany from the nineteenth century up to the Second World War (cf. Bourke 2009: 185).

materialism and the simultaneous disappearance of traditional values and religion from the lives of her German relatives and friends in the 1950s and '60s, there is no sense that she bore her identity as the stigma it signified for her second-born.³¹⁴ At the same time, her attitude towards her new environment remained open-minded, and, on the whole, she coped well with the different mentality and standards in Ireland, only rarely succumbing to every foreigner's temptation to draw negative comparisons between new and old home. It is therefore plausible to suggest that Hamilton superimposed historical preoccupations and cultural conclusions of his own onto his childhood persona and his mother in his memoirs, because his concerns about identity presented themselves to him as inexorably linked to his mother's German past rather than to his father's Irish nationalist ideology. This may be in large part due to the fact that the historical sensitisation of his German peers and their radical, auto-aggressive breaking with the parent generation proved more influential for Hamilton, who witnessed the process in the 1970s, than the simultaneous revisionist agenda in Irish intellectual discourse.

In the 1960s, Irmgard identified the real danger for her children not in their half-German background, but in the isolating effect of her husband's Irish-language policy and in his overbearing behaviour in the home. She resolved to assert her opinions over his, and, when the time came to choose a secondary college for her two eldest sons, she rejected the idea of sending them to yet another small Irish-language school, fearing it would impede their socialisation (cf. MS48,168/3: Easter 1963). Instead, the boys were sent to Coláiste Mhuire in the city centre. In 1966, Johannes surprised his parents by repeatedly expressing a wish to follow a vocation for the Christian Brothers. He was persuaded by a Brother to wait until he was fourteen, much to the relief of Irmgard and Seán, who, in spite of their avowed wish at his christening that he may be "God's servant" throughout his life

³¹⁴ This is a popular misconception with critics of *The Speckled People* who consider Irmgard a "displaced person" whose "plight is that historical events have made it impossible for her to celebrate her German identity and love for her homeland" (Ní Éigeartaigh 122).

(MS48,168/1: 13 May 1953), wanted him to finish school first. His next calling was to join the Reserve Defence Forces in 1968, an affiliation resented by his father, who loved to be surrounded by his children and would have liked to halt their growing up.³¹⁵ Johannes, however, preferred the company of his friend, Noel Sheehan, and girlfriend, Thelma, to that of his family. His failure to meet the strict curfew set by his father resulted in altercations which caused his mother much grief and anger. Her husband not only threatened to kick his son out, but also to refuse to pay for his higher education, a decision that struck Irmgard as particularly mean-spirited in light of the sacrifices Seán's own mother, a widow, had made to enable him to study engineering (cf. MS48,168/4: 1 April 1969). Her diary entries at this point are less detailed, either out of a reluctance to reproduce the unpleasant circumstances of family life, or because, four demanding teenagers aside, Irmgard still had two younger children to look after, one with chronic asthma and the other only a three-year-old. But when a truce was reached between Hans and Hanni, she wrote down the terms of their settlement:

Father demands the following four points:

1. He is no longer to go into town in the evenings.
2. He is no longer to get any money to go to the army (he can either use his own money or take his bike).
3. If he breaks the rules again (i.e. disobeys), he'll be kicked out and will have to look for a job.
4. If he sticks to the rules, he will be given more freedom.

De Gaule [sic], Pope Paul VI (dictatorship) – they're best, they get things done.
(MS48,168/4: St Patrick's Day 1969)

Irmgard's last remark could be quoting her husband verbatim and concurring with his view, but it might also express derision, for she generally encouraged her teenage children's independence and freedom of expression. Her diaries document her arguments with her husband over money for French-language courses, school outings to the

³¹⁵ One of the ways in which he tried to hold them back was his refusal to let his teenage sons wear long trousers, as he preferred to see them as boys in shorts (cf. MS48,168/4: 9 November 1965). Irmgard had sympathy with her sons who were embarrassed to be the only ones still wearing shorts among their peers.

amusement park Butlin's, or trips to France and Germany for her three eldest.³¹⁶ She remembered well, despite having lost both parents by the time she was fourteen and despite the deprivations she had suffered after the war, how delightful it was to be young. Her letter recounting her own adventurous travels through Ireland in August 1949 (cf. MS48,168/4: 23 June 1967) is ample proof of this, as is the fact that she shared it with her sons prior to their departure on a bicycle tour through Wicklow in summer 1967.

Irmgard's diary entries stop on 11 October 1973, only to resume again on 17 February 1979, a few months after her husband's sudden death.³¹⁷ In the intervening years, Johannes left his first job as a copy boy with the *Irish Press*, went to Germany, where he lived for five years in Berlin and Vienna (cf. Anon., *The Irish Times*, 30 June 1986: 11), and got married to Mary Rose Doorly in 1976 (cf. Egan). At the point where his mother's last diary picks up again, he had already settled into family life in Dublin, working in the records section of Gael Linn (Anon., *The Irish Times*, 30 June 1986: 11).³¹⁸ Hamilton's reason for going to Berlin was perhaps no more sophisticated than the one he gave in interview with Ciara Dwyer in 2008: "There was beer and it was cheap." Germany was to offer him stronger incentives, for example, the possibility of receiving free third level education after all. In order to be able to enrol in German Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin and to receive a maintenance grant, however, Hamilton had to prove his German nationality. His mother was not particularly pleased when he notified her of his intention to apply for a German passport in 1974 and was relieved when her son's application was rejected, because, at the time, she held no valid German passport herself (see last chapter in

³¹⁶ Contrary to Ní Éigeartaigh's reading of *The Speckled People*, according to which Hamilton and his siblings were only set free from the narrow confines of their home to "explore the other identities and cultures available to them" (121) after their father's death, the diaries show that they were allowed to choose their own career paths and to travel abroad on their own while Seán was still alive.

³¹⁷ Seán appears to have died of a heart attack at Frankfurt Airport on 1 November 1978 while away on business for the ESB.

³¹⁸ Encouraged by his wife, Hamilton left this job in 1984 to dedicate himself to writing (cf. Egan).

SW and NLI MS48,124/6: “The Ruins of Identity”³¹⁹). In light of all her and her husband’s efforts to raise their children as proud Irishmen and -women, it is not difficult to understand her reaction. Yet the fact that her son had tried to change his nationality as a matter of convenience rather than conviction indicates that he was able to appreciate the multiple opportunities a hybrid identity could afford. For if his time in Germany in the mid-1970s showed Johannes Ó hUrmoltaigh one thing, it was that he could be, in his and everybody else’s eyes, as typically Irish as he liked (cf. McCann 18). In the ubiquitous quest for self-realisation in cosmopolitan, multicultural and consumerist West Berlin, he was free to pursue his own self-invention at will and to perform whatever identity he chose. He responded to this opportunity by speaking less fluent German than he was able to and by starting to play the tin whistle, much to his German flatmates’ blue-eyed admiration and to his elderly neighbour’s annoyance (cf. *SW* 259f., also MS 48,124/6: “The Ruins of Identity”, and, recounted in a very similar way, in the short story “The Compound Assembly of E. Richter” in *DPTG*). Playing up to a romantically distorted notion of Irishness accorded him social prestige with those of his German peers who, he instinctively recognised, envied him the refuge of an “easy” identity and who were aggressively trying to remake themselves in a new image by rejecting their parents and relocating to the victims’ side.³²⁰ Their example informs the views and lives of the German characters that people Hamilton’s books, and, of course, the author’s own understanding of contemporary German society. It also proved inspirational for Hamilton on a personal level in his rejection of his father’s stamp by changing his surname from Ó hUrmoltaigh back to his grandfather’s Anglicised name. Most importantly, however, its effects can be traced in

³¹⁹ A German translation of the article (“Das Talent der Zugehörigkeit oder Wie ich einmal versucht habe deutsch zu werden”) is also included in the National Library’s collection of Hamilton’s papers, but the German title, which translates as “The Talent of Belonging or How I Once Tried to Become German”, conveys a different slant, flattering German readers with a sense of kinship, however limited it may have been.

³²⁰ See, for example, Hamilton’s descriptions in *Unschuldsgedühle* of his work colleagues Boris and Norbert, both of whom resent their filial ties to the perpetrator generation (cf. 56ff.).

his writing, which unfailingly explores the individual's right to mine and to rewrite their given narrative, using all the cultural tools and discourses at their disposal to fashion their identity.

3.2. Closets of Memory in *The Speckled People* and *The Sailor in the Wardrobe*

With the publication of his first short story in the New Irish Writing series of the *Irish Press* on 29 March 1986, Hamilton emerged as a writer who presented disconnectedness and in-betweenness as a common condition rather than a shortcoming. Nevertheless, he felt the need to write about the source of his personal sense of dislocation in his forties,³²¹ and his approach was to first reconstruct and then deconstruct the claustrophobic, ethno-nationalist cage of Irish identity as defined by his father, and to apply multiple layers of meaning to his mother's German background in keeping with the prevalent discourses on German history, the latency of trauma, and memory's role in identity formation. His entitlement to "innocence", his mother had told him, had to be earned in life (cf. *Unschuldsgefühle* 30), and by Hamilton's understanding, the process of writing his own past would allow him to achieve just that. Significantly, what he referred to as a measured quest for "innocence" in 2003 began as a vendetta against his entire environment at the outset of his career, as Hamilton recalls in interview with Dwyer in 2008. Like the authors of the so-called *Väter-Literatur* in Germany (see I.2.3), he sought to understand the effects of his parents' past on his own identity and at the same time to assert his difference and independence. The radical detachment and mental rebirth his German peers performed showed him how the genealogical connection to the past could be capped and a new beginning justified on different terms than those applied to their progenitors. The binary opposition established between one generation, free to reimagine its connection to the

³²¹ A negative reply to his agent Charles Walker from publishing house Macmillan in relation to an offer of a memoir dates back to 1997 (cf. NLI, MS48,151/2).

Second World War on the side of the victims, and the other, stuck in the role of perpetrators, informs Hamilton's view of his mother, and his reliance on this dichotomy explains perhaps why he describes as disturbing those encounters with a German past that precede this categorisation. Just as he considers the confrontation with a photograph of his "self aware" [sic] mother in her Irish Certificate of Registration from 1948 (included in MS 48, Box 34a) as outside his grasp on her life, he is similarly taken aback by a picture of the intact Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church in Berlin before the war, a building he only knew as a damaged structure and memorial (cf. MS48,124/6: "The Ruins of Identity"). Viewed outside the framework of a "ruined" landscape he imposes on remembering his mother's identity and German history in his writing, both appear "strange" (ibid.) to him, and he seems temporarily disoriented. Hamilton's reaction resembles Böll's, who likewise favoured the suggestiveness of romantic ruins in a ghost village deserted after the Famine over the, literally, concrete reality his countrymen built on top of the debris of the war (cf. Chapter 5 in *Irishes Tagebuch*). Unlike Böll, however, who wrote from within the perpetrator bind and who advocated keeping the continuity between the dead and the living visible, Hamilton placed himself at a remove from the war generation, capable of shedding his "birthmark" and regaining "innocence" on his own terms. Crucially, when Hamilton relates the events that inform "The Ruins of Identity" in the last pages of *The Sailor in the Wardrobe* (262f.), he omits those telling details that defy his understanding of his mother and of a Germany prior to destruction, using his authorial control to smoothly join the fragments of the past into a reassuring, familiar picture.

Yet Hamilton's desire to incorporate his parents' narrative and his young, "marked" self into his identity in the present also bears striking resemblance to a contemporary trend in German literature in which the supposed taboo of empathising with the perpetrator generation is lifted by children and grandchildren eager to document and legitimate the individual human stories of their ancestors – often to the detriment of a critical engagement

with the political personae they once were (cf. Part I). This is part of the same tendency, discussed in the context of Stuart's writing, towards a valorisation of immediacy and trauma, on one hand, and historicisation through the use of contemporaneous media (for example, photographs, diaries, postcards, etc.), on the other. The diaries Hamilton's mother left behind serve to both re-establish intergenerational continuity and to support his retelling of his family's story, even in those instances, mentioned in the biographical outline, where he deviates from her version of events in order to vindicate his own perspective. Changing the emphasis (as opposed to the entire chain of events in Stuart's case) need not be considered a misrepresentation of the facts, even less so if the author's primary concern is creative rather than autobiographical. Rather, the author's selection and interpretation of certain elements from the storehouse of personal and mediated recollections reveal what matters most to him and affects him in the present. It is important, however, to be conscious of the ways in which Hamilton adapts the past to suit the needs of his narrative and to bear in mind the risks inherent in conflating historical and structural trauma.

The Speckled People, for example, suggests to one critic that Irmgard's diaries contain a record of "a life growing up in an extremist society"³²² – an exaggeration at best – which, in turn, "constitute[s] a conduit for Hamilton into the past and finally enable[s] him to break through the silence that has descended upon postwar Germany" (Ní Éigeartaigh 123).³²³ Although the latter assumption is true, it is so not because of the diaries' actual reflections to this effect (there are none), nor in the sense that Hamilton single-handedly achieved a feat that had eluded German literature and society. Rather, the

³²² It is possible that Irmgard's private account of her sexual abuse by her supervisor in the late 1930s contains more specific reflections to this effect. However, this sensitive document does not form part of the Hugo Hamilton Papers.

³²³ Eamonn Hughes argues in a similar way that Hamilton's mother "in her diary does the 'work of memory'" (133), ignoring that she only does this in as much as she records everyday life. Contrary to Hughes's perception, it is her son's commitment to a duty to remember which shapes her narrative rather than vice versa (cf. 134).

retrospective meaning his mother's record has assumed in the author's own imaginative exploration of his past exemplifies the dynamics of cultural memory, endlessly expanding upon, and reinterpreting, sources from the archive of mediated recollections in an attempt to fashion an identity in the present. Similarly, whereas the conclusion of *The Speckled People* leads to the desired interpretation that the narrator, "[a]rmed with his mother's diaries and her unshakable belief that contradictions can be resolved and differences transcended" (Ní Éigearthaigh 124), is now ready to tap into the full potential of his hybridity in his encounters with the world, the very opposite of this chain of causality is the source behind the production of the memoir. While Irmgard's last diary, written in the two years after her husband's sudden death, prefigures her son's later attempt to reconcile past and present self with their environment, the stepping stones she offers him to writing his own story are to be found in her insistence that any judgement of her life must be made in light of the prehistory to her predicament, provided in her previous five diaries. At the end of her reckoning with her dead husband, Irmgard asks these two poignant questions: "Was I free? = not always, not by a long chalk! Was I a slave? Partly, yes!" (MS48,168/6: 17 February 1979). Hamilton's response to her appeal goes further, using his interpretation of the record she left behind not just to explain her personal entrapment, but to set his own tongue free, as the epigraph of *The Speckled People* suggests. An earlier attempt to compress his whole childhood unhappiness into just one short story, "Nazi Christmas", had not released him, but only revealed the need for him to return and alter the premises on which his identity in the present rested (cf. my interview with Hamilton from 23 June 2006). His representation of his mother's diaries and of his own recollections in his memoir can be seen as an attempt not simply to establish the actual events of the past, but to reinterpret them in light of his evolved personality and changed environment. Anna Shapiro was the only reviewer who remarked on Hamilton's near impossible task of trying to "show from a child's point of view what a child can't see", namely the ideologies that

governed his parents' behaviour. It is, of course, Hamilton's valorisation of his bicultural background in the present that informs his understanding of these ideologies and of his mother's diaries, enabling him to weave a narrative tapestry that produces the desired dramatic effect of simultaneously highlighting strands of uniqueness in his story and blending them with images and meaning derived from his access to a wider archive of Irish and German cultural memory.³²⁴ The openness of these archives, as Aleida Assmann and Rigney have shown, to updates and exchanges enables Hamilton's readers to translate, or identify with, his story.

Hamilton's analogous use of narrative templates specifically developed to relate traumatic experiences ensures that his readers will perform the task required of an empathetic audience and help the narrator overcome the silence and repression related to his experience. His narrative technique also confirms Rigney's claim on the copy-cat dimension of mnemonic practices, especially the popular recycling of established narrative forms to describe painful experiences of a different nature, and exemplifies the transgenerational, transnational dynamics behind cultural memory. Hamilton uses the persona of a confused child as his other to piece together the fragments of his past – not in order to regain access to forgotten or repressed autobiographical memories, as in those cases of Holocaust survivors and abuse victims Kirmayer investigated (or, for example, in Wilkomirski's *faux mémoire*, *Fragments*), but rather as a narrative device that allows for an authentic expression of bewilderment and confusion in the face of what happened. At the same time, his closeness to events is transformed into critical distance, as insights gleaned with hindsight are incorporated into the narrative and into the child's understanding of his environment. The connection between narrated child and child

³²⁴ Hamilton's literary treatment of his Irish and German grandfathers is a particularly revealing example of this process of imbuing the family's past with additional meaning. In his memoir, he envisions how they "stood facing each other in the Great War" and conceives of his parents as "orphaned by that same war" (*SP* 12). The first inference is, of course, a figure of speech, given that the Royal Navy never sailed down the Rhine to where his German grandfather was stationed. The second parallel is misleading in that Irmgard was born in 1919 and had two younger sisters. Her father died from an illness ten years later, which may have been exacerbated by his army service (MS48,168/6: 17 May 1980).

narrator, between past and present self, however, is similar to the experience of a traumatised person, for in both cases it is “the continuity of private pain” which “gives rise to the nagging need to integrate the ruptured self” (Kirmayer 185). Although he would perform this integration himself in the act of writing, Hamilton portrays his mother in *The Speckled People* as an early, enlightened champion of the need to work through the past. She regularly takes time to tell her children stories about her own growing up and her experiences during and after the Second World War so as to help them make sense of their own situation in the present. She is likewise in touch with developments that affect collective memory in Germany in the 1960s through books she reads on the Eichmann trial or on the July 1944 plot (cf. *SP* 260). Her awareness of a surge in judicial and societal enquiries into the guilt of the war generation seems to encourage her to be open about her past in order to pre-empt being judged as harshly by her children as the parents of the generation of 1968 in Germany would be (cf. *SP* 119). In many ways, she is wise before her time in her ability to anticipate and avoid all the wrong turns her German compatriots would take after the war. She is, however, not just exemplary in how she deals with the guilt and shame of her people, but also in her engagement with her own victimisation. Despite the complete lack of a receptive audience, she realises the danger of passing on her trauma unexplained to her children and of trapping them in “the same film” (*SP* 18). According to her son, she types up the most agonising memory of her rape by her supervisor, *Herr Stiegler*, in the German-occupied Dutch town Venlo (cf. *SP* 68). Her trauma suffuses Hamilton’s recollections and resurfaces throughout his narrative of alienation and homecoming (cf. *SP* 16-18, 68, 147-52, 173-5, and 203-5). Due to her sustained efforts to share her past with her children, it appears to young Hamilton like an old film in black and white which he can watch from beginning to end. Irmgard’s well-documented past – reminiscent of the grainy war footage that informs our image of Germany during the Second World War today – epitomises how communicative memory

is submerged in postmemory, feeding on a supply of mediated or vicarious recollections – among them her own diaries. Hamilton’s task, as Forness concludes in her reading of *The Speckled People*, is “to seek the fine balance between allowing memory of the past to *rule* the present and enabling the *present* to rule the memory of the past” (110). In effect, however, Hamilton’s memoir is an attempt to do both: to remember, but also to make the past pliable and serviceable through a reinterpretation that establishes connections which may not have been apparent or available to his mother.

In contrast to the war documentary of his mother’s German past, which suggests the existence of fixed roles that impose limits on his intervention, Hamilton conceives of his father’s past as a heroic Irish ballad, the chorus of which reminds his children “how [they] should live in Ireland and be Irish” (*SP* 33). The form – verse narrative and oral delivery – in this case gives Hamilton, as the present performer, the opportunity to improvise both on the ballad’s tone and content. To Seán’s own detriment, his ballad is riddled with gaps, omissions that result from his selective memory which excludes all aspects that undermine his authority and his ideology of Irish-language supremacy. He is presented as the victim of what Seán O’Faoláin eloquently exposed as a delusion in his essay, “The Gaelic Cult”, and it is the contradiction between his belief in an unadulterated Irish way and Ireland’s inevitable exposure to extraneous influences that fuels what even his wife described as his “fanaticism” (cf. MS48,168/6). Although an engineer with Ireland’s Electricity Supply Board – the Shannon electricity scheme is cited by O’Faoláin as one of the few achievements of an independent Irish State that was otherwise forced to pay lip service to the antimodern notion of a Gaelic nation (cf. 573) – and an enthusiastic supporter of technological inventions and the promotion and exchange of knowledge,³²⁵ he

³²⁵ Irmgard recorded his many business trips to Germany on behalf of his employer and his involvement, just before his death, in a project to supply electricity cables suitable to the climate of Saudi Arabia. His participation in a conference on “Distribution Technology in the ’70s”, organised in 1967 (cf. MS48,168/4: 9 February 1967), and the delight he took in building his own Hi-fi (cf. MS48,168/3: 22 October 1961) likewise suggest an acceptance of progress in certain areas.

is ruthless in expunging anything from his record that would question his aspirations towards a Gaelic master-type that is, at heart, a medieval notion of life (cf. O’Faoláin 573). Seán disowns, for example, his own father Jack, who served in the British navy and did not speak Irish (cf. *SP* 12), and fences off enquiries into a childhood trebly marked by the early loss of his father, poverty, and a limp. Still, his son dutifully tries to recover the absent stories, imagining how his father’s handicap must have made him a target among his peers and what it must have been like to escape bitter poverty thanks to a college education.

Hamilton uses hindsight to justify his empathy with a father made repressive by his own repressed background. The endeavour to halt this vicious circle in his own life explains his wish to heal and motivates perhaps his decision to quickly pass on from his disclosure of the father’s anti-Semitic article on “Ireland’s Jewish Problem”³²⁶ (cf. *SP* 254 and S. Ó hUrmoltaigh 1946: 1, 6) for the newspaper *Aiséirí* – the publication of *Ailtirí na hAiséirghe* (“Architects of the Resurrection”), by far “the most popular far-right-wing movement during the war” (Wills 364)³²⁷ – to a childhood memory that describes his attempt to overcome his estrangement from his father. As Bourke points out, what makes Seán’s article particularly despicable is the fact that it was targeting a tiny, well-integrated

³²⁶ Although the newspaper of an Irish-language movement, it included articles published in English, presumably to attract a wider readership. Interestingly, an Index of authors who contributed to *Aiséirí* and of their respective articles wrongly attributes “Ireland’s Jewish Problem” to the paper’s editor and leader of the party, Gearóid Ó Cuinneagáin (cf. Anon., *Aiséirí Innéacs*). The Index itself does not acknowledge its author and only Dublin City Libraries’ catalogue names Ó Cuinneagáin in that capacity. It is plausible, however, that he, the best-informed authority on the matter, compiled and circulated it to various Irish libraries (National Library, Russell Library Maynooth, Dublin City Libraries) a few years before his death. If so, it is possible that he either made a mistake in claiming to be the author of this particular piece or that he deliberately took responsibility for it, perhaps in order to protect his dead friend Seán’s reputation.

³²⁷ Ó Cuinneagáin, like Eoin O’Duffy a member of the Irish Friends of Germany/Cumann na Náisiúnta, established the party in 1942. *Ailtirí na hAiséirghe*’s draft constitution from 1943 proclaimed as the party’s objective “[t]he establishment of a realistically Christian social and economic system in a free Gaelic Ireland to-day” (Ó Cuinneagáin 1943: 20). Its programme elaborated on how this model State of “Christian perfection” (22) was to be achieved and shows a proximity to Nazi policies in its xenophobic vision of Irish racial and cultural purity:

(2) The fostering and strengthening of national morale through the restoration of the national language and the protection and preservation of our national culture. (...)

(12) Measures to be taken for race preservation (...)

(15) The elimination of the controlling influence of aliens and free-masons and the expropriation of ground landlords. (22f.)

The party’s extremism was no impediment in the eyes of Irish voters, who, just after the lifting of censorship and in full knowledge of Nazi Germany’s extermination policies, elected nine of *Aiséirghe*’s representatives to local government in June 1945 (cf. Douglas 220f., 227).

minority in Irish society just one year after the existence of extermination camps had been revealed to the world (cf. Bourke 2009: 183). The late timing of the publication was owed to the fact, touted beneath the headline, that it had been prohibited by the censor in 1945. However, Seán's first contribution to his party's obsession with the "Jewish question" dates to 1944, when, at the behest of Ó Cuinneagáin (cf. Douglas 131), he outlined Aiséirghe's position in relation to Jews over eleven handwritten pages in an essay titled "Ireland and Israel" (cf. MS48, Box 29). Douglas, who had accessed the essay before the National Library acquired Hamilton's papers, rightly described the manuscript as possibly "the most technically-accomplished piece of Irish anti-Semitic literature ever written" (Douglas 131). Although aiming to be more sophisticated than ordinary anti-Semites – Seán, for example, quoted various sources in his "dispassionate study" of this "delicate subject", including an American and a French rabbi, and disallowed the popular notion of a Jewish conspiracy against Christianity – his contention that "the problem [was] one of race and not of religion" was no less pernicious. He not only rejected the possibility of Jewish assimilation on the basis of his belief in their hereditary conditioning, but also argued for legislation to deprive Jews of a right to even attempt it, for example, by changing their name or by participating in the cultural, economic and political life of Irish society. Instead of being fellow citizens, they had to be treated as "guests", since they were a different "nationality", loyal only to "their own people and their own nation." Seán warned against their strategies of "concealment" and "secrecy" that allowed them to dominate the unsuspecting Irish people through their stranglehold on finance, politics, the media, popular songs and films. His stance was, after all, not much different to traditional anti-Semitism, despite a sanctimonious and pseudo-scientific argumentation that purported to "preserve the traditions of the past and lead the world in Christian treatment of this historic race." According to Douglas, Ó Cuinneagáin was not entirely satisfied with the piece produced by his assistant National Treasurer, but he nevertheless encouraged him to

prepare a drastically shortened version for public distribution in March 1945 (cf. Douglas 134).³²⁸ Seán's response was "Aiséirghe and the Jewish Question", only two typewritten pages long, which was suppressed, however. The following year, the same article (with the omission of the very last paragraph) appeared as "Ireland's Jewish Problem" in *Aiséirí* and enlightened readers on what Aiséirghe still considered an urgent matter that had to be dealt with by methods obviously "characterised by Christian charity and justice" (S. Ó hUrmoltaigh 1946: 1). Both the 1945 and the 1946 article acknowledged "the unjust and inhuman tactics which have been rightly condemned elsewhere", but awareness of the atrocities committed by the Nazis, Seán was adamant, "should not be taken as saying that we are going to do nothing" (ibid.). Again, he advocated measures to curtail what he implied were "unchristian" practices in business and "secret" forces steering the Irish media and politics. He further argued against the immigration of "aliens", claiming it would be uncharitable towards the Irish unemployed at home, and strongly objected to the "subterfuge" of Jews adopting the names of "Irish patriots" on the hypocritical grounds that it "must naturally arouse suspicion in the minds of the people" (ibid.). Despite the article's specific title and target, Seán pretended that the legislation that was so urgently required would not target "any section of the community" or "outlaw any minority". Arrogantly reminding his audience that "Ireland alone of all the countries of Europe ha[d] never soiled her hands with the blood of persecution" (6), he concluded that "the real Jewish problem – the problem of the presence of an alien body within the nation" had to be addressed in the name of fighting social injustice. His argument recalls Stuart's reference to Austria's successful liberation from Jewish dominance as an example Ireland should emulate in his *Lecture on Nationality and Culture* and emphasises that racist and narrow nationalist views were as prevalent in 1946 as they had been in 1924.

³²⁸ The comment Douglas mentioned was probably affixed to the manuscript, but all that remains is a rusty paperclip attached to the first page.

Hamilton admits his inability to understand this side to his father in his memoir, yet instead of seizing the opportunity to initiate a more searing enquiry into his anti-Semitism and fascist sympathies, he performs an act of mercy, not just towards his father but also towards nationalist tendencies in Irish society, both of which are implicitly excused as products of a harsh childhood. Hamilton's conclusion in *The Speckled People* and in *The Sailor in the Wardrobe* seems to be that Seán's misguided beliefs and cruelty stemmed from dedication rather than malice or a belief in an extremist ideology. He thus reiterates an excuse Irmgard formulated in her diary, namely that Seán "belongs to that small number today who count as idealists and who are prepared to make sacrifices for their ideals" (MS48,168/2: 25 February 1959). In light of this acknowledgement of her husband's radical views, it seems a little doubtful that Irmgard's discovery of her husband's anti-Semitic article on the cover of *Aiséirí* should have come as the surprise it is described as by Hamilton in *The Speckled People*.³²⁹ Although Hamilton delves into the history of his father's involvement with Aiséirí at more length in his second memoir (cf. *SW* 176-85), the focus of that examination is primarily his father's radical friend, Gearóid. Thus, Seán's implied transition from his initial support of the idea of an Irish protectorate under Nazi rule, purged of its Jews, to his preference for "a peaceful, non-violent, cultural movement, based on persuasion and openness" (*SW* 182f.), which according to Hamilton led to his expulsion from the party,³³⁰ lacks substantiation – especially given the fact that he was all

³²⁹ A letter to Hamilton from a former colleague of his father's in the ESB makes it clear that anybody who spent time in Seán's company was left in no doubt about his views. Thus, J. N. Tansey writes:

Your father was a man of high (but to my mind – even at that time – misguided) ideas, an ardent Catholic, an activist in Aiseiri (a right-wing political group of the time), an admirer of Chesterton and Belloc. He had a hatred of Protestantism and of the British (...) He believed in the 'international conspiracy of Jewish financiers' theory as the cause of the world's problems. *This, around 1950, post-Holocaust and post-marriage.* (MS48, Box 29, emphasis added)

³³⁰ Douglas's findings do not support the claim of Seán's exclusion from the party and merely state that he asked to be relieved of his duties as Deputy Treasurer at a party meeting in September 1945 (cf. 239). His move came after Ó Cuinneagáin charged him and another member with "insubordination" (237) following their attempt to reason with him about the manner in which he was leading (and failing) their movement (cf. 234ff.). Two months later, Seán would express his support for the party leader in a circular letter, reminding all members that "'it was Gearóid Ó Cuinneagáin who conceived the programme. (...) He instructed us in his vision. He demanded self-sacrifice from us. He instilled courage in us'" (quoted in Douglas 245). Douglas's research also seems to contradict Hamilton's claim that Seán abhorred the extremist means advocated by Ó

too happy to join the party again later (cf. *SW* 184). Seán's patchy Irish ballad of the past is thus perpetuated by a son willing to overcome the distance between them by emotionally identifying with his father.³³¹

Seán's nationalism and anti-Semitic leanings should call into question any attempt to congratulate Hamilton's father, as Paula Shields does, for understanding "the value of multi-culturalism as opposed to cultural imperialism" (22). It is, of course, Hamilton who appreciates the value of a fluid identity in a globalised world, whereas his father merely forged an identity by inverting the stereotypes previously ascribed to the Irish character. In contrast to his son, who early on grasps how language functions as a bridge-building instrument, lending itself to "mix[ing] up the words like sand and cement and water" (*SP* 27), he punishes such playfulness even at the risk of estranging his wife and confusing his children. Instead of inspiring love for the Irish language, he increases the appeal of forbidden English, a language that can only be relished in secret. The father's disastrous policy of force-feeding his children a dead concept of language is mirrored in the mother's failure to make them eat the mangled cow tongue she plates up for dinner on one occasion. While she acknowledges her mistake and refrains from making her children swallow something "somebody else had in their mouth already" (*SP* 163), her husband fails to see that language should not be a tool of torture and isolation, but a connection between people.³³²

Cuinneagáin in the matter of Northern Ireland, for the minutes of a meeting in 1946 show that he supported the call for the establishment of a uniformed, "armed wing of the movement" (257). Seán was the only other member in attendance, besides Ó Cuinneagáin, at the 1950 assembly (cf. 280), which suggests he remained loyal even after the party had begun to go into decline.

³³¹ Lee holds a diametrically opposed view, suggesting the narrative's force derives from "that painful distancing, that making strange of a family life which was once so overwhelmingly close" (Lee 2003) rather than from the author's purposeful quest for reconciliation with the image of his family.

³³² Seán's attitude is reminiscent of what Ní Domhnaill describes in her essay, "Cé Leis tú?", as "the Cork Irish-language 'mafia', a bunch of misogynist elitists who looked down their noses at the rest of the country as some form of Yahoos" (124). According to her, their snobbery was responsible for making Irish unpopular with a younger generation (cf. 128).

In addition to these subtle mirroring techniques, Hamilton also juxtaposes the narrator's experience of trying to make sense of the outside world directly to his parents' stories and strategies of coping with the past. The boy's resistance to his parents' attempts to create the "new Irish" is prefaced with numerous interjections and "buts" – "But you don't want to be special" (*SP* 3), "But that changes nothing" (*SP* 4), "But I know it also means we're marked" (*SP* 7) – and highlights his awareness of a dividing line between his family life and public life. Eventually, he arrives at the humiliating realisation that "people laugh at our family" (*SP* 159), which results in his attempts to dissociate himself from his family and to hide his background. This dissimulation, however, engenders in him the same "helpless anger" (*SP* 37) and aggression which shows in his father's arbitrary, violent reactions to his children's deviations from his rules. As he grows into a lonely adolescent uneasy in his speckled skin, the boy vacillates between longing to be accepted by the same "fist people" who persecute him and to escape "to another country where nobody knows where I came from" (*SP* 280). Significantly, the recurring image that accompanies the stages in the narrator's life where his sense of belonging is most threatened is that of a stray dog he observes on the beach in the futile activity of barking at the waves until "he's hoarse and lost his voice" (*SP* 2). The time gap between seeing the dog bark and the sound reaching his ears makes the barking seem disconnected from its source and even less effective as an expression of anger. Yet as a boy, he, too, imitates the useless fight against the waves by throwing stones at the in-rushing tide (cf. *SP* 4) which, metaphorically, envelops, rejects, confuses and entices him. This discrepancy between the magnitude of the task and the inadequacy of expression finds a further reflection, on a meta-level, in the writer returning his gaze on the past, his voice likewise risking sounding disconnected and unable to change the meaning of events. Hamilton's attempt to creatively restructure his childhood in a way that allows him to emerge from it free of the traps set by his parents' legacy, his own choices and his society's limiting concepts of the other is predicated

precisely on this image. As the boy narrator in *The Speckled People* succumbs to the guilt projected onto him by his peers, whose views are informed by the stereotypical portrayal of Nazis in American and British comics and films, he begins to conceive of himself as a perpetrator. In this situation, he encounters the stray dog again and its very vulnerability incites him to commit the worst atrocity he can imagine and drown it. However, this form of displaced auto-aggression results in a feeling of having forfeited his rightful position in society and in the desire to “disappear and drown [him]self as well” (SP 281). His sense of self-worth is only restored when the dog returns unharmed, still barking at the waves, at the very moment when the narrator is once again victimised by a neighbourhood gang precisely because of his own otherness and vulnerability. Whereas they consider his crime to be his Germanness, the boy realises that his crime consisted in trying to belong by suppressing his alterity. In accepting the background at the root of his victimisation, as his mother encouraged him to do (cf. SP 293), he advances to an understanding of his identity which is shared by Hamilton. Suddenly, the superhuman effort of “holding back the waves” (SP 6) no longer needs to be attempted, and the boy can rejoice: “I am not afraid of being homesick and having no language to live in. I don’t have to be like anyone else” (SP 295). The difficulty in this resolution is, of course, that alterity is almost synonymous with victimhood and that those who belong to dominant culture are invariably responsible for the exclusion of others and implicitly likened to perpetrators. In other words, the character’s self- and hetero-image remain conditioned by unquestioned binary oppositions and dictated by reversed stereotypes.

The Speckled People concludes on a confident note, where even being lost in the middle of the Irish countryside at night poses no threat whatsoever to the now older narrator’s sense of belonging, nor to that of his widowed mother. At the beginning of *The Sailor in the Wardrobe*, however, the teenage narrator is still in the throes of a stifling inferiority complex, feeling that he is “only borrowing the air around [him] instead of

really owning it like everyone else" (*SW* 34). He is ashamed to admit to his German origins in front of his Irish friends and hides from his mother and siblings when they appear at the harbour where he works. His background, in short, still marks him like a form of "original sin" (*SW* 1), impinging on his "innocence". Yet the process of remembering repeated in the second memoir inculcates the lesson that "there is no place to hide from your memory and no place to hide from your own name" (*SW* 11). The only way forward lies in enacting, in writing, the reconciliation between son and father that will finally allow the former to say "[g]oodbye to the shame and (...) blame and (...) the hurt mind" (*SW* 9). For even if Hamilton accepts that "[d]isconnectedness is our identity", as the memoir's epigraph proclaims, he cannot help but write in order to imagine connections between self and other, past and present.

Whereas his first memoir had used a narrative template which, with its reverberations of traumatic childhood recollections, emphasised the joint effort involved in remembering the past, enveloping as it did author, narrator and audience in a community where these memories could be voiced and where the shame of non-conformity could be transformed into pride in one's difference, the second book continues the identity-building project of an empowered, hybrid persona from a different angle. In *The Sailor in the Wardrobe*, the stress falls more broadly on life narration and self-image, both of which are, as Michael Lambek explains, "inextricably linked to our sense of the good" (249) and operate along the "three axes of moral thinking, namely respect for others, understanding of what makes a full life, and dignity" (*ibid.*). Hamilton's narrative about his transition from adolescence to manhood seems to be informed by a like-minded concern which is manifest in the pervasive sense of responsibility inherent in human relationships. Although difficult to communicate, it should acknowledge each other's difference and pledge to respect it. The connection between self and other, in turn, is memory, which, as LaCapra proposes, ideally enables the self to become responsive to the other without presuming to

speak for this person or vicariously live their experience. For Hamilton, the key to narrating his coming of age seems to lie in combining his acceptance of himself as hybrid, as enacted at the end of *The Speckled People*, with the realisation that, in remembering his relationship to his father, however fraught it was, he can seize the opportunity to “want to be generous” (*SW* 74) and forgiving.

At the beginning of *The Sailor in the Wardrobe*, during an unjustified beating the narrator takes, he sees sadness in his father’s eyes, “as if he can’t help lashing out, as if it’s not really him at all, but the countless lashes he got himself that have suddenly compelled him into this summary punishment” (*SW* 23). He envisions a parallel learning process for his father, who realises his mistake and apologises to the son, asking him “to look him in the eyes” (*SW* 24), because he, too, is beginning to understand that his child should be respected and not dominated by him.³³³ Rather than relish his “moral victory” (*ibid.*), the son “cannot withhold [his] forgiveness any longer” (*ibid.*) when he hears his father’s heartbeat and sees his distress. Increasingly, the adolescent ceases to wish he were an invisible nobody rather than his parents’ son (*cf. SW* 53, 107) and to declare his opposition to his father by brandishing the English language and pop music as his weapons in their culture war (*cf. SW* 69). At the same time, his father acknowledges errors he has made in the education of his children (*cf. SP* 282, *SW* 74, *SW* 185) and seeks the narrator’s friendship. In marked contrast to the young German Stefan Haas, who comes to visit the Ó hUrmoltaighs in Ireland in an attempt “to get as far away as possible from his father and from his country” (*SW* 96), Hamilton makes his younger self profess not to “know how to

³³³ The deep bond established between two human beings looking each other in the eyes is a recurring image in Hamilton’s writing. In *Surrogate City*, Alan remarks, “[i]n Germany, if you look into somebody’s eyes, it means you are hoping to find something there” (*SC* 24f.). This notion is reinforced in the description of the narrator’s encounter with Alex, the disabled son of his German friends, in *The Last Shot*:

(...) Alex began to look at my face, examining my ears, nose, hair, without uttering a sound. When I put him down again he began to jump up and down with excitement. Then he ran around in circles. I felt I was getting closer to Alex. He was getting to know me. (*LS* 117)

Finally, Christa conceives of the promise of giving birth to new life as “a lucid vision of infinity, a world starting all over again” (*LT* 193).

be disloyal” (SW 95) to his father.³³⁴ Again, his mother’s influence bears positively upon him, convincing him that “[i]f he hate[d] [his] father, he would hate [him]self for ever” (SW 110). Thus, the realisation that he “could no longer avoid being like [his] father” (SW 176) is not a negative but an enabling one, allowing the narrator to repair his recollections of his father in the present rather than leaving memory to calcify as a sediment of the past. His surrender coincides with his father’s decision to meet him on equal terms and to abandon his ideology, which had imprisoned himself most of all. Seán’s return to “the language of his memory” (SW 236), English, enables his son to finally understand him, “as if he’s got his voice back after years of exile” (ibid.). Through the experience of living abroad, the narrator learns that, despite a different environment, a changed name, and a selective memory, there always remains “some tell-tale part of [him] that cannot be hidden” (SW 258) which surfaces in his perspective, “like ancient ruins on the landscape” (ibid.). The transformation Hamilton envisions in his father in the memoir, however, as well as the progression he charts for the narrator ensure that the Ireland he leaves behind at the end of *The Sailor in the Wardrobe* is his legitimate home on his (literary) return.

Hamilton does not limit himself in this memoir solely to the challenges presented by his family past. Rather, he makes both German and Irish history part of his responsibility in the present (cf. SW 160, 173) and broadens the scope of his recollective reconfiguration to draw attention to a breadth of silent victims, from the victims of the Famine (cf. SW 198) and the victims of the Troubles (SW 243) to every victim who threatens to drown in oblivion, making it his task to imagine them back to life. To emphasise the historical implications of the retrospective reconciliation between him and

³³⁴ Stefan’s story is modelled on the visit of Norbert Haas, the nephew of a German friend of Irmgard’s, in 1966 (cf. MS48,168/4: 18 December 1966). As Hamilton’s mother recalls in her diary, he spent some time with her family and went hill walking with the eldest, Franz, before departing for the North, thinking of returning via Scotland. When his mother did not hear from him for three weeks, she raised the alarm and Irmgard spent days on the telephone to the German embassy and gardaí, trying to locate the young man, until a letter suddenly announced his return to Dublin. He had been unaware of the rescue mission, and in Irmgard’s account there is no mention of any “soul searching” or conflict with his father behind Norbert’s disappearance. It is presented instead as the result of miscommunication.

his father, their conflict is mirrored on two further levels in the memoir. It finds its counterpart in the “German father-and-son war” (*SW* 141) between Stefan and his father, which drives the former all the way to the West of Ireland to learn how to be “homesick” (*SW* 142) and to free himself from the burden of his father’s history. The Böll-therapy Hamilton prescribes for him works and Stefan returns home where, as he reassures the narrator, he will help his father shoulder the burden of his war trauma (cf. *SW* 225). Just as his own decision not to probe into his father’s anti-Semitic article is prompted by his own emotional needs, so, too, Hamilton resolves this intergenerational conflict by defining Stefan’s father as yet another victim of historical circumstances (cf. *SW* 208ff.). He thus figuratively restores the ruptured genealogical link between ’68er son and war-implicated father on the premise of universal suffering. This move not only waives critical insight in favour of emotional identification, but also seeks to derive a foundational meaning from the atrocity Stefan’s father witnessed as a soldier in Russia (cf. *SW* 95f.). As Schmitz points out, however, “the development of a more complex image beyond simple perpetrator/victim dichotomy and a humane, forgiving image of the wartime generation are two different matters. The former demands a more focused gaze whereas the latter is ultimately in the interest of closing family ranks” (Schmitz 2007b: 209). By contrast, the conflict between the two fishermen Dan and Tyrone related in the memoir finds no peaceful solution, reflecting the Troubles in Northern Ireland in their deadly seriousness on a miniature scale. It is significant to note that while Tyrone’s drowning turns an abstract conflict raging in the North into tangible human suffering for those who witness his funeral in Dún Laoghaire, his arch-enemy Dan maintains “the same hard expression in his eyes” (*SW* 231) which prevents him from responding emotionally to the other’s death. The Northern Irish conflict is thus not dissolved into a harmonious, uplifting ending, a conclusion that would have been too incredible for Hamilton’s readers, while German history and identity are summarised under a more sweeping vision.

In his representation of German and Irish history across both memoirs, however, Hamilton reverses this judgement, weighing the effects of German and Irish sites of historical trauma differently. Whereas much of his youth and career as a writer were spent grappling with the German side of his identity and its association with globally acknowledged guilt, it would appear that the darker sides of Irish history, such as his father's complicity in a repressive nationalist ideology coloured by streaks of anti-Semitism, can be passed over with relative nonchalance, because this political vision was never realised: "My father says it's unfair to accuse the Irish of things that never happened" (*SW* 182). This statement introduces an element of doubt into Seán's rebuttal of any criticism of his political ideas, but the narrator does not probe deeper, being overcome instead by memories and emotions that cancel out his father's dubious past. Given Seán's dominant influence on his upbringing, it is surprising that Hamilton should choose to focus on the issue of his German guilt after the Second World War in his personal narrative rather than explore the extent to which his father's nationalism was fascinated with nationalist ideologies that closely resembled Nazi-Germany's chauvinism, anti-Semitism and anti-Bolshevism. Ultimately, Hamilton's decision allows his literature to eschew exclusively Irish debates and to participate instead in a larger dialogue on the interpretation and representation of the European past and of postwar identity in flux, both in its relation to place and in its response to history. This experience is perhaps what translates best for Hamilton's readers, more so than the peculiarities of the Irish-German upbringing he describes.³³⁵ Yet the fact that his memoirs elude the limitations of a purely domestic debate on Irish identity should not be tantamount to an exemption from critical scrutiny. Both in Ireland and Germany, critics have been content to accept the respective historical portrayal of the other along with the division into an "easy" Irish and a "difficult" German identity. Similar to the problematic translation of victimhood into a source of pride in his alterity in

³³⁵ By 2012, Ireland Literature Exchange had supported the translation of *The Speckled People* into ten languages, a figure that does not include translations that were published without the organisation's funding.

The Speckled People, *The Sailor in the Wardrobe* highlights how the author's personal concerns with identity and his understanding of the role of history affect his ability to write the other without distorting them into a convenient reflection. Stefan as the stereotypical German son rejecting his father and fatherland is one point in case, and his personal decision to distance himself is subsumed under an allegedly common German quest for healing on Irish shores. This is a recurring feature in Hamilton's writing and is indicative of his hetero-image of a wounded and guilty postwar German identity. At the same time, it is a contradiction in terms, for it constructs the empty vastness and beauty of the Irish landscape as the perfect place not to critically reflect on the German past from a distance, but to submerge it in an emotional experience of the sublime. It could be argued that in his memoirs, too, emotion trumps critical reflection, abetted by Hamilton's choice of a childlike perspective of "naïve optimism". As Regan points out, this "makes for comedy, but (...) is apt to become monotonous and the comic effects can soon wear thin" (235). More importantly, however, it reduces the scope of Hamilton's engagement with his and his parents' past, never going beyond the point that would force him to admit that a naïve perspective is, essentially, unavailable in what he recognises as a complex historical and cultural inheritance overshadowed by the legacy of fascism and the Holocaust.

Hamilton's undifferentiated concept of historical trauma and vicarious victimhood expressed in the memoirs are two further examples that highlight the risk of inadvertently amalgamating popular notions of projective identification with the other and the dangerous tendency towards "quasi-sacrificial processes of victimization and self-victimisation" against which LaCapra warns (2001: 71) – a risk that is ever present in the novel *Disguise*. The portrayal of Irmgard, too, as an outsider and alien, enables Hamilton to project weakness, confusion and inferiority onto her as he himself experienced it at a younger age. It facilitates interpretations such as Dore Fischer's, who concludes that Irmgard's acculturation strategy in Ireland is one of separation, practising a cult of her German

heritage and remaining unresponsive to Irish culture around her (cf. D. Fischer 34). Her diaries, of course, disprove this reductive assessment, revealing instead her cultural competence and her efforts to accommodate both cultures in her family. They also bear testimony to the extraordinary strength and independence she possessed and her resilient, courageous personality, unafraid of foreign people and foreign places.³³⁶ It is noteworthy that Hamilton ascribes the same attributes of weakness and inferiority to his fictional character Vid in *Hand in the Fire*, perhaps unconsciously suggesting that every newcomer to Ireland is longingly eyeing the almost impenetrable fortress of “authentic” Irish society from the margins. This view, which seems to reflect his desire as a boy to be received into the fold of dominant culture, comes dangerously close to actually confirming the existence of such a “simple” Irish identity and purity, in defence of which his father had rallied with his essay on “Ireland and Israel” and his article, “Ireland’s Jewish Problem”. Migrants like Hamilton’s mother, however, arrived in Ireland with an already formed identity which she, unlike him, neither felt the need to prove nor to negate. Hamilton makes some amends in the final pages of *The Speckled People* where he allows his mother to regain her girlishness and independence following her husband’s death. Lost at dusk in the Irish countryside, she does not mind in the least where she and her children are going. As she lights a cigarette, her infectious laughter reassures her children, by then adults, that they are safe and their disorientation in their home country only temporary (cf. *SP* 298).

What is revealing, however, in Hamilton’s portrayal of his mother, is the extent to which it corresponds to his depiction of women in his works in general. As an early reviewer of his first novel, *Surrogate City*, pointed out in 1990,

³³⁶ Having lost her father when she was nine years old, and her mother only five years later, Irmgard and her four sisters were raised by her mother’s sister, Maria, and her uncle, Gerd. Irmgard had to earn a living to support her sisters and foster parents and left school in 1936 without taking her leaving certificate examination. Her jobs for the Employment Agency in Kempen and, later, as a staff secretary in the German army took her abroad to the Netherlands, France and Czechoslovakia. After the end of the war, she managed to feed herself and her sisters from the money she earned and the food she received working for a Colonel in the US Army (cf. MS48,168/6). As previously mentioned, she would have liked to pursue a degree in dentistry in 1947, but failed to be accepted by a university.

[m]ost of the male characters bump along in worlds that are to a large extent created by the women to whom they have attached themselves, and so emerge as a compliant and beleaguered lot. (Ryan: A8)

In this, Hamilton's treatment of his female characters is not entirely dissimilar to Stuart's – Stuart, too, is prone to stylise and manipulate the women in his novels in such ways that will make his male protagonists' actions (or failings) look more flattering. The influence Irmgard (and with her Mara, Claudia, Christa, Anke, Bertha, Helen and Hadja) exerts over the narrator in the memoirs is at times conceived as nurturing, providing comfort and support for his attempts to find his bearings in relation to his environment. Alternately, she represents a living imposition on his conscience, and his narrative project of regaining his innocence means he has to fly by her nets in the Stephen Dedalus tradition so he can redefine both himself and her from afar. In the process of doing so, however, he re-roots his literary flights in the maternal oral and written tradition, citing her diaries in support of the critical evaluation of the past. Yet these meditations are, as I have shown, not simply legitimised by this record of Irmgard's memories. Rather, they are the result of his interpretation of the past in light of a much more expansive store of meditated recollections and of an affective response to postmemory performed through vicarious remembering.

3.3. History and Self in *Surrogate City*, *The Last Shot* and *The Love Test*

The Irish first person narrator Alan Craig in *Surrogate City* is the first of Hamilton's protagonists struggling to extricate himself from such a binary male-female constellation and to narrate with authority the brief intersection of his world's and Helen Quinn's, an Irishwoman he meets in Berlin in 1976.³³⁷ A lighting engineer by profession, he muses over the analogies between his spotlight's power over darkness and the need to place his recollections in relation to a complex set of perspectives. Just as the myriad lights of the

³³⁷ The election posters of the Social Democrats, we are told, feature Helmut Schmidt who ran for chancellor twice, in 1976 and 1980. As Hamilton's own stay in Berlin would have coincided with the first election campaign, it seems plausible to suggest the novel is set at that point in time.

divided city function as a reminder of people's "existence" and "limitations" (SC 49), Alan is self-consciously aware that he, "the person operating the lights", is in danger of being "blinded" (SC47) in the process of trying to throw light on the past. By fixing his memories of his love affair with Helen in writing, he fears that "[e]verything would be reduced to words" (SC 91) and to one version of events. His sense of dislocation following the end of this relationship, and his difficulties with finding the right words to describe his experiences further frustrate his attempts to make sense of what happened. Alan is cast, then, in a role that reflects on the fragmentation of modern existence and the sense of alienation from German society, a feeling which overcame Hamilton in Berlin (cf. Wallace 1990: 10). His hesitant articulation of his experiences takes place inside the frame provided by a self-assured narrative voice, one that, in taking over from Alan, gives a glimpse of the author's own social critique. "In Germany" is the start to many a sweeping observation on cultural difference – a difference which, more often than not, describes a common condition – and Alan's story is supplemented with information on specifics that range from culinary discoveries to Berlin's regular city-wide recycling days (cf. SC 95). The most important local dictum, however, justifies the narrative's very existence, for "In Germany, everything must be declared" (SC 29).

Alan's approach to language's insufficiency and memory's instability is, in many ways, a blueprint to Hamilton's engagement with these topics throughout his career: conceiving of memory in terms of the ruins of the disused railway station Gleisdreieck in Berlin, waiting to be "reclaimed" one day (cf. SC 5f.), Alan sets out to uncover different angles from which the events of the past could be narrated, rather than "[t]aming [them] by naming" (SC 32). He creates a collage of descriptions, lists of likes and dislikes, rankings, slogans, question-answer patterns, observations on cultural peculiarities, national and

world events and subtly suggests how every fragment relates to everything else.³³⁸ The result is not unlike the mosaic on the pavement of the street in Berlin where the narration begins, *in medias res*, with an anonymous pregnant woman running. Acknowledging that “everything cries out for an explanation” (SC 3), the narrator supplies the woman’s name, Helen, along with her reasons for coming to Berlin, and shows how her story becomes intertwined with that of Hadja Milic at the end of the street when the latter offers her help. Hadja introduces Helen to her boyfriend, the singer songwriter Wolf, one of those Germans Hamilton sends on a pilgrimage to the shores of the Irish Atlantic to numb their German *malaise* (cf. SC 34). Not surprisingly, the cover of his first album *Atlantis* acknowledges this debt to the Irish landscape by merging pictures of Berlin Kreuzberg and the Berlin Wall with a superimposed photograph of Wolf “looking out across the Atlantic waves” (SC 191). Wolf, in turn, introduces Helen to Alan, who comes to square off the cosmopolitan constellation of complementary couples which in Hamilton’s German trilogy consistently serve to both reinforce and explore the distance and opposition in human relations through mirrors of the past and mirrors of the other. The person who has brought these worlds together, finally, is Dieter, the father of Helen’s child and the phantom she is chasing in the opening scene. To add more complexity, Alan gradually discovers, and to some degree becomes involved in, the various strata of German society attached to Hadja’s world: on the one hand, her German mother and Turkish father, and her brother, a candidate for the Social Democrats in Berlin; on the other hand, illegal Turkish immigrants, whom her family exploits both as labourers on their building sites and as tenants,³³⁹ and Persian student Sulima, who, after a brief period of emancipation encouraged by Hadja, prefers to marry the devout Muslim her family has chosen for her.

³³⁸ This operative mode can be found throughout Hamilton’s works and, although his approach was already criticised in reviews of his first novel, he responded that all writing “[was] basically a list of facts and observations (...) so why not start off with a list” (Wallace 1990: 10).

³³⁹ This plot element is based on the Serbian girlfriend of Hamilton’s fellow band member, Chris Fitzgerald. In *Die redselige Insel*, Hamilton tells of how they met in the late seventies in Munich and played several

The stage on which Alan and the other characters tread is illuminated for the readers partly from Alan's perspective and partly from that of an authoritative narrator, reflecting on the direction West Germany is taking. The society depicted clings to stability to sustain the prosperity it has achieved and is inimical to the aspirations of migrant workers and their longing for upward mobility (cf. *SC* 65, 70). The novel exposes the lifestyle of the provocatively liberal, yet unhappy couple Hadja-Wolf and hones in on a people who feel "morally bound to seek satisfaction" (*SC* 73) and who "erase" the past (cf. *SC* 131), believing that "[m]emory and progress were incompatible" (*SC* 184). The Berlin Wall, which cuts through the city and effectively makes it an island in the GDR, is comfortably ignored as a relic of the past, and life on the other side is considered infinitely inferior, if thought of at all. Culture in West Germany has become a commodity that can be consumed. The educated, younger generation of Hadja and Wolf speak English to "emphasize [their] fast, businesslike [sic] approach" (*SC* 124), even at the risk of mispronouncing and missing the sense of their English utterances, much to the amusement of the narrator and the book's English-speaking readership. Taking in the details of this social tableau from his vantage point as an Irish migrant, Alan wonders if, at this stage of progress and prosperity, "life reflected market forces or vice versa" (*SC* 179).

And yet Alan feels "adequate" (*SC* 15) in this environment, temporarily losing his detachment through his involvement with Helen and accepting his inclusion in the "stage instructions" (*SC* 106). Although aware of his complicity in perpetuating social injustice, he accompanies Hadja on her weekly rounds to collect the rent from her family's Turkish tenants (cf. *SC* 47f.). His implication in a society that is both alien and familiar to him, however, is offset by his aloofness in his descriptions of it and in his engagement with Helen. Ultimately, they remain "strangers" (*SC* 104) to each other because of his inability

concerts together in Austria. The father of Chris's girlfriend owned a dilapidated apartment house in Vienna which he rented out to less fortunate countrymen. Hamilton remembers how his friend, who had turned his back on his inherited wealth and status, refused to accompany his girlfriend when she went to collect the rent and tried to make her see the exploitation she was participating in through his music (cf. 127).

to engage with extraneous reality in a way that would allow him to penetrate it, or at least to differentiate between mediated experiences and his own sensations and memories. “Whatever [he] see[s] or witnesse[s],” Alan realises, “describes only [him]self” (SC 129) – an implicit comment, perhaps, on the limits of Hamilton’s outsider perspective on German society. Acknowledging the fragility and incomprehension inherent in human existence, Alan doubts he really knows himself and invokes a higher, “omnipresent observer” (SC 105) who indeed provides the frame for his recollections. Tellingly, it is in the terms of a dichotomy between the (maternal) sea and the (paternal) land that he questions his static position in life, wondering if “the sea define[s] the land or land [sic] define[s] the sea” (SC 129). Stasis, or the impression of paralysis, is the *malaise* that afflicts him, and, by extension, his relationship with Helen. Inserting himself into a literary tradition which encompasses such famous predecessors as Baudelaire’s “L’Homme et la mer” and Joyce’s *Proteus* episode, Hamilton expresses the certitude through Alan that “countless men” continue to fight their internal battles “on the seafront, gazing out to sea as though they had seen or heard everything” (SC 166). It is precisely this impression of finality and impotence which caused Dieter to leave Helen in the first place and Alan to leave Ireland. Yet his hope that the experience of moving abroad would change him in a way that would supersede who he was before is disappointed. Whether in Frankfurt, Mannheim or Berlin, Alan remains “still the same” (SC 184). Helen, on the other hand, looks towards the past and “old comparisons” to envision a future which can offer her “material proof of her own existence in Berlin” (SC 142). Her pregnancy is her chance to belong, an anchor providing genealogical continuity. Deprived of this means of connection, Alan opts for a creative power of a different kind, one that allows him to actively interfere with the past and the other and to “mutilate memory” (SC 184) in his account of his encounter with Helen. If the epigraph of the novel, “No one is himself”, does not subsume him completely, it is solely because his reflections in the process of narrating effectively rescue him from oblivion, for

the sentence – taken from Paul Bowles’s *The Spider House*³⁴⁰ – fully reads: “No one is himself under the stress of passion, you know.” Passion, however, lies in the past for Alan.

Past passion – and a passion for the past – is, again, the driving force in Hamilton’s second novel, *The Last Shot*, which offers an opportunity to reflect on the connections and continuities between the Second World War and later events. Set at the end of the 1980s, on the cusp of another historical shift, the book charts the attempt of an unnamed first-person narrator to research the forgotten history of “the last shot” fired during the Second World War and, with it, the story of his own roots. Again, Hamilton’s motivation behind this revision is personal and slightly foreshadows a trend in German literature which, as Stuart Taberner points out, saw many German writers create an imaginative return to lost or forgotten places in the former GDR and Eastern Europe to undertake the excavation and reappraisal of family histories (cf. 214). How personal the journey is that Hamilton imagines in *The Last Shot* can be deduced from the dedication, “für Irmgard”. As his mother’s last diary notes show, the coordinates of Bertha Sommer’s fictive return home to Kempen from the Czech front, by bicycle and in the company of *Wehrmacht* officer Franz Kern in May 1945, tally with the brief description (not more than one page) Irmgard gives of her retreat from the advancing Soviet army at the end of the war (see “Curriculum Vitae” in MS48,168/6).³⁴¹ Irmgard’s second name was Berta, after her own mother who had been a trained singer (cf. MS48,168/6: 17 February 1979), as was the mother of the fictional character Bertha (cf. *LS* 40). The name of the officer who helped Irmgard escape to safety was Hans Kern (cf. MS48,168/6: 18 August [1980]). Like Hamilton, the narrator had happened upon his mother’s diaries after her death and passed over their predominantly domestic focus on “happy moments in her life, the linguistic charm of her

³⁴⁰ Hamilton secured an assignment from *The Irish Times* that allowed him to visit Bowles in Tangiers, although the paper later only printed a travel feature by him on Morocco (19 December 1987, Weekend 4). The Hugo Hamilton Papers contain some correspondence between the two writers as well as his article on Bowles (MS48,152/2).

³⁴¹ Hamilton also incorporates into the novel the story Irmgard relates of her return from the French front prior to her posting to the East (cf. NLI, MS48,168/6).

children when they were small, locks of hair, etc” (LS 157) to focus instead on her attempts, at the end of her life, to account for herself. Perhaps it is for the sake of regaining more distance that Bertha’s son is cast as American and remains nameless,³⁴² but the similarities extend even to the point of the dramatic crisis in Bertha’s narrative, her rape, which is the secret her son seeks to lift. However, in contrast to Irmgard, who was raped by her boss, a Nazi, Hamilton configures Bertha’s rape at the hands of two famished, vengeful Polish forced labourers, taking inspiration from his mother’s mention in her last diary of having been careful to avoid “returning Poles” who “were relieving all Germans of their possessions: watches, wedding rings, cameras etc.” In doing so, Franz’s killing of the men gives the novel a further level of meaning by meditating on “crime and punishment” and the never-ending haunting of those who participated in the Second World War as well as their descendants. Through fiction, Hamilton both gives form to his mother’s memories and shapes them anew, recognising the importance of a continuous engagement with history by bringing the past forth in a new interpretation that is pertinent to the present.

Whereas West Germany was intent on preventing change in the elections that form the backdrop to Alan Craig’s story, historical change permeates the atmosphere of the narrator’s present in *The Last Shot*, announcing the fast-approaching end of the Eastern Bloc in 1989. Reflecting the flux and mobility of the age, the narrator is constantly on the move, journeying east and west across central Europe. The events in Bertha’s world in May 1945 gather significance by being told side by side with those in her son’s life between 1985 and 1990. While Alan longed for everything to happen “once, and then never again” (SC 20), the juxtaposition of past and present in *The Last Shot* emphasises the repetition of history by mirroring events which occurred in Bertha’s life in that of her son decades later. Even the geographical frame of the novel enforces the vision of recurring,

³⁴² It is no coincidence that he is American, for Hamilton knew that his mother had been offered work with the family of an American Colonel in Vermont. In *The Sailor in the Wardrobe*, Hamilton would still wonder “how different our lives would have been” (84) had she accepted.

interconnected events, as the trajectories travelled by Bertha and Franz from Louny to Nuremberg run almost parallel to those repeatedly travelled by the narrator between Düsseldorf and Münster, where his lover Anke and her husband Jürgen, the narrator's best friend, live. His train journeys between all four coordinates, in turn, connect them to form a parallelogram that delineates the historical territory the narrator feels compelled to excavate (cf. *LS* 120).

The events of the past, by contrast, are presented in a chronological narrative, steadily advancing in step with the characters' slow, dogged progress towards a clearly defined goal: home, or, alternatively, "new homes (...) where they could find peace" (*LS* 96). In this respect, the narrative conforms to the general patterns used to describe the end of the war in Europe in collective memory, to which both Bielenberg and Stuart refer in their writing. Within the framework of this shared memory, the narrative introduces a hidden, subjective dimension through the "private, arcane names" (*LS* 13) Bertha assigns to the events she witnesses and the places she passes through on her return. "The morning of the end of the Reich" or "the hill of the last time looking back" (*ibid.*) are later supplemented with "the Timber-yard of silent breath" (*LS* 47), by which she remembers an execution, and "[t]he Breakfast of Lovers" (*LS* 100). Her rape puts an end to Bertha's wish to recollect events, which is, in turn, the reason behind the narrator's intervention in the late 1980s to gather and arrange the "facts" he snatches from his mother's diary, the local archives in Louny, and the eye-witness account of Franz Kern. His research reveals the extent to which the smooth narrative of the past is, really, a mediated recollection, fuelled by various sources and subject to the narrator's interpretation. Even before the first shift from past to present occurs, it is evident that hindsight informs Bertha's story, both explicitly, in the use of knowing references to Theresienstadt and to the fate of the Sudeten Germans after the war, and implicitly, in the use of anachronistic language, such as the reference to a peaceful demonstration in Louny in 1945 as "a premature but unsuccessful

attempt at the velvet approach” (LS 8). The narrator’s attempt to make sense of the present, by contrast, defies linear progression, resembling instead Alan’s self-conscious struggle with modern life’s instability and language’s insufficiency in *Surrogate City*. Unlike Alan, however, the narrator in *The Last Shot* is not in Germany to have something “happen” to him which would make him forget his past, but on a journey towards this past, towards his roots, and towards a father figure who would, at last, explain the past to him as if he were “talking to a son” (LS 159).

Mobility, personal and global, determines the pace of the novel, and it inevitably accelerates between May 1945, when the bicycle was “the fastest mode of transport” (LS 18), and the arrival of “freedom trains” (LS 71) in West German railway stations in 1989. Yet the common impetus – a longing for home, or, at least, for a safe place to live – seems to be judged as less authentic and legitimate in the case of Eastern Europeans and East Germans, whose aspirations towards Western standards of living is disparaged by those who already enjoy the fruits of economic prosperity and consumer satisfaction (cf. LS 71).³⁴³ The narrator’s determination to grapple with “the nightmare of history”, while television is showing “[t]he ecstasy of history” (LS 85), may appear to be missing the point. His hope that Franz Kern, should he ever find him, “would reopen the past and explain it to a new generation totally unconnected with the events and unable to understand the way people felt in the war” (LS 115) is based on the belief, however, that access to the past must be renewed in order for the present generation to comprehend where it is heading. By indicating how events that seem disconnected are part of a larger pattern, the narrator’s message replicates a dynamic understanding of history and cultural memory. Accordingly, “[a] new era for Germany” (LS 127) should not begin by repeating the mistakes of the past, that is by figuratively “burning” (LS 21) every trace of it, as Bertha

³⁴³ Jürgen’s negative assessment of the motivation behind the arrival of East Germans in the novel echoes Hamilton’s, expressed in the article he published on 10 November 1989 under the title “What Is this Freedom the *Silent Herds* Want so Badly?” (emphasis added).

literally did before the German army started its retreat in 1945. Her five failed attempts to write down the traumatic memory of her rape (cf. *LS* 157) underline the importance of gathering witness accounts, testimonies, every scrap of documentation that enables later generations to access the past and empathise with the experience of those who lived before.

Whereas Bertha could not summon the words to write of her rape, lacking an audience that would have felt sympathy for German suffering during the war, Anke finds the courage to tell the narrator how her husband Jürgen raped her in a wish “to act like a complete stranger” (cf. *LS* 147f.). Despite this progress, the book suggests that taboos persist in many other areas and continue to affect human relations: hostility towards foreigners, unwillingness to share with those who have less, and impatience with the disabled, old and slow – all this is characteristic of German society on the eve of unification as the narrator sees it. Alex, the son of Jürgen and Anke who suffers from Down’s syndrome and leukaemia, is presented by his father, a gynaecologist, as a “refugee” of history, born after the Third Reich, where he would have been considered “unworthy of life” (*LS* 80), but before it became possible to detect his condition at embryo stage. His existence is prefigured in the novel by that of a Czech boy with Down’s syndrome mentioned in Bertha’s story as a hopeful proof of “an overt act of revolution” (*LS* 7) in which life triumphed despite the Nazis’ deadly policies. In the Federal Republic, by contrast, the attitude of Alex’s parents shifts from feeling proud of having “saved his life” (*LS* 80) to contemplating a mercy killing for their terminally ill child. Although their decision is taken in the interest of sparing Alex further pain, it is also apparent that his disability and illness present a curtailment of their “personal freedom”, the only “real” freedom worth having according to Jürgen (cf. *LS* 71). This couple, like all German couples in Hamilton’s works, are from educated, liberal backgrounds, have travelled the

world,³⁴⁴ and, ironically, have learned how to “mourn” thanks to reading Heinrich Böll (cf. *LS* 24), that eminent critic of a cold, self-involved bourgeoisie in postwar Germany. The euthanasia Jürgen carries out and the subsequent cremation of the child’s body conjure up memories of the Holocaust, of defenceless victims and white-collar perpetrators. The representation of Alex’s funeral as an event at the limit brings the narrative close to a halt, as the narrator feels paralysed in the face of “a set of images or symbols” (*LS* 168) which all signify one thing only: death. Vaguely realising that his bereaved friends, Jürgen and Anke, are almost flirting with a formulaic iconography of catastrophe, the narrator concludes that the time has come for him to leave.

Were the novel to close on this image, the message for German society’s future would be a very bleak one indeed. As it is, the vehicle of mirroring the present in the past allows the final chapter to close on an uplifting note. Although Bertha and Franz’s relationship ends when they reach Nuremberg, where Franz returns to his wife, Bertha’s sudden independence – “the sound of her own footsteps and the thought of her own home” (*LS* 175) – gives her strength to carry on. The German song she sings to entertain the GIs who offer her a lift expresses all the longing and yearning of the individual driven from home, from her own story. Her son’s attempt to recover it, decades later, allows him to view her story in light of his position in the present at the intersection of different historical events, yet the conclusions he draws from the past – and those left for the reader to draw by the author’s juxtaposition of the two narratives – do not quite penetrate to the core. The novel’s focus on the human and romantic aspects of Bertha and Franz’s story, and on the love triangle that links the narrator to Anke and Jürgen, eschews a critical engagement with questions of awareness, implication or individual responsibility of the characters as

³⁴⁴ The most striking depiction of this phenomenon, however, is reserved for the depraved Mechtild in the short story “Freedom of Speech” in *Dublin where the Palm Trees Grow*. Fleeing Germany because she professes to be disgusted with its modern-day society, she taunts her Moroccan tour guide Mustafa with a one hundred Deutsch Mark note and her sexual availability if only he manages to eat a whole pack of cream crackers. Hurt in his male pride, he abducts her and her lover and takes brutal revenge on both.

political personae, during the war as much as in the present. Instead of realising the potential of this kind of memory fiction as a new dimension between historiography and commemoration, ideally enabling “a more nuanced remembering and thus a less suspect form of forgetting” (Taberner 217), Hamilton prefers to extrapolate from the narrator’s individual act of excavation to present the empathetic recollection of the suffering experienced by dead ancestors as the necessary condition to cure the “unhappiness” assailing their descendants. That the final encounter between the narrator and Franz Kern should culminate in the following diagnosis of German society’s shortcomings seems completely anticlimactic, if not beside the point:

Today we take luck for granted, here in Germany, and we don’t know what to do with it. I have never seen Germans so unhappy. This business with the Wall and German unity is not going to make them happier either. (LS 157)

More pressing than lamenting the Germans’ inability to be happy, however, would be the recognition that the way out of aporia and melancholic self-involvement requires the kind of work the Mitscherlichs called for – a critical engagement with, and mourning of, the past in which Bertha and Franz had a stake, and not a romantic reconstruction of the circumstances behind “the last shot” as a site providing solace or validating a specific cultural critique in the present.

German unification offered Hamilton another opportunity to delve into the tributaries of twentieth-century history and to explore the confluence of East and West German past in his next novel, *The Love Test*. As mentioned at the end of the chapter on Francis Stuart, Hamilton outlined the critical agenda that informs his writing in his introduction to a new edition of *The Pillar of Cloud*. Aligning himself with Stuart’s point of view, according to which “nothing but the intensity of human love can ever put things right” (POC 4), Hamilton’s last novel in the German trilogy again examines, much like Stuart’s postwar novels, the bonds between its male and female characters, both under the strain of historical events and in times of peaceful affluence. Hamilton based this work on

the real-life story of Walter Thräne, to whom the novel is dedicated, and his lover Ursula Schöne, two Stasi informers who defected and were abducted back to the GDR, where they served long sentences in the notorious Hohenschönhausen prison (cf. Hamilton 1994: A12). Thräne's case featured prominently in the West German press in the mid-1970s, which is perhaps how it first came to Hamilton's attention. Years later, he met the former prisoner Thräne in his new home in Eisenhüttenstadt. Hamilton remained ignorant of Schöne's fate after her release – his article merely notes that she "is believed to be living in Dresden" – which left him at liberty to imagine and invest her story with meaning for a postunification perspective on East and West German history in *The Love Test*.

Once again, Hamilton strategically pits two couples against each other, constructing the male and female characters as two halves of the mind/body dualism. On the East side of Berlin, in her Pankow apartment, is Christa Süsskind, who still feels very much a prisoner of the defunct GDR which took her freedom, her lover Ralf Krone and her newborn child. On the West side of the city, in another apartment building, are Mathias and Claudia Hauser, two captives of the present "mindlessness of the Euro-fun" (LT 144) who find themselves trapped in a marriage that no longer is very much fun. Hamilton also uses the technique of mirroring past and present narratives again, shifting the third person perspective between the different characters to show how the "love test" is approached by each of the four figures involved and to probe if "the intensity of human love" can still set things right or if, as the novel's epigraph suggests, "at a certain level of misfortune, love can no longer be generated." That this may be the case for Claudia and Mathias becomes evident from the very start of the novel, which opens on the night of Mathias's return home after a fortnight abroad. Claudia is doing the female trick of "being nice", baking a cake in the vain hope of conjuring up "a real sense of being together again" (LT 1), much the same as Irmgard would try to cook up peace in her Glenageary home in Hamilton's later memoirs. She goes to considerable lengths, putting on relaxed music, offering her husband

a foot massage and trying to engage him in conversation. Mathias, however, feels unable to listen, unable to overcome the “paralysis” (*LT* 2) that gripped him the moment he “walk[ed] on to [the] stage” (*ibid.*) of their life together. The “underlying tension in his body” (*LT* 3) meets with his wife’s “underlying sense of mistrust” (*ibid.*), and both cancel out whatever goodwill is left in them for the other. While Mathias makes an effort to subordinate his “impulse to get away” to the demands of life in the “family cage” (*LT* 8), his wife is doing her best to avoid being considered conventional by her social group (*cf. LT* 3). To prove their unconventionality, the Hausers visit nude colonies, attend gay parties and accept each other’s infidelities. This “constant test of over-exposure” (*LT* 17) in human relationships has itself created “a form of imprisonment” (*ibid.*) and effaced all simplicity between two people. A poignant image that conveys the stifling rigidity of life ruled by these liberal values is offered when Claudia, who works for American Express, is turned into “a corpse with coins” (*LT* 15) by her ten year-old son, Werner, who, out of boredom, piles his savings onto her body. Immobilised by the weight of money, Claudia realises how she longs to be “an individual” (*ibid.*) again and how, instead, she keeps “lying to herself” (*ibid.*) about her lifestyle. Among the lies she fabricates to preserve her sense of meaningfulness are her romantic and clichéd projections of Ireland, and by extension of Kevin, an Irishman among her circle of friends. Intrigued by “the spiritual, or rather poetic, environment around him, even when he was funny” (*LT* 142), Claudia transposes her desire for change onto an affair “conducted in a semi-imaginary world (...) as though they were on holiday in Ireland” (*LT* 91f.). Kevin’s perceived otherness is only the first commodity in a long list of materialistic pursuits she adopts to fill her inner vacuum. However, when she learns of her husband’s affection for Christa Süsskind, the “*Spiegel*-literate Claudia”³⁴⁵ (*LT* 122) sheds her mask of sophistication and political correctness, asserting her cultural superiority by disparaging her rival as “the Ossie [sic] girl” (*LT* 164).

³⁴⁵ Mention of the news magazine, *Der Spiegel* is supposed to identify Claudia as an intellectual, critical of

Mathias's ability to reflect on modern life does not liberate him from his own insecurities or from an "intellectual cynicism that gr[ows] out of boredom" (*LT* 17). Rather, it alienates him further from his immediate environment and makes him wish he could discover something to say that would make him belong again (unfortunately, the Irish seafront is not to hand). His inability to understand his wife and to communicate with her contrasts with his job as a journalist for a left-wing newspaper, championing "the cause of women" (*LT* 21) like Christa. The hypocritical codes that govern the Hausers' "Wessi" lifestyle are exposed in the juxtaposition of their relationship to that of Christa and Ralf in the past, and in their encounters, in the present, with the two former prisoners. Despite the oppressive nature of the State in which they fell in love, Christa and her lover Ralf managed to "str[ike] up a tacit pact of (...) openness and trust" (*LT* 30). Their affair was considered "subversive" and an expression of "freedom" (*LT* 25) in East Germany, whereas in the West, it has become a moral obligation. When the Stasi used its knowledge of their relationship to blackmail them into becoming informers, Ralf and Christa sensed that their state of innocence had been destroyed. The constraints of their "intellectual conscription" (*LT* 33) forced them to face their "loyalty test" (*LT* 80) together and defect. Their "love test" soon followed, when they were abducted back to East Berlin and interrogated at Hohenschönhausen prison. It reached a climax after a long period of deprivation and torture, when they were suddenly brought together again in a set-up meant to encourage intimacy: a heated room with comfortable furniture and suitable lighting, all to "create the illusion of freedom" (*LT* 158). Yet the fear inculcated during their imprisonment keeps them apart. Love, it seems, had been "eliminated" (*LT* 116) by an efficient, impersonal state apparatus.

For Ralf, who was released after ten years of his fifteen-year sentence and started a new life in Eisenhüttenstadt, the key to living in harmony with the past lies in recording the

injustices he suffered (cf. *LT* 179). Rewriting his story – an earlier version was shredded by his interrogator the day he was released from prison with the laconic remark that “it needed a new ending” (*LT* 178) – empowers and affirms Ralf in the present, so much in fact that he does not even wish to see his tormentor or the friends who betrayed him brought to justice. Christa, by contrast, wants to forget in order to heal, but remains “a prisoner of the past” (*LT* 52). Her condition reflects Adorno’s statement that “[o]ne wants to break free of the past: rightly, because nothing at all can live in its shadow (...); wrongly, because the past one would like to evade is still very much alive” (Adorno 2005a: 89). In Christa’s case, her attachment to the past is indeed more alive than the words Ralf finds to document his experience, because she does not know what has happened to the child she gave birth to in prison. Mathias is the midwife to her story, helping her recover the traces of those responsible for her suffering. Once he has gained her trust and overcome her “engrained reticence” (*LT* 44), he comes to like Christa, although his choice of words to describe her – “her slightly old-fashioned, Soviet sense of dignity, her silent maturity, her vulnerability and the genuine shyness or lack of pre-emptive sophistication which he associated with Western women” (*LT* 63) – cannot disguise his underlying patronising attitude. In an almost symbolic union of West and East Germany, the rational male, lacking an emotional investment in the sterile world he inhabits, finds meaning and fulfilment in the ruins of Christa’s exploited life. To Christa, it almost seems as if she were reliving her love affair with Ralf, only “more peacefully, in a new Germany” (*LT* 149). Yet Mathias’s reductive understanding of her as the other gainsays her optimism. In the act of making love to Christa, he realises that the disturbing source of his fascination with her is his dominance over her:

He trapped her underneath himself, pinning down her arms, realizing for the first time why he had become so obsessed with her; she had the qualities of a captive. He could love her in a way he could never love Claudia. (*LT* 150)

Christa, the “Ossie-girl”, is cast as submissive and exotic, a victim in a predatory German society. Again, Hamilton translates victimhood as a badge of honour and source of identity that goes against the grain of the mainstream of dominant culture.

This point is reinforced in Werner’s victimisation, on whose body the German past and present are acted out directly when a group of Skinheads attack him and a foreigner. The violent incident forces Mathias and Claudia to overcome the stalemate in their marriage and to take the love test which, “lacking the strength and stamina to initiate a reunion” (*LT* 147), they would otherwise have failed. Their commitment to each other, however, seems to derive less from actual love than from what Battersby diagnoses as their “shared fear of the unknown” (1994: A15). For Christa, Hamilton envisions a different way of coping with her victimisation. Rather than the return of her lost son, whose life she does not want to upset once she finds him, it is the prospect of having another child (Mathias’s parting gift to her) that reconciles Christa with the present. As in Helen’s case in *Surrogate City*, her pregnancy is construed as empowering women to connect to extraneous reality biologically rather than rationally. More dubiously, it is presented as an act of “retrospective justice and hope” (*LT* 194) – a making good of past injustices perpetrated by the GDR and a new beginning in East and West German relations. This ending reflects Hamilton’s opinion that “new” German identity is enriched by contact with unspoiled East German “authenticity”, expressed in the value they place on tight-knit families, modesty and frugality (my interview with the writer, 23 June 2006).³⁴⁶

Hamilton’s discovery upon his arrival in Germany of “just how Irish” and “how un-German” (Anon., *Books Ireland* 1995: 45) he was, enabled him to look at German society as a critical observer in his first three novels and to explore from different angles how

³⁴⁶ Years before Germany would have two East Germans at the helm, Angela Merkel and Joachim Gauck, Hajo Schumacher made a similar point about East and West German relations in his article, “Die Hochleistungsbürger” (“The High Performance Citizens”). He claimed that while “Ossis” were acting as responsible, hard-working citizens, many spoiled “Wessis” were unable to adapt to a changed reality (cf. 10ff.).

“people are very much steeped in, and shaped by, their political environment” (idem 46). Although his observations lagged a few steps behind the country’s progression in *Surrogate City*, Berlin being no longer divided by the time the book was published, his next work, *The Last Shot*, foreshadowed the preoccupation in contemporary German literature with the excavation of the family past in memoirs and memory fiction. *The Love Test*, in turn, is an early imaginative vision of cross-fertilisation between East and West German attitudes and identities. Throughout the trilogy, Hamilton tries to navigate the straits of German history and culture with the intention of showing the connections between past and present, but his modes of expression and perspective threaten to become “official and archaic” (LT 170), just like Christa’s language in *The Love Test*. His staple German characters, all culled from the rebellious ’68ers vintage, make his representations of German society seem limited and repetitive. Similarly, the tongue teasers of German words and phrases which intersperse his texts appear as unconvincing as the GDR kitsch and paraphernalia used to decorate new bars in Berlin in the 1990s (cf. LT 137).³⁴⁷ Most of all, however, the not so subtle ways in which the reader’s perception is constantly channelled by the authoritative voice of a super-imposed narrator – a tendency some reviewers had originally hoped he would grow out of³⁴⁸ – have proved programmatic, subordinating characters and the individual reader’s critical insight to an overt agenda of historical and social commentary.

Remarking on Hamilton’s exploration of the GDR regime’s stranglehold on its citizens in parallel to the legacy of the Second World War, Edith Hallberg and Christoph

³⁴⁷ This impression is not helped either by inaccuracies and misprints. Thus, Mathias notices something archaic about the insult “Schweinhund” (correct: Schweinehund) Christa uses, yet addresses her with “Fräulein” (Miss), a title no longer used in Germany by the 1990s and certainly not by a TAZ journalist, the most left-wing of all the newspapers.

³⁴⁸ See, for example, Bolger’s review of *Surrogate City* in *The Sunday Tribune*. Ruth Pavey’s complaint relates to the “irritating” questions riddling the novel and a tendency of straining towards aphorisms (*The Observer*, 2 December 1990), which Diana Whitley Jones finds pretentious (*Western Mail*, 9 February 1991) and Anthony Quinn dismisses as hardly thought-provoking (*London Review of Books*, 21 February 1991: 19). C. J. Fox also criticises the vagueness and journalese that accompany these “philosophical” lines of enquiry (*The Independent*, 10 November 1990).

Houswitschka suggest that “the infatuation with historical turning points on the Continent” (86) may serve to affirm the stable outlines of Irish history and identity. Yet whatever reassurance Hamilton derived from mapping the confluence of history onto German territory, it seems that, in the midst of the “free world”, the past refused to release him from its grip. By the time *The Love Test* was published, what had once alienated and “appalled” (Hamilton in interview with Sirr & Cronin: 7) him in German society had become a reality in Ireland. His two detective novels, *Headbanger* and *Sad Bastard*, as well as his essays and newspaper articles from the mid-1990s onwards, explore this transformation in Irish society. Helen’s promise to Dieter that returning to Dublin at the end of the 1970s “wouldn’t be like going backward”, but “like going forward” (SC 183) was an accurate prediction, for as early as 1981, Brown described Ireland as already marked by fifteen years of “[o]stentatious consumption in a society enjoying a rapid rise in its standard of living” (260f.). To Hamilton, modern Irish society, pledging allegiance to capitalist values of affluence, personal freedom and success, increasingly resembled the milieu of Hadja and Wolf, Anke and Jürgen, Mathias and Claudia. Their self-indicting behaviour he now perceived at home (cf. “Thanks for Nothing, Michael Flatley”, 1998a), although he admitted that Ireland’s accession to the EEC and growing prosperity had also brought with it social and personal liberation from limiting national discourses and preoccupations (cf. “Ireland – the Snug of Europe”, 1996). A year later, however, he lamented the cultural and spiritual decline in his article, “Morals in Our Pockets”, and called on his fellow artists to produce “the kind of culture that asks real questions” (1997b). Sociologist Michel Peillon affirms Hamilton’s diagnosis of Celtic Tiger Irish society, claiming that Ireland had experienced an implosion of economy, culture and society with the result that culture, once the fertile ground of critique, had become a commodity:

Not only does the economy produce more and more cultural commodities, but all kinds of commodities are invested with a cultural content. They are

consumed because they function as markers of chosen lifestyles and supports for individual and collective identities. Commodities no longer satisfy needs, but are consumed as images and signs. They belong to a logic of signification, through which cultural differences are marked and claims to social and cultural superiority put forward. (...) When this happens, culture is transformed into a means of consumption, it is fully integrated in the dynamic of capitalism and it acts as its driving force. (50)

The individual's space, so sacred and yet so sterile in Hamilton's description of German society, was now deemed in Ireland, too, more important than a "commitment to countervalue" (Peillon 53). Like Hamilton's criticism of dissatisfied Westerners and stupefied foreigners walking the length of the resplendent Kurfürstendamm in *Surrogate City*, Peillon remonstrates the dangers of "individualised pleasure orientation" and "withdrawal" from society coming to engender the same "consumerist hedonism" and "isolation within an extravagant and inconsequential world" (ibid.). During the same period, Luke Gibbons pointed out a further negative development in Ireland which echoes Hamilton's critique of Germany's lack of engagement with the past. Gibbons warned against the "naïve optimism according to which the ghosts of the past, even the recent past, are lifted by the cessation of conflict, or the first upswing in the economy" (94) and concluded that an inability in the Irish to accept the suffering and poverty of past generations as part of their inheritance would likely make them blind to the fate of "those who come to the Ireland of the Celtic Tiger reminding them of their own unrequited past" (104).³⁴⁹ Hamilton, who, funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and the British Council, had spent some time in Romania in 1995 as a lecturer in Irish Studies at the University of Bucharest, anticipated this development and tried to promote solidarity in what he considers a historical, and not simply economic, European community. Writing of disadvantaged Romas, he expressed hope that the lessons of Irish history would guide his compatriots in their encounters with migrants in Ireland (cf. 1998c: B1).

³⁴⁹ In her essay, "A Ghostly Alhambra", Ní Domhnaill likewise postulates that only if "this convenient amnesia" (74) is overcome will Irish existence cease to "be at best highly fragmented, and at worst pathogenic" (71).

Whereas his affirmation of his Irish identity in Germany had empowered Hamilton to coolly assess the state of German society before and after unification in his first three novels, addressing the deficiencies in his native home appears to have softened his attitude towards Germany, a place he now liked to present as a model for its engagement with the past, for its pluralism, and for its openness to other cultures and countries. Whatever inhibition he may still have felt in writing about Germany – Hamilton claims he was afraid of being exposed by “somebody [who] might know something more about it than I did” (Dwyer 2008) – seems to have disappeared in the wake of the acknowledgement he received for *The Speckled People*, both in Ireland and Germany. The change is noticeable in the shift away from relatively objective reportage in his articles from the late 1990s³⁵⁰ to a more confident tone in articles such as “I’m a Kraut, and I’m Proud” (an article from 2004, first published in Germany and later in English as “The Loneliness of Being German”), “After a 60-Year Guilt Trip You can Mention the War” (2005a), and “Rescuing Germans from their Past” (2005e). These articles proffer the same conclusions Hamilton had arrived at in his literary engagements with his German heritage, drawing on certain Böll-inspired perceptions and his own experiences to pronounce on the German psyche. Yet in trying to capture such a large picture, he has made his work vulnerable to generalisation and reverse stereotyping. His inconsistencies can be traced in essays such as “The Shelter of History” (MS48,168/2) and “Don’t Mention the War” (2003): whereas Hamilton is offended in the latter article that Germans should have been blamed collectively after the war, he himself alleges rather indiscriminately in “The Shelter of History” that “[y]oung protesters marching at that time [1968] against the Vietnam War would still have heard their parents [sic] generation shouting ‘you should all be gassed’

³⁵⁰ In “History Is What Shapes German Character”, Hamilton stated that the Irish knew German culture only second-hand through English and American media and should form their own opinion by “going to Germany and talking to them, learning German and reading what they say about themselves” (1996a). In keeping with this belief, his article from 1999, “A Longing for Closure”, summarised for his Irish readers contemporary debates in German society on how the Holocaust should be remembered.

from the sidelines” (MS48,162/2). Nowhere is Hamilton’s changed perspective more visible, however, than in his new image of Berlin in his novel *Disguise*, transformed from breathless surrogate city alienating its inhabitants to a retirement haven for the travel-weary generation of ’68.

3.4. Postwar German Identity Constructions in *Disguise*

In contrast to his German trilogy from the 1990s, Hamilton attempts in *Disguise* a bolder diachronic overview of Germany’s changing self-image, charting the trajectory of events over sixty years: from the ruins of a bombed-out Berlin in 1945 through the postwar years, when Germany was hastily rebuilt atop the rubble of its destroyed cities, to the awakening of a younger generation to the crimes of their parents and, finally, through the gradual transformation of the rebels of ’68 into today’s respectable middle class citizens. He takes a further risk by venturing deep into the difficult realm of identity formation in the aftermath of the Holocaust with his protagonist, Gregor Liedmann, who denies his German parents and reinvents himself as a Jewish survivor. Hamilton’s return to a German setting, however, also explores how remembering and representing the Holocaust has become a central part of contemporary cultural memory through the collaborative artistic efforts of writers, painters, architects, film-makers and others who have struggled with its legacy over the past decades. The novel’s epigraph acknowledges this interdependence of artists and their reliance on previous modes of representation: “125921” is a fragment borrowed from *Szene aus der Hirschjagd* (*Scene from the Stag Hunt*), an installation by Joseph Beuys from 1961, housed in the Block Beuys of the Hessisches Landesmuseum in Darmstadt. This fragment, in turn, is a contraction of the artist’s date of birth, printed onto a wooden model of Beuys’s earlier proposal for an Auschwitz memorial, and, as such, it is an indication of the intersection between his personal history and collective memory of the Holocaust. Hamilton’s epigraph is thus doubly charged and presents an intriguing point of

access to a novel in which the protagonist exemplifies the potential uses and abuses of cultural memory as an archive supplying the individual with mediated recollections of the past which can be retrieved and interpreted at will to fashion an identity in the present. In his exploration of memory's "embodied-ness" in Gregor Liedmann, Hamilton probes the limits imposed on remembering the self by memory's "embedded-ness" within cultural and historical frameworks. His careful positioning of *Disguise* in these terms as well as in relation to earlier modes of creative engagement with German history suggests his willingness to join the dialogue on the role interpretations of the past play in identity construction.

The installation *Scene from the Stag Hunt* consists of a wooden closet in which more than six hundred identifiable objects were deposited by Beuys. It is reminiscent of the "wonder cabinets" fashionable among German noblemen in the seventeenth century (cf. Malaka 124), and, like these, it invites curiosity and close inspection. A seemingly chaotic hotchpotch of similar and dissimilar items – bundled newspapers, diverse bones, seed pods, jars, pieces of chalk, cherry pips, etc. – is crammed into the ten open compartments and ten drawers of the closet, or arranged in front of it (cf. Huber 74f.). The recycled detritus from Beuys's studio gives insight into the artist's habit of collecting and saving items, while his old tools along with pieces of laboratory equipment exhibited in the cabinet provide further clues about his work methods (cf. Lerm Hayes 233). One such preserved fragment of a former project is the untitled wooden model for Beuys's proposal for an Auschwitz memorial, deposited in the second upper compartment from the left. Printed on it is a contracted form of Beuys's date of birth: 12 May 1921 becomes "125921". That Hamilton should have selected this number sequence for his epigraph not only emphasises the focus on projective identification with Holocaust victims in his book, but also reveals something about the processes at work in experiencing this installation and, by extension, about the novel's approach to identity construction: a first encounter with *Scene*

from the Stag Hunt and its collection of myriad objects, carefully and purposefully assembled, forces the observer to accept the installation's abundance of possible meanings and its simultaneous refusal to be decoded (cf. Huber 73). Then, in order to penetrate the surface of this complex work of art, the observer has to select a limited number of fragments from the repository in an attempt to create meaning. The installation's title reflects this hazardous search for understanding, for in Beuys's *œuvre* the stag is a symbol of life. This association is derived in large part from Christian iconography, where the stag symbolises both Christ and the disciple, thirsting for the water of life. Alternatively, the stag can denote the act of baptism and inspiration (cf. Huber 81ff.). The stag hunt, then, represents a struggle for knowledge and truth through the observation of the right life and faith. By analogy, the elements that make up the installation can be seen as potential tools in a similar quest for meaning, left there for each observer to appropriate and to interpret.

With more than six hundred individual objects in the installation, there are countless possibilities for selecting and connecting its different elements. What *Scene from the Stag Hunt* underlines is the observer's fragmentary relationship with respect to the whole construct and reliance on personal creativity to access the work as art. This, in turn, corresponds to Beuys's theory of the social plastic, in which he proposes that the inherent function of his art lies in giving the observer the opportunity to select suitable tools or symbols in the work and to reapply them. Based on this understanding of art, Beuys was able to pronounce: "Everyone is an artist" (Beuys 39).³⁵¹ His motto closely resembles Becker's, "Everyman his own historian", responsible for injecting meaning into the fragments of the past. Becker and Beuys both seem to suggest that historian and artist have an obligation to confront society with what it prefers to forget. *Disguise* reflects their

³⁵¹ Certain aspects of Beuys's idea of the social sculpture can also be detected in the counter-monument movement. As Gillis points out, its advocates struggle to reintroduce remembering into everyday life as part of active citizenship rather than relegating it to public rituals of commemoration (cf. Gillis 16f.).

stance in calling on the individual to become involved in the interpretation of the past and, simultaneously, showing the risks involved in doing so.

By referring in the epigraph to a wider framework of artistic representations of the Second World War, Hamilton can be seen as making a comment on the tradition of remembrance itself, as acknowledging the vast archive of stories and artefacts from which the protagonist Gregor can compose his own “disguise”. Beuys’s installation is referenced in the text proper when items from Gregor’s childhood home are stored and carefully rearranged by his estranged wife, Mara, following the death of her mother-in-law. Like the closet from which the novel’s epigraph is derived, this private museum holds a store of memories that prompt Gregor to construct a working model for the present from its fragments:

Gregor enters like a child. (...) In front of him is the home that Gregor disowned. The curtains, the rug at the centre of the room, the entire nausea of home come to life. The fatigue in the furniture, the boredom trapped in the embroidered tablecloth, the raised voices, the long sigh of Gregor’s teenage years, the martyred silences, all the false hopes and frail family achievements clinging like a musty scent. (...) All the worthless objects of a lifetime elevated into a family documentary, containing human breath. (D 235)

Like Beuys, Hamilton conjures up the idea of a storehouse of memory, “curated” (D 212) by the individual, for whom it provides a source of unspent energy (D 187). Their understanding closely correlates to the concept of cultural memory developed by Jan and Aleida Assmann, discussed in Part One of this thesis, and appears to concur that memorial practices can define and redefine the way an individual conceives of himself. The number sequence that is the novel’s epigraph, singled out from the complexity of *Scene from the Stag Hunt*, initiates the dialogue with the archive of cultural memory, showing how Beuys’s date of birth on the model for a memorial establishes a connection between past and present, self and other. “125921” not merely foreshadows Gregor’s projective identification with the other of history, but already prefigures the process of transformation he undergoes in the course of re-evaluating his relationship to the past and his

environment. His quest for truth culminates in the room-size version of his childhood home, a space into which Mara has crammed the junk and furniture of the life he has negated. Here, among the discarded objects of his parental home, Gregor resumes responsibility and is granted a revelation in return:

History is the question we keep trying to answer. It is the shape of our imagination, the accusation in our existence, the guesswork of our decisions, the measure of improvement and decline. We are the answer to history, this corridor of correction, full of intuition and invention and handed-down instruction. Our identity is our instability: the longing, the adjustment, the attempt to answer the question from which we have come, the trace of ourselves left behind. (*D* 258f.)

Yet the mnemonic adjustments Gregor makes earlier in his life to remove himself from the family framework – a setting in which he feels like a preserved animal in a “museum of the dead” (*D* 37) – and to insert himself instead into the evolving narrative of the Holocaust in a manner reminiscent of Beuys’s inscription “125921” deserve closer attention.

Gregor’s construction of an alternative past begins with his own ‘scene from the stag hunt’ in the woods near Nuremberg. Gregor’s father is a “hunting fanatic” (*D* 26) and, after years in Russian captivity, he is determined to prepare his son for a world where only the fittest survive. At the crucial moment, however, Gregor deliberately fails the rite of passage that would have required him to shoot a deer. His failure is partly a revenge on his father, who had previously given him the impression that he was a disappointment, but it also signals the start of his dissociation from his family and is followed by his reinvention as a victim of German aggression in the Second World War. Gregor’s identification with a Jewish survivor occurs at a point in his adolescence when his own sense of being a misfit is strongest. Prompted by an unsubstantiated remark made by a friend of his dead grandfather, Uncle Max, he develops the notion that he is a Polish orphan, adopted as an infant to replace a dead German son of similar age. It does not seem ominous to him that the suspicion of his Jewish identity was raised by Gestapo officers as a threat in the course of torturing Max in order to find out the whereabouts of Gregor’s grandfather (*D* 200). Nor

does he see the irony in enacting yet another myth by choosing the life of a Wandering Jew-like musician, unwittingly perpetuating the very stereotypes attributed to the Jewish community by Christian culture.

Gregor's quest for truth and artistic fulfilment remains stalled, however, for instead of becoming a self-determined individual, he merely supplants one predetermined narrative, that associating him with the perpetrators, with another, that of the victim. In doing so, he appropriates an ill-defined notion of trauma inflicted by historical events to fill the "emptiness" (*D* 107) and existential anxiety he experiences from puberty onwards – and to avoid working through either issue. Gregor's strategy of evasion constitutes an inflected form of the "narrative fetishism" Santner ascribes to a German postwar generation engaged in "undoing, in fantasy, the need for mourning by simulating the site and origin of loss elsewhere" (144). It is important to note that, after running away from home at the age of seventeen, Gregor does not pursue this identity much beyond the denial of his parents and the superficial identification with a Jewish survivor. His solitary, nomadic lifestyle ensures he does not have to explain himself to anybody, least of all to himself. Significantly, he only invokes his Jewish identity twice in the ensuing decade: once, to deflect the advances of a homosexual in London, and once when harassed by the German police; on both occasions, he deliberately exploits the guilt his counterparts feel at the mention of the words "Jewish survivor".

Gregor's life is changed when he returns to Berlin, city of his putative alter ego's death, where the social transformations of the late 1960s suddenly provide him with a receptive audience for his story, an audience that eagerly constructs a romanticised notion of Gregor's identity from the few scraps of information he volunteers. As Kirmayer observes, "[e]ven fragments can be read as story if a larger narrative context is supplied by an audience primed by history" (186). What Kirmayer intended to be an encouragement for traumatised victims backfires for Gregor, who experiences an excess of unquestioning

sympathy in Hamilton's portrayal of the '68ers. The emergence of such a sympathetic platform in the student commune he joins persuades Gregor to celebrate his Jewishness and to begin a deeper engagement with what he believes to be his roots, starting with a belated circumcision. Yet his wish to join the Jewish community in Berlin is rebuffed by the rabbi, who insists on proof of his parentage (*D* 60). Ironically, the more Gregor and his wife Mara intensify their search for evidence of his personal "found(l)ing trauma", the more elusive and open to interpretation his identity becomes.

In contrast to Celan's sobering statement in "Aschenglorie" that the witness stands alone, Gregor fears that "[n]obody is real unless they have a witness to their lives" (*D* 254) and vainly struggles to authenticate his story. However, more than the veracity of Gregor's claim to a Jewish identity, the poignant question posed by his narrative is whether the identity he fashions allows him to assume responsibility for his life and environment or confines him in a repetitive loop that results in yet another impasse in his development. In essence, this is the same question, if more acute, that already arose in relation to Hamilton's earlier approaches to identity construction affected by postmemory of the Holocaust. First, there is the attempt to construct an identity out of victimhood which "translates trauma into honour in the sense of a claim and of a positive self-image" (A. Assmann 2007: 81, my translation). Locked into the passive role of victim, Gregor not only resists development by refusing to work through his past, but, in his self-centredness, also victimises his parents, wife and son. Second, Gregor's narrative demonstrates the danger of an existence built on the conflation of existential anxiety, which he experienced so strongly in his adolescence, with the historical trauma suffered by others in the Second World War. By misconstruing this anxiety as a personal loss or lack, Gregor blurs the distinction between his position in the present and the historical losses sustained by others in the past.

Gregor's story bears a striking resemblance to the Wilkomirski case, which excited comment from LaCapra, Margalit and A. Assmann alike as an argument against the usurpation of the victim's position (cf. Part I.2.3), but the protagonist of *Disguise* is modelled on a former colleague of Hamilton's, Boris, whom he met working in the warehouse of the publishing house Walter de Gruyter in Berlin. The latter's denial of his German family and claim to a Jewish survivor identity was based on the essentialist notion that, in Germany, "you can feel it" if you are a Jew (*Unschuldsgedühle* 57, my translation) – an assertion Hamilton renders without comment in his autobiographical essay. Confirming LaCapra's reservations about "vicarious recollections" (or victimhood), Weigel argues that the deliberate dissociation of the postwar generation from their parents' involvement in the war, and their pretence of being self-engendered and thus able to approach the German past as vicarious victims, carried with it the danger of ultimately rejecting the actual victims: "Any testimony from survivors must seem dubious to this generation, because it reminds them of a tradition in which the genealogy, however disturbed or interrupted, is presented as a memory that crosses and links generations" (2002b: 275). In his essay, "Über den Zwang und die Unmöglichkeit Jude zu sein", Améry puts paid to any attempt at projective identification, however empathetic: "Jedermann muß sein, der er in den ersten, wenn später auch verschütteten Lebensschichtungen war. Keiner kann werden, was er vergebens in seinen Erinnerungen sucht" (152).³⁵² Yet Gregor's surrogate victimhood is not only accepted by his wife and peers as a form of atonement (*D* 158); Hamilton, too, appears to commend it as the ultimate German response to the Holocaust. In an email to academic Helen Finch he explains:

I am writing about a person who is brought up as a German and lives in a place between being a perpetrator and a victim – that is my experience. I am writing about a person who denies his German identity and takes on the identity of a Jewish survivor – this is the experience of many Germans which has come

³⁵² "Everybody has to be who he first was in his earliest life stages even if these were later buried. Nobody can become the person he searches for in vain among his memories" ("On the Imperative and Impossibility of Being Jewish", my translation).

about by the project of commemoration and memory. The lifelong project of Gregor Liedmann becoming a Jewish survivor is, in fact, a very German experience, something which cannot be underestimated in German society because it also carries with a trail of family destruction.

(National Library of Ireland, MS48,153/4: email from 5 April 2009)

Following this sweeping declaration, Hamilton reinforces the importance of mediated recollections in a creative approach to identity construction in the present: "We are all fakes when we stand beside the victims of Nazism. And maybe there is something about human nature itself that is intensely fake and only becomes real in art, in fiction, in the stories we tell about ourselves." What remains unclear is whether the author has failed to see that Gregor, or any individual who supplants his identity with the vicarious, generalised recollection of Holocaust victims, reflects an understanding of Jewish identity which Finch rightly terms "grotesque" (Finch 13).³⁵³ In other words, Gregor is a fake indeed, and a stereotypical one at that, pandering to philo-Semitic notions of victimhood. Although Daniel, Gregor's son, eventually challenges his father's entitlement to a victim identity, Hamilton's exploration of Gregor's coming to terms with a 'difficult' German identity threatens to implicitly construct Jewish identity as a simplistic other, over and against which the troubled layers of German memory gradually emerge to be reconciled with the present in the mistaken belief LaCapra warns against, namely that "everyone is somehow a victim (or, for that matter, a survivor)" (LaCapra 2001: 77).³⁵⁴

³⁵³ Some reviewers of *Disguise* have expressed unease about this and also criticised the work's heavy-handedness, didactic tone and deliberate vagueness on its central issues of memory and identity (cf. Boland; Kunisch; Lee 2008). The critics in *The New York Times* and *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* respectively questioned whether the critical potential of the novel was jeopardised by a too undifferentiated portrayal of its German characters and their infatuation with, and over-compensation for, historical guilt (cf. Brownrigg; Schader). Hans-Peter Kunisch even accused the author of rehashing well-known *topoi* about Germany in a work that seemed geared towards the tastes and stereotypes of an English-speaking readership. A further indication of a failure to fully appreciate the complexities at stake, albeit on the publisher's side, could be seen in the omission of the reference to Beuys's artwork as the source of "125921" in the English paperback edition of *Disguise*, without which the epigraph becomes unintelligible and obsolete.

³⁵⁴ Hamilton's writing again takes up a theme in German literature, including its pitfalls. Despite his declared best intentions to differentiate and to go beyond common stereotypes of German identity, he appears to enforce precisely the same problematic notion Kathrin Schödel describes in her discussion of Bernhard Schlink's short story "Die Beschneidung" ("The Circumcision") and Seibt's critique of Maxim Biller's "Harlem Holocaust":

When the memory of the Holocaust is criticized for not allowing enough room for differentiation in narratives of National Socialism, to the extent, for instance, that it precludes the memory of Germans as victims, this critique is often explicitly directed against the German

LaCapra's insistence on retaining a respectful distance from the experience of historical victims and on avoiding any simplistic or harmonising conclusions to historical events is based on the conviction that an identification with the victim threatens to result in an inability to mourn of a different kind, trapping the secondary witness in the uncritical, backward look of melancholy. This undesired outcome describes precisely the impasse Gregor Liedmann experiences and which eventually drives him away from home a second time, on this occasion leaving behind his wife and young son. However, although *Disguise* comes close to endorsing a generalised notion of universal victimhood, Hamilton recognises both the need to release his protagonist from the repetitive cycle in which he is trapped and to distinguish between the protagonist's identification with Holocaust victims and the appropriate perspective of a secondary witness. Such a differentiation is attempted structurally through the device of a superimposed narrator who relates the death of a German boy named Gregor Liedmann in an air raid on Berlin at the very start of the novel. Knowledge of this event, however, evades Gregor Liedmann, who is introduced in the second chapter as a man in his sixties on his way to join his family and friends for the apple harvest on a farm in former East Germany. Gregor's encounter with a "random piece of evidence from the past" (*D* 14) – a bomb crater he almost stumbles into – reveals to the reader that his life story is a fabrication that presupposes what Gregor can never know with certainty: the death of the young boy described in the first chapter. Just as the novel's epigraph poses a challenge to the reader, the crater is a carefully chosen stumbling block for Gregor which "seems to be staring back at him, asking him questions" (*D* 16) about the very foundations of his identity, questions that follow him to the family reunion. Hamilton's careful arrangement of his opening in this manner highlights once again his

generation of '68 and its insistence on an undivided focus on German guilt. Yet a problematic transference of the claim that there exists a moralistic and over-simple memory of the Holocaust in German discourse to the claim that *Jewish* memory and identity are representative of such a simple memory might suggest itself a frighteningly convenient construction of the Other of a new, more 'complex' German memory. (Schödel 229)

responsiveness to German cultural debates, this time as a nod in the direction of W. G. Sebald who, using terms reminiscent of descriptions of the Holocaust, had castigated German writers for having failed to adequately incorporate and represent in their postwar works the catastrophic and traumatic features of civilian life under aerial bombardments (cf. *Luftkrieg und Literatur*).³⁵⁵ It is very likely that Hamilton, a frequent traveller to Germany and writer-in-residence in Berlin in 2001/02 on a bursary from the German Academic Exchange Service, followed the discussions raised by Sebald's Zurich lectures. His description of the destruction wrought upon the lives of the inhabitants of an apartment block in Berlin in an Allied air raid and the suggestion of a lingering hold of this past affecting the protagonist's identity may well represent Hamilton's attempt to imaginatively remedy the deficit Sebald had noted.³⁵⁶

Ripe with portentous symbols, the farm that serves as the setting for Gregor's reappraisal of his life story has seen occupation and destruction during the Second World War, and, following the demise of the GDR, has been restored to the heirs of its former owners. For the protagonist, it is simultaneously *lieux* and *milieux de mémoire* as Nora envisioned them: both a place that retains a residue of memory to comfort him and a "setting in which memory is a real part of everyday experience" (Nora 1996, 1). In the course of the day, the apple harvest blends with a step-by-step assessment of the various compartments in Gregor's memory store, a stock-taking that follows no strict pattern but offers the reader glimpses into the motivation behind Gregor's appropriation of an alternative narrative. It highlights the manipulative "devices" and selective "skills (...) he developed as a young man (...) that could filter out the unwanted" (D 14) and shows that

³⁵⁵ The English translation, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, only appeared posthumously, in 2003, four years after *Luftkrieg und Literatur* was published in German and one year after Jörg Friedrich's *Der Brand (The Fire)* started another controversy with its detailed, graphic description of the horrors of the bombing of Dresden.

³⁵⁶ Hamilton is an admirer of Sebald's writing, as he confessed in his email correspondence with Helen Finch, and was very flattered to be compared to him in her unpublished essay, "Hugo Hamilton's *Disguise* and W. G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*: Constructed Memories, Imagined Identities and the Poetics of Narration" (cf. NLI MS 48,164/3).

the fragments of vicarious and personal memories Gregor seized on to define himself have left him feeling “like an invented character, swept along a predestined narrative” (*D* 131). His regrets are indicative of an overall mellowing which manifests itself not only in Gregor’s permanent return to live in a fashionably multicultural yet “calm suburb of Berlin” (*D* 19), but also in his attempts to improve his relationship with Daniel and Mara. It is further apparent in the relative ease with which he accepts contemporary German society – the exaggerated pride, even, with which he identifies with its present dreams and defends Germany in the face of the criticism levelled at it by his son:

The Germans have always been the world champions at dreaming. For years, we were forbidden from having our own dreams. Only American dreams. Capitalist dreams, Communist dreams. Rock and roll dreams. Greek island dreams. Biggest dreamers on the planet, the Germans. You should be glad, Daniel, that at least now we are dreaming about football again. (*D* 130)

As if to mark Gregor’s reconciliation with his immediate environment and his “great returning” home after “a lifetime of running away” (*D* 218), this exchange ends with a lyrical evocation of peace that envelops the farm at noon: “In the orchard, everything is quiet, a long sustained note stretching into the afternoon.”

Gregor’s altered perspective eventually brings him closer to empathy for, rather than incorporation of, the victim’s narrative. As the day spent in the company of his loved ones draws to a close, he accepts, for the first time, that his identity rests on the everyday interaction and experiences shared with the community he lives in:

Gregor Liedmann has been brought to life by Mara, by his family, by the external story created around him, existing only inside those experiences he has shared with others. These are the ingredients of his identity, his narrative, that strange human genius of belonging. (*D* 254)

It is possible to ignore Hamilton’s personal views on the monumentalisation of the German past and to read this as the end to Gregor’s usurpation of the victim’s place and identity. Seen in this way, not even Mara’s discovery later that evening of an infant’s pair of trousers with the strange initials “JB” among the items she salvaged from Gregor’s parental home could induce him to define his life again in terms of a single fragment, a

cipher, the meaning of which, like the novel's epigraph, remains elusive without further contextualisation. Returning the potential proof of all his suspicions to its box, Gregor acknowledges that his wife's dedication to validate his own Jewish identity has in effect succeeded in keeping "the memory of *a* survivor alive in this room" (*D* 259, emphasis added), but by that he no longer seems to refer to himself. Rather than continue living a life of unspecified surrogate victimhood, Gregor has finally come to understand his role as a witness of the victims of history, respecting their place in the past by remembering them in the present – not vicariously, but as informed, self-aware secondary witness. In doing so, his pursuit of truth has found its conclusion in a more successful and responsible engagement with the storehouse of cultural memory.

If interpreted in this way, *Disguise* would suggest that the potential for freedom and creativity is not to be found in the political or ecological movements that Hamilton's German characters subscribe to, nor in their disavowal of their roots. All these alternative paths merely left Gregor (and, like him, Hamilton's other male characters) as "[t]he man with no answers. The man with no explanations" (*D* 252). Real freedom is achieved by the individual's transformation from an isolated unit, defined by predetermined narratives, into an inspired creator, recognising himself as part of "an all-embracing organism" (Schuster 19) and affirming his identity by shaping his environment. Beuys believed that an individual who had understood this could not only achieve change, but also produce art "that derive[d] from a profoundly historical past but return[ed] as the future, as the totality of self-aware-man" (Beuys 44). His vision of a marriage between freedom, self-awareness, and creativity reverberates at the end of *Disguise*, where a procession of old and young apple-pickers grab a mix of musical and makeshift instruments to produce "a long, living note" (*D* 261) that rises into the night sky. This counterpoint to the "sustained note" of silence earlier in the day (*D* 130) provides a harmonising end to the novel, which reassures the reader that German identity has found a happy self-image and mode of expressing

itself. However, it remains weighted by the problems that accompany Hamilton's exploration of historical trauma and representation of alterity.

3.5. German History as a Site of Multidirectional Memory

The importance of Germany as "elsewhere", for Hamilton, lies not just in the opportunity to ascertain his otherness, as in Bielenberg's case, or to, quite literally, "[se] rêver *autrement*", as it was for Stuart. Rather, German history and alterity provide the stage for his struggle between validating his feelings of belonging and overcoming the need to belong to one particular place, tapping instead into separate realms of cultural memory in order to unite them in an identity that proposes to transcend exclusive national boundaries. Hamilton's attempts to broaden the scope of Irish cultural memory often rely on his understanding of Germany's past as a site of multidirectional memory, using the country's commitment to the legacy of the Second World War as a model for promoting pluralism unfettered by monocultural, nationalist agendas.

"The past is not a weakness," Hamilton concludes at the end of "The Ruins of Identity", and expresses his contentment that the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church remains "the same as it ever was, exactly as they had left it, a beautiful, bombed-out ruin, standing still in time" (MS48,124/6). The implication is that he has derived strength from the painful personal confrontation with the German past and that this has, in turn, made him less "afraid [...] of being German", of being "marked", of being different. Unburdened of his shame, he can appreciate the cross-cultural fertilisation of his Irish-German background and hone his double vision to draw parallels between the memorial to the Second World War and "the ruins of an Irish monastery, [...] Clonmacnoise, [...] the Rock of Cashel, or [...] the crumbling houses of the famine village on the hillside in Achill Island." Even in his novel *Disguise* he recognises implications for his Irish audience, pointing out a tendency in Ireland to hide behind a complacent self-image as victims (cf.

McCann 18) – an image, however, he had also cultivated in his memoirs. Fusing German and Irish *lieux de mémoire* carries both extraordinary potential and the challenge of approaching each setting with the necessary degree of cultural and historical differentiation. The flipside to Hamilton’s enthusiastic promotion of a historically aware, multicultural identity is the undercurrent of didacticism and reverse stereotyping he has introduced into his texts. His pitying of “lonely” Germans (“The Loneliness of Being German”, 2004b), who need to be “rescued from their past” (Hamilton 2005e) by dipping into the Irish world Böll charted for them in his *Irishes Tagebuch* is as much a reductive representation as are romantically distorted notions of Irishness.³⁵⁷ Hamilton’s summary in his works of the debates that have preoccupied German society over the past decades at times does not do justice to the complex issues at stake and reinforces simplistic notions of German identity and history. For example, he echoes claims of a “taboo” preventing empathy with German war victims and that their experience threatened to be forgotten. As discussed, this assertion has been motivated by the ongoing review of the hostility with which the generation of ’68 has met their parents (cf. Schmitz 2007b: 197) and gained currency particularly in the wake of Sebald’s Zurich lectures. In fact, Anette Seidel Arpacı has demonstrated that the opposite is true: what is at stake in Germany is forgetting to remember German victimhood and validating traumatic excess. The discourse of breaking a “taboo” in addressing German victimhood “expresses a forgetting about the fact that this memory was preserved, (re-) shaped and transferred throughout society, publicly, and – not least – within family narratives” (Arpacı 173). Family narratives like Irmgard’s, passed on to her children in her diaries. As I have pointed out before, Irmgard’s diaries carefully list all the material losses and hardships she experienced during the war and in its aftermath, but do not reflect on her role as a staff secretary in the army or on other victims of Nazi

³⁵⁷ In several articles published shortly before *Die redselige Insel* appeared, Hamilton ascribes to Böll’s book a hardly credible impact on practically the entire German nation, claiming that “no other book in German literature claims this position as a monument of healing, (...) a literary home” (Hamilton 2005e).

policies and warfare.³⁵⁸ As the critic for the *Westfalenpost* concluded in his eponymously titled review of *Disguise*, Hamilton's engagement with German history and identity was "Für Deutschland nicht genug" ("Not enough by German Standards") (cf. Anon., *Westfalenpost*, 3 January 2009). What may appear "too unoriginal, clichéd and banal" (ibid., my translation) a treatment for a German audience, however, may convince readers elsewhere to extrapolate Hamilton's representation of his German characters' views to a collective, German level, sanctioning a concept of a "new" German identity which rests on a dubious, predominantly emotional engagement with the past.

The danger inherent in performing a routine as cultural arbitrator is evident from the opening lines of *Die redselige Insel* ("The Island of the Talking"), in which Hamilton describes his return from giving a talk in Oxford on his Irish-German childhood in order to travel in Böll's footsteps. If *Irisches Tagebuch* was at heart a hidden book about postwar Germany, *Die redselige Insel* epitomises both Hamilton's achievements and limitations in his attempt to mediate between Ireland and Germany by updating their respective self- and hetero-images. In keeping with popular thinking during the economic boom, Hamilton presents the Irish success as resting on the sound foundation of a State-sponsored "knowledge economy" coupled with an optimistic can-do spirit. He is more critical, however, of the consumerist excesses and cultural and spiritual sell-out the new affluence has fuelled, listing topical examples that range from the controversy over the Shell gas pipeline in Rosport to the defacement of the landscape with flashy holiday homes and the transformation of one of Ireland's most beautiful pubs into a lap dancing club. Hamilton's ambivalence towards certain developments in modern Ireland – rather than, as Ní Éigearthaigh surmises, an "ongoing confusion" (127) about which camp he belongs to – may explain his repeated shift of perspective in the book, from identifying with the Irish in

³⁵⁸ MS48, Box 34a contains Irmgard's de-Nazification questionnaires and copies of letters of application she sent out to various German universities in 1947. In some of these, Irmgard states that she had been conscripted into the army and that she continually, but unsuccessfully, petitioned for her release during the war.

their exuberance at the hurling final or in the stories and music they produce in the pubs on Achill, to distancing himself from them when he addresses issues like blind consumerism, greed and opportunism. Ironically, Hamilton's disapproval of these corollaries to economic success leads him to reinstate images of a rough and poor, but more authentic and cohesive Ireland. In *Die redselige Insel*, this is presented as a more attractive Irish image than the fake-tan reality of a commercially driven nation.

In spite of his intention to "emphasise differences without coining clichés" (*Die redselige Insel* 146, my translation), Hamilton's observations along his journey in the footsteps of Böll reveal a perceptible divide in his appreciation of modern-day Ireland that runs not only on an East-West axis, but also on a generational one. The individuals he writes of approvingly are of his own generation and older: eccentrics, hippies, locals, artists and drop-outs (read "Germans"), who eke out a living on the back of a booming hospitality and building sector in the sublime landscape of the Irish West. Interestingly, Hamilton's attitude to Irish society replicates his mother's in relation to *Wirtschaftswunder* Germany, which had alienated her on her visits home with its displays of affluence and its excessive consumerism. Yet the author appears unaware of the extent to which his hankering for the remnants of an "authentic" Ireland of the past echoes both Irmgard's nostalgia for the happier days of her prewar German childhood and Seán's myopic visions which had valorised the rural Gaelic West over the urban Anglicised East. Perhaps it is this compartmentalisation of Irish society into a commendable minority and a condemned majority that proved a problematic selling point for the book in the English original. Initially scheduled for publication in 2008, Hamilton's critique of Ireland during the boom and many of his cultural vignettes had become outdated by the end of that year.

Hand in the Fire, published in 2010, likewise raises the question of whether Hamilton's descriptions of modern Ireland and "new" Irish identity fully do justice to the

complexity of contemporary experience.³⁵⁹ In the article “My Mother Was an Alien” (MS48,162/2), written during the economic downturn, Hamilton reflected that the Irish perhaps had to “learn what it’s like to be an alien in [their] own country” in order to be more empathetic towards newcomers. However, the voice of his character Vid, a carpenter from Serbia who tries to integrate into Irish society, sounds deceptively like the author’s as he roams the streets of Dún Laoghaire or traces secrets haunting a local family to their origins in the cradle of mythical Irishness, the West. Hamilton’s decision to cast the foreigner Vid as another *faux naïve* narrator is in sharp contrast to the combination of aloofness, critical distance and historical awareness he grants his Irish and American narrators in *Surrogate City* and *The Last Shot*, or his Turkish-German characters Hadja in *Surrogate City* and Juli in *Disguise* (although, significantly, not to the first generation of low-skilled Turkish migrants included in his novels).³⁶⁰ Rather than imaginatively develop the character Vid, Hamilton passes up the opportunity, sacrificing the immigrant’s background to a convenient amnesia, and places his own observations on, and preoccupations with, Irish society and history into Vid’s mouth instead. Vid’s undiscerning nature seems to justify presenting him with an Irish setting that reminds one reviewer of a whole string of assorted clichés associated with representations of Irish family life: “the intimation of violence in the family home, breast cancer, unopened letters from America, a tragic divorce, an unplanned pregnancy” (Lieske, my translation). The result is not just an unconvincing protagonist – the German title, *Der irische Freund* (“The Irish Friend”), seizes on the better-developed character Kevin Concannon, who ties Vid into his family life and then exploits him – but also an overburdened narrative that tries to analyse the country’s many dysfunctions.

³⁵⁹ Incidentally, it is a German critic who absolves Hamilton from the doubts expressed in many mixed reviews, declaring that this portrayal of Irish society “will last” (Leuchtenmüller, my translation).

³⁶⁰ Perhaps it is but a Freudian slip, but the misprint in *Surrogate City*, which describes a Turkish man in the park as “walk[ing] his owner’s dogs” (SC 43, emphasis added), is a telling indication of this immigrant’s insignificance and subservient status in German society in contrast to the Irish protagonist Alan Craig.

Stylistically, the novel recycles some of Hamilton's foibles: when Vid is confronted with xenophobia, Hamilton describes him as drinking "doubt-tea", eating "doubt-sandwiches" and turning "doubt-doorknobs", using language reminiscent of his word concoctions for the child narrator of *The Speckled People*.³⁶¹ This may seem as incongruous from Vid's mouth as his homage, across the length of three pages, to Teddy's ice cream shop in Dún Laoghaire, which serves but to highlight the author's infatuation with his neighbourhood.³⁶² Even Vid's intense longing to blend with the Irish mainstream recalls Hamilton's coveting of his peers' easy Irish identity in his memoirs. And when weighty, but inconsequential pronouncements are made in the novel on "the dead of all time" (249) or "beyond human memory" (178), and a young mother honours her Irish roots by "[p]romising to teach her child the language left behind by her father" (272), Hamilton's tendency to conflate diverse histories once again becomes apparent, as does his determination to achieve reconciliation with, and to derive meaning from, hazy traumas of the past. In contrast to the unreservedly glowing review of *Disguise* for *The Irish Times*, the newspaper's critic this time admitted that Hamilton "occasionally tests the limits of credulity by creakily manoeuvring [Vid] into situations (...) that serve as pretexts for Irish history lessons" (Harte 11).³⁶³ Instead of focusing on Vid's attempted integration and outsider position, Hamilton simultaneously wants to explain and resolve the complexities of Irish culture and history through Vid. "That's like trying to describe a house from the

³⁶¹ Franziska Sperr, however, speaks of "Hugo Hamilton's typical sound" (my translation) with admiration in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, praising it as a hallmark of the "lyrically quiet noises of his clever prose" (my translation). In an interview Hamilton confirmed that Vid's peculiar language was a reflection of his own "awkwardness" growing up in Ireland (cf. McKeown 429).

³⁶² Another ill-fitting element in the plot, the story of the drowned pregnant woman from Connemara who seems to haunt the Concannon clan, resembles an incident that happened in Hamilton's neighbourhood when he was a boy. In *Unschuldsgefühle*, Hamilton relates the story of Peggy Flynn, who was found dead by the sea near his home, and confesses his fascination with the murder (cf. 28f.). Hamilton, who had read *Crime and Punishment* shortly before the event, dwells at length on the murderer's psyche, and professes to understand what he must have felt like, for he, too, had kept a crime secret, even if he had only stolen the leather strap his teacher used for punishments. Like Raskolnikov, he returns to the murder scene by the sea, unable to let go. His haunting prefigures the one visited upon members of the Connemara community which had once condoned the murder of a "fallen woman", except in this case, in contrast to the unresolved murder of Peggy Flynn, Hamilton can configure a reconciliatory closure in his novel.

³⁶³ Svenja Brueck's review for the German *Titel Magazin* concludes more negatively that the novel lacks credibility, tightness, and continuity.

outside and wanting to look out its windows at the same time,” one reviewer complained (Lieske, my translation). The result is, of course, not at all the perspective of an outsider on his new home, but that of somebody who has been emotionally invested in the Ireland described in the novel for a long time and who belongs there, whatever his doubts once were.

As the conflicts between memory and history, between trauma and an ethics of remembering discussed in Part I have shown, there is reason to be cautious with identity constructions that rely on lost memories, victimhood or a conflation of self and other. For Hamilton, walking and working on this thin line has been instrumental to explaining his feelings of insufficiency in Irish society. After years of grappling with an uncomfortable and unfashionable Irish-German identity, he realised that

you have to eventually acknowledge things that have been done to you and turned you into who you are. But the whole business about writing is to get beyond victimhood. If you remain this victim, it destroys you. (Dwyer 2008)

By then, Hamilton had written himself into the heart of modern Ireland. His account of growing up in Aran sweaters and *Lederhosen* now serves his Irish audience as the reassuring blueprint for successful integration, and, at the same time, qualifies him to gently remove the patina from Böll’s portrayal of Ireland for his German readers. Hamilton’s contributions to shaping Ireland’s image at home and abroad certainly acknowledge the trust both sides have placed in him. His articles for the Irish press, for instance, typically emphasise the need for inclusive concepts of Irish identity and cultural memory (“Learning to Grieve for Our Enemies”, 2008),³⁶⁴ and exhort his countrymen not to repeat the mistakes of Germans, but to learn from them to engage responsibly with

³⁶⁴ This article was Hamilton’s contribution to a series marking the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Responding to Article 27, which stipulates that “[e]veryone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community”, Hamilton drew attention to the exclusion of those whose story differs from the collective consensus and explained the act of reconciliation he personally had to undertake between his Irish and German roots:

Remembering the past and the people who died is an important element of our identity. But how much more difficult and creative and culturally imaginative is it to be able to grieve for the fallen enemy also? How much further along the road to reconciliation have we travelled when we step into the shoes of the other? (Hamilton 2008)

prosperity, the environment, and, above all, history (“Stepping into the Shoes of the Germans”, 2007b). In the German media, on the other hand, his commentary is appreciated on Irish topics such as Northern Ireland (“Oh, wie gut, dass sich jetzt einigen der Magen umdreht”, 2007a),³⁶⁵ or the transformation of Irish society by all those “intelligent, good-looking Poles, Romanians, Africans, [and] Chinese” (Villachia 24, my translation). After the Lisbon Treaty was rejected in a first referendum, Hamilton reassured German readers that the Irish had been mainly caught in a moment of bad humour at the polling stations, although he admitted that xenophobia may also have played a role (cf. S. Lorenz).³⁶⁶ When the financial crisis brought Ireland to the brink of bankruptcy, he was called on again, this time to describe the state of shock his compatriots were experiencing for the readers of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (2009a) and *Die Welt am Sonntag* (2009b, 2010).³⁶⁷ Hamilton took the opportunity to express his hope that Ireland’s burst dream of endless economic prosperity was also the end to a nightmare of mindless consumerism; a return to modesty and a restoration of the Irish soul that had been sold to the idea of an unregulated free market economy.

It would, of course, be unjust to describe Hamilton’s greatest achievement as a writer – the inclusion of his Irish-German narrative with all its historical and cultural resonances into the archive of Irish cultural memory – as the beginning of his imagination’s entrapment in a nostalgic preoccupation with the past. However, it would be equally reductive to unquestioningly accept his constructions of self and other, past and present. As an outsider turned insider, Hamilton may want to expand the limits of collective identity further to accommodate other unheard stories, but his undertaking is not

³⁶⁵ The title of the piece relishes the idea, with no small amount of *Schadenfreude*, that some people’s stomachs were bound to turn in the face of the unexpected resolution of the conflict in Northern Ireland.

³⁶⁶ Xenophobia is also the subject of his unpublished article “My Mother Was an Alien”, in which he regrets that Ireland had become less welcoming in times of prosperity (Hamilton cites the 2004 citizenship referendum and the rejection of the Lisbon Treaty in support of this claim) and warns that “being Irish is not such a precious commodity that we should withdraw it from outsiders who live here” (cf. MS48,162/2).

³⁶⁷ Ironically, Hamilton’s contribution on straitened times for Irish people proved almost more than the Swiss paper could afford (cf. Hamilton’s email correspondence with the newspaper in MS48,153/2).

always helped, as one reviewer of *Disguise* commented, by the author's "special pleading" (J. Boland) in his works in the name of identity and history. Although insightful and courageous, the critical gaze Hamilton instinctively turns on German and Irish society has been prone to establishing dichotomies that are themselves subject to criticism. Hamilton's writing is at its best when he draws on his experiences not to teach a moral lesson, but to show how cultural memories are interwoven and expanded almost organically through literature and its readers, who perform the act of remembering anew in the act of identifying with, or translating, his experience into their engagement with history and memory. If, as Nancy Miller claims, "memoir is the record of an experience in search of a community, of a collective framework in which to protect the fragility of singularity in a postmodern world" (432), then Hamilton stands out among Irish writers as having inserted into the framework of Irish cultural memory the challenges of keeping the memory of the Second World War and Holocaust alive. Without knowing it, he has responded to Bielenberg's invitation to a new generation of writers to "build in the empty house of the stare", so that the limiting national boundaries of collective memory can be transcended through literature's ability to remember a past that encompasses not just multiple perspectives, but also multiple communities connected through a shared cultural memory.

CONCLUSION

The supposition that inspired this thesis was essentially optimistic: that Christabel Bielenberg, Francis Stuart and Hugo Hamilton – as witnesses or secondary witnesses of the Second World War and its defining event, the Holocaust – were each involved in fostering an exchange of memories across German-Irish boundaries. Their personal or mediated experiences of wartime and postwar Germany and simultaneous rootedness in Ireland suggested that their engagements with the past in their works would be informed by a double vision, capable of relating the German point of view and thereby expanding the Irish understanding of the interrelation between self and other, between Irish and European history. My analysis of their literary approach to the war and its German setting was itself based on two theoretical discourses – cultural memory theory and imagology – which, I believe, shed new light not only on the writers and their texts, but also on their historical and cultural contexts. By exploring the tensions that exist between memory and history, the dynamics of cultural memory, the difficulties of writing in the force field of the Holocaust, and, lastly, the national stereotypes that inform German-Irish literary relations, I prepared the ground for a multifaceted examination of the ways in which Bielenberg, Stuart and Hamilton have responded creatively to the dangers inherent both in a stratification of the past and of self- and hetero-images.

In what is the first in-depth engagement with these writers' mediations of their experiences of the war, or, in Hamilton's case, of the influence of postmemory on later generations, I have offered insight into how their interpretations of events have been shaped by their evolving personalities and changing environments. In order to better understand the processes behind the interplay of individual and mediated recollections in their autobiographical and fictional narratives, I have juxtaposed Bielenberg's, Stuart's and

Hamilton's works with contemporaneous sources, such as diaries and letters, which record a different interpretation of events at the time they occurred.

I have shown how Bielenberg's motivation to write derived from her desire to counterbalance the historical viewpoint of the victors by bearing witness to the struggles of those who resisted the Nazi regime in a "missing book" that recorded everyday life in a dictatorship. In tracing her lifelong engagement with the Second World War, the event that came to define her, I have drawn attention to her continuous negotiation of her position in relation to the past – as victim, observer or active agent – and to her environment – as English, German or Irish. Her actions as well as her exploration of the issue in her unpublished short story, "The Christmas Room", would seem to resolve her struggle and place her firmly on the threshold of her home in Ireland, ready to welcome the exchange with the other.

Stuart's engagement with, and understanding of, the past has been shown to be the very opposite. Although he heralds a new beginning for human relationships following the war, his vision proves impermeable to outside influences and blind to the German, Jewish or female other. In his case, the Second World War becomes foundational in the act of conflating his experiences with those of the war's victims. The result is not empathy, but rivalry; not multidirectional memory, but a narrowing of memory into clichés and exclusive "fraternities".

Hamilton's response has been shaped by postmemory and has been shown to be that of a writer who acknowledges the validity of Diner's postulate of the Holocaust as European *lieu de mémoire*. His writing enables him to keep the past alive as an integral part of his Irish-German identity. Through his attempts to correlate current problems to the past, Hamilton insists that the engagement with history is neither a token exercise for the individual nor limited in its relevance to one place or period. Rather, it affects the present in ways that have to be explored and understood not collectively, but individually.

In the course of examining these three writers' lives and their texts, I have highlighted not only the potential of their respective engagements with the past to act as a point of departure for exchange between Irish and German memories, but also the problems that hamper this process. Such problems manifest themselves in an undifferentiated approach to the historical causality of events which leads to an interpretation of the Holocaust as foundational in the sense of filling an absence at the roots of identity. Closely linked to the abstraction of concrete historical realities is the uncritical identification with, rather than empathy for, the historical victims and the idealisation or universalisation of victimhood. Where the integrity of the other is not respected, the exchange ceases to be dialogic and becomes self-serving. This also applies to the perpetuation of stereotypes in the guise of auto-exoticism or through the use of distancing mechanisms.

Bielenberg's need to keep emotionally challenging situations at bay has been shown to be central to her reliance on frames to contain memories within selective but manageable units. Stuart's methods of "fixing" the past and adjusting his self-image to correspond to his needs in the present are more intrusive, but unlike Bielenberg, he never openly discussed his interventions, letting his audience believe instead – and coming to believe himself – in his fiction as fact. Hamilton, by contrast, self-consciously problematises the issues involved in excavating and narrating the past in order to derive meaning in the present. However, his attempts at explaining the paradigms of German memory culture carry the risk of simplifying the challenges German society faces and of effacing the necessary distinction between historical and secondary witness. He also risks introducing limiting concepts of identity and alterity in the very process of trying to rise above old taxonomies.

I hope that my critique will open the way to further discussions of these writers and of the relations between Ireland, Germany and the Second World War in a stimulating,

interdisciplinary dialogue. In light of each writer's desire to act as counter-current to the mainstream understanding of the Second World War outside Germany, one may ask – with some justification – how far Bielenberg's, Stuart's and Hamilton's writing has succeeded in breaking down barriers between self and other and in making the painful past come to life. Tóibín's statement about Ireland as "a sort of backwater, protected from the terrible pain and anger suffered by the families of those killed by the Nazis", quoted at the beginning of this thesis, would suggest that literature such as theirs had failed to communicate the fate of those persecuted by the Nazis in a way that would allow individuals removed from the events to relate to the victims. But perhaps the failure was only temporary, for Aodána's decision in the *causa* Stuart itself enlivened a public debate on how the Second World War is remembered in Ireland and highlighted the need for a more critical and informed engagement with a common European past. Ultimately, the three writers at the heart of this thesis, knowingly or unknowingly, have set in motion an exchange which acknowledges that the path into the future is not predicated on the retreat into an exclusive community, as Stuart postulates, nor, as Hamilton proposes, on the pursuit of "innocence" with its dangerous nostalgic overtones. Rather, it requires both writers and their readers to follow Bielenberg's invitation to "build in the empty house" and to continue to engage with the legacy of the Second World War and Holocaust.

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APPENDIX

1. Transcript of Christabel Bielenberg's Diary Notes

1.1. July – September 1944

Loose leaves found in the "Schreibblock", some of them still attached at the top by the original adhesive; pencil on unlined, absorbent paper.

July 20th Summer weather at last. Suddenly this afternoon Frau Koff came running down to the Adler saying "Turn on the radio, turn on the radio. They've thrown a bomb at that Hitler!" "Yes, and, have they succeeded?" I nearly yelled. "I don't know, but it's all being said on the radio." I hurried in the *Wirtsstube*³⁶⁸ and felt my heart bumping. Goebbels was speaking. I knew as soon as I heard his voice that it had failed. He said a few names of Generals who I heard of but didn't know. I found myself praying that it wasn't the same as Adam's plan? Perhaps it was really only a few officers of the army. I had written a long letter to A. though and it was waiting to leave with the post. I went over to the post and retrieved it. The incoming post had just arrived bringing a letter from Peter [posted on] July 14th and addressed to Tante Ulla: "Dear Ulla, I heard from Chris that you always take over the children when she is not there and now I want to thank you for this and to beg you to continue to play ersatz mother to our little family. Above all I think it wise to separate up in various houses our supplies which we have collected during the years and to have them by trustworthy peasants. Great changes may be coming in the near future and everything at the moment is slightly unclear. Please look after my family."

I read it and felt myself go cold. So Peter had known this was the end of our planning. But still I have hope that perhaps Adam will be able to keep in the background.

³⁶⁸ Bar

July 26th The first list of names of the collaborators have [sic] been published. Peter Yorck and von Haeften are amongst them. It is quite impossible that Adam[,] and through him Peter[,] should not be implicated. I have had flu for the last few days and have never felt as ill in my life. The whole weight of these happenings came down over me and I felt pain as never before. I can't believe that it has not succeeded. Those splendid men have planned and plotted in spite of air raids and continual danger of imprisonment and now it is finished, Stauffenberg (Döld's [sic] cousin) is dead. Only last week Camilla told me how charming he was. I must write to Camilla or now I'd better go over there, her letters will probably be controlled now. I would rather go to Berlin and see if I can see Adam, but it would probably not help him to have an Englishwoman looking around.

August 2nd Nicky's birthday and still no news of Peter. I have sent letter after letter and today a telegram. As the days go by I have sort of got quieter. Adam is so clever, perhaps he'll diddle them. As yet there is no news in the paper that anyone has been imprisoned. Peter is quite mad not to give me any news. Reckling[,] that fat ass[,] came over this evening and said in ponderous tones that he and some *massgebend*³⁶⁹ people from Strassling³⁷⁰ had all come to the conclusion that it would have been a catastrophe for Germany if Hitler had died on the 20th. These Germans sometimes make me spitting mad. They are such political fools that they don't deserve anything better than to be regimented around by the Gestapo and probably sooner or later by the allies or Russians. And then I look around this valley and see the patient peasants, simple, kindly, in each farm a missing son or father or husband. They are bringing in the hay now, the old men and women who should have peace, and the children working away in the fields. The orderliness everywhere.

³⁶⁹ Influential, important

³⁷⁰ It remains unclear to which locality this place name refers.

August 8th A letter from Peter at last. Adam has been arrested on the 25th of July. [crossed out: Peter is still free] Peter writes[:] “I can’t imagine why.” So he seems to reckon with his letters being watched. Yesterday I came back from Wilflingen. The whole family have been arrested.³⁷¹ I didn’t go to the castle in case of a control. It is worse than anything having to wait down here doing nothing but I can only do harm by going to Berlin.

August 30th The days have clipped by but I have been too worried to write this diary. Have no news of Peter whatsoever. Even a telegram has remained unanswered. Last week they published the names of the main collaborators who were to have taken over the Government when H. was dead. Adam was amongst the eight. They are to be hanged. It is like living in an awful dream. I sometimes feel it can’t be true. The English radio tells of a wave of arrests which are going over Berlin. But thank God for the allies, they are pushing daily nearer. The breakthrough has succeeded and they are coming up to the Rhine. Here the peasants have all been called up to dig trenches and tank holes. A pathetic sight to see these old men and boys shouldering their spades and marching off. Let’s pray that the Rhine doesn’t hold them up. We are not much worried by planes these days. They need them all in France I suppose. As usual the British and Canadians seem to be doing all the slogging, while the Americans tear ahead in their tanks. Clever of the allies to arrange it that way, because the British are no doubt the toughest and need no praise or success to make the fight doggedly. Whereas the American must have success and cover ground, otherwise he gets dissatisfied. The German soldiers who pass through confirm that, saying that the American only fights when the air force has cleared the way first. First he comes feeling along with his tanks and when he meets opposition he stops and telephones for air support. Over come the planes and drop a carpet or two, then the tanks try again, if there is still a German gun shooting they send for more planes. After that the tanks usually just

³⁷¹ Dölt von Stauffenberg’s family.

have to mop up. Well, I don't care how they do it as long as they hurry. Please God make them hurry.

September 2nd The news I dreaded has come. I had a letter from Mabel dated August 25th telling me that Peter was arrested in Graudenz on August 7th. They had only heard the news on August 23rd and she hoped he would soon be out again etc. etc. It is no use writing what I feel, but there is one thing that I have learned. There is a stage beyond pain just as in physical pain there is a borderline beyond which one becomes unconscious. So there is a boundary to psychical pain, beyond which a sort of numbness sets in. If P. is in prison and A. probably hanged. What of our other friends Langbehn[,] Roloff[,] Moltke? I have decided to leave for Berlin tomorrow. The Americans are coming daily nearer and the journey is long and dangerous and perhaps I shall be cut off from the children but I must go. The last time I was in G. [Graudenz] Peter showed me those Gestapo brutes up there and said they were after his blood. I know they've got him. There is no thinking what they may do to him. I think I will go first to Munich and see Seiler. And then up to Berlin. Let's hope no alarms. There is of course a chance that I'll be arrested too. I have written to Mummy and Pom in case. I want the children to go to England if anything happens to us. I have decided that should I find out that they have definite proof on Peter then I must try to bribe Lange. If he forgets P's *Akte*³⁷², then I will see if I can help him after the war. I think the end must be near now, and he must know it too. There is of course the chance that he will arrest me too, but I must risk that. Sometimes I find myself wishing I didn't know so much. I have no idea how I will react to third degree or those injections. The best thing I think is to read and soak myself in "Völkischer Beobachter"³⁷³ until I talk N. Socialism in my sleep.

³⁷² File

³⁷³ Official newspaper of the NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers' Party)

The journey to Munich and then on to Berlin was a pretty good nightmare. Weather good and planes plentiful. I sat on my suitcases in the corridor for two days and two nights. In Munich, Seiler told me that A. had been hanged. He said it in such a vile way, that I wanted to hit him. Instead I had to pretend we hardly knew him and had never discussed politics together. Forgive me Adam, if you are really dead, you know how much I meant it. *September 8th* I am back again now in Rohrbach and Berlin seems far away. The visit to our little house, with no Peter, is over. Berlin is a terrible town now. Over and above the air raids which are slowly battering it to pieces, is the more awful shadow of the Gestapo. The usual old M bus clattered past A.'s flat and I saw the closed shutters. The air was full of autumn and I remembered the last time we were there together. Adam saying "You know it's almost embarrassing to be still going around without a uniform. One gets quite a lot of nasty looks, but you mustn't think we're doing nothing Chris. Things are really getting a move on now although it's almost too late." And my saying, "It's never too late, the main thing [is] it happens."

1.2. April – July 1945

These pages are still attached to the actual notepad; pencil on thin paper with pale blue lines; several pages were torn out before the first entry begins mid-sentence.

I wished them good luck and left them. In Rohrbach everything was in an upheaval preparing to leave. Everything was being destroyed and Ellen and Hans and everyone in the village was collecting what they could. Food, loots, car parts, telephones, wireless, cigarettes in thousands. The cars were being burnt, everything else smashed. A terrible sight. I said goodbye to my friends. They seemed confident of breaking through but it's easy for them to talk they have a car. I think of that slow moving stream down the road. As the sun went down they left, and a sudden stillness came to the village only broken by the crackling of flames as the cars burned and an occasional crack and munition went off in the

flames. Nothing but destruction is everywhere. Dirt[,] filth and destruction. Our sitting room is full of junk. For the children a sort of glorified Christmas. We are all completely exhausted. P. came out of hiding and we all felt rather dotty.

April 25th Mam's birthday and we are sitting in a sort of vacuum. Peasants are coming with oxen and fetch the cars away. The village idiot has three lovely limousines and a lorry. We are trying to tidy a little, but everything is so dirty that I don't know where to start. We wander around in a sort of dream. There is a lot to collect still. We heard the French had entered Furtwangen. Blacks apparently. Peter is going to have a look tomorrow.

April 25th Yes the blacks are in Furtwangen [~~crossed out: and are apparently plundering and assaulting the countryside~~]. Peter went over and found a well equipped [sic] cavalry division standing around. Their welcome was very friendly. Everyone is delighted that the chance of an air raid is over.

April 29th I went shopping again, more or less out of curiosity. The first thing I saw on the main road was an empty packet of Lucky Strikes. Well, they are here. Then the troops all black in British uniform and on perfect horses. They look rather like a pirate crew but I suppose alright.

May 1st The poor people in the valley went through a terrible night. The blacks went around the lonely farmhouses plundering and assaulting. Old women and young children. Really awful. They smashed everything looking as they said for German soldiers. There are of course many of these wandering around in strange illfitting [sic] civil clothes. We gave two men some of Peter's clothes. His suit from Charles' Aussee tailor. They hope to get to Lahr.

May 5th Since last week we have been getting going. It began with a French sergeant asking Peter for his papers. As he had none I had to explain everything and although he wasn't very impressed that P's [sic] had been in a concentration camp ("Everybody could tell that story[,] he said[,] "and if one must believe every story then every second German

was jewish [sic] or had been in a camp.”) he believed me and the next day came in and asked me to *dolmetsch*³⁷⁴ for him.

Two obvious German soldiers he had caught. He ate here and then I asked him to take us to Villingen. He agreed and off we went at terrible speed after he had taken all sorts of parts out of other cars and screwed them into ours. It was all very French. During the drive they suddenly sprang out and shot at a telegraph pole, just for fun and to try out a newly stolen pistol. To cut a long story short, we managed (a certain amount of cheek on our part) to see the Town Commandant of Villingen a big fine-looking Frenchman who speaks perfect English. I told our story and he was most polite and friendly and asked Peter to help him by informing him about Furtwangen. We walked about V. without white armbands and after 7 in the evening. He occupies the *Rathaus*³⁷⁵ which is draped in the Tricolour, the Stars and Stripes and a strange looking business which is supposed to be the Union Jack. Masses of rather badly dressed policemen lolled about, now and again a car tore up[,] hooted itself silly and tore off again. The Germans with the white armbands looked on apathetically [sic]. They aren't to be moved by anything after 12 years of Nazi rule. Even the sight of a Jewish Brigade swaggering past didn't move them. Peter suffered considerably, but I couldn't stop laughing. Frenchmen always have that effect on me. We left Mon le Capitaine [sic] and promised to return a few days later with news of Furtwangen.

May 5th Peter and Hans have been going around collecting petrol. Now that there is something to be done they are like children. They have decided to try and get a car together. They went off with a nail[,] hammer and a bucket and managed to squeeze about 8 litres of petrol out of the wrecks lying around here. We left today by car for Villingen and having spoken to the Commandant we returned. The biggest bit of cheek yet. A sentry

³⁷⁴ Interpret

³⁷⁵ Town hall

on the roads examined our papers and saluted smartly as we drove away. The war seems to be ending.

May 26th I haven't written for some time because everything that I have done has left a nasty taste. My honest feeling is that I want to get up and tell all these rotten Frenchmen that the quicker they get to hell out of here the better. Everywhere large notices that plundering will be punished with death, and the glorious French army and lots of highfaluting baloney, and the result[:] French soldiers, officers[,] Russians[,] Spahis[,] everyone plundering as well as they can, women raped (in our little village six cases, Wilflingen 20)[;] where [sic] one old man tried to save his 60 year old [sic] wife he was shot. It would be easier if they said that they've only come for that, but they then seem horrified at what the Germans did in France and are doing exactly the same. The Moroccans are probably the worst because they attack anything female between the age of 15 and 70. Women and chickens are their main sport. Women at night and chickens during the day. When a patrol rides through, they halt, ask for arms, ogle the women, and then off after the chickens. They then ride off with each one or two squaking [sic] birds hanging from their saddlebags. La grande armée. At night the frightened peasant women and girls in the lonely farms are as easy to get as the chickens. It is really bad luck that this quiet peaceful catholic part of Germany should have this plague. It has never been very Nazi here. They deserved it more in Thuringen-Saxony [sic], where you heard Heil Hitler all day.

As for ourselves, we made some efforts to get law and order and then decided to play their game and cheat as well as we can. We have learned it well under the Nazis.

Some nice days stand out in my memory. The day of days when the British liaison officer Capt. Register came to see me. He arrived with three lorries and a smart Mercedes and suddenly stood in the room breathing England. I only then realised how I love and miss my country. It came over me like a terrific pain. We got coffee ready and he asked if

the drivers of the lorries could come in too. I would have welcomed the whole British army. The whole four of them were so nice that the short visit went like lightning. A Canadian who had heard Charles' planes droning over his home in Canada, bound for Europe. A North of England man with a simple wee Englisch [sic] face and Register himself[,] big[,] blond[,] laughing at himself[,] the war[,] the French army, liaison officer who doesn't speak a word of French or German. We smoked Lucky's and I felt I was [in] another world.

May 26th Peter left for Hamburg yesterday on his motorcycle. With his ski blouse and gaiters he looked like a French soldier. He was excited to leave, and I can imagine the joy of his mother and sister when he arrives. I wish I could go too. I can't wait now until I hear some news from home. Sitting here and doing housework is sort of hard on my patience. Frau M. is so frightened that I can hardly leave the house. When Moroccans come, I stand there and chat away about "Anglaise, poules Anglaise [sic], maison anglaise" and when they ask where my husband is, I always say he is with the Commandant and will be back any minute. Being large and fat the blacks seem to have a particular liking for me which makes things rather difficult. One of the funny things is that the oldest and stringiest of the females in the village are the most frightened of being raped. Aged spinsters and grandmothers barricade themselves in everywhere. Tante Ulla is certain they'll have a go at her one day and Ellen's mother won't stay alone in the house.

July 8th The interests of the French army have widened from chickens and women to clocks. Clocks clocks and more clocks. The least important soldier to the grandest general they all scramble for clocks. I think if Hitler had waited until the French army was over the Rhine and then let off a lot of alarm clocks on the Alsatian bank the whole of the grande Armée Rhin et Danube [sic] would have turned and fought its way back over the river to get an alarm. They all have the most splendid wrist watches and yesterday I went into the

Rathaus and in a sideroom I saw some fat colonels bargaining over some kitchen clocks which would have cost about 3/6 before the war.

2. Summary of Irmgard Ó hUrmoltaigh's Diaries

The acquisition of a portion of Hugo Hamilton's papers by the National Library of Ireland in 2010 gave me the opportunity to access and translate the six diaries of the author's German mother into English. Although the events she related were seldom extraordinary, the diaries nevertheless present a compelling account of Irmgard's thoughts on her and her family's life between two cultures. The National Library holds a copy of my translation, which, for reasons of space, I will only summarise here.

2.1. MS48,168/1: 13 October 1952 – 7 August 1956

Irmgard's first diary begins on 13 October 1952, her eldest son's first birthday, and ends on 7 August 1956 with an account of a pilgrimage she and her husband Hans³⁷⁶ undertook to Croagh Patrick. In the intervening years, their three eldest children are born, Franz, Johannes and Maria. The first notebook provides background information on how Irmgard met her husband in Dublin in 1949, their marriage in Kempen Christmas 1950, their honeymoon in Germany, and her arrival at their home in Glenageary in March 1951. The description of the latter as "primitive" and a sore disappointment is a telling example of her difficulties in settling into the very modest circumstances that awaited her in Ireland. Observations of this kind and direct comparisons, however, are rare in this notebook. Instead, later entries stress her willingness to make the best of her situation and chronicle her love for her growing family, her children's development, feats and illnesses, her

³⁷⁶ Irmgard refers to her husband and children by the German equivalent of their Irish first names wherever possible. In this manner, Seán, her husband, becomes Hans, Proinsias (the eldest son) is Franz, Seán junior (Hugo) is Johannes, Máire is Maria – Ite, Bríd and Ciarán, however, retain their Irish names.

pregnancies and her coping with a miscarriage, her growing religious faith, and her and her husband's continuous financial worries.

Irmgard's intense focus on family life, in fact, reveals how isolated and withdrawn these early years must have been. Although kept busy by running the household and raising three young children, it is quite apparent that her positive, extrovert disposition suffered under her husband's strictness and preference for seclusion, which even excluded most of his own relatives in Dublin and Co. Cork. Irmgard, by contrast, had been accustomed to working abroad and fending for herself for years before she got married (a letter home telling of her bold exploration of Wicklow and Lough Derg by bicycle in August 1949 is enclosed in the fourth diary). Her innate sociability is particularly apparent on the one outing she reports at length, a visit to the Dublin Spring Show in 1956, where she revels in the opportunity to watch people and comment on the fashion they sport.

As the only regular guest to their home, her husband's brother, Uncle Ted, becomes Irmgard's confidant and a go-between in marital conflicts. This friendship, however, may have been somewhat unilateral, for later diaries (4 and 5) record their growing estrangement. Perhaps to compensate for the lack of involvement in her social environment, Irmgard's religious devotion intensifies, as does her reliance on letters from her family in Germany and Austria. Whereas English-speaking friends and neighbours (or their children) are not welcome in their home, she opens it to any relatives who are prepared to travel the distance and hosts several nephews and nieces who wish to improve their English in Dublin schools. Each letter from home, however, has the potential to upset her if its tone or content are not as loving and caring as expected. Each unanswered letter, in turn, is interpreted as a sign of neglect.

It is little surprising, then, that her two trips to Germany are the highlights of these years. At the same time, Irmgard's returns home become a double-edged sword: on the one hand, they provide small luxuries which her life in Dublin cannot offer, such as, for

example, daily chats over coffee and cake with female friends and relatives, or the immersion in cultural life (be it TV, listening to *Faust* on record, or visiting sights and monuments). On the other hand, her nostalgia for the way she left everything and everyone behind inevitably leads to disappointment and hurt feelings on these occasions, as her relatives seem to have other priorities than her or prove too busy to make sufficient time for her.

2.2. MS48,168/2: 11 August 1956 – 30 August 1959

The remaining four notebooks are, in many ways, variations on the themes set out in the first: the vital links with Germany, which can be a source of both pleasure and intense disappointment; the joy Irmgard derives from seeing her children grow, the worries that assail her when one of them is sick; the continued financial difficulties and her optimism that her husband's side-business of trading in German imports will, eventually, take off; recurring remarks on how few guests they receive and her gratefulness for any opportunity for a proper conversation on ideas, books, art or people with chance visitors, etc. At the same time, partly due to her children entering school, partly of her own initiative, Irmgard's participation and stake in her Irish environment increase noticeably. In its most basic manifestations, she tries to socialise her children and her Irish household help and takes a greater interest in her Irish relatives. As a result, the family's circle of acquaintances gradually widens. In addition to this, Irmgard takes up classes in Irish, in all likelihood to be able to follow her children's progress in primary school, but also in order to become proficient in the language of the "authentic Ireland" in which she and her husband believe.

Events such as a strike in ESB and the perennial issue of how to boost Ireland's ailing economy also receive her attention. She even writes a piece for the Irish-language women's magazine *Deirdre* (see Bibliography under Kaiser) with advice for Irish

housewives on how to run their household more efficiently as their personal contribution towards economic recovery. In 1958, she repeats this comparative approach in an article on German customs related to the celebration of Advent which she submits to three newspapers. No typescript survives of this article, however, and Irmgard herself never knew if it was published. International events like the Suez crisis and the Hungarian uprising are likewise mentioned, but their brief prominence is replaced by her sorrow over a second miscarriage. In 1958, however, her fourth child, Ite, is born.

Irmgard also becomes increasingly aware that her distance from her country of origin allows her to perceive changes in German society towards a more money-driven, shallower and less religious lifestyle. Overall, she is grateful to be able to raise her children in the quiet, backward Irish environment which she considers more conducive to a happy Catholic family life. For that, she is even willing to accept being derided along with her husband as “utter fools” by her German relatives. Yet despite her generally conservative attitude, Irmgard eventually realises the need to her to become more emancipated, both financially through the introduction of a weekly budget and by daring to voice and uphold a different opinion to her husband.

She essentially concurs with him, however, in his desire to instil in their children a love of their country and of the Irish language. Although she does not approve of his methods (which include beating the children for speaking in English), she admires his “idealism” and accepts that she and the children must make sacrifices in order to safeguard what she believes to be an authentic Irish identity and lifestyle – even at the cost of cutting ties with friends who speak English.

This ideal Ireland Irmgard and Hans seem to seek (and find) on their holiday in Connemara where they meet poor, simple and happy people, like the old fisherman and his wife, the “innocent man” who entertains the pub with his songs and dancing, and various scholars and Dubliners who retreat to the West for similar reasons. Of course, it rankles

with Irmgard that there are also indications that not all is well in rural Ireland. For example, their landlady disappoints by proving both too bitter and too focused on money for Irmgard's taste. Nor can she ignore the preparations made for the departure of the daughter of the house to go to Manchester, like her aunt and many others before her, to train as a nurse. Yet perhaps most indicative of the West's failure to live up to its untainted reputation is the fact that the family cannot escape Hans's hot tempers and violent outbursts there either.

2.3. MS48,168/3: December 1959 – 12 July 1964

The third diary begins with an episode of intense homesickness, brought on by the atmospheric Christmas celebration of the German-Irish Society in Dublin. However, neither Irmgard's wishful longing for Kempen as it used to be nor her continued dependence on regular news from "home" can bridge the growing rift between her world in Ireland and that of her German relatives. This becomes painfully apparent during the family's next trip to Germany in the summer of 1960: although the preparations and the actual journey are a source of great excitement and joy, the welcome Irmgard receives is not always as warm as she would have liked. Her religious attitude, in particular, is frequently criticised by her aunt and sisters, who have a far more relaxed view on Catholicism or openly renounce it (her brother-in-law Wilhelm, for example, avoids Uncle Ted, a priest, and sends his two children to a Protestant kindergarten). Consequently, her own family remains Irmgard's focal point throughout this diary, while her Irish environment steadily gains in importance. For example, after ten years in Spencer Villas, her relationship with her neighbours seems to reach an all-time high when her fifth child, Bríd, is born in 1961. Occasional German guests, however, still serve as welcome reminders of bygone times and sometimes even challenge her own self-image by making

her realise how formal and withdrawn she has become in her interaction with others due to lack of socialising.

Her husband's initiative in setting up an Irish-language society in ESB is noted, as are his sustained efforts in promoting the Irish language elsewhere. His language crusade proves particularly successful on the home front when their two eldest sons win a three-month Gael Linn scholarship to the Gaeltacht. As their former primary school teacher points out to Irmgard, they are living examples of "how much could be achieved through cooperation with, and support from, the parents." Significantly, while Irmgard is pleased with their progress in this area, she values their social development higher than individual schooling in Irish and opposes the idea of sending them on to a small elite Irish-language secondary school. Her enthusiasm for the idealised West of Ireland is also slightly curbed after another stay on a farm in Kerry, where both the primitive conditions and the hosts' unfriendliness put her off planning any further holidays of this kind.

Beyond the purely domestic and personal sphere, the fourth diary also contains two interesting examples of Irmgard's attitude to larger political and historical events. In a first instance, she actively supports her husband in his "fight for Christ and against communism" by typing up his hot-tempered letters to various editors. In these, he defends Cardinal Stepinac's reputation and accuses Proinsias Mac Aonghusa of using Radio Eireann as a platform for sympathising with Milovan Djilas, the communist former vice-president of Yugoslavia. As she makes clear in a letter to her sister Elfriede, she considers this kind of involvement an act of patriotism. The family's unquestioning support of Cardinal Stepinac is also reflected in the fact that they pray to him for assistance on two occasions of extreme distress, namely when Hans becomes sick and when Irmgard threatens to have another miscarriage. The second instance worth noting sheds light on her attempts to come to terms with the legacy of the Second World War. Crucially, the year she first addresses this problematic issue in her diaries is 1962, shortly after Adolf

Eichmann was hanged in Israel. However, she only implicitly indicates her opinion by expressing a keen interest in Uncle Ted's proposition of "shared responsibility", even in the military. In an entry that dates from two years later, Irmgard elaborates further on her need to understand the rise and horrors of Nazism. She believes to have found the answer in Wolfgang Kuhn's article, "Auschwitz – The End of a Biological *Weltanschauung*" (my translation), in the Catholic journal *Stimmen der Zeit*. The doubly underlined phrase "The unresolved past" seems particularly significant, although it remains unclear if it does so as an apt summary of her own experience of dealing with this past or if she merely considers this to apply to Germany's relation to the Second World War in general. In this article, Kuhn suggests that "National Socialism is politically applied biology", which, Irmgard maintains, should be corrected to read "politically applied Darwinism". In accordance with her religious beliefs, man must never be regarded as just another creature, but as a being endowed with a mind and soul subject to an ethical and creative imperative. Hence, she concludes that "the 'unresolved past' cannot be resolved simply by presenting the crimes of the national socialists as an abuse of biology, but only by clearly negating any form of 'biologism'."

Irmgard's preoccupation with the German past plays a central role in Hugo Hamilton's memoirs where strong emphasis is laid on her passing on personal traumas, shame and guilt to her son. Unfortunately, these two passages remain her only attempts, in her diaries, to reflect on the events of the Second World War apart from her account in her last diary of her escape from the Eastern front and survival in postwar Germany working for a US Army Colonel. Likewise, there is no reference anywhere in the diaries to her rape and exploitation at the hands of her superior, Mr Stiegler, in Düsseldorf and Venlo at the beginning of the war. This sensitive material remains with the family.

2.4. MS48,168/4: 11 November 1964 – 2 June 1969

The overall sense of the fourth diary is that the pace of Irmgard's life has stepped up considerably. In fact, she is so busy with catching up on everyday occurrences, anecdotes and facts, it takes her more than a year to find the time to write a few lines about her sixth child, Ciarán, born in 1966. Often, her entries amount just to notes jotted down beside a growing number of documents pasted into the diary: wedding invitations, death cards, school reports, holiday postcards and family photographs. A steady trickle of young house guests over the years, relatives from Ireland and Germany, adds to the already considerable size and demands of running her household. The visit of Norbert Haas causes even more excitement than usual when his family back in Kevelaer erroneously believes him to have gone missing, and a rescue search across Ireland is mounted by Irmgard in cooperation with the German Embassy and police.

While Irmgard's preoccupations remain essentially the same – her children's health and progress in school, her husband's career in the ESB, news from her loved ones in Germany – there is also a new breathlessness to her record and her attempts to capture fleeting moments. The relentless progress of time is further emphasised by the acquisition of a car in the Ó hUrmoltaigh household. By contrast, there is very little mention in this diary of events occurring outside the home. Ireland's transformation from a quiet backwater, conducive to bringing up her children in the Catholic faith, into the scene of sectarian violence is, in fact, only referred to indirectly in a German newspaper clipping Irmgard includes. The latter quotes a Jesuit priest declaring the Catholic Church in Ireland a scandal in terms of sectarianism. Irmgard's comment written beside the clipping reads: "Is this true?" One event her diary does cover is the *Humanae Vitae* Encyclical of Pope Paul VI, which, Irmgard thinks, will cause problems for some priests. Otherwise, she is "very much in favour of self discipline" and adds: "I hope I have enough of it myself".

Irmgard compensates for her long separation from her home country through indirect means such as German newspaper clippings with news of her hometown and home region, through relishing every detail of Hans's accounts of his business trips there, and through the "care packages" full of sweets and clothing sent by relatives and friends back home which never fail to cheer her up. A kind offer by a fellow churchgoer in spring 1967 of financing her next trip to Germany suddenly provides an unexpected opportunity for escape, yet Hans puts paid to her dream. At first, he makes her turn down the generous offer, only to then insist on being part of such a trip, despite their obvious lack of funds. Although this trip does eventually take place in autumn and Irmgard makes a stab at relating it, she never actually gets beyond pasting in her flight tickets and a postcard of a gleaming Dublin airport – other events in her family life take priority and displace the memory of that holiday.

Despite the constraints of her married life, Irmgard takes great pleasure in her teenage children's growing independence from home. Their explorations of Ireland by bike, and later of Germany and France, bring back fond memories of very similar experiences in younger years. She also supports their need to go out and socialise with their peers and takes their side in arguments with Hans. Irmgard even has understanding for the more challenging aspects of teenage emancipation which, in Johannes's case, manifest themselves in his outright defiance of his father's rules. The boy who, in 1966, had expressed a vocation has now morphed into a moody, taciturn, and rebellious youth, staying out late and spending most of his free time either on his bike or with the Reserve Defence Forces. The arguments between Hans and Johannes, of course, affect the whole family, but what Irmgard finds hardest to stomach are her husband's attempts to quash not just all resistance to his views, but his insistence on everybody having to share these. Her dismay at his penny-pinching, unreasonable and reclusive attitude is more vocal than ever. Yet if her husband's unpredictable humour and narrow-mindedness were the main source

of discord in the past, worries about his physical and mental health (depression) soon prove even more trying and demand a great deal of Irmgard's attention and patience by 1969.

This situation is exacerbated when Ted suddenly withdraws his friendship and support. Irmgard sorely misses his Sunday visits and suffers from not being consulted by him during what appears to be a crisis in his life. Perhaps the worst blow to her feelings is being left on the side-line while he seeks shelter and help in the home of Aunt Rosaleen. Her disappointment translates into bitterness which she tries hard to fight. Still, twice her entries in the fourth notebook suggest that she may secretly long her life had taken a different course: first, when she reveals in parenthesis that her pilgrimage to Lough Derg in August 1949 had been in order to pray whether or not to join a prewar acquaintance, Peter Troost, in Brazil. The second instance, following the disappointment in Ted, spells it out more clearly: "I think if I do end up going to Germany this time, I shall find it very hard to return here."

2.5. MS48,168/5: 23 June 1969 – 11 October 1973

For the first time, Irmgard has hardly filled the notebook she started as her diary. The large number of quick notes and postscripts to past events suggest that she could no longer find the time to write at leisure. Consequently, her entries in this book mainly record the comings and goings of her husband and children and relate less of her own thoughts and troubles. There is, however, a sense that her relationship with Ted has been restored to some degree and that normality has returned to the family. Problems with Johannes are only alluded to and not explained in any detail.

As her older children prepare to finish school and to fly the coop, Irmgard wonders what will become of them, looking admiringly at her sister's daughter, Christiane, who has just passed her medical exams. Maria's initial trouble finding a trainee position as a nurse inspires fears in her parents of having to beg for a placement for her or, worse, that she will

have to emigrate to Germany (England is not an option). Generally, however, Irmgard is proud of her children's achievements and is very interested in their experiences and encounters at home and abroad. She is grateful when Johannes tells her of his girlfriend and resolves to do what she thinks is best: pray for the young couple. There are also a number of signs that indicate Irmgard has become more independent herself as her children grow older. For example, she is learning to drive and gives private German lessons, partly for the extra income and partly to amuse herself. Modernity holds sway in other ways, too, such as when a team from RTÉ shoots on location in the family home for an educational programme. Not long after that, in February 1971, Irmgard proudly announces the acquisition of a TV set. Much to their surprise, Hans and Irmgard come to appreciate the positive side-effects of this new piece of furniture which unites all the family again in a silent adoration of a different kind.

The passage of time makes itself felt in other ways, too. A growing number of Irmgard's acquaintances enter nursing homes or pass away. Age is beginning to tell on her as well, and she has to seek treatment for her thyroid and other ailments. In the meantime, Hans continues to suffer from depression and develops a heart condition. Nevertheless, the tone of Irmgard's entries is much calmer compared to the previous diary, if perhaps a bit less buoyant. The celebration of their 20th wedding anniversary with a night out suggests harmony has been restored to their marital relationship. Of course, there is always room to improve, quite literally, as Irmgard's bargain-hunting at auctions in the neighbourhood shows. Sadly, her last lines conclude that her home in Ireland will never live up to her dreams of it: "Unfortunately, the room will remain a lumber room until such time when we will build a study or a garage in our garden – shame, what a shame. I would easily get a very beautiful room in no time for little money."

2.6. MS48,168/6: 17 February 1979 – 18 August 1980

In her last diary, started the year after her husband Hans's sudden death, Irmgard attempts, with increasing difficulties in composing her thoughts, to account for her life and to assess its course. Her observations looking back on her married life are critical, both of her husband and his Irish-language fanaticism and of her own subservience. Overall, the impression one derives from reading this notebook is that of disappointment and isolation in her old age, of detachment from her siblings in Germany and from her native home.

The last diary contains only a few entries and ends with a list that expresses the growing count of lost loved ones, namely her husband and her two older sisters. The writing in this last notebook is, at times, erratic and abrupt, and, on the whole, it is also less accurately and carefully written. In all likelihood, this is due to such factors as Irmgard's age, her grief for her husband, the general difficulty of addressing sensitive issues in the past, and perhaps also by a lack of communication in her mother tongue outside the (perhaps calcified) family idiolect. However, her "Curriculum Vitae" offers valuable information on her life up to the point where she met her husband and moved to Ireland, specifically on her family background and upbringing in Kempen; the consequences of losing her father at the age of nine and her mother at the age of fourteen; the preferential treatment of her youngest sister by her aunt and uncle who raised Irmgard and her sisters after their mother's death; her employment history from her late teens onwards – in particular, her posting as staff assistant in France and, later, in Czechoslovakia – and her retreat by bicycle from the approaching Soviet Army in spring 1945; her struggles in postwar Germany working for a Colonel in the US Army; and, finally, the opportunity of working as a household help in Ireland in 1948.