Marius von Mayenburg's *Der Stein*: (Un)Covering Memory

by

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ABSTRACT:

Marius von Mayenburg's Der Stein: (Un)Covering Memory undertakes an in-depth examination of contemporary German playwright Marius von Mayenburg's 2008 play *Der Stein*. The play explores how Germany's National Socialist past continues to play a foundational role within the construction of German identity. However, memory of the past must be critically analyzed because of the fallibility of memory, illustrated in *Der Stein*.

Der Stein is firmly entrenched in the postwar examination of concepts of guilt and responsibility, developed by philosophers such as Hannah Arendt and visible in German popular cultural discourse. Von Mayenburg is a part of a specific movement of German theatre practitioners who embrace a narrative-centered, individualistic, materialist-based theatre aesthetic. Past productions illustrate how this aesthetic lends itself to the complex examination of memory and history present in the structure, motif and themes of *Der Stein.* The critical reception of productions and the adaptation of the script in performance illustrate the complexity of the play's structure and the potentiality of meaning within the play. This study proposes *Der Stein* as an exploration of contemporary theatre practice in Germany. It also investigates the changing relationship between German society and the country's troubled past, in which the fallibility of memory plays a critical role.

Preface:

This thesis is an original work by Lily Maeve Climenhaga. No part of this thesis has been previously published.

Dedication:

"I think you guys are going to have to come up with a lot of wonderful new lies, or people just aren't going to want to go on living."
-Kurt Vonnegut Jr. *Slaughterhouse-Five*

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INTRODUCTION:

"Gottes Willen!"
-Marius von Mayenburg

Marius von Mayenburg is a contemporary Berlin-based playwright, dramaturge, translator and director. He exploded onto the German theatre scene in 1998 with the premiere of *Feuergesicht* (*Fireface*). Like many of his plays to follow, *Feuergesicht* was a provocative, uncomfortable and fractured exploration of provocative themes such as murder and incest in a hundred short scenes. My first exposure to Marius von Mayenburg's work was in a senior level theatre theory course where I undertook a comprehensive examination of Luk Perceval's multicultural and multilingual *mise-en-scène* of *Turista* (2005), investigating how von Mayenburg's monolingual script lent itself to multilinguality. This first exploration captured my interest in von Mayenburg because of the play's non-traditional structure and edgy examination of rape, murder and violence. Von Mayenburg has become one of my favorite playwrights and with my interest in history and German culture, an examination of *Der Stein* made sense for a master's thesis.

Von Mayenburg wrote *Der Stein* in 2008 as a joint project with the Salzburger Festespiel's Young Directors' Project. This play remained true to the edgy aesthetic that first shocked audiences with *Feuergesicht* examining the uncomfortable relationship German identity shares with the Nazi past. Von Mayenburg, like many Germans, shares a familial connection with the Nazi era and his exposure to the theme of National Socialism has deeply affected him. Von Mayenburg builds his play on a uniquely German historical basis, painstakingly deconstructing the themes of guilt, memory and family.

Since the end of the war in 1945 various forms of media have attempted to analyze and understand the postwar guilt that continues to haunt German identity. Germany's twentieth century history plays a major role in memory and identity politics, shaping how many Germans project and view themselves on an international level. Questions of guilt and responsibility for the shared past continue to plague many Germans even seventy years later. Theatre, film, literature, art and scholarly discourse do not shy away from tackling the issue of National Socialism and German collective memory. Now, three generations after the end of the war, young artists continue to explore the issue in an attempt to understand their place in history.

As well as being one of Germany's most influential theatre practitioners, Marius von Mayenburg is also one of Germany's most-performed contemporary playwrights, in- and outside the German-speaking realm. He employs an interventionist aesthetic based in what materialist realism (explored in Chapter Two) to investigate complex social problems within modern capitalist society. *Der Stein* (*The Stone*), the main focus of this thesis, tackles the theme of National Socialism examining the fluidity of memory. The play highlights the processes of memorialization and commemoration and the inevitable failure of these practices. Von Mayenburg investigates how generational shifts in memory discourse surrounding National Socialism and increased temporal distance changes individual understandings of the event. Through the deconstruction of primary and secondary memory the identity-making process is destabilized throughout *Der Stein*.

Chapter One provides a brief overview of the examination of German guilt within Germany since 1945. It introduces a small number of the major philosophical principles of the guilt question, as well as a extremely short list of artists, novelists, dramatists and other individuals whose work is influenced by the National Socialist past. The list of academics, films,

novels, artists and dramatists is by no means comprehensive of the massive amount of work and response in Germany in the past seventy years and doesn't even scratch the surface of this topic on an international scale. However, it provides a rough framework of the tradition, von Mayenburg's play can be situated within.

Von Mayenburg, as a German and an individual with a personal and familial connection to the issue of guilt in contemporary German identity, approaches the theme with a specific method. This method is informed by the theatrical aesthetic he has developed throughout his career. Chapter Two briefly analyses the continuing development of von Mayenburg's aesthetic and the major themes present in his oeuvre. The chapter provides an overview of von Mayenburg's oeuvre from 1998 to 2015 with a short description of how each play fits within his aesthetic.

After providing a summation of the historiographical response to National Socialism and guilt within German society and von Mayenburg's aesthetic in the first two chapters, the third chapter undertakes a close reading and analysis of *Der Stein*. Employing the work of various memory, theatre and literary theorists it closely analyzes and interprets the play's themes, motifs and structure. The close-reading builds mainly off a textual analysis of the script, but Sarantos Zervoulakos' 2014 production of *Der Stein* at Munich's Residenztheater acts as a framing device for particular dramaturgical responses and solutions. The chapter further explores the historical and theoretical implications of the issue of forgetting and rewriting the past within the German context, as presented in von Mayenburg's play.

The fourth chapter elaborates on the diversity of directorial and dramaturgical response to *Der Stein*, while exploring reception. The two major productions built upon in this chapter are Zervoulakos' 2014 production at Residenztheater and the premiere production mounted in

Salzburg/Berlin in 2008 directed by Ingo Berk. This chapter explores the multiplicity of reactions to the play in its various productions across Germany since 2008.

The methodology employed throughout this examination builds on the abundance of critical writing about German guilt since 1945. The foundational work of major theorists such as Hannah Arendt, Theodor Adorno and Karl Jaspers are central to understanding the evolution of memory trends and historiography in Germany. Their theories, observations and critiques from the immediate postwar period are vital to my understanding of guilt from a German – and global – perspective. Arendt's theories on guilt, responsibility and violence are particularly relevant for my analysis of von Mayenburg's work. Although the playwright asserts Arendt does not influence him or his work, possibly because of the far-reaching influence of Arendt, there is a strong connection between the themes explored in *Der Stein* and her theory of banality. Additionally Andrew Stuart Bergerson (et al.)'s *The Happy Burden of History: From Sovereign Impunity to Responsible Selfhood* has offered an elaborate study hugely influential in determining the role of the National Socialist past in past and present German identity. Likewise, memory theorists Pierre Nora, Dominick LaCapra and Harold Welzer are instrumental in the close reading of von Mayenburg's text and the play's interpretation of identity-formation and collective identity. Particularly beneficial for my study is Nora's theory of the *lieu de mémoire*, or memory site, in association to the symbol of the house in Dresden.

Theatre theorist Hans-Thies Lehmann in *Postdramatic Theatre* and the numerous counter-articles by von Mayenburg's fellow director Thomas Ostermeier have been particularly useful in my analysis of the play. I employ Ostermeier's concept of theatrical capitalist realism, a materialist-based individualist examination of the failings of capitalist society, and the critical framework provided by Mark Fisher's examination of capitalist realism within postmodernist

visual art. Chapter Four's examination of production and reception relies heavily on available critical reviews and production history. Although there have been eleven German productions of *Der Stein,* in the past seven years since the play's premiere there has only been one English production of *The Stone*, despite the excellent translation by Schaubühne dramaturge Maja Zade. There have been numerous productions outside of Germany in Spain, Portugal, Lithuania, Russia, France and Switzerland, to which language access is obviously challenging (see Appendix 2). I rely primarily on German sources for the fourth chapter and the *mise-en-scène* of Ingo Bark's and other secondary productions are reconstructed using information from theatre websites and the vast wealth of available reviews. The notable exception to the reconstruction process is Sarantos Zervoulakos' 2014 production at Munich's Residenztheater, for which I attended numerous rehearsals between December 12 and 18, as well as the first and second preview and the premiere on December 18. I also had the opportunity to converse with dramaturge Christina Hommel about the dramaturgical process and several actors during the rehearsals.

I have worked almost exclusively with the German text in my analysis of the play and all references to the play are taken from the original German script. The English translations provided in footnotes have been taken directly from Maja Zade's 2009 published translation. All other translations of the quotations taken from German reviews and critical articles and books in the footnotes are my own. It is also important to note the production in Munich rearranged certain scenes in *Der Stein*, therefore the scene order in the Munich production differs from the summary provided in Appendix 1.

I must also acknowledge my place as an outsider within the German community. Particularly in Chapter Three, the close reading of *Der Stein*, I specifically reference the German

interpretive community. Many of the elements I identify as recognizable to a German audience I did not initially understand, specifically within the Munich production. Therefore, my assertion these elements are easily interpreted and instantaneously understood by a German audience is based on the reaction of those German spectators surrounding me in Munich, whose response I observed or I later discussed the production with. My reception experience was drastically changed by the introduction of an audience to the rehearsal and performance process. In rehearsal I was initially unable to recognize many of the instances of topological humor and references made by Zervoulakos and his production team.

I first learned Residenztheater was doing a production of *Der Stein* while completing a *Hospitanz* there. I contacted Residenztheater in September 2014 and was put into contact with dramaturge Christina Hommel, who invited me to sit on several rehearsals while I was in Munich in December. The opportunity to sit in on rehearsals allowed me to watch the director, dramaturge and actors work together to interpret the text. Throughout the process I took elaborate notes in my meanwhile dog-eared, scribbled in, well-loved copy of the German script. Equally exciting was being introduced to the cast as the Canadian student writing her thesis on *Der Stein* and having several actors approach me to discuss my work.

Since 2013, I have studied von Mayenburg's work extensively and worked to acquire a detailed knowledge and understanding of his work. I have travelled to see productions of von Mayenburg's *Märtyrer* (*Martyr*), his translation-adaption of *Hamlet* directed by Thomas Ostermeier and *CALL ME GOD*, directed and co-written by von Mayenburg. During my initial research I spent months attempting to establish contact or find a contact to pass emails onto von Mayenburg via the dramaturgy team at the Berliner Schaubühne and his publisher Henschel Schauspiel to no avail. The highlight of my work was the surprise that Marius von Mayenburg

would indeed be attending the premiere, when he was initially unable to attend. Christina Hommel introduced me to Herr von Mayenburg and I was able to discuss his work with him and Lukas Turtur, who played Wolfgang in the Munich production.

Through this introduction I have been able to establish contact with von Mayenburg and consult him on several points in my thesis. I am grateful to have another opportunity to engage with *Der Stein* for a second time in greater detail than the seventeen page paper in my undergraduate Drama Theory class. I have studied von Mayenburg's work extensiviely for the past three years and his work has not only influenced my research, but also my command of the German language and my dramaturgical practice. Now, three years after I was first introduced to von Mayenburg's work, I can now smile when I think back on the first words the artist who has been so influencial to my work said when he was introduced to me were, "Gottes Willen!"[1]

[1] "For God's sake!"

CHAPTER 1
POSTWAR GERMAN GUILT: A SHORT OVERVIEW OF CULTURAL DISCOURSE

"Ihr aber, wenn es soweit sein wird
Dass der Mensch dem Menschen ein Helfer ist
Gedenkt unsrer
Mit Nachsicht."

[But you, when at last the time comes
That man can aid his fellow man,
Should think upon us
With leniency.]

-*Die Nachgeborenen*, Bertolt Brecht (tr. Scott Horton)
1939

Since 1945 questions of guilt and responsibility have been intrinsically woven into the German sense of identity and collective memory. The atrocities of the Second World War, committed in the name of National Socialism, are widely known. Modern theorists continue to examine this theme extensively through various frames of references. Popular culture, novels, films, articles, critical examinations, performances and other forms of cultural discourse attempt to understand or commemorate the violence propagated against Jewish and other political, sexual, religious and ethnic groups during the Third Reich. The topic, although seventy years old, continues to interest both scholars and the general public in the ongoing German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*—a form of memory work, which is very broadly defined by Moaz Azaryahu as an attempt to master or overcome the past (3). Within Germany self-examination and understanding of guilt continues to play a vital role in identity. Andrew Stuart Bergerson and his team of scholars explain in *The Happy Burden of History: From Sovereign Impunity to Responsible Selfhood*, "responsibility as we see it begins in *selfhood* itself, in our ways of being and making 'us.' Selfhood is an ordinary part of our daily lives, so it is in the dynamics of everyday life that we look for responsibility" (Bergerson 14). Thus, as is explained later,

responsibility, rather than guilt, becomes an important term in contemporary German identity or, what Bergerson and his team refer to as selfhood, in which memory plays an especially important role.

Memory is according to memory theorist Pierre Nora, "life, born by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived" (145-146). Nora establishes a concept where memory cements itself within an established society. However, as time passes collective (and individual) memory undergoes transformations to better fit within the established narrative, which is also in a constant state of transformation. Changes in memory take place to better situate memory of particular events within societal paradigms of historical understanding. Thus memeory, according to this concept, is fluid. It is this concept of memory developed by Nora von Mayenburg employs in *Der Stein*.

Der Stein presents two versions of a family's historical narrative. The first is the actual event as it unfolds, grandfather Wolfgang's actions during the Nazi era, and the second is the familial memeory of the event. This memory is his daughter and granddaughter's version of the event based on the memory/oral history of his wife Witha. Throughout the play, the spectator witnesses how the memory of Wolfgang's life and death changes and takes on new meaning within the family. Von Mayenburg examines the relationship between bystander, perpetrator and collaborator and how these designations change as the memory surrounding the individual changes based on the dialectic within different groups about the past changes. *Der Stein* takes on the challenge taken on by numerous playwrights, novelists, artists and filmmakers in the postwar

period: How do we in the present situate our forefathers' guilt within our current understanding of self without damaging the positive perception of self.

In the vast cultural discourse that has emerged both in the popular as well as in the critical sphere, this guilt-question does not singularly seek to identify Germans as unquestionably guilty, but rather identify degrees of guilt as well as degrees of responsibility. It has shaped how Germans view themselves in throughout the postwar period. Vast amounts of academic research exist on this topic and hundreds of widely popular films and plays. An entire industry has been built on this concept of German guilt. Monuments have been erected across Europe in memory of the victims of fascism[2] and the Holocaust, with at least one placard or monument in every major German city as well as the majority of smaller cities.

Prior to the end of the war, works of art began to emerge dealing with the question of guilt and what was to be done by the German *jederman*. At the beginning of the war in 1939 German poet and playwright Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) wrote *Die Nachgeborenen* (*To those born after*), commonly translated as *To Those Who Follow in Our Wake* or *To Posterity*—quoted above—which begs the next generation not to judge their parents' sins too harshly. Brecht wrote several overtly anti-fascist plays during the war such as *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reichs* (*Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*) in 1938 and *Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui* (*The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*) in 1941 while in exile. Likewise, Carl Zuckmayer (1896-1977) wrote his play *Des Teufels General* (*The Devil's General*) shortly after the end of the war in 1946 while in the United States, where he—like Brecht—spent the war years. Whereas Brecht offers a pointed commentary on the German government and the Nazis in his antifascist works,

[2] Victims of fascism and victims of the Holocaust must be distinguished from one another because within Soviet and East German ideology there could be no Holocaust because it meant that the Germans sought to wipe out a specific group outside of the Soviet people. It also meant World War II (The Great Patriotic War) was not directed as an attack on the Soviet Union, but rather on an ethnic/religious group.

Des Teufels General examines the role of the German people not as perpetrators but as collaborators. Another important German drama that has been widely performed in Germany since 1946 is Wolfgang Borchert's (1921-1947) *Draußen vor der Tür* (*The Man Outside*), which examines the immediate postwar situation from the perspective of a soldier returning home from the Eastern Front. Borchert's drama examines how the horrors of war affect returning soldiers, who, like the playwright himself, had no or little choice in their participation. The major themes examined by these playwrights reflect the major philosophical questions of the period.

The three major theorists investigating German guilt in the immediate postwar period were: Karl Jaspers (1883-1969), Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) of the Frankfurt School and German-Jewish philosopher Hannah Arendt (1906-1975). The work of these academics continues to have a lasting impact on scholars in and outside of Germany. Jaspers wrote his polemic *The Question of German Guilt* in 1946. He asserts the existence of four different forms of guilt: criminal guilt, for those directly responsible for the execution of the crimes of the Third Reich; political guilt, for those with the power to influence and carry out the laws; moral guilt, for those who carried out orders and are morally responsible for their deeds. Lastly, metaphysical guilt, which is founded on the belief all human beings are co-responsible for "every wrong and every injustice in the world, especially for crimes committed in his presence or with his knowledge. If I fail to do whatever I can to prevent them, I too am guilty" (26). Jaspers distinguishes in his polemic where jurisdiction lies in the judgment for those 'responsible' (a term explained below): For the criminally guilty jurisdiction lies in the court of law, for the politically guilty the victor, for the morally guilty their conscience, and for the metaphysically guilty jurisdiction lies with "God alone" (26). Jaspers identifies the need in the immediate aftermath of the war to find a way to escape blame and guilt placed on them by the victors and

neutral countries—a theory shared by Adorno (Jasper 21). Karl Jasper's work explores the consequences of the Second World War and the Third Reich for the millions of surviving Germans retrospectively from the perspective of a German citizen.

Adorno, a German philosopher and sociologist, explores the theme of guilt in *Guilt and Defense: On the Legacies of National Socialism in Postwar Germany* and several essays. *Guilt and Defense* examines how the German people worked through their guilt, highlighting: negotiation, false internalization, acknowledgement, denial and excuses (72-79). Two of Adorno's most influential essays on National Socialism are "The Meaning of Working Through the Past" (1959) and "Education After Auschwitz" (1966). In both essays he examines the question of how the German people can move forward after National Socialism, while stating:

> National Socialism lives on, and even today we still do not know whether it is merely the ghost of what was so monstrous that it lingers on after its own death, or whether it has not yet died at all, whether willingness to commit the unspeakable survives in people as well as in the conditions that enclose them. ("The Meaning" 213-214)

Much like his contemporaries, Adorno examines the question of what should happen to the surviving Germans in the postwar, post-Hitler years. The central focus of his theses is what to do with the *absolute Negativität* that followed Auschwitz, spurring his famous statement there can be no poetry after Auschwitz.

Jaspers' former student, Hannah Arendt, one of the Twentieth Century's most influential and important political theorists and a stanch critic of Adorno, wrote extensively on the question of German guilt. Throughout her postwar career Arendt attempted to come to terms with the crimes of the German people as a Jewish person who was forced to flee Germany in 1933. She wrote extensively on the question of guilt in relation to responsibility. According to Arendt guilt

is an individual and direct emotion felt by those who are criminally or politically guilty—employing Jaspers' definitions ("Collective Responsibility" 147). Responsibility acts as a more useful distinction for the German people, because—similar to her mentor's concept of metaphysical guilt—responsibility comes from membership within a group (149). Equally important to the concepts of guilt and responsibility is Arendt's work examining what she called the "banality of evil," becoming an unthinking participant in a fundamentally wrong system (*Eichmann in Jerusalem*; "Guilt and Responsibility" 128). Thinking is essential to Arendt's postwar philosophy and came to play a major role in how she and many others look at the National Socialist period.

Arendt's concept of responsibility is especially poignant to this analysis of *Der Stein* because guilt is associated with direct involvement in a crime or wrongdoing. Conversely, as previously stated, one may be responsible without direct involvement. Arendt states, "guilt, unlike responsibility, singles out; it is strictly personal. It is only in a metaphorical sense we can say we *feel* guilty for the sins of our fathers or our people or mankind, in short, for deeds we have not done, although the course of events may well make us pay for them" ("Collective Responsibility" 147). The Heising family in *Der Stein* (specifically Hannah and Heidrun) cannot be literally guilty because they were in no way directly or indirectly involved in Witha and Wolfgang's actions from 1935 to 1945. As Arendt states, they can only feel guilty in a metaphorical sense for these actions. Thus, in the preceeding discussion of *Der Stein* the Arendtian definition of responsibility applies much better to this analysis then guilt.

While the work of these historians, philosophers and political theorists fundamentally shaped the continuing guilt discourse, in the immediate aftermath of the war the first concern of the devastated nation was to rebuild and find a semblance of order. Germany in 1945 was

occupied by the victorious Allied forces, largely destroyed and split into two parts: the Russians occupied East and the American, British and French occupied West. In the West, from 1945 to the fall of the Berlin Wall (*Mauerfall*) in 1989 and Reunification in 1990, several different historical debates and memory trends emerged. In East Germany there was a singular state-sanctioned historical narrative of innocence by virtue of association with the victors (Moeller 39). In the West the first period of remembering was centered on the *Wirtschaftswunder*, the economic wonder or the rapid period of reconstruction in the West. However, theorist Regina Feldman asserts that by focusing on the rebuilding process, Germans fled from the problematic past (Feldman 254).

In this first part of the postwar period Hannah Arendt noted a surprising lack of mourning (Arendt in Giesen 115). This phenomenon was againt noted during the *Historikerstreit* of the 1980s by German academics such as Hermann Lübbe, Alexander Mitscherlich and Margarete Mitscherlich who refer to the war generation's response to the past as an 'inability to mourn' (Mitscherlich and Mitscherlich) or 'communicative silence' (Lübbe; qtd. in Giesen 116). However, the concept of silence does not accurately describe the postwar German atmosphere as the question of guilt remained central within literature, art, film and many other facets of both East and West German life.

Despite the victory narrative associated with the position of the Soviet state, East Germany produced several early films known as *Trümmerfilm*, rubble films—films that show the destruction of the war through the destroyed reminants of the major cities such as Berlin and Munich. In 1946 the East German film *Der Mörder sind unter uns* (*The Murderers are among Us*) set in Berlin was released. A year later the Munich based film *Zwischen gestern und morgen* (*Between Yesterday and Tomorrow*; 1947) premiered in West Germany. Other East German

films dealing with the theme of war and the postwar atmosphere such as *Ehe im Schatten* (*Marriage in the Shadows*; 1947) and *Die Affäre Blum* (*Blum Affair*; 1948) were released. During the 1950s films such as *Rosen für den Staatsanwalt* (*Roses for the Prosecutor*; 1959) emerged in West Germany. This list of films is representative of some of most important and influential films to emerge out of Germany in the immediate aftermath of the war. This early period of German film marks the beginning of the postwar memorialization paradigm within both the German and international filmmaking community. The continued popularity of the theme illustrates the early infiltration of the film industry with postwar memory, a designation that continues to change and mold with different generations.

Within the early postwar period authors and poets also attempted to find a way to negotiate with the past. For many authors the topic was difficult to broach. Even playwright Bertolt Brecht fell relatively silent on the National Socialist past after his return to East Germany in 1949, focusing mainly on directing his Berliner Ensemble and writing relatively few plays in his final years. In the West, Wolfgang Koeppen (1906-1996) in *Tauben im Gras* (*Pigeons in the Grass*; 1951) and *Der Tod in Rom* (*Death in Rome*; 1954) and Heinrich Böll (1917-1985) in *Billard um halbzehn* (*Billards at Half-past Nine*; 1959) and *Und sagte kein einziges Wort* (*And Never Said a Word*; 1953) negotiated with the war history in their novels; these authors faced what literary theorist Michael Minden calls "the shameful past [with] the prospect for moral and aesthetic survival" (136-137). During this period Günter Grass (1927-2015) first emerged with his breakout novel *Die Blechtrommel* (*The Tin Drum*; 1959), winning the title voice of his generation.

In East Germany early postwar theatre practice remained firmly centered around the classics such as Goethe's *Faustus* (1806/1808) and Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* (*Nathan the*

Wise; 1779). Adaptations and variations on the pieces that did not honor what the government saw as fit were promptly rejected. Austrian composer Hanns Eisler (1898-1962) and Brecht's 1953 adaptation of *Urfaust* was rejected by the SED government for this reason (Minden 165). Similarly, Heiner Müller (1929-1995), one of Brecht's successors at the Berliner Ensemble, was subject to the same censoring forces in East Germany. His *Leben Gundlings Friedrich von Preußen Lessings Schlaf Traum Schrei (Gundling's Life Frederick of Prussia Lessing's Sleep Dream Scream*; 1979)—a direct attack on *Nathan der Weise*—was also rejected by the East German government (Fox 1).

Within the GDR's literary scene, it was during the early years of the postwar period that some of the regime's best selling novels dealing with the question of guilt were produced. Eduard Claudius' (1911-1976) *Menschen an unserer Seite* (*The People by our Side*; 1951), Erik Neutsch's (1931-2013) best-selling *Spur der Steine* (*Traces of Stones*; 1964), Bruno Apitz's (1900-1979) prose hit *Nackt unter Wölfen* (*Naked among Wolves*; 1958), and Christa Wolf's (1929-2011) *Der geteilte Himmel* (*Divided Sky*; 1963). Wolf directly confronts her own relationship to the Nazi past in *Nachdenken über Christa T* (*Reflections on Christa T*; 1968) and *Kinderheitsmuster* (*Patterns of Childhood*; 1976). Both Wolf and Müller remained important literary and political figures in East Germany. Following the end of the GDR both Wolf and Müller were celebrated survivors of East German theatre and literature.

During the early period visual artists from both East and West Germany active prior to the National Socialist regime such as Heinz Trökes (1913-1997; Image 1), Fritz Winter (1905-1976; Image 2), Ernst Wilhelm Nay (1902-1968; Image 3), and Willi Baumeister (1889-1955; Image 4) re-emerged. Notable in all of the paintings created by these artists—as is clearly visible in images 1 to 4—is the disorganized and chaotic nature typical of the artist, many of whom were

former expressionists. Possibly one of the most important spaces for art in the German postwar period is the unlikely city of Kassel, in Hessen. In 1955, the city of Kassel hosted the first Documenta, an art event created by Arnold Bode, still held every five years in Kassel. It was as an attempt, according to art critic Werner Haftmann, to "re-engage in a conversation that has been interrupted for so long" (*artsnews.org*). It brought artists from across both Germanies and around the world together in the heavily damaged city of Kassel, which in 1955 was still in the process of being rebuilt.

Interest in the National Socialist past continued in both East and West Germany well into the 1960s, when according to historians in West Germany a Holocaust centered narrative became the prevalent memory paradigm (Schmitz 95). Historiography emerging from the West now focused on the Germans less as the victims of Hitler, who had been tricked into National Socialism, but as perpetrators. The new generation of Germans now saw their parents' generation as a generation of perpetrators, not only responsible but also guilty. This generation of Germans, known as the '68ers, came to age during the year of the student protests across Europe and no longer accepted their parents' silence. This generation played a key role in the historians' debate, the *Historikerstreit*, of the 1980s. The '68ers, made up of those born just before or just after the war, began to interrogate their parents' memories of the Third Reich.

Image 1: Heinz Trökes, *Die Mondkanone* (1946)

Image 2: Fritz Winter; *Vor Braun* (1961)

Image 3: Ernst Wilhelm Nay, *Die Nacht* (1963)

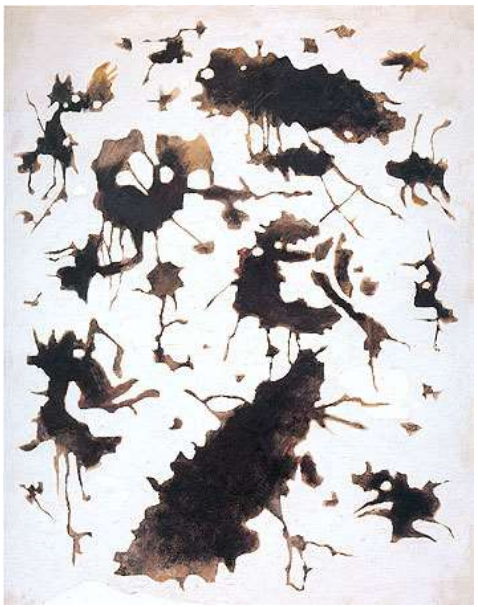

Image 4: Willi Baumeister, *Metamorphose schwarz* (1950)

In Austria guilt for the nation's role in National Socialism wasn't addressed until the 1980s. A number of influential Austrian poets, authors and playwrights began the process of exploring the themes of guilt prior to the eighties, but the topic was not widely accepted or acknowledged (Minden 137). Playwrights and novelists such as Elfriede Jelinek (1946-), Thomas Bernhard (1931-1989), Ingeborg Bachmann (1926-1973) and Peter Handke (1942-), much like their German counterparts, wrote abstractly about Austrian guilt, responsibility and involvedness in Nazi crimes. Perhaps the most direct implication comes in Bernhard's *Vor dem Ruhestand* (*The Eve of Retirement*; 1979), which centered on a family in the midst of their annual celebration of Heinrich Himmler's birthday in the postwar period. In West Germany playwright Rolf Hochhuth's (1931-) play *Der Stellvertreter: Ein christliches Trauerspiel* (*The Deputy*; 1963) was a widely popular (and provocative) play in the newly re-popularized docudrama genre. Likewise, Peter Weiss (1916-1982) premiered his docudrama *Die Ermittlung* (*The Investigation*; 1965), shortening the thousands of hours and hundreds of witnesses of the Auschwitz Process—which tried soldiers in charge or working at the camps—to five hours and nine unnamed witnesses. For the '68ers the trials of Nazi war criminals were incredibly important, because they removed the faceless quality of the many Germans who worked in concentration camps and were responsible for the systematic murder of millions of people. These people were not monsters, rather they looked just like their parents: normal, unassuming: as Adolf Eichmann did in his 1964 trail in Jerusalem.

By the 1980s the students of the 1968 student rebellions had finished their education and begun their tenures at universities across Germany. The first generation of academics to face the guilt question—Jaspers, Adorno and Arendt—had all passed away, leaving their former students in to fill their positions. In this academic environment in the mid to late 1980s the

Historikerstreit took place (Feldman 257). The essential argument took place between leftist Jürgen Habermas, his adepts and the more conservative Klaus Hildebrand, Hagen Schulze and Michael Stürmer about the place of the Holocaust within academic discourse and, more broadly, German identity (258).

The older artists paved the way for the younger group of artists such as Georg Baselitz (1938-; Image 5), whose work examined the abyss left by the war through paintings such as *Die große Nacht im Eimer* (*The Big Night in the Bucket*; 1962/3). Alongside Baselitz, some of Germany's most important painters and visual artists began working during the sixties reaching the paramount of their careers in the early eighties. These artists include Anselm Kiefer (1945-; Image 6), Gerhard Richter (1932-; Image 7), Hilla (1934-) and Bernd Becher (1931-2007; Image 9) of the Bauhaus movement, installation artist Joseph Beuys (1921-1986) and Sigmar Polke (1941-2010; Image 8). These artists were, like their predecessors, deeply influenced by Germany's past and continued to attempt to find a way to negotiate the past either by taking it on directly, or by highlighting the pointlessness through abstract images. These artists remained important throughout the 1980s and many remain active and important stakeholders in Germany's current artistic community.

Image 5: Georg Baselitz, *Die große Nacht im Eimer* (1962/3

Image 6: Anselm Kiefer, *Maikäfer flieg* (1974)

Image 7: Gerhard Richter, *Veraltungsgebäude* (1964)

Image 8: Sigmar Polke, *Untitled* (2007)

Image 9: Hilla and Bernd Becher, *Wassertürme* (2006)

In the 1970s and 80s alongside the *Historikerstreit* and Holocaust centered memories in West Germany, National Socialism continued to be explored in film and television. American and international films such as Marvin Chomsky's series *Holocaust* (1978) and Claude Lanzmann's documentary *Shaoh* (1985) played in West German theatres and on television. Grass' *Die Blechtrommel* was made into a hugely successful film in 1979, directed by Volker Schlöndorff, and the German series *Heimat* began in 1984, and ran until 2013 with the final episode. In East Germany films such as *Jakab der Lügner* (*Jacob the Liar*; 1975) continued to be produced. East Germany publicly maintained its narrative of innocence and its position as victors. During the 1980s new theoretical work surrounding the question of guilt and the *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* emerged in the West through Peter Sloterdijk's *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft* (*Critique of Cynical Reason*; 1983), which—much like Friederich Meinecke did with the Prussian government and the Nazi regime in *Die deutsche Katostrophe* (*The German Catastrophe*; 1947)—linked the Weimar Republic to the contemporary West German government.

Image 10: Ernst Thälmann Monument, Weimar

Monuments in East Germany largely commemorate political prisoners such as Communist leader Ernst Thälmann (1886-1944), whose monuments are still found in Weimar and East Berlin (Image 10). In both East and West Germany concentration camps such as Sachsenhausen and Dachau were transformed into memorial sites, which schools visited regularly for field trips commemorating the political prisoners and the Soviet liberators. East

German monuments recalled political prisoners and fallen Soviet soldiers—the monuments in the concentration camps in Sachsenhausen and Büchenwald still stand, as do monuments to Russian soldiers in Berlin (Image 11). Within West Germany commemoration, in the form of statues and concentration camps, focuses more on the massive scope of Jewish victims. In 1982 Beuys created a large-scale memorial in Kassel. With *Beuys 7000 oak project*, originally an installation project aimed for completion in Documenta 4, the artist hoped to plant seven thousand oak trees with a small stone pillar standing next to each tree. The project, still in Kassel today under the continued maintenance of a group of citizens, signifies the hope for a new Germany.

Image 11: Monument at Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp. The orange triangles represent political prisoners.

The year 1989 signaled the beginning of the end for the GDR with the *Mauerfall*. The GDR regime officially ended in 1990 with Reunification. Germany now had to unite not only two separate nations but also two separate histories. Within the new guilt and Holocaust debate, Habermas once again emerged at the forefront, stating in the newly united Germany Auschwitz stood merely as a warning for what Germany could become. Within the newly unified nation, new memorials began to appear across Germany to memorialize and create a shared past. Most notable is Berlin's controversial five-acre Holocaust memorial (*Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*) in Berlin's city center designed by Jewish-American Peter Eisenmann.

Since the Reunification, a number of German histories and documentaries have returned to the narrative of German victimhood seen in the immediate postwar period among the war generation. Jörg Friedrich's books *Der Brand: Deutschland im Bombenkrieg 1940-1945* (*The Fire: Germany During the Bomb War 1940-1945*; 2001) and *Der Brandstätten: Der Anblick des Bombenkriegs* (*Burnt Cities: A Look at the Bomb War*; 2003). Guildo Knopp's five part documentary series *Die große Flucht* (*The Great Flight*) (2001) and Roland Suso Richter's *Dresden* (2006)—partially based on Friedrich's books—also situate Germans as the victims of the war.

However, current historical analysis of 1930s and 40s do not exclusively employ the victimhood narrative. Rather since the *Mauerfall* a greater number of narratives have emerged. Author Bernhard Schlink has explored guilt among those working in the concentration camps in *Der Vorleser* (*The Reader*; 1995). Grass released *Im Krebsgang* (*Crabwalk*) in 2002 and his controversial memoire *Beim Häuten der Zweibel* (*Peeling the Union*) in 2006, which revealed his own involvement in the war. Most recently Timur Vermes released the hit book *Er ist wieder da* (*He's Back*; 2012), which returned Hitler to present day Germany. New films about the Nazi past continue to be appear: Caroline Link's *Nirgendwo in Afrika* (*Nowhere in Africa*; 2001), Hardy Martins' *Soweit die Füße tragen* (*As Far as My Feet Will Carry Me*; 2001), *Die Untergang* (*Downfall*; 2004), and *Sophie Scholl – Die letzten Tage* (*Sophie Scholl – The Last Days*; 2005) just to name a few. In 2012 David Wnendt examined the continued presence of Neo-Nazi organizations in the former East with his film *Kriegerin* (*Combat Girls*) and in 2013 the four part series by Philipp Kadelbach *Unsere Mütter, unsere Väter* (*Generation War*) examined the war and National Socialism from a uniquely German perspective. Additionally the film version of Vermes *Er ist wieder da*, directed by Wnendt, is to be released in October of 2015.

Image 12: Philip Groezinger. *before he was halfway* (2013)

Visual artists build off the abstract style of their predecessors as is visible in the works of Anselm Reyle (1970-; Image 12) and Philip Groezinger (1972-; Image 13). Within theatre, Nobel-prize winner Elfriede Jelinek continues to explore the question of guilt and Nazism in novels, poetry, essays and plays such as *Wolken.Heim.* (*Clouds.Home.*; 1988), *Ein Sportstück* (*A Sport Play*; 1998) and *Das Lebewohl* (*The Farewell*; 2001). German directors such as Einar Schleef (1944-2001) and Christoph Schlingensief (1960-2010) in their collaborations with Jelinek dealt with the uncomfortable theme of Nazism in their *mise-en-scène*s. Of the young generation of playwrights, the '98ers[3]—those who came to age around 1998—such as Dea Loher (1964-) with *Olgas Raum* (*Olga's Room*; 1992) continue the theatrical tradition of working through the past. Thomas Schmauser at the Münchner Kammerspiele remounted *Olgas Raum* as *Erklär mir, Leben* (*Explain to me, Life*) using a new structure and exploring old themes from a new perspective. Another important

Image 13: Anselm Reyle. *Little Yorkshire* (2010)

[3] I am borrowing the term '98ers from Carol Rocamora's 2001 article in the New York Times "The Germans Call it 'Vergangenheitsbewaltigung': The Germans Have A Big Word for It". She uses the term to "connote the year of Mr. Ostermeier's award-winnering production of Mr. Ravinhill's 'Shopping and [Fucking]' when the new, text-drivenera was recognized)."

contemporary member of the '98ers is Marius von Mayenburg, whose 2008 drama explored the themes of National Socialism and false remembrance of the past. Throughout the *Wirtschaftwunder* in West Germany destroyed monuments were reconstructed, however, it was not until 2005 that the newly re-constructed Frauenkirchen in Dresden, which had been completely destroyed in the fire-bombings of February 13, 1945, reopened for the city's eight hundredth anniversary, marking an important point in Germany's post-war reconstruction process.

The ongoing conversation about German guilt discourse extends far beyond the borders of Germany. The theme of Nazi atrocities reaches past a merely German context and touches on a more philosophical question: why would the majority of the German people, a historically enlightened nation, agree to the violent clause within the social contract offered by the Nazis (Bergerson 56)? How did a generation continue to operate normally, fulfilling their everyday work and familial obligations, in the midst of a genocide? This *banality* fascinates philosophers and artists alike. Arendt first identified the concept of the 'word-and-thought-defying' banality of evil in *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* in 1964 (252). American playwright Donald Freed directly engages with Arendt's polemic in his 2003 play *The White Crow: Eichmann Before Jerusalem*, which portrays a fictional conversation between Eichmann and Dr. Balm, a Jewish psychiatrist trying to understand his actions. The Eichmann trial reveals an uncomfortable reality: many Germans operated normally and even prospered under the National Socialist regime. They did not considered their acts at the time as morally wrong, because they did not, legally speaking, break any laws. According to Arendt, they simply adopted an unthinking stance, because the ability to work and find work within the existing system justified the evils of the system, creating a society of unthinking cogs. One must not

consider the faults and sins of the governing power, because the bureaucratic machine functions smoothly and efficiently.

Von Mayenburg, like Arendt and Freed in their examinations of Eichmann, explores the banality of the everyday. *Der Stein* looks at the daily life of the Heising family in the prewar, wartime and postwar periods. The family patriarch Wolfgang secures a house for his young family in 1935 by reporting his Jewish employer to the *Sturmabteilung* (SA). Although Wolfgang's acts are retrospectively immoral, there is a terrifying normality involved in them as well. Wolfgang, like so many Germans, is able to prosper under the regime because he does his civic duty. In hindsight, even Eichmann saw himself as an outstanding citizen and just as Eichmann chose to "hang [him]self in public," by accepting his fate at the trial in Jerusalem, Wolfgang decides it is ultimately better to die an upstanding German, 'als aufrechter Deutscher' (*Eichmann* 242; *Der Stein* 53). Von Mayenburg builds off the longstanding debate about why and how the Third Reich happened, providing a case study in banality.

Von Mayenburg enters the debate from a specific dramaturgical tradition, which embraces the deconstruction of narrative and non-linear time. These techniques are well practiced in von Mayenburg's oeuvre, as is explained in Chapter Two. *Der Stein* directly explores the question of guilt (associated with Wolfgang and Witha), familial responsibility, individual relation to the past and even the theme of *Ostalgie*—nostalgia for the former East seen in films like *Helden wie wir* (*Heroes like Us*; 1999), *Sonnenallee* (1999) and *Good Bye, Lenin!* (2003). Von Mayenburg reaches far beyond the 1945 debate of morals, questioning the role of current generation in historical consciousness. While this question is further examined in Chapter Three's close reading of the play, it is clear von Mayenburg engages in a debate with contemporary depictions of the past, which white wash history by blending Hitler out and

creating happy-endings such as *Die Untergang* (von Mayenburg email). For von Mayenburg being historically responsible in the present means keeping ourselves politically and historically informed—the concept of *thinking* in Arendt's philosophy. This means having a critical understanding of the role of the past in our present. For Arendt the inability to think leads to inaction or the failure of action based on failing to critically interact with the policies of the regime, as she saw Eichmann as guilty of.

CHAPTER 2:
MARIUS VON MAYENBURG: A SHORT INTRODUCTION

"I still believe in story and I still believe in character."
-Marius von Mayenburg (Nestruck)

Berlin-based playwright Marius von Mayenburg has in recent years become one of Germany's most important and internationally performed German playwrights. Von Mayenburg was born in Munich in 1972, where he grew up. He began his career with the study of medieval literature at Munich's Ludwig-Maximilian-University, but in 1992 he moved to Berlin, where between 1994 and 1998 he studied playwriting at Hochschule der Künste. Since his initial breakthrough hit *Feuergesicht* (*Fireface*) in 1998 at the Münchner Kammerspiele, restaged across Germany and translated into numerous languages, von Mayenburg has filled various roles in Germany's theatrical community. He is currently closely associated with Berlin's Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz as head dramaturge as well as playwright-in-residence. This connection stems from the longstanding partnership with artistic director Thomas Ostermeier. The latter worked with von Mayenburg during his tenure at the Baracke at the Deutsches Theater, bringing von Mayenburg with him in the move from the Baracke to the Schaubühne in 1999. The Baracke was the Deutsches Theater's theatre for young directors and dramatists such as Ostermeier who first emerged in the nineties. The short-lived Baracke, which opened in 1996 and closed in 1999, focused on producing the work of emerging young dramatists, focusing specifically on plays dealing with the issues of the modern world: drugs, sex, crime and power. Fifteen years later, von Mayenburg continues to work with Ostermeier as a dramaturge, playwright, translator/adaptor and, since 2008, also as stage director.

Von Mayenburg, building off the legacy of British dramatists Mark Ravenhill and Sarah Kane, belongs to the generation referred to by British critic Michael Billington as the 'Blood and

Sperm Generation,' or the 'Fire and Fury Brigade' (Billington 2000). This group of young playwrights—von Mayenburg was only twenty-six when *Feuergesicht* premiered—embraces gritty materialist realism, provocative themes, and extreme physical, emotional and psychological violence. Referring to the movement's British counterpart, most often called In-Yer-Face Theatre, Piet Defraeye explains there is "*too much* of the reality in its dramaturgy" (92). This particular aspect of von Mayenburg's aesthetic, an over-load of reality, is trademark of the particular brand of drama emerging from the Schaubühne—also a notable aspect of Ostermeier's directorial aesthetic and associated with materialist realism.

Von Mayenburg belongs to a particular movement, which has been described by Ostermeier as a reaction against or, more accurately, a rejection of Hans-Thies Lehrmann's *postdramatic* movement ("Erkenntnis" 2). According to Ostermeier, theatre's purpose is to unmask the powerful and reveal existing power structures to the spectator (1). Central to this concept is the story, and consequently both von Mayenburg and Ostermeier's work is narrative centered. For artists such as Ostermeier the postdramatic only exists in a world where there is no more narrative because the subject is no longer identifiable. The spectator and performers' experience in the world is so completely disoriented that responsibility is no longer possible and hopelessness takes hold ("Der Kapitalismus liebt die Stille nicht" 8). The purpose of von Mayenburg and his contemporaries' aesthetic at the Schaubühne is to display the cracks within the modern capitalist system, expose the audience to the systemic problems of Western society. This aesthetic is called capitalist realism, named after the art movement in the 1990s. This aesthetic must not be mistaken for pessimistic, because, for these playwrights, there is still hope within this capitalist world. There is still a place and purpose for catharsis in the system, whereas according to Lehmann within the postdramatic there is no place for catharsis. Theatre must show

the current crisis of capitalism so the spectator is aware of the failure of the system and is able to react or reflect on it. Thus von Mayenburg's dramas employ a form of materialist realism with highly heighted and emotionally charged responses to everyday conflict.

Feuergesicht (1998), von Mayenburg's first major success, shows spectators the dysfunctional family life of siblings Kurt and Olga. Kurt, a troubled teenager, is engaged in an incestuous relationship with his sister. Although their parents ignore the romantic relationship, they are horrified by the discovery of a burnt bird corpse in the backyard, recognizing the perpetrator is clearly Kurt. When Olga meets her first boyfriend and brings him home the familial tension hits a boiling point. Kurt murders his parents and burns their corpses. The play presents a seemingly normal family with seemingly normal, but rebellious teenagers. However, the play escalates from middle-class family conflict to perverse heights of incest and murder.

Rapid escalation of actions and extreme violence is a trademark of von Mayenburg's work. British playwright Sarah Kane is one of von Mayenburg's major inspirations; her plays from the early nineties also feature extreme escalation of violence. In 2000, in one of the early Ostermeier productions at the Schaubühne, von Mayenburg translated and dramaturged Kane's *Crave*. In an article co-written by von Mayenburg and Ostermeier on Kane's suicide in 1999 the authors observe although Kane's plays are extremely violent in actual themes they have little to do with violence. Violence (physical, psychological, emotional) is instead a tool, highlighting the centrality of yearning for basic human contact and the impossibility of any real closeness for Kane's characters ('Klarheit und Schärfe'). Likewise, although violence is a constant element throughout von Mayenburg's oeuvre, it is never a central theme. Rather the byproduct of a fundamentally flawed and broken system or societal unit. Violence becomes a tool for those trapped within the system, illustrating their isolation and powerlessness.

Shortly after *Feuergesicht*'s initial success *Haarmann*, one of von Mayenburg's earliest plays written while he was still at Hochschule der Künste, premiered at Schauspiel Hannover in 2001. *Haarmann*, as the name suggests, retells the true story of the German serial killer Fritz Haarmann, the Butcher of Hannover. This play is the only historical *pièce à clef* in von Mayenburg's oeuvre, but unquestionably maintains his violent and—at times—borderline nihilistic aesthetic. The play follows the homosexual killer Haarmann as he murders and mutilates young men in Hannover. The figure of Haarmann as the impotent, hyper-violent, male figure is a common construct in von Mayenburg's plays. This impotent male figure also features in *Turista* and *Perplex*.

In *Perplex* (*Perplexed*; 2010) Sebastian is the closeted homosexual at his wife's costume party who fills the role of the impotent male. *Perplex*, one of von Mayenburg's most non-linear plays, jumps rapidly from scene to scene, showing characters with the same name—and often little else in common—thrust into different situations. The two female and two male characters jump from conflict to conflict: the electricity bill hasn't been paid, Robert and Sebastian have sex on the couch while their wives chatter mindlessly in the foreground, Eva wears the wrong costume to the costume party, the bed-and-breakfast owner is a Nazi and the rehearsal is interrupted because the set needs to be taken down and the director left rehearsal early… or was he ever there? Unlike most of von Mayenburg's plays, there is no clear single narrative uniting the play's different parts. Fragmentation continues to be an important part of von Mayenburg's aesthetic, but, with the notable exception of *Perplex*, his work still largely maintains a concrete narrative.

Written for the collaboration between von Mayenburg and the Schaubühne in Berlin and Flemish director Luk Perceval and Het Tonnelhuis in Antwerp, the premiere production of

Turista in 2005 featured actors from Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium. Each linguistic group speaks their native language onstage, isolating the characters from each other on a socio-linguistic level. The play was originally written monolingually in German and later translated into the various languages heard in production. The play's large cast of twenty-four characters stands in stark contrast to the normally, smaller-scale aesthetic of von Mayenburg's oeuvre—his plays generally feature between five and seven actors.

Turista is a single scene restarted and replayed seven separate times, but each with the same inevitable outcome: the death of young Oli. The play takes place in a European campground near Waterloo—although whether this location is indeed *the* Waterloo in today's Belgium where Napoleon was defeated in 1815 is unclear. The campground is filled with families: Oli, his siblings, his mother and her lover; Sylvia and her family, mourning the loss of their son; a couple that won't leave their tent; a group of hunters; a sexually abusive father and his family; and a clinical psychologist with a group of disturbed and dangerous patients. The campground is crowded, colorful and, true to von Mayenburg's aesthetic, a whirlwind of multi-lingual activity. Oli is murdered six times throughout the seven-act play, each time in a different way and by a different camper. *Turista* is nearly two hundred pages in length and five-hours in performance. Although the play consists of the same scene repeated seven times, narrative remains of vital importance.

Turista deals with another common theme in von Mayenburg's plays, the family drama. *Turista* deals with many different families forced together in the single space. The families are separated by language, but even within each unit there is a lack of understanding between family members, creating intra- as well as inter-familial conflict. Von Mayenburg identifies himself as a *Familienautor*, a family author, because he examines family conflict rather than political conflict

in many plays (von Mayenburg qtd. in "Komik der Depression"). Lack of communication and extreme conflict within the family unit is examined in plays such as *Parasiten*, *Das kalte Kind* and *Eldorado*.

Parasiten (*Parasites*; 2000) examines familial, friend and romantic relationships placed under extreme stress. The story surrounds Ringo, a man accidently run over by his friend old Multscher, under the care of his girlfriend Betsi. Much to Ringo's dismay, Betsi also takes in her suicidal pregnant sister Friderike. Friderike's formerly dismissive husband Petrik visits the flat begging forgiveness. Old Multscher, Friderike and Petrik enter the couple's small flat hoping for escape, reconciliation and forgiveness. Instead, the flat erupts into a vicious fight among the friends illustrating the friends' parasitic relationship. They cannot live with or without each other and are a part of a grotesque parasitic relationship. Von Mayenburg uncovers the problematic bonds that exist among family and friends in a cycle of self-fulfillment and dislike.

Likewise, *Das kalte Kind* (*The Cold Child*), which premiered in 2002 directed by Luk Perceval, also explores the relationship of four couples: Silke and Werner, Johann and Lena, Tine and Henning, and Vati und Mutti. Although they all hate each other the couples are bonded together by their mutual dislike. Silke and Werner are the hateful couple at the center of the small group meeting at the Café Polygamy in an unidentified European city. The cold child is Nina, the stillborn baby of Silke and Werner who remains (literally) frozen in the pram, ignored, ripped apart and abused throughout the play. The dysfunction and abuse exemplified in *Das kalte Kind* is a normalized part of the family unit in von Mayenburg's plays.

Eldorado (2004), set in a war-torn world similar to Sarah Kane's 1995 play *Blasted*, observes the casualties of the capitalist world. The audience witnesses the fall from grace—a well-paid position—of social climber Anton, who is fired for forging his boss Aschenbrenner's

signature. Anton attempts to maintain the illusion he is still employed to his pregnant wife Thekla by taking advantage of his mother-in-law Greta and her young lover Oskar. The play examines Anton's lies, which result in the breakdown of his marriage, he loss of his job and eventually his death as the audience witnesses his slow retreat into madness and suicide; another example of von Mayenburg's interest in potentially dangerous and damaging relationships. As well there is clear connection to the form of materialist realism seen in the aesthetic of fellow German theatre practitioner Ostermeier. It is no coincidence the latter directed the premiere of *Eldorado* at the Schaubühne in December of 2004. The dimly lit stage and business attire of characters of Ostermeier's production sets the play firmly in a dystopian capitalist world.

Ostermeier directed the first production of *Parasiten* as well as a later production of *Feuergesicht* at the Schaubühne. Von Mayenburg works as one of Ostermeier's main dramaturges and has translated numerous plays from English into German for Ostermeier, including the award winning adaptation of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (2008), as well as *Othello* (2010), *Measure for Measure* (*Maß für Maß*; 2011) and the recent adaptation of *Richard III* (2015). Ostermeier and von Mayenburg share a critical and materialistic aesthetic in their dramatic works. Both are critical of the current economic system and prefer fast-paced, dynamic pieces. Von Mayenburg's fast-paced realist aesthetic has become increasingly clear within his directorial career since 2008.

In 2007 von Mayenburg began working with Australian director Benedict Andrews, who has worked extensively in Germany at the Schaubühne. Andrews is instrumental in staging contemporary German drama outside of Germany and expanding the sphere of influence of young playwrights such as von Mayenburg. He first directed the English translation of *Feuergesicht* in 2001 with the Sydney Theatre Company—which has also recently produced the

English premiere of *Perplex* April 2014. In 2007 he directed the world premiere arguably von Mayenburg's best-known play *Der Häßliche* (*The Ugly One*), which has since been produced across the globe. Additionally Andrews has directed several other von Mayenburg plays: *Freie Sicht* and *Der Hund, die Nacht und das Messer*.

Der Häßliche is an exploration of the faceless, commoditized capitalist world. Much like *Freie Sicht* and *Der Hund, die Nacht und das Messer* – discussed below – *Der Häßliche* is one of von Mayenburg's more difficult pieces in terms of casting. The play features four actors playing multiple characters. Lette is a brilliant inventor, eager to present his new power outlet, the 2CK connector, to potential clients. However, his boss Scheffler informs Lette his assistant Karlmann will be presenting the plug because Lette is too ugly. Horrified to learn he is ugly, a fact confirmed by Lette's wife Fanny, Lette undergoes plastic surgery by Dr. Scheffler – played by the same actor who played the boss Scheffler. Lette awakens from his surgery unfathomably handsome and is lost in the glamour of his beauty. He has an affair with Fanny, an old rich woman who looks much younger because of plastic surgery, and gains an entourage. However, Scheffler begins to sell Lette's new face as a commodity and soon everyone has his face. No longer the kind, ugly person he once was and no longer the matchlessly beautiful celebrity, Lette is robbed of everything that made him unique.

The perplexing play *Der Hund, die Nacht und das Messer* (*The Dog, the Night and the Knife*; 2008) features a small cast of three actors playing multiple roles. The play's main character M is lost in an unnamed city on a warm August night when he meets a man searching for a dog. The man first offers to help M, but then tries to stab him. M kills the man in self-defense and flees the scene. Everyone M meets throughout the night (men, women, police officers) tries to kill him and M is forced to defend himself, subsequently killing all his attackers.

The requirements for casting are a man to play M as well as one additional male and female actor to play the other characters.

Equally challenging is *Freie Sicht* (*Moving Target*; 2008), which was also directed by Benedict Andrews. The play features an unspecified number of characters, which form a swarm (*ein Schwarm*). The swarm is having a conversation about a troubled young girl. They cannot decide whether her behavior—ignoring her parents and refusing to listen to authority—is a phase or if something about her is fundamentally wrong. They must decide if they should talk to her, punish her, or kill her. The group acknowledges the little girl is a threat to their power because she won't listen to them. Despite their argument to the contrary, they are scared of her and determine the only way to deal with her is to try to stop whatever it is she is doing, using whatever means necessary.

Von Mayenburg's first venture in directing was the 2000 production of *Herr Kolpert* by fellow German playwright David Gieselmann – whose play *Die Tauben* (*The Pigeons*) von Mayenburg directed in 2009 alongside Friedrich Hebbel's *Die Nibelungen* – with co-director Wulf Twiehaus. In 2008 he began his solo-directing career as one of the main directors at Berlin's Schaubühne. Von Mayenburg directed the Berlin premiere of his plays *Perplex* in 2010 and *Märtyrer* (*Martyr*) in 2012 at the Schaubühne. Much like the above-mentioned plays, *Märtyrer* examines the relationship between a group of students and teachers at a Catholic school and Benjamin "Benny" Südel, a troubled young pupil. Although Benny's mother is concerned and speaks to the school's priest, she does relatively little to stop her son's strange behavior. Benny's erratic and violent conduct continues to escalate throughout the play, revealing a newly discovered extremist religious fervor. His personality and increasingly erratic behavior attracts the attention of his classmates, who start to act as his loyal disciples. Benny even succeeds in

winning over a number of his teachers. This newfound extremism climaxes at Benny's attempts to get rid of his 'Jewish' teacher Erika Roth (Benny is the only one who believes Erika Roth is Jewish): First by plotting her murder and later, when murder fails, accusing her of molesting him.

Again, the absolute violence and dysfunction of education and religious institutions alongside a system, which allows young people such as Benny to be ignored and forgotten is present in both the writing and staging of the production. Erika Roth's attempts to help Benny and persuade her co-workers something is wrong with him ultimately fail, leading to her own mental breakdown and self-inflicted violence—nailing her feet to the floor. Using a proscenium audience configuration von Mayenburg creates a classroom atmosphere, filling the round stage of the Schaubühne's C theatre with the eight bodies of his actors as well as tables, chairs, pictures of Jesus and Mary, a cafeteria and a black board.

Likewise, *CALL ME GOD*, directed and co-written by von Mayenburg alongside Gian Maria Cervo, Albert Ostermaier and Rafael Sprengelburd in 2012, employs the same chaotic and violent impact as his other works. While *Märtyrer* explores religious institutions and the dangers of religious extremism within Christianity, *CALL ME GOD* examines the American Beltway Sniper incident of 2002. The play jumps from victim to victim, looking at the failure of the police and the role of American mass media culture in sensationalizing the incident. Both the writing and staging strongly critique American star culture by showing advertising for the books produced on the victims and survivors of the sniper attack in multiple asides.

CALL ME GOD jumps between moments, victims and media appearances with a jarring pace and breakneck rhythm. Indeed, von Mayenburg's plays often maintain this fast-paced structure: *Perplex* jumps from scene to scene with no indication of the change; *Der Hund, die*

Nacht und das Messer follows M as he runs through the city; *Der Häßliche* moves between the actors playing multiple characters. New characters appear and disappear; actors play multiple roles; and the stage maintains a constant state of flux. Social groups, conflict, control, systemic problems and violence are closely examined in von Mayenburg's oeuvre.

In 2008 von Mayenburg's play *Der Stein* premiered in a co-production with the Salzburger Festspiele Young Directors Project and Berlin's Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz, directed by Ingo Berk. Berk previously directed von Mayenburg's *Augenlicht* (*Eyesight*) in 2006 at the Schaubühne—a play that deals with a housekeeper trying to uncover her employer's secret, which lies hidden in a locked room where strange noises are heard. *Der Stein* deals with familial family conflict, control and the uniquely German problem of postwar guilt and family involvement in the period of National Socialism. In *Der Stein* von Mayenburg builds on the artistic and intellectual examination of National Socialism and German postwar guilt discussed in Chapter One.

Der Stein tells the story of the Heising family – grandmother Witha, her daughter Heidrun and her granddaughter Hannah – Witha survives the fire-bombings of Dresden in 1945 and flees East Germany for the West in 1953. The play spans almost sixty years of German history, 1935 to 1993, surrounding the lie Witha tells her daughter about Wolfgang. Witha tells Heidrun, and in turn Heidrun tells Hannah, her father financed a Jewish family's escape, but was tormented for this deed throughout the Nazi era. The lie proceeds to grow until it eventually unravels itself and the truth is revealed in 1993. The play has an extremely complex structure, as is the case with many of von Mayenburg's works, constantly shifting, scene by scene, between 1935 and 1993. The five years the play moves between are 1935, 1945, 1953, 1978 and 1993 observing the creation of the family myth against the slow disintegration of this myth. The play

reflects an extremely complex exploration of a deeply engrained identity and memory crisis in contemporary German society. Chapter Three undertakes an in-depth textual analysis of *Der Stein*, closely looking at the issue of memory and identity in the context of the play and building primarily off the text and Sarantos Zervoulakos' 2014 production at Munich's Residenztheater. Chapter Four explores production and reception of the play using reviews from productions across Germany and beyond.

Von Mayenburg has been extremely successful in his career as a playwright, dramaturge, translator and director. Many of his plays have been performed internationally with critical acclaim, and translation-adaptations such as *Hamlet* have toured Europe. He has worked with numerous directors in Germany, while beginning a career as a director. He continues to work extensively at the Schaubühne and on April 25, 2015 his new play *Stück Plastik* (*A Piece of Plastic*) premiered at the Schaubühne's annual F.I.N.D Festival celebrating new works from across the globe.

The concept of capitalist realism is firmly rooted in the materialism and individualism of the modern capitalist world. Von Mayenburg's starting-point as a playwright is character and narrative. These characters and their situations are relatable for spectators: they are mothers, fathers, friends, etc. attempting to negotiate familial conflict or parasidic relationships. The definition of the aesthetic as capitalist realism is problematic because there is very little realism in the aesthetic. Instead, the realism refers specifically to the materialistic roots of the aesthetic that situate the plays in a world similar to the spectator's. The root of von Mayenburg's work in materialism is exceedingly clear in his work as a director. Productions such as *Märtyrer* and *CALL ME GOD* fill the stage with props and different everyday objects—such as a full classroom with desks, stools, a chalkboard—while the actual story moves into the grotesque.

His narratives often begin with a banal reflection of our everyday world, which is deconstructed and demolished. In *Der Stein* von Mayenburg recasts the seemingly simple story presented at the beginning of the play—the Heising's return to the former family home in Dresden or the desire to move past the war—the most complex and illogical way possible. The recasting process takes place through the introduction of chaos into the dramaturgy with the addition of fragmentation and violence as a result of the deconstruction process. The result of the skewed logic von Mayenburg imbues his characters with is the breakdown of normality to create a grotesque reflection of the everyday.

Der Stein is a prime example of this aesthetic, dealing with the issue of German historical guilt and responsibility. Von Mayenburg presents a commonplace story of a family attempting to escape guilt by recreating and simplifying the past. However, the play's fragmented structure jumping among the years 1935, 1945, 1953, 1978 and 1993 creates a disjointed and grotesque reality, as the spectator must witness the misgivings of the past alongside the misunderstandings of the present. When the truth is revealed the play returns the spectator to the chronological beginning of the play with no conclusion but the knowledge the family's understanding of self has forever been changed.

Von Mayenburg deconstructs the everyday and the fragmentation and extremism visible in his plays facilitates a critical analysis of society, both the individual members and its socio-political problems. The fast-paced and cyclical structure he employs illustrates the absence of telos or certainty in his plays. The spectator is returned to the state of confusion and disjuncture they experience at the beginning of the play. Von Mayenburg deals with complex societal issues in many of his work and does not shy away from controversial topics such as guilt and responsibility, family conflict and the failures of contemporary society. He lays bare in *Der Stein*

the desire to construct myths: forgetting (Witha), memorializing (Heidrun) and understanding (Hannah).

CHAPTER 3:
UNCOVERING DER STEIN: A CLOSE-READING

> "A family without secrets is rare indeed. [. . .] families make every effort to keep certain things concealed form the rest of the world, and at times from each other as well. Things will be lied about, or simply never mentioned. Sometimes family secrets are so deeply buried that they elude the conscious awareness of those most closely involved. … Secrets, perhaps, are a necessary condition of the stories we are prompted by memory to tell about our lives." (Annette Kuhn 1995 1-2)

Marius von Mayenburg wrote *Der Stein* in a 2008 co-production with the Young Directors Project at Salzburger Festspiele with Berlin's Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz. On July 31, 2008 *Der Stein* premiered in Salzburg under the direction of Ingo Berk and was followed by a run at the Schaubühne (*Schaubühne Program* 1). *Der Stein* chronicles the Heising family between 1933 and 1993. The play, set in a house in Dresden, not only spans sixty years of German history, but also sixty years of a family's secrets, lies and deceptions.

Der Stein explores the complex issues of guilt, responsibility, family and memory within modern German society. The following chapter undertakes an in-depth analysis of von Mayenburg's play. The three main elements examined are: *Der Stein*'s narrative structure, the role of memory and the symbolic significance of the house and the stone. Director Sarantos Zervoulakos' 2014 production at Munich's Residenztheater acts as a framing device, illustrating how these elements of *Der Stein* are realized, or fail to be realized, onstage.

THE PLAY:

Der Stein is about the fictional Heisings and their family history. The family is made up of three generations of women: Witha, the senile familial matriarch and war survivor; her obsessive daughter Heidrun, who was born during or just before the outbreak of WWII; and Witha's fourteen-year-old granddaughter Hannah. The play begins in 1993 with the return of the Heising family to their former home in Dresden. Alongside these three women, the play features

Mieze, the former Jewish owner of the house in 1935; Stefanie, one of the house's former residents from the German Democratic Republic (henceforth referred to as the GDR), who returns to the house in 1993 to disturb the Heisings; and Wolfgang, Witha's dead husband and Heidrun's father.

The play's structure is highly fractured and jumps among 1935, 1945, 1953, 1978 and 1993. One result of this narrative fragmentation is the unfolding of six different stories. First, the conversation between Mieze and Witha as they wait for their husbands to finish the real-estate contract selling the house to Witha and Wolfgang. Second, the conflict between Witha and Wolfgang caused by their seizure of the house and Wolfgang's refusal to give it up. Third, Heidrun and Witha's preparations to escape from Dresden and the GDR in 1953 and the decision of what must stay and what they will bring to the West. Fourth, Heidrun and Witha's visit to the house in 1978 and why Heidrun feels she must return. Lastly, two 1993 stories: Stefanie disturbing the family as they prepare tea in their newly reacquired home and Hannah's struggle to find her own understanding of self. Underlining all of these different parts of the Heisings' past and present is the family's historical narrative.

Heidrun and Hannah believe Wolfgang rescued the Jewish Schwarzmann family, his employer, by funding their escape to the United States, and Wolfgang's good deed resulted in years of torment at the hands of Nazi organizations such as the Hitler Youth (HJ), including having stones thrown at him. Despite the years of persecution Wolfgang resisted the Nazis and celebrated the arrival of the Red Army in Dresden. According to the family story, Wolfgang was tragically killed by a Russian soldier's celebratory shot as he stood in the window watching the city's liberation from the Nazis. The thirty-five scenes deconstruct this narrative to reveal a much darker and more complex historical reality. Wolfgang was a stark believer in National Socialist

ideology, unwilling to see fault in the regime. Even when HJ members mistakenly vandalize his house, believing it still belongs to a Jewish family, Wolfgang would rather repaint the façade and replace windows than admit a systemic problem. As the play progresses it is revealed Wolfgang reported the Schwarzmanns to the SA, the *Sturmabteilung,* to gain their home. As well, Wolfgang's death, which Heidrun sanctifies to transform her father into an anti-fascist martyr, was not a result of the Red Army, but a suicide in the wake of the Führer's own.

Using a variety of finely tuned dramaturgical devices von Mayenburg explores the relationship between history and identity in modern German society. His deconstructionist approach illustrates how myth comes into formation against the backdrop of history and how these myths transform into foundational narratives for identity. Through his examination of these narratives the connection to memory and memorialization becomes clear. Von Mayenburg uses structure to highlight the problematic, confusing nature of memory and identity and illustrates how these two elements communicate and intermingle.

STRUCTURE:

Der Stein employs an extremely complex and difficult narrative structure. The one act play consists of a total of thirty-five scenes as von Mayenburg attempts to present fifty-eight years of German history in a ninety-minute play. Scenes change suddenly with little warning and are often only nominally connected: a line carried over from one moment to the next, or a question directed at 1935 Witha is answered by 1993 Stefanie (for a complete analysis of von Mayenburg's transitions see Appendix 2). As the play deals with Germany's tumultuous recent history from 1935 to 1993 (for a detailed look at German history since 1935 in comparison to *Der Stein* see Appendix 3), the structure offers significant dramaturgical difficulties for the director and the dramaturgical team. Many of the themes *Der Stein* examines are still largely at

play in Germany and must be dealt with carefully so as not to downplay or trivialize the suffering of any group.

Von Mayenburg's work is firmly rooted in the dramatic tradition of story and character, standing in stark opposition to Hans-Thies Lehmann's postdramatic theatre without narrative or codified meaning. However, the fractured structure employed in *Der Stein* seems closer to what we identify as postdramatic than "dramatic". Lehmann, in his treatise *Postdramatic Theatre*, states the centrality of time, in most traditional dramaturgical structures, prevents confusion and promotes unity within play (159). However, in *Der Stein* von Mayenburg uses the dramaturgy of memory to structure his play. This dramaturgy goes against the pseudo-Aristotelian[4] model of unity (unity of time, place and action), because memory is by its very nature fractured and unclear, and thus deeply rooted in confusion and fragmentation. Von Mayenburg employs a postdramatic technique Lehmann identifies as *chora-graphy*: "the deconstruction of a discourse oriented towards meaning and the invention of a space that eludes the laws of telos and unity" (146). The *chora-graphy* in *Der Stein* presents itself as a *pre-logos* anti-structure of time, in which temporal regulation is a device of fragmentation and deregulation, reflected in the lack of a conclusive ending. The audience is denied witnessing Hannah's reaction and how the family moves forward after the discovery. Von Mayenburg deconstructs the (pseudo) Aristotelian dramatic structure by breaking apart chronological unity and redistributing the pieces in an associative dis-chronology. While meaning remains an important part of von Mayenburg's dramaturgy, he complicates interpretation through structure, forcing his audience to take on a

[4] The concept of unity of time, place and action associated with Aristotle is a result of a mistranslation/misunderstanding of Aristotle's *Poetics* in the Italian Reniassance. The misunderstanding of unity within Aristotle was passed from the Italians to the French and subsequently adopted as a part of the Germanic theatrical tradition. Thus the concept of unity discussed above von Mayenburg reacts against cannot be accurately defined as Aristotelian, but is rather pseudo-Aristotelian (i.e. a result of the mistranslation/misunderstanding in the Renaissance).

more analytical and interpretative role through the use of fragmentation instead of a simple linear narrative.

Fragmentation and restructuring are another symptom of capitalist realism, a movement that responds to modern capitalist society. Theatre and art critic and commentator Mark Fisher defines capitalist realism as "subordinating oneself to a reality that is infinitely plastic, capable of reconfiguring itself at any moment" (Fisher 54). This definition roots von Mayenburg's theatre in an individualistic, materialist world, which is rooted in physical objects and a fluid instead of concrete reality. *Der Stein* shows this fluidity through the reconfiguration of memory. Witha's wartime experiences are too traumatic for her to publicly or privately remember, so she reconfigures these experiences into the narrative her daughter wants to hear and Witha wishes she had—Wolfgang bravely resisted the Nazis and was tormented for his good deeds. Reality is in constant flux, making the real bearable by eliminating undesirable parts of history. Identity largely shapes experience and foundational narratives are fundamental to stable identity[5]. The relationship between narrative, experience and identity creates a desire to construct a consistent and linear understanding of reality and our place within this reality. Heidrun and Witha use the figure of Wolfgang and his civilian death during the war to create a linear understanding of reality and self. A linear understanding ironically standing in stark opposition to the non-linear structure von Mayenburg using in the writing of *Der Stein*. The Heising family creates a foundational narrative to situate Wolfgang outside of history, as an exception or *Ausnahme*. However, this narrative is filled with inconsistencies. According to Fisher, within the constructed reality of the capitalist realism such *inconsistencies* are inescapable (Fisher 55).

[5] Historian Hayden White describes the construction of histories in the last century using literary structures such as romance, tragedy, comedy and satire in *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-century Europe*.

The inconsistencies present in von Mayenburg's text are comparable to the contradictory nature of memory itself, which is filled with inconsistancies. Memory is problematic because the memory making process is a constant cycle of forgetting, recreating, reimagining and reapplying. Historian Andrew Stuart Bergerson asserts the memory process that goes into writing history is "less about remembering and more of an exercise in violent forgetting" (13). In the process of remembering, many important aspects of the event being remembered are forgotten, while trivial and unrelated elements have deeper meaning to connect them to the main memory. This process creates the environment in which inconsistencies emerge. These inconsistencies within the Heisings' narrative are elements that don't fit cohesively, such as Wolfgang's Nazi party pin. When Heidrun accidently finds the pin in one of her father's letters in Scene Eleven the discovery challenges the picture she has constructed of Wolfgang as someone who resisted Nazi ideology. While Witha wants to protect Heidrun from this inconsistency by claiming it was her pin, von Mayenburg's syncopated stage syntax highlights the inconsistencies in the Wolfgang myth creating a visible hole in the familial narrative.

There are striking similarities between *Der Stein* and other deconstructionist works like American author Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s *Slaughterhouse Five*—which also deals with an aspect of Dresden war history, namely the bombing of the city by the Allied Forces (Incidently, like Vonnegut, *Der Stein* similarly follows the action of a single individual across time, Billy in *Slaughterhouse Five* and Witha in *Der Stein*). William Elwood and Hellmut Rennert in their study of deconstructionism explain it deconstructs the relationship between signified and signifier. They evoke Terry Eagleton's analysis of the poststructuralist text: "The writable text . . . has no determinate meaning, no settled signified meaning, no settled signifieds, but is plural and diffuse, an inexhaustible tissue or galaxy of signifiers, a seamless wave of codes and

fragments of codes through which the critic may cut his own errant path" (qtd. in Elwood & Rennert). Memory in *Der Stein* acts similar to Eagleton's poststructuralist text. There is no set meaning to the series of events as they transpire, but the women, particularly Heidrun, act as the critic and find/create meaning within the memories to create a cohesive narrative. Additionally, von Mayenburg's jarring structure jumps between time and situation and destabilizes the meaning of the plethora of images present in the text.

Characters such as Stefanie, one of the house's former residents from the GDR era, are semiotically loaded figures. Stefanie represents the repetition of history because she, like Mieze, is forced to leave the house so the Heisings can possess it. She is also representative of the youngest (and last) generation of East Germans born and raised in the GDR. Zervoulakos' Munich production further infuses this character with symbolic meaning by dressing actor Katrin Röver (who played Stefanie) in a Freie Deutsche Jugend shirt, a GDR-era youth organization similar to the boy scouts and girl guides. Thus, spectators are left to interpret Stefanie for themselves because there is no exact explanation or understanding of Stefanie in the text. Rather, the plethora of images surrounding her are left for the spectator to interpret and, in Eagleton's words, cut their own path.

Stefanie is certainly not the only semiotically charged character or image in *Der Stein*, but she is particularly important to the postdramatic concept of *plethora*. *Plethora* is an important aspect of *Der Stein*. Productions are infused with signs to fill in characters and period. In productions that employed double casting such as Zervoulakos' 2014 Munich production with five actors and Rüdiger Pape's 2010 Cologne production with only four actors, this deployment of specific stage signs is obviously crucial in the understanding of the play. In postdramatic theory plethora acts as a "refusal of the normalized form of the image" (Lehmann 90). Part of the

normalized form of the image among characters is singularity of the actor plays one character, which is thrown into question by the visible plurality of both memory and character. *Der Stein* rejects the normalized narrative understanding of history as it is done in classic historiography. By deconstructing the narrative and imposing an overabundance of memory and history on the spectator, von Mayenburg illustrates the inconsistency, unreliability and plurality of memory and the inconsistency of a reality constructed around it. The density of the signs employed throughout the play creates discontinuity and simultaneity. The year 1935 is presented on the same stage as 1993; united Germany occupies the same physical space on the stage as GDR and Nazi Germany. Time, space and ideology weave between each other on a single stage. National Socialism, communism and capitalism co-exist—a stark commentary on contemporary Germany.

By placing the three regimes on the same stage von Mayenburg illustrates both continuity and contrast between the three. Although ideologically they are all extremely different certain events repeat themselves in the script. In 1935 the Schwarzmanns are forced to leave the house because of restrictions and newly implemented policies limiting their freedom as Jewish people. In 1953 the Heisings abandon the same house because, somewhat ironically considering the circumstances through which they obtained the house, they fear the restrictions and limitations of the newly implemented GDR government. Stefanie and her grandfather obtain the house because the Heisings left, similar to the Heisings capitalizing on the Aryanization process in the early Nazi-era that forced the Schwarzmanns to attempt to flee Germany, which left the house to be obtained by the government and given to families deemed suitable. Heidrun repossessed the house in 1993 after Reunification. The Heisings prospered in the capitalist West and were able to take the house from the GDR families without the financial power to continue living there. The

capitalist regime favors financially prosperous individuals and perpetuates a narrative that aligns financial success with hard work and financial need with laziness. Thus *Der Stein* in its dramaturgy of fragmentation and simultaneity illustrates the biases of capitalism in comparison to those of National Socialism and communism: each with preferential treatment towards a specific sector of society. However, the simultaneous presence of the apparatuses is also phenomenologically difficult for the spectator, in search for stable meaning, because it deconstructs differences and highlights similarities.

The phenomenon of simultaneity in the postdramatic theatrical tradition, according to Lehmann, "overstrain[s] the perceptive apparatus," making it impossible for the spectator to see and analyze the multiplicity of signs onstage (87). In production, *Der Stein* presents competing narratives, multiple time periods, characters, conflicts and numerous other signs telling vastly different stories about what happened. Thus the spectator is able to grasp only some of the play's potential meanings, but never see what has happened in its entirety. This phenomenon of *under*-understanding allies the spectator with von Mayenburg's characters. Memory eludes all of the characters and fools them. It rewrites and reasserts itself throughout the play, while the spectator watches characters' attempt to assert a concrete, foundational narrative and identity. The fractured nature of the play is similar to the fluid function of memory, which does not remember events in order. Memory, much like von Mayenburg's play, takes unrelated events and applies new meaning to connect moments in history. Memory attempts to create a narrative out of experience so to give provide deeper import to these experiences. Heidrun attempts to find a meaning in her childhood without a father. She does so by constructing an identity based on her father as a hero, which necessitates a heroic death. She uses her father's death as the foundation of her own narrative, which is built around the exceptionalism of Wolfgang as resistor. This

central facet of Heidrun's identity connects her memories, both real—her experience escaping the GDR and returning to Dresden—and fictional—her father tormented by the HJ and having stones thrown at him because he stayed true to his friends. However, as is often the case, the different memories Heidrun uses to form her identity do not fit together seamlessly but must be forced together creating disunity and jarring transitions between the different memories. These aspects of the narrative mirror the stylistic and dramaturgical choices von Mayenburg employs in *Der Stein*.

Von Mayenburg mimics the discord and voids between memories in his transitions. Transitions between scenes use a phrase or a conversational element from the previous scene to connect the two scenes (for a full breakdown of transitions see Appendix 1). Even within the fast tempo and chaos created by the thirty-five scenes and five different temporal settings, von Mayenburg has carefully connected each scene. The play jumps between years, important events and moments of conflict. A word or a moment triggers a memory of the past, Heidrun making a speech about the marriage of Witha and Wolfgang triggers Witha to go dig through the garden to find the box with Wolfgang's letters and the party pin. Finding the pin triggers the reading, re-reading and composition of Wolfgang's suicide note, which in turn, through the crossed out words and the demonstration of Wolfgang's own attempt to recast his history, triggers the next scene in 1953 where Heidrun first questions her mother about the death of her father and the family narrative begins its formation. Von Mayenburg borrows the fractured structure of memory as a template for his narrative. A word, a thought, an item triggers a new memory and launches into a new scene. Memory and history are juxtaposed upon each other and, within von Mayenburg's narrative style, also complement each other by allowing the scenes to flow into each other.

The unpredictable, unreliable structure of memory, highlighted by the non-chronological, rapid shifts between scenes, explores the unraveling of the familial narrative. The problematic relationship of current Germans with the troubled past, which *Der Stein* explores, is present in von Mayenburg's family and those of many other Germans. As a child, von Mayenburg listened to his grandmother's stories about Hitler and the National Socialist regime. He believed because he grandparents called Hitler a "kulturlosen Idiot" they actively resisted; however, as he grew older he came to realize it was not this simple (Wille 40). Recognizing the past does not imply the need to condone it, but rather understand it took place and critically assess how and why it happened and how to prevent it from happening again. Although familial stories such as von Mayenburg's do not entail resistance, interpreting them as resistance acts as a strategy for coping with the past. It is also a way to situate the "little" grandfather in what German social pyschologist Harold Welzer calls the "big" history (Welzer 14). The tendency to heroicize or victimize grandparents is often committed at the expense of recognizing the past. *Der Stein* explores the desire of generations of Germans to escape the identity crisis created by the sense of guilt and responsibility imparted on German citizens in the postwar era.

GENERATIONAL MEMORY:

Each generation of Germans deals with the trauma of National Socialism and the war differently. New memory paradigms illustrate how the current generation fits history into its identity. Dominick LaCapra in his study of Holocaust memory asserts although memory is fundamentally flawed, it still maintains an important place within the understanding of past events. He asserts, "[e]ven in its falsifications, repressions, displacements, and denials, memory may nonetheless be informative—not in terms of an accurate empirical representation of its object but in terms of that object's often anxiety-ridden reception and assimilation by both the

participants of the event and those born later" (19). Witha is representative of the war generation, who desperately attempted to rebuild Germany for the future and remain silent about the past. For this generation, to quote George Steiner, "the world of Auschwitz lies outside speech as it lies outside reason" (qtd. in Waniek 24).

Heidrun is representative of the next generation, those born just before, during, or at the end of the war and politically active during the 1968 student rebellions. These young Germans ended their parents' silence. Students questioned their parents about their involvement in the Third Reich and demanded answers for their actions (or inaction) during the Nazi era (Giesen 127). These young Germans condemned the previous generation, as responsible for Nazi atrocities (128). Seemingly trendy among members of the second generation is the tendency to give children Jewish names. This act of naming diverted the feeling of guilt within families. As the silence of the war generation was broken, Jewish victims were not only given a voice in history, but, according to Giesen, "were represented by personal names with the German nation" (Giesen 127). Heidrun and Witha's conversation about the naming of Heidrun's unborn child in 1978 is a prime example of this process. Heidrun is disgusted by her own name, which she sees as typically Aryan: "Das klingt nach blonden Zopfkränzen und Dirndl"[6] (37). By deciding to name her child Hannah or Daniel, Heidrun further distances herself from the perpetrators. She makes her daughter the voice of a lost generation of Jewish peoples. Hannah represents the current generation, the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the war generation. She is a member of the first generation that must negotiate Germany's double past of fascist and communist crimes (Niven 233). This generation must cope with the disappointment and disillusionment of a generation of East Germans with what Feldman calls the "asymmetry" of the

[6] "Sounds like plaited blond crowns and dirndls" (26).

unification process, referring to the advantage given to the richer West by reunification (Feldman 259-260).

The newly united Germany still faced government corruption, unemployment and many other social issues that disappointed Easterners. Von Mayenburg illustrates the disillusioned generation of East Germans through Stefanie, one of the house's previous occupants. Stefanie and her grandfather, in the aftermath of the 1990 unification, are evicted from their home—the Heisings' house. Stefanie's grandfather is sent to a retirement home, where he becomes confused and dies. Stefanie represents the failure of the West to help young East Germans find a place in a united Germany. Heidrun's promise of Western chocolate in return for seeing the garden illustrates this failure. She and her mother buried the stone in the garden in 1953 and she promises Stefanie she will send Western chocolate every year for Stefanie's birthday if she can see the garden. The promise of chocolate is left unfulfilled and Stefanie is forgotten once the stone is obtained. I will discuss the meaning of the stone as important symbolic feature of the play in-depth in the final section of this chapter.

Stefanie represents the failure of Western capitalism in a unified Germany. She is a part of society that has fallen through the cracks of the new system, left without hope for a better future. The character of Hannah juxtaposes Stefanie. While Stefanie believes her parents abandoned her to escape to the West, Witha and Heidrun's flight to the West ensure both Heidrun and Hannah's future. Hannah has opportunities because of her upbringing in the West Stefanie has not experienced. The Heisings were able to amass significant wealth, while Stefanie and her Grandfather lived under the prescriptive regime of the GDR, dictating what they could buy, what jobs they could do and what education was available. Hannah, like Stefanie, must leave her old house and home, but unlike Stefanie, she is not left without a family, a home, or

any hope of a future. Hannah attempts to negotiate a new identity that re-examines the past. She searches for an identity that deals with the complexities of sixty years of German history, while trying to find her own identity in the midst of the crisis of the newly formed state. Conversely, Hannah has the financial means and privilege to be able to escape her situation. Her father is willing to fund her trip to the United States and her family is able to afford the move to Dresden and repossess the old house.

Hannah's situation stands in stark contrast to that of Stefanie who finds herself with nowhere to go and no family to help her. Hannah does not feel she fits in with the other children at her school, because, as a West German, she is different. She complains to Heidrun, "In der Schule lachen sie darüber, wie ich rede"[7] (49). Zervoulakos' 2014 production added names further illustrate this difference. These names all started with R and Hannah exaggerates the rolling of the R when she says each name, which the other students make fun of, as it foregrounds her Bavarian accent.

For those Germans of the war generation who survived the Second World War, silence became an important strategy for dealing with the past. Silence is key to the war generation's understanding of self. Theorists such as Hannah Arendt, Dan Diner, Anson Rabinbach and Frank Stern refer to the German identity paradigm as a form of 'negative symbiosis,' identity created in reference to a negative other (Feldman 253). In the immediate postwar period, German identity, the ethnically German and non-Jewish identity (Protestant or Catholic), existed in reference to the past, inseparably linked to the attempted destruction of the Jewish peoples. In *Der Stein* negative symbiosis is seen in Heidrun's placement of her family against the German people (viewed by Heidrun as guilty) as the negative other. She creates a *not I* paradigm of identity. When Heidrun tells Stefanie she has to leave the house, explaining it never belonged to Stefanie,

[7] "At school they laugh about the way I talk" (37)

Heidrun asserts Wolfgang was an exception among the German people because he resisted the Nazis:

> Es hat nicht viele Leute gegeben wie meinen Vater, Leute, die bewiesen haben, dass Widerstand möglich war, Leute, die ihr Leben für andere aufs Spiel gesetzt haben, aber mein Vater war so eine Ausnahme, und trotzdem kennt keiner seine Geschichte.[8] (58)

By comparing her family's history, Heidrun is able to understand her family as an exception (*Ausnahmen)* and create a positive identity.

Silence was imperative to a positive sense of German identity in the postwar period. Germans in the immediate postwar period used the *Wirtschaftswunder* (the rebuilding of Germany) and the *Sonderweg* (special path) to reconstruct identity using select silence. These victories, the rebuilding of a nation and the overcoming of barbarity, act as the foundations of the war generation's identity and could only exist in the absence of the crimes of the Third Reich, crimes that overshadowed German postwar victories. Thus, silence, for the war generation, was central to German postwar identity. Historian Bernhard Giesen identifies the paradigm of silence as a "tacitly assumed coalition of silence" (116). For the war generation their silence negated their guilt, allowing them to forget the troubled past. Similarly, Witha adopts silence and exclusion as central to her understanding of self. Conversely, Heidrun is eager to discuss and commemorate Wolfgang, celebrating Witha and Wolfgang's anniversary in 1993 nearly fifty years after his death, an event Witha would rather forget. Throughout the 1993 scenes, until the final scene between Hannah and Witha, the latter is curiously silent about the past. However, what she does say about the past is revealing, but for the rest of the family out of context. Many of these memories have to do with Mieze. She warns Hannah over coffee if she talks while she

[8] "There weren't many people like my father; people who proved that resistance was possible, people who risked their lives for others. My father was one of those exceptions and yet no one knows his story" (43)

eats her teeth will fall out like Mieze's or when the family returns to the empty house in 1993 she recalls where Meize's piano stood and how beautifully she used to play. Yet, these sparse memories highlight the utter absence of remembrances to Mieze in 1945, 1953 and 1978. Her return to the house as an old woman triggers these memories, signaling Witha has, paradoxically forgotten what it was she spent almost sixty years trying to forget, thus allowing Mieze to re-emerge as part of her history.

Silence remains an important theme throughout *Der Stein*. Awkward silence descends on Mieze and Witha as they wait for their husbands to return from their negotiations in 1935 about the price the Heisings will pay for their new house. Due to the fractured structure of the play, the spectator does not witness every moment between the two women, but the uncomfortable silence between the pair is clear. In one scene Mieze exclaims, "Diese Schweigen. Wie eine Ohrfeige"[9] (48). For Mieze the women's silence is so insulting because it is juxtaposed by the implied ongoing conversation between the two men about the price of the house. Mieze and Witha both understand the men haven't finished negotiating, because Wolfgang is haggling for a lower price. Wolfgang understands no matter what price he offers, the Schwarzmanns must agree, because, as Mieze says to Witha, "er weiß, zuletzt muss mein Mann zu allem Ja sagen. Wir ziehen aus, und Sie ziehen ein"[10] (49). The Schwarzmanns must leave and are only allowed two suitcases, leaving all their furniture and possessions for the Heisings.

Mieze recognizes Wolfgang, in his act of heartless opportunism (all the more heartless when the audience learns Wolfgang reported the Schwarzmanns to the SA), is taking advantage of the situation and there is nothing she can do to stop him. Her single act of resistance is to destroy her beloved piano, preventing Witha and Wolfgang from using it—or worse not using it:

[9] "This silence. It's like a slap in the face" (36).

[10] "he knows that in the end my husband has to say yes to everything. We're moving out and you're moving in" (36)

"Ich nehms mit, das Klavier. Wenn Sies nicht zahlen sollen Sies auch nicht kriegen. Ich spiel Ihnen was zum Abschied. Hören Sie genau hin. Das ist das letzte Mal, das drauf gespielt wird"[11] (62-63). Fifty-eight years later, when the family returns to the house, Witha bemoans the furniture she and Wolfgang threw away and remembers where the piano once stood (61). In the Munich production, as Mieze exits the stage, axe in hand, the destruction of the piano is signaled not with a crash, but with a moment of pregnant silence.

The theme of silence is important to both von Mayenburg's play as well as the historical reality of the Nazi era. Zervoulakos highlights the theme of silence in his production through the intersection of historical reality and the pointed use of Franz Lehár's duet *Lippen Schweigen* (commonly translated as *Though lips are sealed*), from Lehár's opera *Die lustige Witwe* (*The Merry Widow*) as pre-recorded transition music. The song acts as a switch between years, specifically for Witha in 1993 and Witha in 1935, connecting them. However, Lehár's music plays a double role. First, while the theme of the song is love, the title of the song implies the code of silence adopted by Witha's generation in the immediate aftermath of the war, and its central verse foregrounds a maintained disposition of silence: "Und der Mund, er spricht kein Wort" [12]. Second, Lehár and the song itself share a problematic past because of the composer's involvement and popularity in National Socialism. Franz Lehár, despite using exclusively Jewish librettists and having a Jewish wife, was one of Hitler's favorite composers. However, Lehár was a problematic figure even within the regime, because he moved in almost exclusively Jewish circles. Goebbels referred to Lehár as an artist who "wasted his talents on culturally regrettable subjects" (Grun 257). In 1940 Lehár was awarded the Goethe Medal by the ministry of culture, unsurprisingly as *Die lustige Witwe* was one of Hitler's favorite operas (Spotts 273). Lehár sent a

[11] "I'm taking it with me, the piano. If you won't pay for it then you're not going to get it. I'll play you a goodbye song. Listen carefully. It's the last time someone's going to play on it" (47).
[12] "And though the mouth, it is still sealed"

signed program from the fiftieth performance of *Die lustige Witwe* to Hitler for his fiftieth birthday in 1938. Included in the autographed program was a handwritten manuscript of *Lippen Schweigen* specially copied for Hitler (Grun 260). Lehár's wife was given the title of *Ehrenarierin*, honorary Aryan (although, there were still several attempts to deport her following this designation in 1938) (Frey 338). Lehár remained in Vienna throughout the Nazi occupation, remaining silent about his own political opinions despite the death on one of his librettists, Fritz Löhner-Beda, in a concentration camp and the attempts to deport his wife. Lehár's biographer Bernard Grun explains, "In the conflict of creeds he remained mute: neutral toward the murderers, because he was naïve enough to believe he was thereby showing the world the great distance between them and him" (262). However, the result of his silence was Lehár's implication in the crimes of the regime as well as becoming a problematic historical figure within Germany.

Lehár is not alone in his silence during the Third Reich, and he may well be emblematic of the Heisings in *Der Stein*. Silence during and following the Third Reich according to literary theorist Erdmann Waniek "rises from unspeakable terror, which, in turn, may be aided by silence. It was acquiescent individuals and collective silence that helped to make possible the atrocities of the Third Reich" (20). It is true not all Germans agreed with National Socialist ideology or the political actions of Hitler, although throughout the period there was relatively little resistance by the larger German population. Many simply carried on their daily work in what Arendt describes as a *banal* fashion. Bergerson explains that since the First World War Germans largely saw themselves as "little people" with little historical responsibility for the major crimes of the current regime (61). This belief is itself a form of silence, because it was told to avoid becoming a victim of the regime. However, according to Bergerson, the more dangerous

aspect of this silence is the assertion "that ordinary people do not shape and cannot alter the conditions of their collective existence" (61). Although silence was a survival mechanism, it assured the collaborator function of most of the population during the Third Reich.

Silence, as seen in the case of Lehár, was a Faustian bargain for many Germans. For Witha, the Faustian bargain took the shape of the house. She was willing to sell out the Schwarzmann family for their house, but after the war is over she is haunted by memories of Mieze—the house's former resident. In the final scene of the play, chronologically the first scene, Mieze begs Witha to be her friend just for the one evening. She prophecies: "Es wird keine peinliche Begegnung mehr geben, Sie sehen mich nicht wieder, es ist nur für heute Abend, und dass ich weiß, dass du mich nicht vergisst, dass du deine Freundin Mieze nicht vergisst"[13] (65). For Wolfgang and Witha, like many Germans, the Faustian bargain took the form of a way to move up in society, which the Nazis offered by removing Jewish competitors. Returning to the real-life example of Lehár, the Nazi banning of Jewish and other forms of music meant certain artists and composers in the German-speaking realm enjoyed increased popularity. Although Lehár did not support the Nazis, he remained silent and prospered, assuring he and his wife survived. However, Lehár, and others like him, prospered and survived at great moral cost.

Despite the controversy surrounding Lehár's career, he remains one of Germany's most popular composers, best known for *Lippen Schweigen* and *Die lustige Witwe*. For a German audience *Lippen Schweigen* remains an easily identifiable example of middle-class German music. The tune holds a special place within the collective experience of the middle-class German audience as your typical Sunday afternoon family music (i.e. music one goes to a park to hear played by an orchestra or to a concert hall). The image of Witha sitting in front of the

[13] "There won't be any more embarrassing meetings, you'll never see me again, it's just for tonight, so I know that you'll never forget me, that you won't forget your friend Mieze" (50)

television watching *Die lustige Witwe* in the final scene of Zervoulakos' production is therefore highly relatable for most German spectators. The soft and lulling rhythm of the waltz juxtaposes the uncomfortable story the audience watches unfold on the stage. Particularly in the final scene when Witha reveals to Hannah, who has come to her asking for a letter to Frau Schwarzmann in New York, Mieze Schwarzmann and her husband both died before they were able to escape. The lulling music at the beginning of the scene stands in stark contrast to the total silence of the end. As the scene ends, after Witha reveals Mieze is dead and never succeeded in escaping, Hannah helps Witha put her headphones on and instead of hearing *Lippen Schweigen*, a convention established at the beginning of the scene when the audience first hears the song Witha listens to with her headphones on, the audience is left in complete silence as the lights fade to black around Witha and Hannah. In the blackness of the stage the only sound heard is the sound of the set once again spinning in the darkness conjuring the image of the continued passing of time. It is a stark counter experience to a family sitting together listening to *Lippen Schweigen* on a pleasant Sunday afternoon.

Families, as a social group, share a 'collective memory,' which allows them to identify as a member of the *Wir-Gruppe*. This we-membership allows affiliates to share in the history of the group, because according to Maurice Halbswachs: "Sie reproduzieren nicht nur ihre Vergangenheit, sondern sie definieren ihre *Wesensart*, ihre Eigenschaften und ihre Schwächen"[14] (qtd. in Welzer 156, italics added for emphasis). This familial *Wesensart* is both inseparably connected and in negotiation with history. The past, particularly the troubled past, must be re-defined and re-imagined in the present to create a positive understanding of self within a historical context.

[14] "They reproduce not only their history, but they define their *identity*, their characteristics and their weaknesses"

Der Stein clearly illustrates the Heisings' attempt to create a positive historical context and re-inscribe their history to fit in this positive framework. This phenomenon of re-situation and re-inscription leads to the creation of what Welzer calls "false remembrances" within the family unit (150). These false remembrances create a specific understanding of history among children and grandchildren based on stories told by parents and grandparents. Witha creates a false remembrance of Wolfgang, who in reality is a fanatic believer in the Nazi cause, to placate her young daughter Heidrun in 1953. The stories told by Witha in 1953 are in turn passed on to Hannah, who again constructs her understanding of self through this specific understanding of history. Harald Welzer identifies this occurrence as a "kommunikative Vergegenwärtigung von Vergangenem," a communicative realization of the past, integral to group-formation and self-identification. The celebration of the past through conversational and ritual remembering (ex. the telling and retelling of why the family possesses the stone), the telling and retelling of stories within the *Wir-Gruppe*, is central to this process (150-151). The best example of conversational remembering is the aforementioned anniversary celebration. Heidrun uses the occasion of her parents' wedding anniversary to commemorate the past through an annual celebration. Heidrun repeats the same speech every year recalling how Witha and Wolfgang met at the *Akademischen Sportverein* (the Academic Athletic Club), where Witha brought her horse to Wolfgang, who as a veterinarian looked after the animals. Both Witha and Hannah have heard the same speech for many years (Hannah: "Das erzählst du jedes Jahr"[15](51)) and are no longer interested in the story (Heidrun: "Das ist eine Rede, und du [Witha] wühlst die ganze Zeit durch die Kiste"[16] (51)), but it is deeply engrained within family practice. The yearly celebration commemorates Wolfgang

[15] "Hannah: You say that every year" (38).
[16] "Heidrun: This is a speech, and you [Witha] keep digging through that box" (38).

the person and cements the myth surrounding Wolfgang on which the family establishes their identity.

Thomas Morton and Stefanie J. Sonnenberg remind us meaning for the present is derived from an understanding of history (323). For Heidrun, the present is constructed around her father's actions. These action are based the memory she inherits from Witha. According to memory theorist Jan Assmann cultural memory is founded on the intersection of history and memory, which ceremony such as the anniversary celebration and the significance of the stone and repetition construct (Assmann in Welzer 156-157). For the Heising family, their understanding of the past provides a moral high ground, which places them above collaborator and perpetrator Germans. It does so by denying responsibility and situating themselves outside of the wider community of Germans. Repetition of the story cements it as a central aspect of the Heisings' identity. Ceremony plays an important role in the proliferation of myth visible in the anniversary. Witha's anniversary celebration is representative of a ritual the entire family takes part in to commemorate the past. Coherence and continuity are of central importance to identity, which makes repetition of them vital to the maintenance of the memory. Heidrun's speech inevitably ends with the retelling of Wolfgang's tragic death, but Witha, the subject of the remembrance, disrupts Heidrun's ritual when she cannot find her *Bundesverdienstkreuz* (Order of Merit), which she received from the German War Graves Commission—a commission dedicated to providing proper burial to German soldiers, war casualties and prisoners of war. She leaves the house to literally dig up the past from the back garden, an ironic act considering she is searching for the medal honoring her work burying the dead. Witha dedicates her postwar existence to both literally and metaphorically burying the past: first burying the bodies of the dead and then concealing her past from her daughter and granddaughter. The act of digging in

the garden to find a reminder of the past is a major transformation for the character and indicative of the collapse of myth as history begins to re-emerge.

In Zervoulakos' production, this sequence is particularly effective in the mise en scène through the use of simultaneity and an effective use of the set and its different levels. The unit begins with 1993 Witha, (Hedi Kriegeskotte) pulling the box of letters out of the earth—a small pile of actual dirt—on the second level of the three-story structure on stage. As Scene Twenty-eight begins, Kriegeskotte remains on the second floor silently reading the suicide letter, while on the ground Nora Buzalka, Stefanie Röver and Juliane Köhler spin the structure creating a maelstrom effect on stage. Time swirls together as 1993, 1953 and 1935 all meet and take part in the cycle of remembering the death of Wolfgang. The maelstrom aesthetic of this part of the production resembles the play's structure in a beautiful moment of visual dramaturgy. The spinning of the house and presence of the three Withas (Buzalka, Köhler and Kreigeskotte) is the clearest moment of the *chora-graphical* quality of the play. At the same time Wolfgang (Lukas Turtur) frantically ascends the stairs to the third floor while hurriedly dressing himself in the Waffen-SS uniform. In the letter, Wolfgang explains to Witha he wanted to kill himself in his office, but because of the firestorm he must do it in the house. He states his regret of having to abandon his family, but he hopes she can maintain her dignity just as through his suicide he was able to maintain his dignity. For the three lines Wolfgang has crossed out in the letter first 1993 Witha reads the line from the letter that is crossed out and 1953 Witha yells out "ist durchgestrichen"[17] (54) as she (Köhler), Buzalka and Röver continue to push the set.

In the chaos of the spinning building, Wolfgang must constantly reposition himself to stay facing the audience as he hastily dresses himself in preparation for his death (coat, buttons,

[17] "And in the consciousness/as a German officer/God bless is crossed out" (40)

belt, gloves, and hat). The audience is privy to Wolfgang's attempted reconstruction of his own identity for his wife and daughter. Wolfgang wants to be remembered as a German soldier who died rather than admit defeat, but recognizes this is not possible, illustrated by his crossing off "als deutscher Offizier" in his suicide note. Historian Christian Goeschel in his study of suicide in the Third Reich asserts dying a soldier's death was viewed as more dignified than negotiating for peace, particularly in the final months of the war. Thus, according to Goeschel, suicides among Nazi leaders (whom Wolfgang associates himself with as the head of the veterinary institute) were "not understood as suicides as such, but as heroic self-sacrifices undertaken for the future of the Nazi creed" (154). With a final cry of "Heil Hitler," Wolfgang winces and, as the set lurches to halt and lights change, brings the pistol to his mouth. The next scene begins immediately as the lights and focus shift from Wolfgang on the third floor to Heidrun (Nora Buzalka) and Witha (Juliane Köhler) in 1953, sitting on the steps leading to the second floor preparing dinner. Heidrun questions her mother about what happened to Wolfgang and as Witha reluctantly answers the family narrative of Wolfgang-as-hero begins to form. Meanwhile, on the third floor, with Wolfgang still looming in the background, 1993 Witha (Hedi Kriegeskotte) puts on Wolfgang's hat and, leaning over the metal railing looking down on the past, rips up the suicide letter. As Heidrun and Witha's conversation continues and Witha begins to construct Wolfgang-the-upright-German for Heidrun, little pieces of the letter float down from the third floor until there is nothing remaining of the original letter. The truth is gone, destroyed, and what is left is the re-constructed memory, which the two women sitting on the steps have created.

Returning briefly to the image of Wolfgang's Waffen-SS uniform: Zervoulakos' choice to put Wolfgang in an SS uniform is odd, because von Mayenburg never identifies Wolfgang as a member of the SS. Wolfgang is a veterinarian and therefore exempt from military service

because horses were an essential part of the war effort. However, semiotically, the sign of the SS-uniform is extremely powerful because it is easily identified by both German and non-German audiences. Employing Anne Übersfeld's analysis of theatre, the Waffen-SS uniform is a non-verbal sign, a sign outside of the text in performance. The Waffen-SS was an armed wing of the Nazi party that fought alongside the army, but was never formally under army command. Unlike soldiers who, particularly later in the war, were conscripted, the Waffen-SS joined (and were admitted) by choice. The uniform is an icon of this group of dedicated party members. An icon is grounded in reality and creates a link between reality and performance, which for a spectator who relates to the play on a personal level creates what Übersfeld refers to as, "stimulus" (13). The SS were arguably the most dangerous group of Nazis not only in terms of actions but influence as well. By dressing Wolfgang in an SS uniform his position as bystander is questioned and the line between perpetrator, collaborator and bystander blurred.

The above-mentioned scenes illustrate the re-inscription of memory within *Der Stein*. Witha, using the clues given to her by Heidrun about what she wants to hear, constructs the story of Wolfgang standing in the window celebrating the arrival of Red Army when he is shot in the head. She builds the story around Wolfgang's suicide (shooting himself in the head) and Heidrun's question if he was celebrating the city's liberation. In doing so she honors Wolfgang's desire for his daughter to remember him as an upstanding German. Welzer refers to the re-inscription of memory as *Quellenamnestie* (source amnesty). This term refers to the borrowing of a story from real or fictional events, integrating it into their personal history and accepting the memory as one's own (Welzer 168-169). Von Mayenburg demonstrates this re-inscription of memory via borrowing throughout the play. The first and most obvious instance is in the Wolfgang narrative. Heidrun and Hannah believe after Wolfgang funded the Schwarzmanns'

escape from Germany the couple first travelled to Amsterdam. While in Amsterdam, the Schwarzmanns met real-life expressionist artist Max Beckmann, who also escaped Nazi Germany by way of Amsterdam. The couple bought one of his paintings and brought it with them to the United States. However, this is not Witha's story, but rather something Witha once read. Witha only reveals this source when Hannah asks her to write a letter to the Frau Shartzman she found in Brooklyn, who she believes to be the Schwarzmanns' daughter:

> Hannah: Doch. Sie war in Amsterdam. Sie hat Max Beckmann getroffen. Sie hat seine Bilder aus dem Keilrahmen genommen und in ihr Kofferfutter eingenäht. Sie hat ihn nach Amerika gebracht.
>
> Witha: Ist das so? Ich glaub, ich hab das irgendwo gelesen.[18] (64)

Witha, in her attempt to appease her daughter and spare her family from sharing her troubled memory, adopts this story. Heidrun unquestioningly accepts it. Witha's source for the Beckmann story is unknown, but there are several important similarities between the historical Beckmann and the fictional Schwarzmanns' escape. Both left Germany within a two-year period of each other: the Schwarzmanns in 1935 and Beckmann in 1937 and both went to Amsterdam before leaving for New York City.

The second instance of *Quellenamnestie* and re-inscription is the story of Heidrun's name. In 1978 Heidrun asks her mother why she was named Heidrun, a name she associates with blond hair and dirndls. Unsatisfied with her mother's response that she was named after a Heidrun her parents once knew, she insists on knowing what made her exceptional:

> Heidrun: Was hat sie Mutiges gemacht, diese Heidi? [. . .]
>
> Witha: Sie hat einfach keine Angst gehabt.

[18] "Hannah: Yes she did. She was in Amsterdam. She met Max Beckmann. She took one of his paintings from the frames and sewed them into the lining of her suitcase. She brought him to America.
Witha: Is that right? I think I read that somewhere" (48).

Heidrun: Wovor?

Witha: Was weiß ich.

Heidrun: Vor den Nazis?

Witha: Ingesamt. Auch die Nazis, ja. [. . .] Einmal standen zwei Jungens in Uniform bei ihr im Garten.

Heidrun: SS.

Witha: Oder HJ, da ist sie auf die Terrasse und hat sie angeschrien, so lange geschrien, bis sie über den Zaun sind und weg, so eine Wucht hat die gehabt, als Frau.[19] (39)

This is Mieze's story, not Witha's. When Mieze first shows Witha the garden, Mieze explains she and her husband had to put spikes on the wall surrounding the property because they were unprotected from their neighbors. The final straw was in the winter when two boys from the HJ climbed over the wall and into their garden. Mieze tells Witha, "Ich hab auf der Veranda geschrien, bis sie Angst gekriegt haben. Sie haben ihre Säcke über die Mauer geworfen und sind langsam im Dunkeln verschwunden" [20] (18). Again there is a striking similarity between Witha's story about her brave Heidrun friend and Mieze's memory of why she and her husband put the spikes on the wall surrounding the property. Witha simply adopts Mieze's resistance and refusal to give in to the harassment of the regime as a part of her and Wolfgang's story.

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[19] Heidrun: Yes, this Heidi of yours. Why was she courageous?
Witha: She wasn't afraid, that's all.
Heidrun: Of what?
Witha: Of whatever.
Heidrun: Of the Nazis?
Witha: On the whole yes. The Nazis, yes. [. . .] This one time two boys in uniform appeared in her garden.
Heidrun: SS.
Witha: Or Hitler Youth, and she went onto the terrace and shouted at them until they climbed over the fence and left, that's how forceful a woman she was. (28)

[20] Mieze: I shouted from the veranda until they got scared. They threw their bags over the wall and slowly disappeared into the dark. (10)

Other examples of re-writing and re-adapting history exist throughout *Der Stein*. Heidrun is unaware her mother and father purchased the house from the Schwarzmanns. Heidrun tells Stefanie, as she is forcing her to leave the house, that Wolfgang (not Mieze!) put the spikes on the wall surrounding the house to protect his family. Heidrun's Wolfgang-as-hero story no longer functions when he bought the house from a Jewish family who then used the money to flee Germany. It works even less when he barters down the price of the house and fails completely when he reports the family to avoid paying for the house. The hero paradigm requires considerable cosmetics, placed against an unjust regime and tragic death. Thus all parts of the narrative that are non-conducive to the positive identity constructed since 1953 are excluded or re-written.

The most significant exclusion in *Der Stein* is the Holocaust, the unspeakable event of the Twentieth Century. Clearly, for the world of the play, the event is unmentionable but von Mayenburg provides subtle traces of Holocaust imagery. Witha tells Hannah over cake and coffee if she talks with her mouth full, her teeth will fall out, this conversation evokes the memory of Mieze for Witha and recalls the image of the golden teeth collected from the dead at Auschwitz. Characters do not refer to the Holocaust by name. Instead, a different narrative of victimization is told, the story of German victimization. Witha cowers under the kitchen table and Heidrun tells Stefanie about the horrors of the allied firebombing of Dresden to prove the Heisings suffered more than she has:

> Heidrun: Die Eltern von meiner Mutter haben am Großen Garten gewohnt, wo nichts stehengeblieben ist in der Bombennacht [. . .] Das Haus ist bis in den Keller runter gebrannt. Aber nach ein paar Tagen, wie die Trümmer ausgekühlt waren, ist meine

> Mutter mit dem Leiterwagen hin und hat das Porzellan aus dem Keller gegraben mit bloßen Fingern.[21] (43)

The myth of German victimhood, popular in the early postwar period (particularly in East Germany) among the war generation, focuses on civilian bombings and the cruelties of the Soviets instead of German crimes (Langenbacher 49). Witha is portrayed as a victim who lost everything. However, this narrative stands in stark opposition to Wolfgang and Witha's seizure of the Schwarzmanns' possessions and house.

Each generation in Germany has developed a unique relationship with the past. The war generation remained largely silent about the past, while the second generation of '68ers broke this silence through increased interest in the Nazi past. The current generation of Germans, the third and fourth generation since the war, must again re-situate the Third Reich within their collective identity. However, as 2015 marks the seventieth anniversary of the end of the war, the relationship with the war has become increasingly tenuous with the death of the much of the war generation. As members of the war generation like Witha disappear, the risk of forgetting and allowing the past to "fade away" increases (Halbwachs 142). However, memorialization and monumentalization is equally problematic as von Mayenburg establishes through the use of the house and the play's namesake, the stone.

A STONE HOUSE:

The Heising family suffers from an obsession with memory—a preoccupation with the past. Heidrun has carefully constructed her family's identity around a false history. Vital to Heidrun's understanding of self is the former family home in Dresden. Memory theorist Pierre Nora in his study of memory distinguishes between history and memory. History, according to

[21] Heidrun: My mother's parents lived by the Grosser Garten where nothing was left standing on the night of the bombing [. . .]The house burned to the ground. But a few days later, when the rubble had cooled off, my mother went back with a handcart and dug the china out of the basement with her bare fingers" (32).

Nora, is an intellectual process, providing a public representation of the past. Conversely, memory is defined as a "perpetually actual phenomenon," which incorporates facts to create an understanding of the past. The memory process "installs remembrance within the sacred" and is rooted in concrete physical spaces, images and objects (Nora 145-146). Within *Der Stein* there are two central memory markers, the physical markers of memory, the family's house in Dresden and the play's namesake: the stone.

The house is a metonymic trope, representative of the different layers in the process of forgetting and re-inscribing. The house undergoes several major transformations throughout the play, most significantly (and visibly) changes in ownership. Meaning is intrinsically tied to memory, and the house acquires a multiplicitous array of denotation. In production, specifically in Thea Hoffmann-Axhelm's design for Zervoulakos' 2014 production, the physical house does not change between scenes. Stefanie lives in the same house in 1978 as Mieze in 1935 and Heidrun in 1993. The skeletal design representing the house is unchanging, but its meaning changes. For Mieze the house represents the loss of her home and way of life. For Stefanie it is the memory of her Grandfather and her childhood. For Hannah moving into the house represents the loss of her family and childhood home. For Witha the house represents a moral defeat, while for Heidrun the house represents Wolfgang's supposed moral victory.

Heidrun transforms the house into a *lieu de mémoire*. Pierre Nora defines the *lieu de mémoire* as a space where "memory crystallizes and secretes itself [. . .] These are *lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory, because there are no longer *milieus de mémoire*, real environments of memory" (144). According to Nora, the *lieu de mémoire* is an imagined space existing in tandem with memory but not with history. The house is a *lieu de mémoire*, because it is a space where there is a lack or deprivation of history. The constructed memories enclosed within the walls of

the house form the basis of Heisings' familial identity. To reaffirm this identity, Heidrun returns to the house to both reaffirm this identity as well as protect and sanctify the memory. Nora explains identities are 'buttressed' on these memory-based spaces (149).

Nora describes the physical structures of these *lieux de mémoire* as containing memory within an 'enclosed' space (149). Ironically, the physical building of the house in the Munich production was the bare bones of the house. No walls, doors or windows, only the pillars holding the three storeys together and stairs leading to each level. Neither memory nor history is contained within the structure. Instead, it seeps out, assaulting the audience with contradictions between family myth and actual history—visible in the provocative nature of the play's stimulus. Memory is safe so long as the family is removed from the building where history and memory meet. The competing stories fly out from the house: Hannah's school report about her Grandfather, Heidrun's work to understand the past, and Heidrun's recovery of the stone stand in stark opposition to Witha waiting with Mieze for their husbands, Wolfgang's words and actions, and Witha's attempt to bury the past before they flee Dresden.

The house triggers Witha's remembrance of the past she had tried to forget for almost fifty years. The family's first visit to the old house in 1993 begins the slow destruction of the family myth. During this visit Witha sees the large now empty house and states, "Aber dass sie alles so leergeräumt haben. Wir hätten die Möbel doch behalten sollen"[22] (61). The memory of her and Wolfgang removing the Schwarzmann's furniture and the destruction of Mieze's piano is non-conducive with Heidrun's memory. Heidrun first asks about the furniture, but asserts Witha is mistaken. Thus the two competing memory cycles appear within this scene. Witha's memory first (chronologically) falters—in the case of Witha the faltering of memory signals the escape of the truth—and directly challenges the Wolfgang-hero memory connected to the house.

[22] "But they've cleaned everything out. We should have held onto the furniture after all."

Memory is deeply connected to physical spaces and places. The memory process is problematized by destruction of place, because the architectural sites of memory, the *lieux de mémoire*, are also destroyed. The location of the house in Dresden is important to the loss of memory, because of Dresden's historical position. Dresden was the location of the infamous Allied fire-bombings in 1945, knowledge vital to the identification of the city in *Der Stein*. The bombings largely destroyed Dresden and killed 25,000 civilians. Prior to 1945, Dresden was a cultural *Hauptstadt* and on February 13, 1945 was burnt to the ground practically overnight. In *Der Stein* the house is a *lieu de mémoire* in the flattened city, because it is a constant in a space robbed of physical reminders of history. The survival of the house provides Heidrun with the necessary requirements to construct a familial *lieu de mémoire*. The house remains a site of memory in a society where authentic, visible history is demolished (in spite of post-war restoration efforts). The house is filled with reminders of family history: Witha's parents' fine china, marked with the ash from the firestorm in 1945, and, of course, the stone thrown through the window in 1935.

Image 14: Peter Eisenman. *Denkmal für die ermorderten Juden Europas.* Berlin, Germany. Photo: Lily Climenhaga.

The name of the city where Witha, Heidrun and Hannah live is never overtly stated in the script, but is easily identified using textual clues. Von Mayenburg explicitly states the city is located in East Germany and was heavily bombed in 1945. Dresden, like Cologne and Kassel in West Germany, was one the most heavily damaged cities during the war and of course was one of the major hubs in the GDR. Another clue von Mayenburg provides is Wolfgang's assertion to Witha when she wants to leave the city to hide in

the country, "Sie werdens nicht machen. [. . .] Churchill hat eine Tante, die wohnt oben am Weißen Hirsch"[23] (26). During the war, there was a widespread belief that Dresden was safe because British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's aunt lived in one of Dresden's suburbs—Weißen Hirsch. Wolfgang attempts to dissuade Witha from leaving the city by rationalizing that, "Der wird nicht seine eigene Tante bombardieren"[24] (26). However, these references to Dresden are few and far between and from a directorial perspective difficult to translate from page to stage. The entire play is set inside the house, and the inside of a house in Dresden looks much the same as a house anywhere else in Germany. In the Munich production, Lukas Turtur[25], who plays Wolfgang, introduced the city following the entire cast humming *Deutschland über alles* as Heidrun opens a bottle of champagne and Witha retreated under the stairs muttering the Lord's Prayer. During the first transition to 1935, Lukas Turtur simply pronounces: "Dresden 1935" before moving offstage.

The location of the house in Dresden is significant for the family's past and present: the firebombing, the flight to the West and the return to the East. However, the more important question in the analysis of *Der Stein* is: why is the only location in the entire play the house? The house acts as both a memory site and a trauma site. LaCapra states *lieux de mémoire* are generally founded on spaces of extreme

Image 15: Susanne Ellinghaus. Stage Design. *Der Stein*. Petra Wüllenweber (Dir). Hildesheim. 2013. Photo: Andreas Hartmann.

[23] "They won't do it [. . .] Churchill has an aunt that lives up by Weisser Hirsch [a suburb of Dresden]" (17).
[24] "He's not going to bomb his own aunt" (17).
[25] Lukas Turtur was responsible for introducing many of the new time periods as they appear on stage (see https://vimeo.com/116235605)

trauma. This concept is especially poignant in reference to those spaces associated with war (10). While the traumatic event has its greatest effect on the victim, there is also significant pressure on bystanders, collaborators, and perpetrators. These traumatic events place the existing identity of all people involved under strain (LaCapra 8-9). Witha's trauma is repressed and eventually re-inscribed as a moral victory by Heidrun based on misinformation. The house is transformed into a monument dedicated to Wolfgang and his triumph. The danger of monuments is their potential to propagate unanalyzed acceptance of what they memorialize. In the case of *Der Stein* false memories circulate as fact and are accepted as history. Lewis Mumford warns, "Stone gives a false sense of continuity, and a deceptive assurance of life" (qtd. in Young 180). The house illustrates Nora's 'meticulous reconstruction' of the past rooted in the desire to forget (qtd. in Young 181). The family's history, more accurately what the spectator witnesses in 1935 and 1945, is blurred and largely forgotten in lieu of the false memories Witha and Heidrun create.

Memorialization is always problematic and for proof, one must look no further than Berlin's Holocaust memorial (Image 14). The memorial was designed by American architect Peter Eisenman and is officially named the *Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas*/*Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*. The memorial has been problematic and controversial since it opened in 2005.

At the altarpiece of the Heisings' monument is the stone, a symbol intricately connected to the house. The stone is representative of the shared nature of memory, even false memory, explored by theorists Jan and Aleida Assmann (2008: 50). It is the physical representation of the family's central narrative. The foundation of old houses, like the Heising family's, are made from stone because stone is sturdy and more durable than wood, which rots or burns. Often, long after the rest of the house rots away, the stone foundation remains as a ghost or monument to the

grand structure that once stood there. Stones create a sense of continuity and stability, as illustrated in the Mumford quote above, remaining even after the main structure is gone. Heidrun explicitly refers to the stone as a monument when her mother won't let her take the stone with them to West Germany in 1953: "du hast gesagt, der Stein ist ein Denkmal für Vater, weil er den Juden ihre Flucht bezahlt hat, ein kleines Denkmal, dass man Mut haben mussen und dass Vater Mut hatte, und dass wir nie vergessen dürfen"[26] (34). According to James E. Young, monuments are "essentially celebratory markers of triumphs and heroic individuals. [. . .] [They] commemorate the memorable[,] embody the myths of beginnings[,] […] ritualize remembrance and mark the reality of ends. [. . .] With monuments we honor ourselves" (Young 179). While the stone celebrates and commemorates Wolfgang, it simultaneously memorializes the Heisings' innocence and freedom from responsibility. However, stone is not infallible, it can be remolded and reshaped with the proper tools and a poorly built foundation will break long before the wooden beams and outer façade rot or crack. Von Mayenburg illustrates the crumbling foundation of the Heising family identity. They have built their identity around Heidrun's Wolfgang-as-hero narrative, but this history is false and becomes hugely problematic when the family comes face to face with the empty space of memory. The stone is a memorial to false memory, but is crumbling under the weight of history. The complexity of this sign—the stone—is extremely difficult for directors, because although it is full of potential meaning, the stone does not feature extensively in the play, or on stage.

Obviously, the cobblestone is a difficult element to incorporate into performance. Susanne Ellinghaus' design for the 2013 production at Theater für Niedersachsen foregrounded the stone by enclosing the Heisings' living room in a circle of cobblestones (image 15).

[26] "you said it's a special stone because they threw it at Father, you said the stone is a memorial to Father because he financed the Jew's escape, a tiny memorial to that you need courage, that Father had courage, and that we must never forget" (24).

Conversely, the stone has not featured prominently in the designs of many other productions. In Hoffmann-Axthelm's design the stone is a prop brought on and offstage by primarily Heidrun. It sits on the tea service for 1993 and appears sporadically in other years, mostly lost in what is going on around it. Heidrun's retrieval of the stone from the garden in 1978 is one of the few instances in the production the stone features prominently. In Zervoulakos' production, Heidrun (Juliane Köhler) digs into the pile of (real) dirt on the middle level of the structure while the structure is spun by two stagehands. During this scene, Lukas Turtur uses a watering can to make it rain while Stefanie Röver shakes a piece of metal to create the sound of thunder. The combination of water and dirt, which Heidrun violently throws from the structure as she digs, makes the stage wet and muddy. When she finds the stone she holds it triumphantly above her head before descending to the stage floor still clutching the stone and exiting with Witha (Hedi Kriegeskotte).

The stone is an odd trope, because the object is at once eponymous with the play, but also one of the lesser present signs on stage, while still infused with meaning. Instead of simply being a cobblestone from a sidewalk somewhere in the city, once onstage the stone transforms into a complex symbol for the audience to interpret, an obvious occurrence of Keir Elam's *semiotization of the object* (8). According to Russian semiotic theorist Petr Bogatyrev, "on the stage things that play the part of theatrical signs . . . acquire special features, qualities and attributes that they do not have in real life" (qtd. in Elam 7, or. ellipsis). Von Mayeburg divorces the stone from its utilitarian function and it is, according to Eli Rozik, imprinted with images (29). According to Elam, the connotation imbues the sign with the social, moral and ideological meaning beyond its visual appearance (11). The stone is an extraordinarily complex image

within the context of the play. One example of possible readings of the stone is the Biblical image of stoning, particularly when Heidrun describes how her father had stones thrown at him.

This image of Wolfgang-the-hero having stones thrown at him inverses the instances of wicked people being stoned in the Bible, recalling Jesus stating in John 8:7 "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone." Instead, within Heidrun's narrative, Wolfgang is stoned by the wicked because of his goodness. However, the story breaks down when the question of who is without sin when applied to both Wolfgang and German society. When Heidrun finds the party pin in her mother's box she expresses her disgust with Witha's party membership. Witha defends herself by attempting to rationalize her membership: "Schwarze Haare, und wie mein Gesicht geschnitten ist – in der Straßenbahn haben sie mich angespuckt und wollten mich aus dem Wagen schmeißen"[27] (30). Witha cannot rationalize her membership in the Nazi party, but she does attempt to justify it to alleviate her feelings of personal guilt. Heidrun still judges her, because the idea her mother could be a part of the party that had thrown stones at her father and tormented him is horrible. Membership in the party equates Witha, for young Heidrun, with those people who tormented her father. The stone acts both as a reminder of the tormenters' guilt (criminal guilt because they physically threw the stone), because according to Heidrun the specific stone she keeps in her house was one of the stones thrown at her father that he kept, but also as a reminder he did not throw the stones back. Just as he turned the other cheek when the house was vandalized and painted red, he did not throw the stones back. However, a closer examination of the Biblical motif shows Wolfgang is not free of sin, because he cannot cast a stone either.

[27] "Witha: Black hair, and the shape of my face – they spat at me in the tram and tried to throw me out of the carriage" (20).

The stone is a problematic and complex sign in the play, because it creates and proliferates the cyclical economy of exoneration and implication. The cycle is illustrated in the play's structure, which places the first scene at the end of the play. For Witha the stone represents Wolfgang's guilt because it is a reminder why he could not throw the stone back or go to the police. Although the HJ vandalized his house, Wolfgang reported a Jewish family to the SA and is indirectly responsible for their deaths. He is a cog in the same mechanism that justifies throwing a stone through his window under the false assumption it is still a Jewish house. For Heidrun the stone exonerates Wolfgang as well as the rest of her family. The stone acts as empirical evidence of Wolfgang's suffering at the hands of the HJ who threw stones at him as well as proof he did not throw the stone back. The stone implicates members of the HJ, a nameless faceless mob of young Germans who could be anyone or anyone's relative. Thus, Heidrun spreads the HJ's onto the wider German community; the stone for Heidrun doesn't just implicate the HJ but anyone who could possibly have been associated with them.

Remembering the HJ's guilt (and by proxy the responsibility of German society) is important to Heidrun because it highlights Wolfgang's exceptionalism and difference. She casts her family as *other*, the stone functions to situate the family firmly apart from perpetrators as a statement of *not I*. Returning to the above-mentioned Biblical reference, the *not I* is no longer valid because Wolfgang could not cast a stone either. He is a part of the ideological machine of National Socialism. However, it is not only Wolfgang and the surviving Heising family implicated, but the entire audience. Almost no audience member in a German production can say *not I*, because they are also in part responsible (in the Arendtian sense of responsibility[28]). Thus the spectator is not in the position to judge or Heidrun, Hannah or Witha because they to are

[28] "the reason for my responsibility must be my membership in a group (a collective) which no voluntary act of mine can dissolve, that is, a membership which is utterly unlike a business partnership which I can dissolve at will" ("Collective Responsibility" 149).

unable to cast their stone. Instead, they must sit and watch the processes of writing and re-writing history.

One of the most powerful moments in the Munich production integrated the image of stones being thrown at the house. This particular moment in the performance is significant because it is one of the few instances when the stone is foregrounded. Elam identifies foregrounding as a spatial metaphor that frames or differentiates a specific part of the performance from the rest (18). The house structure is spun as Wolfgang, dressed in his pajamas, runs up the structure exclaiming whoever is throwing the stones has the wrong house. As this happens the women onstage throw cobblestones into metal buckets, creating the sound of stone smashing against metal and glass. Witha (Hedi Kriegeskotte) begins the medley of smashing by walking from downstage right to downstage left with a stone held high above her head and a metal bucket in the other. When she reaches the far downstage left corner she throws the stone into the bucket, after which the other women take their cue to begin throwing their stones. This image evokes the memory of *Krystallnacht* or the Night of Broken Glass of November 9-10, 1938, a night of widespread vandalism of Jewish homes and businesses as well as murder in Germany and Austria.

Clearly, Zervoulakos specifically framed this moment (Scene Twenty-four) to conjure the memory of *Krystallnacht* and it is an extremely effective and powerful moment in the production. However, it highlights a historical anachronism within von Mayenburg's text. *Krystallnacht* took place in 1938, whereas Scene Twenty-four is in 1935, four years too early. There is no mistaking von Mayenburg wants the audience to see traces of this moment in history; in his script the stage directions for Scene Twenty-four overtly say glass is heard breaking. The playwright indicates the vandalism was carried out by the local HJ, which he seems to imply

were nothing more than a group of thugs. However, the HJ was a regimented youth organization for teenaged boys, in which membership by 1935 was mandatory. However, *Krystallnacht* was carried out largely by the SA (*Sturmabteilung*) not the HJ. The choice to set this moment of the play in 1935 in an Aryanized house is strange, because, historically, 1938 would be more accurate. Although 1935 signaled the establishment of the Nuremberg laws, the Aryanization program was in full force by 1938 alongside increasingly violent acts of anti-Semitism. The year 1935 marked the beginning stages of anti-Semitism as a formal state policy.

The stone is loaded with violent meaning in terms of the Nazi past, in spite of some historical anomalies. However, one cannot separate the elements of the Nazi past from the imagery of the physical stone onstage. The stone also ties to the play's central concept of memory: the stone as a grave marker or as a part of the house itself. The gravestone symbol is clearly indicated in the text when Heidrun and Witha leave Dresden in 1953. Witha dissuades her daughter from bringing the stone with them, because the border guards will wonder why she is carrying a stone with her and instead they decide to bury it. For Heidrun the act of burying the stone is an act of remembrance, by burying the stone she is memorializing and keeping her father's memory alive. Conversely, Witha is burying her past and the burden of the past that hangs around her neck like a stone. She not only conceals Wolfgang, but also the memory of Mieze and the shame associated with Mieze's memory.

CONCLUSION:

Marius von Mayenburg deals with the complex issue of responsibility in *Der Stein*, which stands in stark contrast to the idea of guilt. One, according to Arendt, may *feel* guilt for the sins of fathers or things they have not done, but they cannot *be* guilty. Arendt states in her essay "Collective Responsibility" that guilt is personal and singular, thus the concept of collective guilt

is an anachronism. However, she points out the possibility of being collectively responsible (147). The family unit is responsible for remembering the past to prevent history from repeating itself. The refusal to acknowledge the past causes history to repeat itself is a failure to fulfill this responsibility.

Witha, because of her desire to possess the Schwarzmann's beautiful house in Dresden allows Wolfgang to report them to the SA. Heidrun, in her desire to return to her family home, evicts Stefanie, her grandfather and the three other families sharing the house. Mieze and her husband are deported to a concentration camp and Stefanie's grandfather does not survive the move; he falls down stairs and walks into windows in his new home. A new cycle begins through the death of Stefanie's grandfather, which bears striking resemblance to Witha's guilt for the death of Mieze.

Responsibility does not mean accepting the guilt of ancestors. Heidrun is not guilty for her father's actions in 1935 because, in Arendt,'s words "[t]here is such a thing as responsibility for things one has not done; one can be held liable for them. But there is no such thing as being or feeling guilty for things that happened without oneself actively participating in them" ("Collective Responsibility" 147). Neither Heidrun nor Hannah are guilty because they did not take the house from Mieze and her husband, nor are they guilty for their deaths. However, they may feel guilty and may consider themselves partially responsible. Heidrun is responsible for creating the circumstances of Stefanie's grandfather's death, just as Witha is responsible for contributing to the circumstances of Mieze's death. Although neither woman killed anyone personally their actions led to the deaths of the respective house owners.

Heidrun assists her mother in the construction of the myth surrounding her father. Witha tries to explain young Heidrun when she first asks about Wolfgang:

> "Dein Vater war kein Held, aber im Widerstand ist er immergewesen. Nicht aus politischen Gründen, sondern aus Prinzip. Wenn jemand was gesagt hat, war er dagegen, weil er wissen wollte, ob was dahintersteckt. Da ist viel kaputtgegangen, natürlich, aber ein Frosch geht auch kaput, wenn man seine Nerven herauspräpariert, und das ist er ja gewesen, ein Tierarzt, ein Mann aus der Wissenschaft."[29] (30-31)

To the perceptive spectator this explanation does not suggest active resistance, but Heidrun, like many Germans, constructs a meaning different from her parents' story. Heidrun absolves her mother and father of taking part in the crimes of the NS regime, while releasing herself and Hannah of responsibility. However, this false absolution makes Heidrun, and in part Hannah, guilty of non-thinking and of neglecting to pass history onto the next generation, which according to Arendt is the same crime many Germans (including Adolf Eichmann) were guilty of.

Instead, Heidrun passes on a story of innocence and persecution. The stone represents the image of Wolfgang-as-hero pelted with stones because he would not give in to the pressures placed on him by the regime (personified by the HJ). Von Mayenburg uses the image of the stone to explore the relationship between past and present and the supposed continuity stone symbolizes. This image is however problematic in *Der Stein*. The assumption a simple stone can hold all of the complexities of remembrance and recall the horrors and tragedy of the war is ambitious, and one wonders if the playwright's central trope can represent the complexities of the Holocaust and the crimes of the Third Reich, as well as the mechanisms of memory and its delusions. Yet, this is precisely the role memorials and monuments across the globe attempt to

[29] "Your father was not a hero, but he always resisted. Not for political reasons, but as a matter of principle. If someone said something, he was against it because he wanted to know if there was something behind it. Of course a lot of things got broke, but a frog breaks if you dissect his nerves, and that's what he was, a veterinarian, a man of science" (21).

fulfill. The massive Holocaust memorial in Berlin with its two thousand rectangular stones, nor the thousands of *Stolpersteine*[30] (stumbling stones) across Europe cannot fully represent the complex and problematic history they attempt to memorialize. Either intentionally or unintentionally, von Mayenburg identifies the major shortcoming and unrealistic expectations placed on memorials, which inevitably will over time crumble – as stones do in graveyards – just as memories are forgotten.

One of the major critiques, according to Johan Åhr's analysis, of Berlin's Holocaust memorial was the abstract quality of the cenotaph structures. The stones making up the memorial are essentially abstract objects with no inherent meaning. Unlike the *Stolpersteine* there are no names, dates or information inscribed on the stones, but they are simply blank, empty stones erected in the middle of Berlin. Von Mayenburg's stone is also an abstract object, simultaneously symbolizing nothing and everything. There is no inherent connection between the stone and the past, only an imagined one.

In *Der Stein,* Marius von Mayenburg responds directly to more concrete representations of the past: films such as *Der Untergang* (*Downfall;* 2005), which, in his opinion, are presumptuous and inaccurate. *Der Untergang* examines the final days of Hitler in the bunker with his staff, told from the perspective of his secretary. Oliver Hirschbiegel's film removes Hitler from the historical context of National Socialism and situates him outside of his environment to humanize the Führer and show a softer side of the man responsible for the death of some twelve million people (Von Mayenburg, email). Happy Ending narratives such as *Der Untergang* create a different understanding of the past for the present generation of Germans, one von Mayenburg identifies as a "geschichtsvergessenen Bewegung," a movement that forgets

[30] *Stopfersteine* are monuments created to commemorate victims of the Holocaust/Shaoh. They are small cobblestone size monuments found in many German cities as well as eighteen other European countries with the victims name, date of birth, date of deportation and date and place of death (if known).

history: “Es ist die Verantwortung, informiert zu sein und politisch und historisch zu denken”[31] (Von Mayenburg, email). A statement echoing LaCapra’s assertion: “Moreover, a critically informed memory is crucial in the attempt to determine what in history deserves preservation in living tradition, either as something to be criticized [. . .] and avoided or as something to be respected or emulated” (LaCapra 19-20). *Der Stein* illustrates the dangers of a generation not informed about the past. It is a reaction against forgetting the past. German identity is inseparably connected to a unique and troubling history—a history that cannot be forgotten by current or future generations and must not be repeated.

[31] “It is the responsibility [of those in the present] to be informed and to think politically and historically”

CHAPTER 4:
'STICKS AND STONES':
THE PRODUCTION AND RECEPTION OF MARIUS VON MAYENBURG'S DER STEIN

"Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."
-Leo Tolstoy

Der Stein first appeared on the German stage in 2008 in a joint project between the Salzburger Festspiele and the world-renowned Berliner Schaubühne. Since these first shows it has been produced within Germany in Wiesbaden (2009), Konstanz (2010), Dresden (2010), Hildesheim (2011), Cologne (2012) and Munich (2014), as well as in numerous countries outside the German-speaking realm. Critical response to the play is mixed. Initial reactions to Ingo Berk's Salzburg/Berlin production were largely negative, while response to Sarantos Zervoulakos' Munich production in 2014 is notably more positive. Many German productions have received similar critiques in their attempts to stage the thirty-five-scene play. The two major critiques of the play concern structure and subject matter. The initial production was described as a "conventional," clichéd and confusing production, offering the spectator nothing Hollywood and German film has not already shown in the last seventy years about Germany's war legacy (Decker; Spencer; Stadelmaier). The following chapter highlights the production and critical reception of *Der Stein*, examining both how various directors have approached the text and how reviewers have responded. An understanding of critical response is vital to comprehending von Mayenburg's dramatic choices through the lens of reception and reader-response theory. A detailed understanding of how directors have tackled these challenges is equally important to reception analysis. The production aspect of this chapter primarily makes use of the first performance in Salzburg/Berlin and the 2014 production at Munich's Residenztheater directed by Sarantos Zervoulakos. Staging and *mise-en-scène* are reconstructed

using rehearsal and production photos and reviewer descriptions. Additionally, I am using my own experience as a spectator for the Munich production. Therefore, many of the examples used from this production are built from the notes I took during rehearsals and performance combined with my own memory of the event.[32] The reception analysis is mostly based on critical reviews, it is important to clarify that these sources do not necessarily represent the overarching reception of a production. Rather, reviewer response relates only to a specific sector of spectatorship. Reviews represent the opinion of the mass media (and sometimes specialized media) in the theatre instead of the general public.

The critical methodology employed within this chapter first identifies the challenges connected to the study of reception within theatre and how these challenges present themselves in reviews of *Der Stein*. Reader-response theorist Wolfgang Iser's theory of negation and blanks is vital when exploring critical response to the play. These concepts are examined within productions and combined with Canadian theatre theorist Susan Bennett's own theatrically based interpretation of Iser's theory. Additionally, Stanley Fish's concept of the interpretative community is applied to both the German audience as well as the social milieu of reviewers, looking at historical and personal connection to the play's subject matter. The following pages closely look at responses to the play and the difficulties faced by directors producing *Der Stein* (For a comprehensive list of past production see Appendix 1).

In recent years the topic of National Socialism has been explored in film, literature, television (examined in Chapter One). Hollywood films such as *Schindler's List* (1993) and *Inglorious Basterds* (*sic*; 2009) illustrate a continued fascination with the Second World War and the Holocaust in international popular culture. However, the sustained sensationalizing of the

[32] Based on the subject matter of the entire examination, I feel it is appropriate to state memory is fallible and changes over time, therefore the examination is, in part, susceptible to my own changes and failings of memory.

theme of National Socialism and the Holocaust presents the danger of the trivialization in theatrical productions dealing with the subject. The mass production of Holocaust-Guilt drama in Germany causes some reviewers to respond cynically to *Der Stein*. Arnim Bauer, in his review of Esther Hattenbach's 2013 Heilbronn production, states the play merchandises on the theme of "old Nazis," bemoaning this door has not yet been closed: "Dabei geht es um die Aufarbeitung des Treibens der alten Nazis, die immer noch nicht abgeschlossen ist. Schlimm, dass wir es schon mit den neuen braunen Horden zu tun haben"[33] (Bauer). Likewise, Gerhard Stadelmaier complains it presents nothing TV documentaries and educational videos haven't already shown. Reviewers of many of the different productions grumble *Der Stein* fails to offer anything new and accuse von Mayenburg of being yet another playwright capitalizing on guilt. These reviews illustrate how the continuous presence of the Holocaust in global popular culture has the potential to affect critical response especially in its ability to address the question of German involvement in the war. Von Mayenburg, as he states in an interview with Franz Wille for *Theaterheute* magazine, is reacting against this trend. He grew up surrounded by the memorialization of collective guilt and responds to the current practice of memorializing particular narratives, while ignoring contradictory memories. Furthermore, the continued popularity of *Der Stein* among audiences across Germany and the world indicate Stadelmaier and Bauer's opinion may not be representative of the wider theatre-going community. This example of conflict between the critic and public's voice, illustrated through continued productions and popularity of *Der Stein*, is indicative of the particular role of the theatre critic and how reviews must be analyzed in a critical discussion about reception.

Pavis identifies the place of the theatre critic as a 'voice of the arts' (Pavis qtd. in

[33] "[It] re-visits the crimes of old Nazis, a theme still unclosed topic. Unfortunately, we aren't yet finished with the brown horde"

Bennett 42). According to Pavis, reviewers are greatly influenced by the underlying political assumptions and biases of their medium (42). Reviews for *Der Stein* come from local newspapers as well as a variety of mainstream newspapers: the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Berliner Zeitung* and *The Guardian*. The expertise and biases of their reviewers, as well as the politics of the publisher inform their opinions. Newspaper is a traditional form of mass media, indicative of conservative, non-alternative analyses of events. Thus newspaper reviews tend to represent the opinions of a specific portion of society. Well-established theatre critics normally study journalism and work in the newspaper industry for many years. They share similar expectations of what makes a good production based on their social and cultural sensibilities. Perhaps the exception to this specific group is bloggers who post reviews of shows on their individual blogs and are often unpaid. However, even individual bloggers, referring specifically to those whose opinions are heard and respected within the theatre community, often share a specific critical or artistic background.

Reviewers belong to what literary theorist Stanley Fish defines as an interpretive community: a specific group of people who share similar interpreting strategies for writing and reading texts. These interpretive strategies, according to Fish, shape how texts are read, viewed and received (171) and one could add: how they are eventually produced. The concept of interpretive communities is useful when analyzing reception, because it situates reviewers within a cultural and social context. However, Bennett explains these communities must also be viewed critically, because while "the interpretive communities of theatre critics are clearly influential, [they are] not necessarily helpful, either to the companies reviewed or to the public seeking their opinions" (42). The opinions expressed by reviewers are not necessarily representative of the opinions of the entire or even the majority of the audience. Rather they are representative of the

specific artistic sensibility of members of the mass media. While they cannot provide a satisfactory summation of a play's overall reception, they can provide insight into how a specific segment of society responds to the play's controversial themes (41-42). *Der Stein* aims to have a revelatory function: Gunner Decker states in his review of the Berlin production, "Diese Stück versucht, den Nerv deutscher Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts freizulegen"[34] (Decker). History is still very much alive and engrained in German collective memory and identity, as von Mayenburg illustrates with the fictional Heising family (Decker). The National Socialist past remains an emotionally charged topic in contemporary Germany and von Mayenburg implores his audience to examine the fallibility of both history and memory.

Von Mayenburg, like many Germans born in the postwar period, was exposed to the aftermath of German war crimes in his early upbringing. This experience included watching films about the Holocaust and taking field trips to former concentration camps. From a very early age Germans are imparted with a deep-rooted sense of guilt, causing an identity crisis. This crisis emerges from the desire to break with the past combined with a sustained sense of guilt for the misdeeds of their parents and grandparents. By not fully characterizing individuals such as Wolfgang and Mieze, the audience of *Der Stein* must construct their own understanding of the characters. Von Mayenburg does not attempt to answer why Wolfgang takes the house, why he reports his boss Herr Schwarzmann to the authorities, or why he refuses to let him or his family leave the house when the Allies bomb Dresden. Instead, these answers are left for the audience to ponder for themselves.

The ambiguity of characters like Wolfgang and Mieze allows spectators to connect them with their own memories, possibly because of the closeness of the play to reality. Wolf Banitzki,

[34] "The play attempts to expose the central nerve of German twentieth-century history"

in his review of the 2014 Munich production, notes that while the story is fictive it could very easily be true. While Banitzki asserts this closeness to reality makes the play predictable and dull, it also makes the characters easy for the audience to relate to. Von Mayenburg carefully constructs each of the characters around a specific memory trend and generational group. Thus the struggle of each character to come to terms with guilt and responsibility is representative of the spectator's own struggles.

Proximity to the play's subject matter greatly affects reception. A German reviewer is likely to respond to *Der Stein* differently than a British critic. It is impossible to determine with complete accuracy the reviewers' psychological closeness to the event without interviewing each reviewer individually. However, personal proximity could account for the increased hostility of some German reviewers to the play's subject matter in comparison to, for instance, British reviewers. According to theatre theorist Marvin Carlson, whose main field of study includes the German stage, reception and memory are intertwined. He states, "memory supplies the codes and strategies that shape reception, and, as cultural and social memories change, so do the parameters within which reception operates" (Carlson 5). German spectators, particularly those born in the sixties and seventies, have a specific interpretive code shaping their response. Their memories are shaped by their closer proximity to the Nazi past than that of their British counterparts, whose parents and grandparents may also have fought in the war, but as the victors. Thus reviews provide insight into the critical reception by a specific social milieu, or *interpretive community*.

Membership in an interpretive community means the spectator brings a particular "horizon of cultural and ideological expectations" into the theatre, a term borrowed from reader-response theorist Hans Robert Jauss (qtd. in Bennett 98). In theatre, the relation between

spectator and past shapes the horizon of expectations just as the relation between reader and past shapes this horizon in literary criticism (Bennett 48-49). The audience enters the theatre with pre-existing expectations about the major themes, structure and aesthetics. A theatrical production such as *Der Stein* seeks, according to Bennett, to challenge or confirm these popular expectations (113). The expectations of the spectator are built around the shared/common history of their community. They shape the framing mechanisms the audience employ in their interpretation of the series of signs presented onstage (140). Theatre critics and reviewers obviously do no escape from this dynamic.

For example, in the Munich production we hear Nina Hagen's hit song *Du hast den Farbfilm vergessen* (1976) in the first 1978 scene. Reviewer Alexander Altmann immediately identifies the East-West dichotomy this song creates in comparison to Dschingis Khan's song *Dschingis Khan* (1979). *Du hast den Farbfilm vergessen* plays when Heidrun and Witha are at the old house in East Germany, while *Dschingis Khan* is only played when Heidrun and Witha are in the car driving to (or from) the East (Altmann). For a German audience, Hagen's song creates an instant association with East Germany because of Hagen's role as a popular East German artist throughout the GDR period. In comparison, *Dschingis Khan* is clearly recognizable as the West German entry in the 1980 Eurovision song contest. Based on the reception of the (primarily) German audience at the Munich premiere, the audience initially responded to *Du hast den Farbfilm vergessen* with laughter. This response is a laugh of familiarity. The audience as a whole, based on later conversation among the Munich audience, recognized the song and understood the context of the song. However, I, as a non-German spectator unfamiliar with East German music, did not make this connection because of my different system of cultural codes. It was not until much later, when researching the music used

in the production I came to realize of the significance of Hagen and her music. Both *Dschingis Khan* and *Du hast den Farbfilm vergessen* are representative of a code that effects reception, because they are imbued with meaning for a German audience.

Another important signifier in the Munich and other productions is the Nazi uniform. The clearly distinguishable uniform and white/black/red swastika armband identifies the man wearing the uniform as a Nazi within both German and non-German cultural systems of interpretation. Although it is easily identified and has a social and cultural meaning, non-Germans like myself do not necessarily personally identify this symbol within the context of family history, but rather with the macro history of the period 1933-45. However, German spectators, based on individual and group relationships with the past, view this sign through a unique personal lens very different from my own. Their parents and grandparents belonged to the generation who survived the war and the aftermath of the war. In comparison, my grandfather, a Canadian involved in the war, was on the winning side. Thus my relation with World War II is shaped first as an individual born after the war, second as victor and third a citizen of a place not occupied or fought over in the war. Even third generation Germans have an inherited memory of the war's effect on the German landscape. A German acquaintance in Kassel, a German city eighty-five percent destroyed by civilian bombings during the war, recalled to me how beautiful Kassel was before the war. He bitterly recalled, based on his Grandmother's journals and stories, the night of the bombing: how she could see the fire from Marburg, how the next day she walked back to Kassel to help clear the rubble and how most of her friends and family died that night. For him Kassel would never be as beautiful as it had once been, a sentiment echoed by most of my German acquaintances in Kassel. The bombing of Kassel permanently scarred the city. Seventy years later, its residents still compare it to the pre-war city. Many Germans, particularly those

living in cities such as Kassel and Dresden that were largely destroyed during the war, share this sentiment. The visible scars of war remain a constant reminder of what happened. Alongside these physical scars are remaining psychological ones as well.

One notable psychological scar for Germans is the national anthem. For many non-Germans, especially in North America, the act of singing the national anthem is normal practice. However, Zervoulakos' choice of opening his production with the entire cast humming *Deutschland Lied* is a semantically loaded symbol. August Hoffmann's 1841 lyrics to the first verse[35], also the best-known part of the song, are strongly associated with Nazi sentiment, which at a later point in the production are sung. Although the official anthem consists of only the third verse, the song is seldom heard at public events in or outside German. Another problematic symbol is the German flag, present in both Ingo Berk's Berlin and Sarantos Zervoulakos' Munich productions. Damian Hilz's stage design places the entire production against the backdrop of an inverted German flag (Image 16). Zervoulakos combines the German national anthem with the flag in one transition from 1953 to 1993. The established convention for the scene is Witha is watching television. She flicks on the TV with a remote control and the

Image 36: Damian Hilz. Berlin set. Ingo Berk (Dir.). Schaubühne. Berlin, Germany. 2008. Photo: Matthias Horn.

[35] Deutschland, Deutschland über alles,/ Über alles in der Welt/ Wenn es stets zu Schutz und Trutze/ Brüderlich zusammenhält,/ Von der Maas bis an die Memel,/ Von der Etsch bis an den Belt –/ Deutschland, Deutschland über alles,/ Über alles in der Welt.

Germany, Germany above all,/ Above Everything in the world,/ When always, for protection,/ We stand together as brothers./ From the Maas to the Memel/ From the Etsch to the Belt-/ Germany, Germany above all/ Above all in the world.

blond Katrin Röver (1978/1993 Stefanie and 1935 Mieze) enters wearing a German soccer jersey draped in a German flag singing the national anthem. Witha turns off the television leaving a disgruntled Röver to exit the stage. Both Hitz's design and Zervoulakos' staging illustrate deep-seated discomfort with the past. In the context of the troubled German past, negotiation with history creates tension with the deep-seated desire to neutralize the past, while simultaneously craving to memorialize. Continuity within historical narrative highlights the permanence of society and shapes how we see communities and our place within these communities (Blau 16; 20). Von Mayenburg confronts his audience with two versions of the past: first, how we want to see the past and, second, what actually happened. He invades the space Arendt defines as 'organized remembrance' and questions the notion of objective history (Arendt qtd. in Blau 21). The expectation of honoring the dead and forgetting their association with contemporary catastrophe is shattered. The horizon of expectation brought by the spectator into the theatre interacts and influences the reception of all parts of the play (Bennett 98-99).

Der Stein discusses the subject of personal and familial responsibility both for and during the Second World War, an issue still hotly debated in Germany. Responsibility and selfhood are entangled, just as history and selfhood are entangled (Bergerson 14; 32). Decker acknowledges in his review of the Berlin production the play presents the relationship between Germany's troubled past and present German identity. Von Mayenburg's play is set in German history—the Nazis' rise to power, the end of the war, the construction of the Berlin Wall, its fall and Germany's reunification. However, none of these events are present onstage. Instead, he forces the spectator to identify and fill in the missing elements of the characters and the play using personal experience.

Norman Holland, in his reader-response theory, connects interpretation with the reader's identity: "[I]dentity re-creates itself. . . . That is, all of us, as we read, use the literary work to symbolize and finally to replicate ourselves. We work out through the text our own characteristic patterns of adaptation. We interact with the work, making it part of our psychic economy and making ourselves part of the literary work" (Holland qtd in Bennett 37-38; or. brackets and ellipses). Thus, the audience faces their own identity crisis and the implication of their own familial involvement, placing their own memory in peril.

Directors of German productions of *Der Stein* are presented with many opportunities to challenge the trend of forgetfulness, but it becomes much more difficult in productions outside Germany. While Nazi symbols are easily identified outside Germany, personal connections to them are not the same. This offers a possible answer to the lack of English productions of *Der Stein*. Within this study, there have been twenty-three productions of *Der Stein* identified. There are eleven German, three French, one French-Swiss, one Russian, one Lithuanian, one Portuguese, one Polish (in Danzig), one Czech, one Turkish and one English production listed since 2008. Since the majority of productions are in Germany, it is indicative of a connection and interest in the subject matter far exceeding other nations. However, the three productions in France, in comparison to other nations with only single productions, seems to indicate an increased interest in the subject in France as well.[36] Although there is a wealth of information available on the reception of the non-German productions, this study is limited to English and German sources. This reception study has a clearly German bias due to the large number of German productions in comparison to the single English production at the Royal Court Theatre. An examination of available English sources clearly identifies a difference in critical response

[36] This French interest is a potential area of study for future scholars, because of France's own history of collaboration and resistance during the war. Due to my own linguistic limitations to German and English I am unable to complete this study myself.

between German and English reviewers. For example English sources are far more structure-focused in their critiques than German ones. However, the limited number of reviews available for the English production and lack of commentary on the English relationship with World War II and National Socialism in reviews make it impossible to provide a satisfactory analysis at this time of the difference between German and non-German, or British reception.

German audiences react to specific elements in the play based on their proximity to the events discussed. The best example of proximity within von Mayenburg's play is found in reviewers' reactions to the character of Stefanie, one of the house's former residents from the GDR era. Gabriele Gorgas' review of the 2010 Dresden production directed by Thomas Stecher notes the hollowness of Stefanie's character; she states there is little textual information to help actors find depth in the character. Gorgas, although born in West Germany, has lived in the East since 1972 and shares a different relationship with the portrayal of the young *Ostfrau* Stefanie than many Western reviewers. Likewise, Michael Meyen heavily criticizes the Residenztheater's depiction of Stefanie's character. Meyen, a professor of communication and media studies at Ludwig-Maximilian-Universität, studies media in the GDR. He states: "Wenn der Westen über die DDR spricht, dann muss der Freiheitswille dabei sein, selbst wenn es dramaturgisch überhaupt keinen Sinn macht"[37] (Meyen). Meyen is specifically critiquing von Mayenburg's use of Stefanie as a plot device to move the story forward. According to Meyen's analysis of the character she is without any real thought or opinion about what happened in the GDR and in Germany since reunification. Von Mayenburg shows Stefanie as the victim of a capitalist system, but—to the dismay of critics such as Meyen and Gorgas—she provides no commentary on either reunified Germany or the former East German system.

[37] "When Westerners [referring specifically to West Germans] talk about the GDR, the desire for freedom must be considered, even when it don't make dramaturgical sense."

Reviewer Andreas Herrmann from Dresden's *SAX* magazine states the play explores East German history from a West German perspective. Herrmann's observation stands in stark opposition to West German reviews and in agreement with Meyen. Herrmann and other East German reviews illustrate von Mayenburg is outside of the Eastern interpretive community. Meyen states although the story is set in Dresden to von Mayenburg, "1972 in München geboren," the location doesn't matter (Meyen). However, Meyen's argument becomes dangerous, because it limits writing and communicating the experience of East Germans to those with the living and experienced memory of the communist state. However, as time passes the number of those who lived in the communist regime and remember both its opportunities (otherwise known *Ostalgia* or nostalgia for the former East) as well as repression becomes increasingly limited, much like the war generation. It is true von Mayenburg is outside the interpretive community of East Germans and Dresdeners, thus making it is difficult for him to communicate East Germans experiences, as they are vastly different from his Western experience. However, East Germany is an important part of German identity and history. Just as the experience of the Nazi era and the war is not limited to survivors (the now dwindling war generation), the memory of the East cannot be limited to Easterners.

Der Stein explores the connection between East and West German history and individual action. Bygone traumatic events appear to the audiences in flashes. The spectator is forced to watch the competing cycles of memory and history as the play jumps intermittently across time. For German audiences, the play's subject matter is traumatic and must be dealt with very carefully. Andreas Montag in his review of Oliver Lisewski's 2010 production in Halle states, "Der Dramatiker Marius von Mayenburg macht das große Verdrängen zum Thema, das Trauma der Deutschen nach dem Trauma, das sie dem Rest der Welt mit Holocaust und

kriegerischer Mordbrennerei bescherten"[38] (Montag). According to Holocaust historian Dominik LaCapra, coming into contact with the trauma may cause a rupture or lapse in memory by breaking continuity with the past and, "placing identity in question to the point of shattering it" (LaCapra 8-9). Directors communicate the cycle of time, trauma and ruptures in memory by employing different dramaturgical devices. Design is vital to clearly communicating the passing and rupture of time in *Der Stein*. Design must support the passing of time as well as scene changes, but also show continuity of place in the central trope of a single house. Berk's designer Damian Hitz created a stage design with three different pictures illustrating the three time periods—1935/1945, 1953/1978 and 1993 (Hitz 2008). All characters, except Witha and Wolfgang (who wanders the stage like a ghost), remain trapped in their time. Witha's movements and actions are indicative of jumps in time. Comparatively, the stage design for the Munich production, as discussed in Chapter Three, shows the bare bones of the house and does very little to illustrate changes in time. Subtle costume changes—wigs, dresses, coats, etc.— and decor changes—tea sets, radios, etc.—illustrate these shifts. The shifts break up the trauma so the audience never witnesses the complete trauma in chronological order, communicating it in a new way.

The focus of the annual Salzburg Festspiele's Young Director's Project is "neue Sprachen und ungewöhnliche Erzählformen" or new forms of speech and unusual narrative structures. Von Mayenburg's structure in *Der Stein* is fast-paced and fractured, employing a narrative device Wolfgang Iser refers to as blanks and negations. Blanks represent what is concealed in the text and allows the spectator to make his or her own associations, while negations defamililarizes. Hitz's design is an extremely literal and two-dimensional translation of

[38] "The dramatist Marius von Mayenburg makes the massive suppression [of history] his theme: the trauma of Germans, after the trauma that had given the rest of the world the Holocaust and militarized murder"

the script, confining each period to a specific part of the stage. It does not leave enough interpretive room for the spectator to place their individual understanding of history on the scene.

Image 17: Thea Hoffmann-Axthelm. Munich set. Left to right: Hedi Kriegeskotte, Katrin Röver, Juliane Köhler. Sarantos Zervoulakos (Dir.). Residenztheater. Munich, Gemrany. Photo: Matthias Horn.

The design for Petra Wüllenweber's 2011 production in Theater für Niedersachsen in Hildesheim similarly employed a realist aesthetic, using a fully furnished room to represent the house. The problem with a realistic setting is it situates the subject in *someone else*'s house, distancing it from the audience. Most directors and designers employ a more abstract design leaving more to the audiences' imagination by employing negation—a technique von Mayenburg often uses in the play. Negation both invokes and negates the familiar. Through cancellation, specific elements are highlighted by their absence, effecting the spectators' interpretation (Bennett 44; Iser 168). While the abstract design shows a home belonging to no one, it could also belong to anyone. Zervoulakos' designer Thea Hoffmann-Axthelm, with her barebones design negates the house by placing the spinning skeleton of a house on stage (Image 17). The house is not there, but an empty structure for the audience to find and apply meaning to is. Iser's theory of blanks foregrounds the impossibility to "put the whole character into the book," just as Hoffmann-Axthelm illustrates the impossibility of placing an entire house on the stage (Iser 180; Hoffmann-Axhelm 2008).

It is also not possible to show a fully developed person in a ninety-minute play, each character's background cannot be explored well enough to become fully believable. Attempting to construct a naturalistic house is an impossibility because the space is inescapably a stage and all the makings of a house—walls, bedrooms, belongings—cannot be *fully*[39] realized in the limited space and with the limited budget of a typical theatre. Instead of attempting to create a realistic house, most directors and designers, like Hoffmann-Axthelm, create a space with blanks or incomplete and unexplained elements. The reader/viewer must fill in these blanks based on what they already know about the text/play as well as history, in a process Iser refers to as "ideation," involving the creation of new ideas (Iser 169).

Blanks, according to Iser, force the audience—or reader—to "construct for himself the aesthetic object" (107). Bennett applies Iser's blanks to theatrical performance. She posits the use of "[c]urtains or blackouts to denote act breaks or scene changes clearly work in the manner of Iser's blanks. They generally herald a change in perspective and permit the audience some time for the juggling of expectations and memories" (44). However, curtains and blackouts do not denote scene breaks in *Der Stein* because the sheer number of scene changes makes this form of blanks impossible. Von Mayenburg's blanks are the time jumps back and forth. The audience must try to understand why the jump has taken place and how the next scene fits into the overarching narrative. The purpose of these blanks is remembrance without trauma. If the director allows the spectator to undergo the full traumatic effect then they risk that the spectator will stop listening. Thus von Mayenburg employs a technique in his writing that allows the audience to momentarily escape the trauma so they are able to better understand and engage with it. Certain critics state the fast paced script and sudden scene changes are jarring and difficult to

[39] A realist stage design would partially create the experience of being in a house because it is actually in a theatre it inevitably fails.

follow. However, the quick transitions fill a specific role within von Mayenburg's structure. The blanks do not allow his audience to adjust to the new scene, because they are aimed at negating *feelings* of guilt[40]. Although memory is invoked, there is no time for personal reflection among audience members; the trauma is not relived. To understand what is happening and what von Mayenburg is saying, the spectator must focus only on the play and not the trauma.

Blanks in *Der Stein* signal time changes, jumps covering days, weeks, or years. The blanks and how to communicate changes in time provides yet another dramaturgical problem for directors. Often directors use design elements to solve this problem and communicate the scene's location in time to the audience. Damian Hitz's design for Ingo Berk's world premiere illustrates these time shifts. The different periods are presented laterally across the stage, starting with a large piano followed by the Schwarzmann's dining room table with a full tea service on the left side of the stage. This section, where the spectator sees Mieze and Wolfgang, is followed by the terrace, which is filled with two colored plastic chairs and a swing. The far right side of the stage consists of a large rhododendron bush and a pile of dirt (descriptions in Gronewold; Rothschield 2.08.2008; Mayer; image 16). Action is confined to the section of the stage representing the specific time period. Although critics did not respond positively to Berk's interpretation of the script and Hitz's design, design remained an important element for later productions.

Petra Wüllenweber's 2011 production in Hildesheim depended on light changes to illustrate changes in time period, while Enrico Stolzenburg's production in Konstanz (2010) projected the year of the scene on a screen (described in Prante; Kopitzki and Miller). Other solutions include having the actors do quick costume changes like in Slobodan Unkovski's 2009

[40] Note the emotional response is the *feeling* of guilt, a response more closely aligned with responsibility, and not actual guilt. As is previously established it is not possible for the audience to be guilty unless they are personally guilty of perpetrating the crimes of the Third Reich. However, they are able to *feel* guilty according to Arendtian logic.

Wiesbaden production (von Sternburg). Rüdiger Pape applied an old Thornton Wilder technique and had the characters announce their name and year in his 2012 Cologne production (Netz). Thomas Stecher's 2010 Dresden production used porcelain and coffee to illustrate changes in time (Wolf). Because of what one reviewer refers to as the *Jelinek'schen* or Jelinek'esque nature of the play, directors are given certain artistic freedom in their direction. Although von Mayenburg puts the scenes in a specific order, directors are not bound to keeping them in this exact order. The 2014 production in Munich employed a variety of the above listed techniques in design, as well as moving and removing certain scenes.

The relocation of select scenes by director Sarantos Zervoulakos and his dramaturge Christina Hommel serve to highlight particular themes such as guilt and the repetition of history, while still maintaining the fractured nature of the original script. Additionally scene transitions are undertaken through the movement of furniture on and off the stage, specifically the porcelain tea service signaling 1993 and a metal coffee service for 1978. The different time periods are annonounced by the actors when they first occur: Lukas Turtur announces "Dresden 1935," while dressed in an SS-uniform giving his wife a new fur coat and Turtur also announces 1978 dressed in a pilot uniform—a clever reminder of the 1978 hijacking of an Polish airline (see Appendix 3)—holding a care package filled with Western goods. Simple costume changes such as coats, dresses, bandanas and wigs signal character and time changes as well announcing the year by the

Image 18: Wolfgang (Kay Bartholomäus Hoppe) under the table drinking during the air raid. Ingo Berk (Dir.). Schaubühne. Berlin. 2008. Photo: Matthias Horn.

actor[41] (Zervoulakos). These small changes have a double function in the production. First, as previously stated, they signal shifts in time and scene; second, they hold a negating function. Zervoulakos' design has all costumes and props visible onstage throughout the performance. The audience sees the mass of familiar household objects and clothes, but they become strange because they are not in use for all the play and don't fulfill normal household functions throughout. The overlapping and layering of these signs through the mixture of different elements cause the same jarring effect as the shifts in von Mayenburg's script.

Several notable examples of changes occur in Zervoulakos' production. The actor playing Wolfgang, Lukas Turtur, appears in various costumes throughout the production. The layering of these costumes is important. When Wolfgang appears in Scene Twenty-two (see Appendix 1) working in his lab with Witha, who is acting as his assistant, wears all white. While in Scene Twenty (although in the Munich production this scene came after Scene Twenty-two) Wolfgang wears the same white lab coat, but now overtop of the easily distinguished gray pants belonging to his uniform. Based on available production photos, Berk's Berlin production appears to employ a similar layering of elements. In this production Wolfgang is dressed in non-assuming, period clothing—white shirt, a gray pinstriped suit with vest, a brown tie and high black boots. The

Image 19: Opening tableaux, humming *Deutschland über alles* and introduction of Dresden 1993. Left to right: Hedi Kriegeskotte, Lukas Turtur, Juliane Köhler, Katrin Röver, Nora Buzalka. Sarantos Zervoulakos (Dir.). Residenztheater. Munich. Photo: Matthias Horn.

[41] I distinguish between the actor and the character, because, especially in the case of Wolfgang, actors will take on a new character to facilitate the transition. For example, Lukas Turtur enters as a pilot to introduce the first scene in 1978.

most obvious clue of his fanaticism besides the party pin is the high black boots (image 18). Berk's use of Nazi paraphernalia is subtler than the Munich production's. In Berlin's 2008 production the gray suit and black boots are reminiscent of a Nazi uniform without directly having one onstage. The Munich 2014 production builds to the final image of Wolfgang in his full uniform. The play opens with Wolfgang and the rest of the cast onstage, downstage center, humming *Deutschland Lied* wearing the iconic SS uniform with his white lab coat overtop (image 19), he immediately removes both the lab coat and the uniform. Throughout the production, he slowly builds and adds to Wolfgang's costume making it more overtly Nazi until the climax of Wolfgang's suicide, when actor Lukas Turtur dresses himself in his uniform onstage.

Remaining true to the number of characters in the play, Berk uses six actors, while Zervoulakos reduces the cast to five actors. Zervoulakos double cast Katrin Röver as Stefanie and Mieze, an apparent directorial choice highlighting the repetition of history—a family being thrown out of the house for the Heisings to move in. This repetition and identification of Mieze and Stefanie is best exemplified in the transition from Scene Seven to Eight, where Röver changes out of her Mieze into her Stefanie costume while saying Stefanie's lines. Scene Seven ends with Mieze asking if Witha likes the house and its furniture and Scene Eight begins with the same question to Heidrun:

> Meize: Ich wollte nur wissen, ob es Ihnen gefällt hier, weils ein Jammer wäre, wenn wir ausziehen, und Ihnen gefällt es gar nicht.
>
> **1993**
>
> Heidrun: Doch, natürlich, es gefällt mir.

Stefanie: Weil, schließlich wars absurd, wenn ich hier ausziehn musste, und Ihnen gefällt es gar nicht.[42] (22)

This line responds directly to Mieze's previous line scrambling to remove her high-heels, put on her wig and throw on her jean jacket (Image 20 for 1993 Stefanie costume). The connection between the two characters becomes abundantly clear as the audience watches the dialogue between Röver's characters and also the Heisings. Von Mayenburg carefully builds the interplay of lines between Stefanie and Mieze into the script.

Image 20: Stefanie disturbing the Heising family. Left to right: Juliane Köhler (1993 Heidrun), Katrin Röver (1993 Stefanie), Nora Buzalka (1993 Hannah), Hedi Kriegeskotte (1993 Witha); Sarantos Zervoulakos (Dir.). Residenztheater. Munich. Photo: Matthias Horn.

Zervoulakos highlights the universal nature of the script by having each of the actors playing the Heising women—Hannah, Heidrun and Witha—changes roles to show the aging process of each character. For example, 1993/1978 Witha is played by Hedi Kriegeskotte, the oldest actor, 1956 Witha is played by Juliane Köhler, the middle-aged actor, and 1935 Witha is played by Nora Buzalka, the youngest actor who also plays Hannah. In addition to showing the aging process, this directorial choice also shows relation between the women in how they age: for example young Witha looks like Hannah and young Heidrun. However, this double, triple and

[42] Mieze: I just wanted to know if you like it here, because it would be a shame if we move out and you don't even like it.
1993
Heidrun: No, of course, I like it.
Stefanie: Because it would be absurd if I'd had to move out and you didn't even like it. (14)

quadruple casting creates confusion among the audience. Wolf Banitzki from *Theaterkritiken München*[43] and Michael Meyen from *Kulturkonsument* in their reviews both wrongly identify Röver's character of Stefanie as Nora Buzalka's 1953 Heidrun, who played 1993 Hannah, 1953 Heidrun and 1935 Witha. Röver's 1978 Stefanie wore a Freie Deutsche Jugend shirt—a group similar to the American boy scouts—and her later 1993 Stefanie wore a worn jean jacket and a blond mullet wig. Both reviewers clearly identify the character of Stefanie who, unlike the characters of Witha and Heidrun, was only portrayed by one actor.

Based on the number of positive reviews for later productions in comparison to earlier ones, double/triple casting is clearly effective, but can also be confusing for both spectators and critics. However, the dramaturgy of von Mayenburg's script is in itself confusing. The constant jumps in time and switches in character make it difficult to follow what is happening in the play. Unless audience members have made a close examination of the script, it is not immediately clear why scene changes happen in their specific order (see Appendix 2). Conversations with fellow audience members at the preview of Munich's production clearly confirm this confusion; however, based on the reviews of the Berlin and other productions that used six actors, the use of fewer actors is more effective. There is a clear connection in von Mayenburg's script between the characters of Mieze and Stefanie, which is not explicitly stated. Both suffer under the repression of past dictatorships and lost their homes as a result of the regime—Mieze during the Nazi era and Stefanie after the fall of the GDR. One of the best-received productions was Rüdiger Pape's 2012 performance in Cologne. Pape cast four female actors to fill all six roles. Pape uses one actor for both Stefanie and Mieze and the Heising women transform into

[43] The original review in *Theaterkritiken München* published on December 30, 2014 identified Nora Buzalka as playing "DDR-Sächsin Heidrun in prolliger Jeansjacke und Fokuhila-Perücke" ["GDR-Sachsen Heidrun in a worn jean jacket and a mullet wig"] (Banitzki). However, as a result of my own query and subsequent correspondence with Mr. Banitzki this review has been corrected and now correctly identifies Katrin Röver as the actor in question (Banitzki Email 11.03.2015).

Wolfgang using a moustache to symbolize a male presence. The effectiveness of having a male presence onstage throughout the entire production is seen in both Munich and Berlin, because it illustrates the force of having the memory of Wolfgang literally looming over the stage. In both productions Wolfgang remains onstage even after his suicide. In Munich, Lukas Turtur, the actor playing Wolfgang remains on the top level of the house for the next scene watching what happens before going down to the bottom level to change. While in Berlin, Kay Bartholomäus Hoppe remains in his Wolfgang costume, sitting and watching the rest of the play from the table downstage left (Image 16).

The fast-paced structure does not allow enough time for characters to enter and exit between scenes. Thus, the best choice for directors is to keep the actors onstage throughout the production. However, having six characters onstage is confusing for audiences. English critic Charles Spencer from the *Telegraph* comments in his review of the Royal Court's production the play isn't long enough "to bring six characters, spanning three generations and almost six decades of tumultuous history, to life" (Decker). While the condensed structure forces the audience to shape the characters themselves with their own experiences and understanding of the past, it does not make it easier to understand the motivations of each character and find where they fit into the narrative. By giving the roles of Stefanie and Mieze to one actor it clearly connects the two characters for the audience, a connection the play is not necessarily long enough to otherwise fully develop.

Audiences are (unsurprisingly) far less critical of *Der Stein* than professional reviewers. Newspapers in Aachen and Heilbronn published audience opinions following premiere performances. Several audience members in both productions state shifts in time and scene jumps were difficult to follow, specifically in Nicolai Sykosch's Aachen production (2010)

audience members Gregor Fleck and Thomas Haleskamp both say early transitions were especially confusing. However, once theatrical conventions for scene changes were established and the signifiers for time periods identified, both Fleck and Haleskamp found the play interesting and dynamic ('Publikumskritiker'). Shifts, according to audience members, were necessary to create tension and build dramatic action ('AZ-Umfrage'). Despite the minor confusion created by jumps, public response to *Der Stein* in both Heilbronn and Aachen is overwhelmingly positive. Audience members from Heilbronn express a clear interest in the play's subject matter, which professional reviewers—as illustrated above—view as outdated and overused ('Umfrage'). Various audience members recognize and state the importance of the theme, specifically in reference to forgetting and remembering the past. The response of older audience members who experienced the immediate aftermath of the war and witnessed the progression of German postwar historiography is particularly revealing. Detlev Buchold notes the play touches on a theme that must not be forgotten ('AZ-Umfrage'). Likewise, Fleck states, "Die letzten fünfzig Jahre deutscher Geschichte sind voll mit solchen Lügen, und sie sind in keiner Weise bewältigt"[44] ('Publikumskritiker'). Von Mayenburg is clearly, based on audience responses, dealing with important and relevant issues.

Jürgen Strein states in his review of Ester Hattenbach's production in Heilbronn that von Mayenburg deals with a truth subsequent generations of Germans have repressed. According to Strein, many families create an everyday hero within their familial mythology. The concept of mythology is seen in numerous production of *Der Stein*. Mythology is an apt term to use in relation to the heroicization of Wolfgang, because it employs the ritualistic repetition and the memorialization of myth. Zervoulakos likewise explores this trope, illustrating its formation in

[44] "The last fifty years of German history of full of these lies and they have in no way been overcome"

his production at Residenztheater through a specific staging. The fully realized myth, Hannah's school presentation, is performed on the third level of the giant structure; she towers above the audience on a giant pedestal. Conversely, the final scene of Zervoulakos' production, in which Witha reveals to Hannah that Frau Schwarzmann and her family never escaped Germany, is performed on the lowest level of the set—off the house structure. This final scene stands in stark opposition to the highly presentational style of Hannah's homework, which is seen by everyone and directed to the audience. Hannah's presentation is a moment of public remembrance, while the final scene is a private scene between Witha and Hannah. It is not directed outwards, but inwards. The final moment is neither dramatic nor performative, but rather it is the intimate confession of a feeble old woman and the realization of her naïve granddaughter.

Der Stein examines the banal nature of the postwar generations' relationship to history within the familial sphere. Von Mayenburg is widely accepted as an author of the everyday, whose work seamlessly moves between the real and surreal. Reviewer Gunner Decker refers to von Mayenburg as "ein subtiler Autor mit Sinn für die surrealen Weitungen des Alltags.[45]" Similarly, Eva Maria Klinger suggests if the play were written in chronological order it would tell the universal story of evil within the banal existence of the everyday. Wolfgang is representative of a cog in the machine of National Socialism. He does not see his actions as morally wrong. While several reviewers find the play to be predictable and melodramatic in how it communicates the need for the continued sharing of history (Decker and Klinger), von Mayenburg, rather than judging Wolfgang, examines the place of Wolfgang's children and grandchildren to tell his story.

[45] "a subtle author with a sense of the surreal hollowness of the everyday"

Several critics refer to *Der Stein* as a "*well-made play*," while others, even more surprisingly, present it as melodrama. Altmann, Christine Wahl and Christine Dössel state von Mayenburg uses a well-made structure in *Der Stein*. They argue although the play is fractured by the jumps in time, there is still an easily recognizable rise in action leading to the climax and a fall following the suicide of Wolfgang. Von Mayenburg employs this fractured structure in his other work and although his deconstructist style employs a realist aesthetic, defining *Der Stein* as a well-made play is hugely problematic. The well-made play is a traditional structure with a beginning, rising action, climax, denouement and happy-ending. Although *Der Stein* does build towards the climax, it ends after the truth is discovered, leaving an ending (arguably) with no resolution and no happy ending. Thessa Wolf in her review of the Dresden production asserts the open ending is an unsatisfactory conclusion to the arc of suspense created throughout the play. The aftermath of the realization is never examined; rather Hannah learns the truth and the play ends. There is no time for the Heisings' identity to be reconstructed or for the identity crisis Witha creates to be resolved. In Wolf's opinion, the audience is left with no knowledge of what Hannah does with this new information and how her life and sense of self is permanently altered.

Action in the well-made play often takes place in real-time, whereas *Der Stein* takes place over a period of fifty-eight years. The unity found in the play is the unity of place; the entire play takes place in the house in Dresden. However, the nature of German history disrupts this unity. The house is situated in three different Dresdens: first, Dresden in the Nazi era, then Dresden in the German Democratic Republic (a different country) and lastly, in the newly reunified Germany. The unity of place within the well-made form is disrupted by the modern world's fluidity of space, again problematizing the categorization of *Der Stein* as a well-made play.

Dössel's interpretation of *Der Stein* as melodrama is particularly problematic. Von Mayenburg, as is discussed in chapter two, presents emotionally heightened situations in his plays, but by setting his plays in a realistic world it does not cross the threshold into melodrama. However, this specific element of von Mayenburg's aesthetic is dramaturgically challenging for directors, because they must avoid over-dramatization, which reduces the emotional impact of the piece. This challenge is a commentary on von Mayenburg's aesthetic. His characters move between apathetic and emotionally charged protagonists. In *Der Stein* this apathy is seen largely in early moments with Hannah and the first scenes in 1935 before Meize's situation is revealed. However, if the lower emotional stakes aren't fully realized then the moments of high emotional engagement (Mieze chopping up the piano and Wolfgang's suicide) lose their effectiveness.

Der Stein clearly presents directors with significant dramaturgical challenges and uncomfortable subject matter, especially with a primarily German audience. Directors have, with varying degrees of success, found many different solutions to these problems. Numerous factors must be taken into account when examining reception: the historical and cultural relation of the spectators to themes, what is explicitly said versus what is not said or shown (use of blanks), who are the characters in relation to the audience and how are these characters represented onstage. Eberhard Wagner, a fifty-nine year old audience member from Heilbronn told the *Heilbronner Stadtzeitung*: "Unsere Elterngeneration wurde im Dritten Reich sozialisiert, die Erlebnisse häufig totgeschwiegen[46]" ('Umfrage'). Marius von Mayenburg takes on important and still extremely sensitive motifs in *Der Stein*. The play meticulously reveals the history of the Heising family by breaking silence about the past and deconstructing memory, a process that illustrates the changeability and adaptability of memory.

[46] "Our parents' generation was socialized during the Third Reich, [and] the experience silenced [them]"

CONCLUSION:

"We are always held responsible for the sins of our fathers as we reap the rewards of their merits; but we are of course not guilty of their misdeeds, neither morally or legally, nor can we ascribe their deeds to our own merits" –Hannah Arendt ("Collective Responsibility" 150)

Questions of guilt and responsibility ghost Germany's present. Numerous historians, novelists, philosophers, academics, artists, film- and theatre-makers have attempted to deal with this history. Already during and immediately following the war exiled playwrights Bertolt Brecht, Georg Kaiser and Carl Zuckmayer and those playwrights in Germany such as Wolfgang Borchert dealt with the oncoming disaster in their plays and poetry. In the immediate aftermath of the war philosophers Karl Jasper, Theodor Adorno and Hannah Arendt played a fundamental role in shaping postwar discourse both in Germany and across the globe. Following the war, the splitting of Germany into two separate nations again complicated the relation of the German *jederman* with the recent past.

In the postwar period a mass of public figures in both East and West Germany sought to respond to history and explain how and why the atrocities of the National Socialist regime happened. While their academic contemporaries sought to find reason in the shock of the war's aftermath, artists responded to the destruction and horror it wrought as well as the failure of morality. In all of this, the discourse of the survivors of the ruined nation has been marked by silence. Their children broke the silence and questioned their parents about the past. The final episode to the Nazi trials was the Auschwitz Prozess (Frankfurt Auschwitz trials; 1963-1965) and the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem in 1961. These trials played a fundamental role for the identity of this generation. They gave a human face to the image of the Nazi perpetrator, bearing a frightening resemblance to the everyday picture of their parents. The Eichmann trial revealed the ghastly banality of the war generation. The *monsters* of the Nazi period became

one's neighbours and coworkers. From 1961 onwards a cultural industry emerged surrounding the production of representations of the horrors of war, thus attempting to come to terms with this new banal evil. Art and academia alike sought to come to terms with the German past.

When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 and Germany reunited in 1990, Germans were once again forced to come to terms with the competing East and West historical narratives. In the heated political climate of the early nineties a third generation emerged with a new relationship to the Nazi past. As the members of the war generation continue to disappear, so does the direct connection to the past. The issue of guilt remains an ongoing issue in Germany that young playwrights and novelists such as Timur Vermes, Dea Loher and Marius von Mayenburg continue to struggle to understand and represent. American historian Charles Maier refers to German history as the "unmasterable past" (qtd. in Bergerson 8). The relationship to the past is negotiated by the constant competition between the cycles of memory and history. Von Mayenburg examines this cyclical relationship in *Der Stein*, looking at how the fallibility of memory problematizes attempts to master the past.

Marius von Mayenburg has become an important figure in contemporary German theatre, working as a director, playwright, dramaturge and translator at Berlin's Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz—arguably one the most important German language theatres in Europe. He belongs to a generation of German theatre practitioners identified by the New York Times' Carol Rocamora as "the '98ers," including director Thomas Ostermeier and playwright David Gieselmann (best known for his play *Herr Kolpert*). These dramatists champion text-driven drama in a new era of theatre. Von Mayenburg's theatre, like many dramatists, uses both dramatic and postdramatic elements. It is important to note, von Mayenburg does not see himself as a part of the ongoing academic disagreement between dramatic and postdramatic. It is not possible to label von

Mayenburg's work as postdramatic, merely it employs elements identified by Hans-Thies Lehmann as postdramatic[47]. However, his employment of postdramatic elements such as the deconstruction of unity and telos is clearly visible, while maintaining the text-based narrative and character-centered drama of the dramatic tradition. Von Mayenburg's engagement with societal problems within the confines of a materialist world drives the fractured action forward in his plays. However, von Mayenburg does not consider himself a political playwright, rather he seeks to show the audience something they have not thought about before for them to consider. In *Der Stein* von Mayenburg employs this methodology to corrode away the layers of false remembrances and commemorative practices in the familial myth to reveal the figure of Wolfgang, the looming but absent *pater familias* of his play.

Returning to Arendt's statement at the top of the chapter, Heidrun and Hannah are not and cannot be guilty for Witha and Wolfgang's misdoings during the Nazi era; however, Heidrun problematizes her understanding by basing her identity on the distinction of *not I*. She identifies herself as exceptional because she and her family are outside the circle of perpetrators. Von Mayenburg uses *Der Stein* to explore attempts to manage the past through historical narrative, commemoration and memory, which ultimately translates to whitewashing of history through selective memory, highlighting the positives and forgetting the negative and identifies the question of responsibility in the present.

The issue of National Socialism is by no means a new topic in theatre. Since 1945 hundreds of plays have explored the issue of guilt, responsibility and memory. In the '68er generation, playwrights like Rolf Hochhuth and Peter Weiss explored (criminal) guilt through

[47] The use of specific elements to identify a play, performance, playwright or performers as postdramatic is a problematic element of postdramaticism, because it becomes possible to label all theatre as postdramatic. According to von Mayenburg many scholars of the postdramatic movement would label Shakespeare's work postdramatic if he were writing today. Thus, the non-specifity of identification within the movement is hugely problematic.

the lens of docudrama borrowing real world dialogue and Austrian playwrights such as Thomas Bernhard, Elfriede Jelinek and Peter Handke undertook their own abstracted examinations of Austrian guilt (Bernhard) and responsibility (Jelinek and Handke). Von Mayenburg and *Der Stein* emerged from the theatrical tradition established throughout the postwar period.

Von Mayenburg presents his audience with a unique study of three generations of postwar German memory: Witha, the war generation; Heidrun, the '68 generation; and Hannah, the third generation born in the midst of the downfall of the GDR. Von Mayenburg also introduces the character of Stefanie to represent the voice of the East Germans and the phenomenon of *Ostalgie* and Mieze to represent the lost voice of a generation of Jewish people. The multiplicity of viewpoints is one of the play's major strengths, because relatively few plays attempt to examine the issue from the perspective of three generations. However, a pitfall of this method of looking at the past is the inevitable bias towards the memory trends of the third generation.

One of the most problematic elements of the play is the eponymous stone, a central trope in the economy of meaning. The questions surrounding the stone are: can it adequately represent the deep-seated problem of memorialization and is it possible to illustrate the horrors and torments the Nazi regime placed on millions of individuals through this particular symbol? The answer to both questions is most likely no. However, this failure (whether intentional or unintentional) is a commentary on the history of memorialization and monumentalization itself. Stone cannot properly memorialize an event, because it inevitably proliferates a specific understanding and narrative. Stone holds neither memory nor history. It is simply stone and all other meaning is externally generated. Thus, the stone is both void of and semiotically loaded with meaning. The stone as a stone only represents itself, a cobblestone; however, when explored

within its social, historical and cultural context it possesses a plethora of meaning: Wolfgang's guilt, his innocence, Witha's lie, monumentalization, acts of violence, sin, grave stones, the passing of time, etc. The symbol becomes even more problematic – perhaps obtuse - in von Mayenburg's materialist realism, which fills the stage with costumes, bodies, and props, where it is almost lost in the fullness of the *mise-en-scène*.

Der Stein deals with an important and relevant theme in German society. The questions of responsibility surrounding National Socialism remain a central aspect of German identity, but with an ever-increasing temporal distance between 1945 and the present, the problem has become increasingly complex. With the remaining war generation in their eighties and nineties. *Der Stein's*'s aging, frail, forgetful Witha foregrounds an important issue that will emerge in the next five to ten years: what do we do when there are no more survivors? This issue is further aggravated by the aging '68ers, now in their sixties and seventies. Historians, theorists and artists will soon have to deal with the complete loss of memory, as those factually, temporally and emotionally closest to the war are gone. This loss, we can easily predict, will be the next major theme dealt with in plays emerging from Germany.

CODA:

I have greatly enjoyed working with *Der* Stein. However, I have certainly encountered many roadblocks and stumbled many times throughout the process of attempting to understand the play. Der *Stein* is an extremely complex play and many of the theoretical constructs I originally anticipated using did not fit within the confines of this analysis. For this reason the examination has undergone some major transformations. I initially resisted the analysis of postdramatic elements, because von Mayenburg does not identify with this movement, but rather with a counter-movement that embraces narrative structure. The debate surrounding dramatic

and postdramatic theatre among German theatre scholars, critics and practitioners is extremely heated and I was reluctant to place myself in the middle of it. However, as I developed the argument and was pushed to include these elements in my analysis I was surprised to find several dramaturgical devices in Hans-Thies Lehmann's treatise supporting my conclusions about *Der Stein*. I feel there is definitely more work to be done critically comparing and contrasting the postdramatic and dramatic elements of this particular play, and of contemporary theatre practice in Germany in general. Equally helpful was the reader-response theory and semiotic analyses of the text using theorists such as Susan Bennett, Wolfgang Iser and Keir Elam, as were memory theorists Dominick LaCapra and Pierre Nora. Nora's concept of the *lieu de mémoire* lends itself particularly well to the analysis of the singular setting of the play in the family's house in Dresden.

One of the key figures shaping my interpretation of *Der Stein* is Hannah Arendt. When I was first introduced to Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* I found the book difficult to get through and was unsure how to employ her theories. Almost a year later I was reintroduced to her work in a course on Hannah Arendt. After having engaged critically with her work outside of *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, I have concluded her theories on banality, thinking and violence are instrumental in understanding von Mayenburg's work, especially *Der Stein*. Arendt's influence is clearly visible in much of my close reading of the play and my examination of von Mayenburg's oeuvre, and I am convinced her writing harbors great relevance for further study of post-war theatre in Germany.

There are several identifiable limitations in my examination of *Der Stein*. First is the dependence on critical reviews. In Chapter Four I depend entirely on the reviews of different productions of *Der Stein* within Germany. I was unable to find blogs or other non-mainstream

reviews of the show. These non-expert reviews would considerably broaden the perspective for a more complete reception analysis. The only non-newspaper responses I have from the play are from the three Australians I met at the preview and a German friend who saw the production with me, all of whom I am grateful for their contributions to this thesis. The second major limitation is my place outside of the German culture and my ongoing struggles with the German language. Reading the play in German for the first time was quite challenging for me and I have read the play many times since to develop an in-depth critical understanding. However, even watching the rehearsals and run-throughs at the Residenztheater immediately revealed the number of subtleties I missed in the text and the more I have critically engaged with the performance have revealed subtleties I initially missed in performance. Additionally, there are many of the references in the production I didn't understand until they were either explained to me or I spent several months ruminating on them. The experience of watching the premiere illustrated my own limitations as a person outside of the German community and clarified how this affected my understanding of the play. This realization has convinced me, there is more research to be done on the issue of reception, both on a theoretical and practical level. The final limitation is within the methodology. The greatest limitation of this study is the breadth of it. I have touched on many different theories and theorists that have been extremely useful in my analysis of the play. Memory theory, reception theory and Hannah Arendt all play key roles in my examination; however, a separate book could easily be written on each of these aspects in relation to *Der Stein*. I feel I have provided *just* an overview of potential areas for future research in regards to both *Der Stein* and the study of postwar and post-memory drama.

One of the first major concepts my research revealed was the fluidity of memory in *Der Stein*. This idea is extremely important to understanding how one's relation to the past shapes

identity as well as changes identity over time. Increased temporal distance makes the historical event abstract, by distancing the spectator from the historical subject, for example the relation between Hannah and Wolfgang. *Der Stein* explores this temporality in its script and on stage, and I feel there is certainly the opportunity to further examine this theme, particularly in relation to the characters of Stefanie and Mieze.

The potential for a study of non-German productions also presents itself. I was surprised to see, in my list of past productions (Appendix 2), that the majority of productions outside of Germany were in France. There is an opportunity to examine how France's role in National Socialism (both as collaborators as well as fierce opponents) has shaped French reception of productions, and how French theatre practice engages with its neighbour's. Likewise, there is potential to undertake a more balanced reception analysis looking at all of the productions of *Der Stein* since 2008 and seeing how different audiences respond to the play in different nations.

My first interaction with von Mayenburg and his work was a short examination of *Der Stein* in the final year of my Bachelor's degree. The play I originally wanted to write about wasn't in the library, but the English translation of *Der Stein* was available. I stumbled onto von Mayenburg's work and it continues to fascinate me. My research reveals that despite his position as one of Germany's best-known contemporary playwrights, von Mayenburg is woefully underrepresented in English scholarship and theatre practice. Nevertheless, in recent years, he has been increasingly present within the English-speaking theatre community. Thomas Ostermeier's longstanding relationship with London's Royal Court Theatre has assured numerous productions of von Mayenburg's translated works in the United Kingdom, including *Der Stein* in 2009. In addition to English, von Mayenburg's plays are widely translated. *Der Stein* has been translated into: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Turkish, Lithuanian, Russian, and

French. In 2006 von Mayenburg began collaborating extensively with Australian director Benedict Andrews. The playwright visited Sydney on several occasions between 2006 and 2008 for workshops. It was through these workshops von Mayenburg wrote *Freie Sicht* (*Moving Target*), which premiered at the Adelaide Festival in Sydney. More recently in April 2014, the Sydney Theatre Company premiered the English-language debut of *Perplex* (*Perplexed*). In 2012 the Play Company produced von Mayenburg's best-known play outside of Germany, *Der Häßliche* (*The Ugly One*) at New York's Soho Rep. Von Mayenburg has also made a recent entry into Canada. In January 2014 *The Ugly One* enjoyed a highly praised run at the Tarragon Theatre in Toronto Ontario and Kill Your Television theatre group based in Edmonton, Alberta produced *The Ugly One* in May 2015.

Marius Von Mayenburg has reached a new crossroad in his career, his work as a playwright now extends far beyond the boundaries of Germany and is more commonplace in non-European theatre. As well, he is increasingly successful and recognized in Germany as a director, directing his first show outside the Schaubühne in 2012 at the Residenztheater. The opportunity now presents itself for scholarship to follow the emergence of an important figure in both the German theatre community and the international stage.

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APPENDIX 1: SCENE TRANSITIONS

Scene 1: 1993
Hannah and Heidrun argue about the house and whether they belong there, while Heidrun prepares tea. Witha hides under the table from the bombs she believes are falling around them.

Transition: Preparation of coffee in the old kitchen where Mieze prepared the coffee on their last visit shifts scene to Witha and Mieze having coffee.

Scene 2: 1935
Mieze and Witha wait for their husbands to finish negotiations in the house. Mieze offers Witha coffee.

Transition: "Ist das so Ihre Art, dass Sie sich Sachen nehmen?"[48] (12): Mieze accuses Heidrun of taking things that don't belong to her, moves into the story adopted by the Heisings.

Scene 3: 1993
Hannah goes to her mother for help with a class presentation about her hero. Heidrun suggests she do her presentation on her Grandfather. Hannah presents on her Grandfather and what he did.

Transition: Wolfgang's story, specifically, "weil er zu seinen Freunden gehalten hat und darfür von den Nazis verfolgt wurde"[49] (13), triggers Witha's reference to Mieze.

Scene 4: 1993
Hannah, Heidrun and Witha have cake and coffee together. Hannah sees something in the garden, but Heidrun doesn't believe her. Heidrun assures Hannah no one climbed the fence because of the spikes on it. Stefanie knocks on the window and announces she is here to disturb them.

Transition: The spikes on the fence around the house.

Scene 5: 1935
Mieze and Witha look at garden and Mieze explains why they put the spikes on the fence. Mieze offers Witha another cup of coffee.

Transition: Offering Witha another cup of coffee transitions the rejection of a cup of coffee by Stefanie.

Scene 6: 1993
Stefanie rejects the coffee and confronts Heidrun about her (Stefanie's) identity, demanding her fifteen chocolate bars. Stefanie asks if they like the house.

Transition: The question: do you like the house?

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[48] "Is that your style, that you take things?" (5)
[49] "because he stood by his friends and was persecuted by the Nazis because of it" (6).

Scene 7: 1935
Witha says she likes the house, but the garden is her absolute favorite part. Mieze asks if she likes the furniture and reminds Witha she can't take any of it with her.

Transition: Mieze says it would be a shame if they didn't like the furniture they are getting with the house. Heidrun tells Stefanie of course she likes it.

Scene 8: 1993
Stefanie says it would be absurd if she had to leave and Heidrun and her family didn't like the house.

Transition: Stefanie says, "Ja, Sie haben mir Schokolade mitgebracht. Aus dem Westen. Sie waren sehr nett, damals" (24)[50]. 1978 Heidrun gives Stefanie chocolate.

Scene 9: 1978
Heidrun and Witha visit the old house in Dresden, and Heidrun is pregnant. They bring a care package for the family who lives there and they meet Stefanie. Witha does not want to see her Grandfather.

Transition: Witha recalls the Wolfgang's death (shot by Russian) and says it doesn't matter whether you end up in the soup or not (referring to her two lost chickens), but how many eggs you lay first, because it says you had a life; jumps to Wolfgang and Witha discussing their child.

Scene 10: 1945
Witha and Wolfgang discuss whether they should leave the city, but Wolfgang won't leave his work or the house; Witha won't leave the city without Wolfgang.

Transition: First hint of suicide by Wolfgang ("Witha: Du redest so vom Ende, manchmal denk ich, du spielst damit"[51] (27)). Witha talks about how much she loves and needs Wolfgang. Goes to Witha reading the old love letters from Wolfgang.

Scene 11: 1953
Heidrun finds Witha reading old letters from Wolfgang and preparing to bury them, while going through the letters Heidrun finds a party pin. Witha says the pin in hers and Heidrun is outraged. They bury the box with the letters and pin in the garden.

Transition: Witha tells Heidrun Wolfgang wasn't a hero, but a man of science. Wolfgang says the house reeks like a Jewish house.

Scene 12: 1935
Wolfgang asks if Witha is happy in the house and asks what they should do with the horrible furniture. Wolfgang, bitter about moving into someone else's life, complains the house stinks like a Jewish house.

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[50] "Yes, you brought me chocolate. From the West. You were very nice back then" (15)
[51] "Witha: You also talk about the end, I think you're with the idea" (18)

Transition: Wolfgang stating the house stinks; the next scene opens with Witha complaining the house stinks from the families now living.

Scene 13: 1978
Witha complains about what the families have done the house and Witha recalls her past with Wolfgang. Heidrun says she barely recognizes the house.

Transition: Witha says, "Das ist unser Haus, unter dem ganzen Muff und Gerümpel, ich kenn jeden Stein"[52] (33). Heidrun tries to pack the stone (the stone thrown through the house's window) to bring to the West.

Scene 14: 1953
Heidrun wants to bring the stone to the West explains it will look suspicious, because if the border guards find it they will be suspicious. They bury the stone in the garden.

Transition: Burying the stone in the garden; the stone is thrown through the window.

Scene 15: 1935
A stone is thrown through the window and Wolfgang screams out the window that they have the wrong house.

Transition: The cry "wir haben nichts getan!"[53] (35) and the sound of breaking of glass returns to Stefanie and the Heisings. Heidrun asks why Stefanei knocked on the window to get in.

Scene 16: 1993
Heidrun asks Stefanie why she knocked on the window. Stefanie says she wanted to see how the family lived. She reveals her grandfather died and refuses to leave.

Transition: Witha tells Stefanie when people get old sometimes they get confused and die. She admits she could very easily die the same way. This triggers Witha re-creating the story of why Heidrun was named Heidrun.

Scene 17: 1978
Heidrun questions her mother about why she was named Heidrun and Witha tells her she was named after a brave friend who scared off two members of the HJ who came into her yard by yelling at them from her terrace. Heidrun says she will name her child Hannah or Daniel.

Transition: The memory of Mieze as a friend and as a brave woman moves the scene to Mieze rejecting Witha's sympathy.

Scene 18: 1935
Witha tells Mieze she empathizes with her situation, but Mieze tells her empathy isn't enough. She and her husband are still losing their house. Witha says their buying the house helps Mieze, because of the money.

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[52] "This is our house underneath all this mildew and junk, I know every stone" (23)
[53] "We haven't done anything!" (24)

Transition: Mieze refusing to accept Witha's justifications and excuses for forcing them out of the house juxtoposes the women being forced to leave the house by Stefanie's grandfather.

Scene 19: 1978
Stefanie's grandfather won't see Heidrun and Witha and wants them to leave. Heidrun bribes Stefanie, promising she will send her chocolate every year for her birthday if they can see the garden.

Transition: Heidrun uses her pregnancy as well as chocolate to convince Stefanie to let her see the garden; Witha hides Heidrun in the basement to protect her.

Scene 20: 1945
The evening of the bombing of Dresden, Witha tells Wolfgang she is going to go and hide in the basement with Heidrun, but Wolfgang is drunk under the table waiting for the city and house to burn down around him.

Transition: Wolfgang in the firebombing jumps to the recollection of the loss of Witha's parent's home and the family's fine China.

Scene 21: 1993
Heidrun shows Stefanie the family's fine porcelain and recalls how Witha went to the burnt ruin of her parent's home to dig out the dishes.

Transition: The old dishes move the scene to 1935.

Scene 22: 1935
Wolfgang questions Witha about why she has kept the stone. He says they never should have moved into a Jew house. Witha keeps the stone as a paperweight.

Transition: The stone being kept by Witha leads to Heidrun digging up the stone.

Scene 23: 1978
Heidrun goes out to the garden of the house and digs up the stone while Witha and Stefanie watch from inside. When she has it she leaves.

Transition: Heidrun taking the stone; the stone being thrown through the window.

Scene 24: 1935
A stone is thrown through the window. Wolfgang exclaims the Jews have left and they aren't Jews. The breaking of glass is heard.

Transition: Breaking glass and Wolfgang saying, "Wir sind kein Juden,"[54] (47) juxtaposes the awkward silence of the two women.

[54] "We're not Jewish" (35)

Scene 25: 1935
Mieze and Witha stand in silence and Mieze loses her temper. She asks Witha if she plays the piano.

Transition: Mieze and the piano; Heidrun offers to sign Hannah up for piano lessons.

Scene 26: 1993
Hannah tells Heidrun she doesn't want to stay in the house and says she is going to do a year abroad in the United States where she will visit Frau Schwarzmann. Hannah accuses Heidrun of just wanting her to stay so she is not alone with Witha.

Transition: Accusing Heidrun of not wanting to be left alone with her mother, leads to the three women trapped together at the celebration of Witha's anniversary.

Scene 27: 1993
Heidrun, Hannah and Witha celebrate the anniversary of Witha and Wolfgang. Witha can't find her Bundesverdienstkreuz. She goes out to the garden to dig up the box with her letters and the party pin.

Transition: Witha digs up the box with the suicide note in it.

Scene 28: 1945/1953
Wolfgang's suicide Wolfgang says it is the place of men to die in the war and the women to carry on after them.

Transition: The truth about Wolfgang's death, juxtaposes to the story Witha tells Heidrun. Wolfgang want to be remembered as an upstanding German and he is constructed as one.

Scene 29: 1953
Heidrun asks her mother what happened to Wolfgang during the war, Witha and Heidrun create a narrative in which Wolfgang dies the postwar upstanding German.

Transition: Re-imaging Wolfgang's death at the hands of the Russians moves the scene to Heidrun's own victimization at the hands of the Soviet regime (loss of Wolfgang)

Scene 30: 1993
Heidrun tell the story of Wolfgang's persecution and death to Stefanie. Heidrun tells Stefanie after she finishes her coffee she has to leave and go home, Stefanie has no home.

Transition: Heidrun tells Stefanie to go home and in the next scene the audience sees Stefanie has no home and is alone in the world.

Scene 31: 1993
Stefanie explains how her parents supposedly died in a car accident when she was very young and she was left alone with her grandfather. She has spent years searching for her parents, but she cannot find them in the West and now her grandfather is dead.

Transition: The aloneness and homelessness of Stefanie ("Ich bin jetzt allein"[55] (60)) jumps to the Heisings' first return to the house after the families left.

Scene 32: 1993
Heidrun, Witha and Hannah visit the house for the first time after Heidrun repossesses it. Seeing the house empty Witha regrets getting rid of all the Schwarzmann's furniture.

Transition: Witha remembers where the piano once stood in the house and how beautifully Mieze played piano. Mieze returns to chop up the piano.

Scene 33: 1935
Mieze enter with an axe and explains Wolfgang and Witha shouldn't have to pay for a piano they will never use so she has decided to take the piano with her in pieces.

Transition: The destruction of the piano triggers the destruction of the familial myth

Scene 34: 1993
Hannah asks Witha to help her write a letter to Deborah Shwartzman in Brooklyn, Witha says she can't help her write the letter because Mieze Schwarzmann, the woman she knew, is dead.

Transition: Witha remembers and for the first time talks about Mieze. Mieze asks Witha not to forget her.

Scene 35: 1935
The beginning of the meeting between Witha and Mieze, chronologically the first scene of the play: she invites Witha to have a coffee with her and begs her not to forget her old friend Mieze.

[55] "I'm alone now" (45)

APPENDIX 2: PRODUCTION HISTORY OF DER STEIN (CHRONOLOGICAL)

Hametner, Hannes (Dir.). *Der Stein*. Marius von Mayenburg. Design: Giovanni de Paulis. Nordharzer Städtebund Theater: Nordharzer, Germany. March 13, 2015. Production.

Schneider, Gianni (Dir.). *La Pierre (Der Stein)*. Marius von Mayenburg. Trans. Helène Mauler and René Zahnd. Université de Lausanne, Théâtre La Grange de Dorigny: Lausanne Switzerland. January 2014. Production

Zervoulakos, Sarantos (Dir.). *Der Stein*. Marius von Mayenburg. Design: Thea Hoffmann-Axthelm. Perf.: Nora Buzalka, Juliane Köhler, Hedi Kreigeskotte, Katrin Röver, Lukas Turtur. Residenztheater: Munich, Germany. Dezember 18, 2014. Production.

Blamont, Sarah (Dir.). *La Pierre*. Marius von Mayenburg. Design: Amandine Livet. Théâtre Espace 44, Lyon, France. August 2013. Production.

Sărătean, Bogdan (Dir.). *The Stone*. Marius von Mayenburg. Trans. Alexandra Pâzgu. Sibiu International Theatre Festival: Sibiu, Romania. June 2013. Production.

Hattenbach, Esther (Dir.). *Der Stein*. Marius von Mayenburg. Theater Heilbronn: Heilbronn, Germany. April 26, 2013. Production.

Bawlowitsch, Boris (Dir.). *Der Stein*. Marius von Mayenburg. Design Jekaterina Andrejewa. Theater na Spasskoj: Kirow, Russia. March 2, 2013. Production.

About, Gaëlle (Dir.). *La Pierre*. Marius von Mayenburg. La Compagne du Bonheur Vert, Studio 70: Chalon-Sur-Saône, France. May 3, 2012. Production.

Jankevicius, Agnius (Dir.). *Akmuo*. Marius von Mayenburg. Lietusvos Nacionalinis Dramos Teatras (Lithuanian National Drama Theatre), Vilnius, Lithuania. March 16, 2012. Production.

Pape, Rüdiger (Dir.). *Der Stein*. Marius von Mayenburg. Design Regina Rösing. Ensemble 7, EL-DE Haus/NS-Dokumentationszentrum: Cologne, Germany. February 2, 2012. Production.

Carvalhal, Cristina (Dir.). *A Pedra*. Marius von Mayenburg. Trans. Ricardo Braun. Estúdio Zero: Oporto, Portugal. July 6, 2011. Production.

Wüllenweber, Petra (Dir.). *Der Stein*. Marius von Mayenburg. Design: Susanne Ellinghaus. Theater für Niedersachsen Hildesheim: Hildesheim, Germany. January 15, 2011. Production.

Nalepa, Adam (Dir.). *Der Stein*. Marius von Mayenburg. Trans. Jecek Kaduczak. Wybreze-Theater, Malarnia-Szene: Danzig, Poland. November 26, 2010. Production.

Stecher, Thomas (Dir.). *Der Stein*. Marius von Mayenburg. Design: Tom Böhm. Societaetstheater: Dresden, Germany. September 2010. Production.

Stolzenburg, Enrico(Dir.). *Der Stein*. Marius von Mayenburg. Design: Birte Novak. Theater Konstanz am Bodenseefestival: Konstanz, Germany. May 2, 2010. Production.

Lisewski, Oliver (Dir.). *Der Stein*. Marius von Mayenburg. Thalia Theater Halle: Halle, Germany. April 4, 2010. Production.

Sykosch, Nicolai (Dir.). *Der Stein*. Marius von Mayenburg. Design Barbara Steiner. Theater Aachen: Aachen, Germany. January 16, 2010. Production.

Schmitt, Katharina (Dir.). *Der Stein*. Marius von Mayenburg. Stuideo des Svanda-Theaters, Prager Theaterfestival deutscher Sprache: Prague, Czech Republic. October 27, 2009. Production.

Gray, Ramin (Dir.). *The Stone*. Marius von Mayenburg. Trans. Maja Zade. Design: Johannes Schütz. Jerwood Theatre Downstairs Royal Court Theatre: London, England. February 5, 2009. Production.

Sobel, Bernard (Dir.). *La Pierre*. Marius von Mayenburg. Design: Lucio Fanti. Théâtre Dijon Bourgogne: Dijon, France. January 2009. Production.

Berk, Ingo. (Dir.) *Der Stein*. By Marius von Mayenburg. Design: Damian Hilz. Perf.: Bettina Hoppe, Elzemarieke De Vos, Eva Mechbach, Judith Engel, Kay Bartholomäus Schulze, Lea Draeger. Berliner Schaühne am Lehniner Platz. Berlin. 2 October 2008. Production.

APPENDIX 3: GERMAN HISTORY AND DER STEIN

History	*Der Stein*
1923: Beer hall Putsch: fails coup of government by Nazis lead by Hitler in Munich	
January 30, 1933: Hitler voted as Chancellor of Germany; February 27: Reichstag (German parliament fire)	
June 30-July 2, 1934: Night of the Long Knives (murder of all political opponents and Ernst Röhm's SA	
1934: (Dictator of Austria) assassinated by Austrian Nazis	
August 2, 1934: President of Germany Paul von Hindenburg dies and Hitler becomes President and takes the title Führer	
1935: Nuremberg race laws: racial policies decreasing freedom and rights of Jewish people in Germany. Most significantly Jewish peoples lose their citizenship	1935: Witha and Wolfgang obtain the house and Mieze and her husband must move out A stone is thrown through the house's window.
	1935 (exact year unknown): Mieze and her husband picked up by SA and taken to concentration camp. Schwarzmanns die in concentration camp.
1938: March: Anschluß/annexation of Austria	
November 9-10, 1938: Krystallnacht/Night of the Broken Glass (Murder and destruction of Jewish property across Germany and Austria)	
	1945: January 1: Witha and Wolfgang celebrate New Years. Witha wants to leave the city.
February 13/14, 1945: Firebombing of Dresden	February 13/14. 1945: Night of the Firebombing of Dresden. Heidrun and Witha hide in the basement
April 30, 1945: Hitler commits suicide	
	1945: Wolfgang commits suicide
May 8, 1945: Germany officially surrenders	

1949: Creation of Deutsches Demokratik Republik (DDR or GDR)	
	1953: Heidrun asks Witha about what happened to Wolfgang. Familial myth is first created.
June 17, 1953: Uprising of 1953 in East Germany, workers across East Germany strike and Soviet army called in for military support	
	1953: Heidrun and Witha flee East Germany and relocate in the West. Heidrun buries the stone.
	1953-1993: Stefanie and her grandfather (as well as three other families) move into the house and remain there throughout the GDR period.
1961: The Berlin wall is constructed, cutting the West German sector of Berlin off from the rest of East Germany.	
1978: August 30, LOT Polish Airlines Flight 165 hijacked by two East German citizens. The flight was supposed to fly from Gdansk, Poland to East Berlin, but the couple succeeded in landing the plane in West Berlin.	1978: Heidrun and Witha return to Dresden to visit the old house. Heidren reclaims the stone.
November 9, 1989: Fall of the Berlin Wall (*Mauerfall*)	
October 3, 1990: Official reunification of Germany/end of GDR	
December 31, 1992: final day for Jewish survivors to reclaim lost property in the former GDR.	
	1993: The Heising family (Witha, Heidrun and Hannah) repossess the house in Dresden and move into the house; Stefanie returns to the house to confront Heidrun; Witha reveals Mieze Schwarzmann did not escape