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Abstract:

During the Allied occupation of Germany, educators asked students to write about their feelings and experiences of youth before and after the Second World War. This article uses *Abitur* and *Reifeprüfung* examination essays written by young German women, between the ages of fourteen and twenty-three, to explore how they performed and represented their emotional subjectivities in early post-war Berlin. First, it examines how young women used selective strategies of forgetting and remembering to repress their troubling emotional memories of the regime. Second it explores how women achieved some level of psychic comfort, through a selective remembering of their home lives and Bund Deutsche Mädel (BDM) experiences by developing different emotional coping mechanisms. The article argues that young women's emotional renegotiation was not a passive process as previously thought, but rather based on young women's active and astute reading of the post-war emotional climate. Subjecting these emotional subjectivities to greater attention elucidates a key, but hitherto underexplored stage in these young people's lives.

“The collapse of the old Reich has shaken me deeply and let me keep doubting the world,” wrote Gisela in her A-level (*Abitur*) German language examination essay in 1947.[1] Like a number of young Germans, Gisela lost her family, friends, and home when the Soviet Army arrived in Berlin.[2] Although recent historiography has started uncovering war children’s (*Kriegskinder)* memories of the Third Reich, few scholars have thoroughly interrogated the feelings of those young people witnessing and experiencing the collapse of Nazi Germany. Most of the literature focuses on people’s memories of their youth, refracted through adult eyes.[3] For those young Germans who belonged to the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (League of German Girls, BDM, girls aged 14-18) or *Jungmädelbund* (Young Girls’ League, JM, girls aged 10-14) and who believed, ardently, in Hitler and his Thousand Year Reich, the end of the war and the immediate post-war period was a time of emotional instability and a renegotiation of quotidian practices.[4] With this emotional and ideological framework removed, young people were left bereft and confused, struggling to comprehend what they witnessed and how German complicity might shape their futures—how should they balance the tensions between their private, happy memories with the anti-Nazi re-education of the early West German state?[5] In this article, we explore specifically how young women living in Berlin, born between 1929 and 1933, understood, negotiated, and represented their emotional experiences and self-hoods, or emotional subjectivities, at the end of the Third Reich.[6] We do this by turning to an unusual source base: 130 *Abitur* and *Reifeprüfung* (end-of-school) exam essays, penned by middle and upper-class Berlin female students living in Berlin between 1946 and 1950.

While a good portion of the literature considers this generation’s responses to the end of the Third Reich through studies of collective guilt and cultural memory—visible through their response to the 1968 West German Student Movement through autobiographical fiction and the memoir boom of the late 1980s and 1990s—the value of considering exam essays lies in their temporal proximity to the end of the Third Reich.[7] Unlike later memoirs, oral histories,

and autobiographical fiction, which relay the end of war through the eyes of adults, exam essays from 1946-1950 reflect young people's self-fashioned emotional responses in real time: that is, in the immediate post-war years, in the specific social and spatial environment of the school classroom. Contrary to contemporary and historiographical judgements of young women as silent and passive, these essays showcase young women as actively processing the emotional fallout of the end of the Third Reich.[8] Perhaps unlike their parents and teachers, these young women lacked the breadth and depth of vocabulary to express their experiences, let alone their role in the war. Despite this, these young women developed a range of emotional strategies, in order to navigate and renegotiate a new emotional frontier in the newly occupied, post-war Germany. This emotional renegotiation was not passive as often argued by historians, but rather based on an active and astute reading of the post-war emotional climate.

The intense emotional impact of the end of the Second World War may be captured through the so-called "*Stunde Null*" (Zero Hour), which was often later used to describe and articulate the end as a moment of rapture, a burst of emotion.[9] Numerous ardent Nazis contemplated or committed suicide, in fear of Allied retaliation, and could not conceive of a world without the Third Reich.[10] In terms of young people, the historiography categorizes them as either feral children or delinquent boys, in squalor, with their fathers in Prisoner of War (POW) camps.[11] Those who did not need to roam the streets have not received the same scrutiny in the academic literature, leaving those emotional histories remaining unwritten. Besides its focus on delinquency, the period between 1945-1947 is, at best, a prologue to the history of education reform in Germany, characterized by numerous changes, challenges, and shortages.[12] After Germany's total defeat in the spring of 1945, the Western Allies (Great Britain, United States, and France) focused, simultaneously, on delegitimizing Nazi political culture, while attempting to remake West Germany into a liberal democracy.[13] One way of ensuring this was through re-education policy. Children were taught by vetted teachers, who

used new textbooks, stripped of their Nazi ideology. More broadly, the occupiers hoped to enable young people to see the errors of their indoctrinated ways and to provide them, at the very least, with tools for re-education. Each Allied power differed in its approach: British efforts focused on fostering young German's individuality and responsibility, while American educator Herbert Lewin aimed to re-orientate the emotional dependency of German children from organizations, such as the Hitler Youth, towards their parents.[14] Although the Western Allies did not jointly coordinate their youth re-integration efforts, they remained united by their common goal of ensuring that young people took individual responsibility for the brutalities of the Nazi regime; this, somewhat foreseeably, placed a degree of strain on German citizens.[15] While historians have identified different Allied approaches to this re-education policy, few have studied examination essays from this period systematically, showing a preference for oral history. Scholars have also given much less attention to how young people navigated the emotional frontiers of the early, post-war period—caught between conflicting educational approaches.[16] Exam essays illustrate young women's awareness of the challenges that they faced and the limits of expression placed on them by adults' expectations at the time.

Published and unpublished exam collections offer insight into the emotional intensity arising in young people from their loss of the Third Reich, their place in the Hitler Youth organization, their family members and their own material artifacts. These collections also illuminate discussions about young people's fear and anxiety in Berlin. While most scholars categorize essays as "externally required narratives," rather than as organically invoked autobiographical accounts, these essays are nonetheless, war stories, through which we can understand a range of emotions—going beyond primary emotions, such as grief and fear, to secondary emotions, such as "feeling old, mild to the point of death," nostalgia, numbness, joy, hope, stress, and sadness.[17] These emotions, in turn, illustrate the complex, lived experience of young people amidst dramatic cultural and political change.[18] Further, these essays are, quite

likely, one of few surviving source materials for young German women of this period.[19] Although, biologically speaking, the young women who wrote these essays sat their exams between the ages of 14 and 23, the voices in these texts alternate between those of schoolgirls and those of adults—adults who participated in Hitler Youth activities, who cared for family members, and who witnessed death and destruction.[20] This article opens with an overview of the state of the literature on the German history of emotions, before introducing the essay collections and considering what valuable contributions they bring to the study of emotional histories of childhood and youth in wartime.

Historiography, Methods, and Sources

The history of childhood emotions, which considers the complexities of children's emotional lives, occupies a relatively marginal place within German historiography.[21] As historians of childhood acknowledge, the voices and emotions of young adults are often lost and sometimes difficult to access.[22] Historians have responded to this challenge by formulating novel methodologies and sources to approach the study of youth and childhood emotions.[23] Although scholarship on German childhood during the Second World War and post-war period is well-established, there has been a marked reluctance to embrace the history of emotions in order to unpack young people's experiences.[24] This reluctance is somewhat surprising, given that the end of the war in Germany is often depicted as a "fundamental break with the past," due to its violent nature and the emotional upheaval that it caused numerous Germans, who erroneously believed, at least until January 1945, that they had been winning the war. In early January 1945 German suffered the largest number of losses in the entire war, alongside constant bombardment of its cities.[25] Much of the existing scholarship on young people's wartime experiences either focuses on the organizational history of the BDM and Hitler Youth, oral histories detailing adolescence and childhood in Nazi Germany, or high culture, films and other

publications featuring those experiences.[26] Notable exceptions include Michael Kater's work, which explores Hitler Youth's guilt and complicity, via organizational documents and ego-documents, and Nicholas Stargardt's *Witnesses of War*, which narrativizes children's war experiences, focusing on their retelling of the war.[27] Alex Lloyd, examining East German children's experiences of the immediate post-war period living in the Soviet Zone, offers us a glimpse into the largely untapped richness of exam essays as sources for understanding young people's experiences.[28] This article takes inspiration from Hester Barron and Claire Langhamer's work which illustrates the potential of exam essays as a source base, through an analysis of British school essays from a similar time period.[29] Barron and Langhamer offer a conceptual and methodological approach for working with young people's school writings and their possibilities for challenging our macro narratives of broader social change. Taken together, this scholarship has laid the methodological groundwork for a more systematic analysis of exam responses, read using the history of emotions. Such a methodology deepens our understanding of the Hitler Youth generation's emotionally complex childhoods and, specifically, young women's active process of emotional renegotiation in the immediate post-war period.

Through a fusion of different emotional frameworks, it is possible to unpack the emotional complexities of this generation productively. Sara Ahmed's adult-focused renegotiations speak to the ways in which German society began to, emotionally, cope with (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*) the criminality of the regime. More precisely, Ahmed considers how emotions are formed collectively, in a reciprocal, mutually reinforcing renegotiation between the inner and outer worlds, between the "bodies of individual subjects" and the "body of the nation," which is both private and public.[30] Yet, young people find themselves in an even more compromising position, caught between the competing Allied educators' and parental pressures on their emotional subjectivities. Stephanie Olsen's concept of the emotional frontier,

or the "boundary between different emotional formations," helps to conceptualize these competing demands on young people's emotional subjectivities, or young people's "emotional states and experience," from school, home, leisure, and associational spaces.[31] Young people have to learn, practice, and navigate "competing emotional expectations, not knowing how to feel or how to express their feelings."[32] In order to understand how young people navigate between these inner and outer emotional expectations, we draw on the concept of "emotional formation." An "emotional formation" is defined as "a pattern that represents all of the various emotional structures that make up a person in a particular context, location or time," which enables us to read the emotional complexities of young women's exam essays.[33] This definition recognizes that emotional formation is a selective process, responding to Gleason's call for a more "nuanced theoretical engagement with agency and age as relational, contextual and constitutive of unequal relations of power," enabling historians to see children as orchestrators of historical change.[34] This article answers that call by considering how young people self-fashioned their subjectivity through writing and performed what sociologists call "tactical agency": strategically deciding to dilute their complicity, witnessing, or involvement in events through a performative retelling of their experiences for their schoolteachers and examiners.[35]

Young narrators selectively appropriate self-victimhood tactics when they feel socially compelled to do so. For this particular generation, the Third Reich and parents to an extent, had the power to influence children and youths in what is proper or expected social behavior, but as these essays exemplify, young people presented themselves as actively negotiating their past and self-representation, not always conforming to the social and cultural norms of the period. Taken together, these essays reveal how an author's usage of tactical agency influences not only how and when they express emotions, but also whether or not they tell certain stories. We examine this aspect of the essays by paying close attention to three areas: what young women choose to forget and why; where young women derive psychic comfort from their memories;

and how young women formulate emotional coping strategies to deal with their futures. By focusing on these three issues, we gain a deeper understanding of how young people sought to articulate their understanding of the emotional fallout of war and its impact on their subjectivities.

The *Abitur* essays are a prime example of a collection that enables us to access young women's emotional coping strategies during the immediate post-war period. Published by Christian Wegner Verlag GmbH in 1950, the collection edited by Kurt Haß and Albert Goes collates seventy anonymized essays that young people (42 essays by young men and 28 by young women) submitted while sitting their *Abitur* exams, between 1947 and 1949, in Berlin.[36] The publication of Haß's volume was unusual; there were very few ego-document collections published until the "memory boom" of the 1990s.[37] In the introduction, Haß tells us that he selected the school essays with the strongest emotional content, corrected any spelling mistakes, and then added his own annotations. Some essays are included in full; others are truncated. The editing process invites us to assess what "work" Haß wanted these emotions to do for immediate post-war period readers.[38] Emotions "work to align individuals with collectives" and, in Haß's case, we witness an editorial process that transforms the emotional resilience of young people into hope for future generations. These young women's exam responses give us an indication of how they understood the war, before they were subject to more state-wide attempts to make the German population actively face the past from the mid-1960s onwards.[39] Further, these essays give us a rare glimpse into how these women understood the cultural and political upheavals they lived through, as opposed to accounts from decades later, which were subject to potential censorship, in order to appease second- and third-generation Germans.[40] Haß's collection is a snapshot of those young women, whose emotions are temporally contingent upon those uncertain early days and months of the post-war period.

Supplementing the Haß collection, we also read 100 end-of-school (*Reifeprüfung*) and *Abitur* German-language examinations, by fourteen to nineteen-year-old girls, between 1946-1950, from Hans-Thoma Schule, Berlin.[41] Unlike Haß's collection, this collection's essay prompts survived. Those prompts tell us that, in 1946, students answered questions about forgetting, post-war landscape imagery, and German literature. Similarly, essays between 1947-1950 also posed German literature questions, commonly on Goethe, Tasse, or Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, and in rarer cases foreign literature or German paintings. For the purposes of this article, we focused on non-literature questions as we found these the most productive for analyzing young people's emotional reflections on war. The essays from 1947 considered questions such as "Why is religion important for humanity?"; "Why is sport important for people?"; essays from 1948 asked: "Not the things that are objective and real, but those of our own view make us happy or unhappy" (responding to Schopenhauer's quote); 1949 essays posed "What do the works of Ziegel, Tasse, and Abenteuer say about the influence of foreign cultures on our ancestors?"; "Nobody learns the secret of freedom, they learn it through discipline [*Zucht*]"; and "Thoughts on the World and its People: Reflections of a political fighter." The surviving essay prompts also help us to contextualize the student responses in the Haß collection. Students were asked to write on either "The fate and duty of our generation" or, as found in comparable Berlin-Neukölln's prompt, "How can young people in Germany work on building their own future?" (1946)—both of which are indicative of how post-war educators had transformed Nazi-centric essay questions into more acceptable Allied-influenced ones by 1950.[42]

Compared with the Haß collection, the essay writers in Hans-Thoma Schule are more reticent, perhaps reflective of wider developments in literary culture which sought to encourage rational rather than emotional responses, for fear of arousing Nazi associations of fanaticism. Indeed, contemporary reviewers of Holocaust survivor memoirs and autobiographies

commonly critique those works for being overly emotional.[43] As Ute Frevert argues, Nazis purposely "stag[ed] women as overly enthusiastic and emotional," thus gendering the language of fanaticism.[44] Taken together, these developments helped to regulate emotions during the post-war period, undoubtedly leading to young women's self-censorship of inner emotional subjectivities within exam essays, "rehears[ing] associations that are already in place."[45] These essays showcase different levels of narration, based on the exam prompt and the student's ability to respond to it, perhaps indicating they knew their teacher's current or previous allegiances to the fallen regime. For example, the published collection spotlights essays which respond to a narrative-driven set question, while the unpublished essayists offered short stories, in response to a quote-based question, set in a philosophical or literary context. The context of the classroom and the exam is also significant; sharing personal experiences in a time-based examination is very different from confiding in a diary, or writing a memoir in the comfort and privacy of one's home. Here, there is always an ulterior motive of getting good marks and being admitted to university. There are also some notable omissions and silences, especially in relation to specifically emotional topics that might have caused young women and their family's mental anguish, such as accounts of physical violence and rape.[46] An exam essay is certainly not the medium of choice through which one might recount and navigate those experiences, especially considering the timed and peer-pressured conditions. Although interpreting the exam context and author-reader relationship is not straightforward, this ought not to prevent us from turning to exams as a source for probing young people's emotional wartime subjectivities. The emotions that young people represent in their essays are highly performative, shaped by classroom conversations and a desire to achieve high marks, as well as the broader social-cultural backdrop of post-war Allied-occupied Berlin.

This article has a tripartite structure. The first section shows how young women sought to repress emotional memories of the regime. It argues that this was a conscious, strategic choice as opposed to a passive one described by historians. The second section considers how women achieved some level of psychic comfort, through a selective remembering of their home lives and BDM experiences. The final section considers how young women developed emotional coping mechanisms, enabling them to move towards a less emotionally fraught future.

Forgetting and Repressing for the New Berlin

In 1949, forgetting formed a central theme in federal West German president Theodor Heuss's inaugural address, which equated forgetting with having mercy:

> My concern is that many people in Germany misuse this act of mercy and want to forget too quickly. We must preserve a feeling for the traces of what led us to where we find ourselves today. This is not an emotion of revenge or hatred.[47]

There is a conflict here, between the importance of remembering, and the discussion of the Nazi regime's criminality in politics and society, and the need to repress negative memories of the Nazi past.[48] In late 1945 and 1946, many adult women neither acknowledged their involvement in the war, nor how they would forge a new German future.[49] Emphasizing physical rebuilding efforts and caring for family, women were, according to Moeller, silent witnesses: complicit in maintaining a collective shroud of silence about the Holocaust and other crimes of the regime.[50] Arguing that young BDM generation women were "silently adapting to the realities of post-war German society," Reese joins Moeller in this claim, obscuring women's strategic employment of silencing in navigating traumatic experiences.[51] The exam prompts from 1946 and 1947 foreground the theme of forgetting, revealing that already, in

1946, the examiners themselves were preoccupied with the issue, providing a rare vocalization of the process of forgetting.[52] Most of the students only discuss forgetting on a conceptual level, using similar phraseology and literary examples.[53] The writers assimilated with the emotional "body of the nation" in terms of forgetting, illustrating potentially how widespread forgetting, and in some essays an implied feeling of shame, was amongst the populace. In both essay collections, those who elaborate on the topic seem to vacillate, strategically, between remembering and forgetting the recent past in the face of the regime's collapse (*Zusammenbruch*). For some, it was easier to forget than to convey the travesty of what they had witnessed or perpetrated.

In most of the essays, the role and psychological function of forgetting remains the central theme, with female students weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of forgetting. For example, one young woman in Hans-Thoma Schule, writes that forgetting is a prerequisite to moving on, with difficult memories making it hard to overcome the travesties of the past:

> We as Germans should not forget what bad things happened under our name, but we have to put our hopes into other nations who may have the ability to forget what we have done to them. … It is luck to forget what happened and what you can no longer influence.[54]

Here, the student invokes the collective "we" to absolve their generation of blame for "things"—a vague and passive term indicative of a collective self-fashioning of a victimhood narrative construction.[55] Writing in 1946, another student notes that she has "not yet gained distance from these months. As in a hurricane, fate tore me away from my beloved home."[56] The juxtaposition of "tore" with "beloved" underscores the depth of emotional loss felt after

this physical dislocation. Without mental distancing, she implies how she cannot begin to navigate the emotional space of her wartime experience. Other students, who wrote about the theme of forgetting more generally, provide examples of friendships broken by forgetting and forgetfulness. Regardless of narrative depth, the writers prioritize moving on from the pain of the past, using the act of forgetting as a coping mechanism in their emotional formation.

Alongside self-preservation, young women also tied their repression of troubling wartime memories to their broad-based, moral duty to resurrect the German nation. Writing in 1946, one young woman emphasizes tensions between the occupied and occupier:

> The German people [*volk*], with its destroyed and fallen fatherland has been abdicated, has fallen clearly in the eyes of others, and should live with the consequences on its shoulders. An honest, sincere effort, but to do away with sorrow, by paying for the injustices will lift us up again in the opinion of other peoples and only then place Germany in the role of other nations.[57]

Adopting a passive tone, the young woman only hints at the war crimes, ongoing Nuremberg trials, and involvement of the global community, in her mention of "other nations"; however, she paints this picture against the moral backdrop that will "lift us up again." These gaping silences are indicative of the writer's discomfort about existing in a state of limbo, between how she presents herself as an innocent eyewitness and active participant, framing her emotional response in relation to the future of the nation.[58] Another young woman, in 1946, writes:

> Forgetting is happiness! Especially today after all the alarms, bombs and the Russian invasions—I feel that clearly. I could

> never be happy again if I kept remembering the bombing raids ... days and nights during the Russian entry into Berlin. The human being cannot endure so much suffering.[59]

As the statement implies, happiness is unachievable until a person moves beyond these emotional triggers. Other writers echo those points, explaining that it is easier to forgive and forget, than to focus on the criminality of neighbors and loved ones.[60] Contrary to Reese's claims that young women were silent and passive, these essays underscore how young women consciously and strategically adapted their emotional response to meet societal expectations. Young women frame this silence as an active choice, rather than one of simple deference, which plays a crucial role in the rebuilding of post-war Berlin and Germany at large.

Alongside these explicit references to forgetting, other students choose to recount day-to-day experiences, as part of their active decision to remain silent. In 1948, students were invited to write an essay in response to Schopenhauer's quote ("Not the things that are objective and real, but those of our own view make us happy or unhappy"), which illustrates the use of post-1945 memories to explain and contextualize answers rather than memories from the Third Reich. One student juxtaposes her initial happiness at attending a Bach concert at her local church, with a conversation between fellow concert attendees, who criticized the event. She writes:

> I listened to a Bach concert in church that, according to the audience's general judgement, was not well executed. This work particularly appealed to me, I let myself be completely captured by the overwhelming music, I did not hear the wrong and badly played notes, but let the music lift me up into a higher, better world - that of art. Objectively and really seen, Bach's work was

> badly performed, but in my opinion, it was well and good and made me happy for a few hours.[61]

The author struggles with her competing feelings about the concert, noting that, even after such a joyful experience, she "was not able to see it was badly made." Her feelings of confusion are assuaged by reading the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, who enables her to "see things clearly," knowing that her "feelings were overwhelmed" before.[62] Using Schopenhauer, she explains that her personal or private opinion does not matter within the broader public context. In other words, the concert brought her joy, which the more critical comments could not puncture. Paralleling our early essayist, who saw a combatting collective sorrow as important to "lift us up again," this concert-going student felt that the music helped "lift [her] up into a higher, better world—that of art." Returning to normal cultural activities was an antidote to sorrow. The story may be, in essence, read as a microcosm of the contemporary German response to the Third Reich, where the student's private response alienates her from the concert-goers' opinions, just as the now-negative national response alienates individuals' private happiness in relation to memories of the Third Reich. This young woman's account offers us a rare glimpse into how the women of her generation might have navigated competing expectations on the emotional frontier, by turning to an authoritative German philosopher in order to validate their experiences. Much more explicitly, another young woman writes how:

> Everyone thinks differently about what happened ... just listen, but do not contradict. You can tell your opinion, but you can also be silent. If you do tell your opinion, others may become furious.[63]

For both essayists, the fear of contradicting public opinion is so strong that they believe sharing private thoughts and feelings will engender anger and frustration. As such, both choose to remain silent in order to keep the peace, perhaps serving as a microcosm for the re-education of German women's emotional frontier.

Young women also exhibit silence in relation to the loss of life and material possessions of Jewish and other German minority communities. They maintain this silence by foregrounding the emotions arising from their own loss of material goods and possessions.[64] The lack of material goods caused by wartime rationing, flight, and bombardment weighs on the minds of these young women; their grief over these losses overshadows any attempts at acknowledging the considerable loss of life, family, and material possessions of those who suffered at the hands of the Nazis. Ultimately, this confirms Moeller's hypothesis that German society, during this period, is beset with self-pity, rather than guilt over its victims. [65] Memories of material goods and possessions shape how individuals recount the past, as well as the manifestation and formation of related emotions.[66] A loss of physical objects is symbolic in women's narratives, particularly if those women had lived in cities or areas affected by Allied bombardment, as family heirlooms and other material possessions were left behind. Although witnessing so much destruction and losing her home, Anni appears to stay positive: "I still did not give up hope completely because it was clear to me that only in the case of a German victory could our return home be possible."[67] Christiane's narrative illustrates how she felt the impact of the war through the loss of her family's possessions and living standards, and tries to see "a good side":

> What I used to be is to me now a valuable possession. Have I not become rich—rich to the small pleasures of everyday life, richer

> in inner possession, as I call forth both my joy and hardships, experiences and memory?[68]

Elisabeth follows Christiane's rhetoric, but instead optimism, perceives only the negatives: "We had nothing. And not only did we lose material things, we lost everything. A world had collapsed inside me, which seemed to have been so solid. Where was the path that led out of this mess?"[69] These memories of lost material goods and possessions continue as a theme in later memoirs, indicating how material artifacts are intricately tied to family memory and help shape how individuals remember the past.[70]

Despite their criticisms of greed and excess of the Third Reich's leadership, the writers do not acknowledge the losses that Jews and other minority groups suffered under Nazi rule. Such silences may allude to some inability to process the difficult truths of the regime, including some impairment in articulating complex emotions, especially to an examiner.[71] By rarely discussing these decisions to forget Nazi crimes, these essays are one of the earliest examples of "prescriptive forgetting," or the phenomenon by which a society collectively agrees to forget past wrongs in order to resolve some ongoing conflict.[72] Only a few essayists frame forgetting as a means of rebuilding a West German national identity free from the taint of Nazism. Despite other scholarly assessments, these essays reveal that young women, during this period, were actively processing the emotional fallout of the end of the Third Reich. Further, young women's exam essays demonstrate that silence is one of the emotional competencies that young people cultivated in order to navigate and renegotiate their emotional frontiers in a newly occupied, post-war Germany.

Selective Remembering in the Present

In articulating their lived experiences of an occupied Berlin and Germany's total defeat, the essayists reveal that they lack the tools and support to reconceptualize the past. This makes the narrative strategies that they employ even more significant for understanding inner emotional subjectivities. In order to access more painful memories and emotions, young women employ literary devices, such as metaphor and allegory. Using childhood memories to evoke nostalgia uncovers the "longings for identity, security, and belonging," which the war had upended in so many ways.[73] Indeed, the integration of the refugees and expellees of the ethnic German diaspora (*Heimatvertriebene*, "expellees from the homeland") was a pressing issue for the Adenauer Government.[74] Some of these *Heimatvertreibene* found their way to Berlin, as a small number of students write how their homelands are now lost to the Allies in an emotionally, almost unmoored manner. Even those who survived the bombings in Berlin appear to have difficulties remembering the damage to their homes, indicating the deep stress it caused to them and their families.[75] One essayist opens with a description of a "beautiful, summer day" and the scenery of her hometown. The narrative, however, transitions abruptly:

> Today, the streets are empty. People are calm, but without any destination. Striving for a new destination in life [...] But I got used to this state. I was walking around pathetically three weeks after the Russian invasion, the war, bombings, and everything made me numb. From a building, stones were falling down—I was alarmed. What will this rubble tell me? Are there maybe humans buried under it? It was not long ago that I heard the scream of the people trapped under the stones.[76]

As Elisabeth Krimmer writes, we can interpret these fragmented thoughts and snippets of story as evidence of women's difficulty in situating themselves within the broader context of the

Nazi regime.[77] This essay expresses a nostalgia for home, through a retraction into the private memories of childhood which, nevertheless, provides little comfort and only highlight how much has changed within a relatively short time. Compared to the screams of war, the essayist equates calmness with emotional numbness, in a deliberate attempt to disconnect herself from what they have witnessed. Similarly, other young women invoke their dreams allegorically, encapsulating a moment of consciousness when realizing the extent of their indoctrination and complicity, which often elicits the most extreme emotional reactions, a unique coping mechanism not found as explicitly in later memoirs. Writing in 1947, one essayist notes how "[e]verything seemed like a bad dream […] as the flood of refugees [*Ströme von Trecks*] rushed through [the] city, as every night starving refugees asked for accommodation."[78] In much the same way, Disa-Maria, recounting the bombings in Leipzig, writes that she "couldn't take it in. ... [she] woke up as if from a long heavy dream. All [she] felt at first was that [she] was old, mild to the point of death," as she witnesses the desolation around her.[79] Another young woman writes of living in cramped conditions, compared with her earlier domestic space:

> Certainly, it is very good that I have now experienced what it is like to have to live in cramped conditions and in the hardship of everyday life, to no longer have a garden, no house of my own, no room of my own, no more unlimited, longed for selfhood.[80]

Young women used dreams to bridge the gaps in their narrative: between their earlier, carefree selves as children, and the post-war world that they encounter as young women burdened with painful memories.

Changes to representational spaces in the post-war period also encourages these young women to withdraw into memories of their childhood homes. Social and lived spaces had a profound impact on these writers, as the Allied infiltration into Germany became a visible

defeat.[81] Witnessing the change in power structures both politically and physically, in the form of rubble, forces young women to confront the new social spaces that these non-Germans occupied.[82] In these essays, we see young girls recalling memories of their childhood *Heimat* (home), enabling them to relieve moments of happiness, comfort, and safety within the framework of an idealized past.[83] Young women yearn for familiar spaces and places they had once occupied, both physically and metaphorically. One young woman begins writing of her *Heimat* by framing it as a dream: "My dream has frozen me back into the hidden treasures of my childhood."[84] She dreams about watching the fields and forests pass by, outside her train window, when travelling to East Prussia—now occupied by the Red Army. For her, the memory becomes a kind of emotional reprise from the desolate and concrete world of Berlin.[85] Another young woman, who fled with the retreating army, escapes into a daydream by describing the natural landscapes of Bavaria and Northern Germany. Her messy handwriting is punctuated with an intense yearning for her destroyed home, which she contrasts with her new home in North Germany: a comparatively barren and under-developed landscape that she titles an "ode to desolation." To her, Berlin gives a person the "feeling that [they] do not matter," amongst the other inhabitants which she describes as "shy" but appearing "frightfully deep," in other words: withdrawn, depressed, and anonymized.[86] The vestiges of the Third Reich linger in these memories, drawing together disparate feelings of desolation, isolation, and longing for the safety and comfort of the *Heimat* and the BDM. Belonging to the BDM or JV gave many girls and young women the opportunity to belong to a "new generation of hardness and pride," and to have an overarching purpose within Nazi society, as future mothers and wives.[87] In contrast, the post-war period seems to erase these young women's feeling of emancipation, which stemmed from belonging to the BDM.[88] In some instances, these yearnings have nostalgic undertones—not surprising, given that, as Carolyn Steedman notes, nostalgia is a "longing temporalized in the desire for a *particular* past."[89] For our young female

essayists, describing the physical landscape becomes a means of articulating a mental landscape, using memories to tether themselves to home and, by extension, simpler and happier times. Without the JM/BDM youth associational culture, young people were free from the influences of Nazism; still, they were left with this implied, inarticulable ambivalence, which some young women overcame through selective retellings of a happier, easier life in their childhood homes.

Although some aspects of the war were too difficult to put into words, some young women display confidence in recalling memories of Nazi associational culture, using their tactical agency to negate their complicity in supporting the Nazi regime. As Disa-Maria comments, "As children we heard little about the war. We also didn't know what was going on in Germany."[90] In a similar manner, another writer feels bitter about the loss of the mental infrastructure of the Nazi regime: "The war, with its brutality, destroyed a lot of things, not only materialistic things, but our ideals."[91] Some writers hint at mourning the loss of their "ideals" in the new post-war Germany, suggesting that the loss of the mental landscape was as significant as the physical one. This type of reflection on the "ideal" is emblematic of the writers' privileged position in attending a *Gymnasium*. Such significant and emotionally charged responses suggest that these young women perform their use of agency selectively, when describing their wartime experiences and involvement in the JM/BDM. Here, negotiating between their representation of agency and helplessness mirrors how young women struggle with feelings of shame and innocence in reaching a new emotional formation.

Similar to other essays, there are tensions between these authors harboring strong emotional ties to the Hitler Youth and presenting themselves as passive victims of the Nazi regime. Nineteen-year-old Elisabeth's exam entry opens with a happy retelling of her involvement in JM, which she says encouraged her to become more independent and self-

confident, through group games, singing, and sports. Concurrently, such activities had an important social function too: "This time again brought me wonderful hours in company with people of my own age, and I never thought of seeing the work politically."[92] Ursula, an only child, writes that the Hitler Youth nourished her with the much-desired company of girls her own age. Even after a few years of Allied re-education, writing in 1947, she is reluctant to apportion blame to the BDM group leaders, noting how they exposed her to new intellectual challenges:

> I was always fortunate to have real "leaders". I never had the feeling of being "educated" or being pointed out to certain lines of thought. I met people who instructed me in a very subtle way to think seriously about things that had remained closed to me since then. But I was not only happy to take part in serious discussions with female friends, but also in games, sports, camp life, in serious and happy celebrations.[93]

As the quotation illustrates, Ursula is at an emotional precipice: she is unwilling to elucidate what "things" she learned, as revealing its ideological purposes would potentially compromise the happiness she felt when taking part in BDM activities and socializing with other young girls. Presenting itself as empathetic with, and understanding of, the position of young German women, the Hitler Youth organization transformed female youth leaders into role models, in the minds of many young people. Through inclusivity, the BDM enabled a temporary untethering from conventional gender norms and responsibilities.[94] However, Karin, Elisabeth, and Ursula use emotional language to contrast their joyful experiences as innocent young women with how they felt betrayed by their group leaders, who they present as having tricked them into complicity with the wider Nazi regime. Temporal proximity and a lack of perspective

on these events makes it challenging for young women to contextualize the BDM's ulterior purpose. Although numerous young women are aware of what their involvement symbolizes more broadly, they struggle to reconcile it with the more pleasant, private memories, which they share with the examiners. Those memories are later discussed in memoirs and autobiographical fiction, two genres which are, to some extent, more critical of the BDM. To the contrary these exam essays show that young women had not yet fully explored the tensions between their happy memories of the BDM and the broader ideological ramifications of the regime.[95]

Karin, recalling her involvement in the BDM, confidently opens with the statement, "Everything ideological was still very far from us."[96] Karin, particularly, relishes feelings of gender equality, which she feels she owes to the Hitler Youth, as her participation involved wearing a uniform and marching like boys.[97] Speaking on behalf of her fellow female Hitler Youth comrades, Karin tells us that although the BDM group leaders encouraged a sense of collective ambition, the children remained unaware that their "honest" energies were being "misused" by the organization. Karin effectively refashions herself into a victim who participates blindly in the Hitler Youth, with little awareness of the movement's broader ideological (*Weltanschauung*) underpinnings.[98] As another young woman remarks, "[s]ometimes we are happier when we see things as we want to see them." [99] In one sense, this might imply that Germany's optimism about winning was what helped engineer its defeat, and that denying the atrocities of the past is the only way to stay happy and sane. As the first section of this article demonstrates, forgetting painful memories is the easier route, and this becomes a general trend in early post-war Germany. Still, these German women cling to whatever positive memories they have of their childhood—even if those are tainted with Nazi complicity—suggesting that forgetting is not necessarily straightforward or even possible. These young women are not simply "passive recipients"; rather, they selectively choose which

parts of the Nazi regime they want to remember and, by extension, endorse when constructing their wartime narratives.[100] Just as with their material possessions, these young women derive psychic comfort from their memories of *Heimat*, the beauty of that physical landscape, and their time in the BDM, all of which are reflective of a broader self-pitying method of coping with the Nazi past in the late 1940s.[101]

After War: Coping with Changes to Daily Life

The end of the Third Reich had a substantial impact on young Germans, who had not expected—nor had any reason to suspect—that the social hierarchies to which they had grown so accustomed would change. In many ways, this generational cohort is dutiful and pragmatic when it comes to understanding themselves and their futures.[102] Through these essays, the young women reclaim the meaning of the war and its legacy, mainly by disassociating their fond memories of the BDM with war crimes, or by blaming older generations for their own complicity, stoking generational conflict. In the Allied-approved *Horizon* youth magazine of the early post-war period, editorial discussions focus on the tensions between young and old generations—the crimes of the regime become a generational rather than an individual problem.[103] Because the Nazi state had attempted to sever familial bonds by cultivating youth loyalty to the state, young people now had to forge new bonds with either their friends or future spouse. Like their male counterparts, female writers have similar yet distinct understandings of the points at which childhood ended and adulthood began.[104] The Nazi state had to a limited extent, allowed BDM members to integrate themselves into the youth movement, evoking a sense of a separate but equal Hitler Youth.[105] Renegotiations of gender identity are visible within these examination essays, as are reformations of emotional relationships with others.[106] Most writers position themselves as adults in their essays, suggesting that their wartime experiences have given them a sense of agency and ability to extract meaning from events. By renegotiating their gender and age, these writers are able to feel more in control over their own

destinies. Young women use particular strategies to achieve this sense of personal maturity, interpolating a new post-war gender identity into their own Nazi youth subjectivity.

For these writers, representing the process of growing up is challenging not only because the beginning of the Second World War disrupted their childhoods, but also because gendered subjectivities, and awareness of gender, affected the treatment of young people. One essayist comments that women in 1948 have more freedoms than they had before: "Earlier, life was connected to expectations. Women strove for success in public life. It was very hard to get out of the closed circle she lived in."[107] Against this early post-war backdrop, this writer felt that women had more influence, as a result of the war. She is not unique in that perception; other essayists strike a somewhat naively optimistic tone that women were now able to influence politics. Fanciful proclamations about the female sex are scattered throughout the essays, such as one writer's introduction to Rosa Luxemburg: "Women are the masters of letter writing."[108] Teachers often commented "argument incorrect" in the margins of these essays, when their authors wrote overly positive descriptions of women.

Some of the examination essays provide emotionally charged anecdotes about life after the war. In particular, the Hans-Thoma Schule essays often make use of allegory to create the impression that the subject has a mature objectivity—something which is less common in Haß's collection. For example, in her essay on the topic "Nobody learns the secret of freedom except through discipline (*Zucht*)," the student writes about the concept of freedom and how only recently, in 1949, did she begin to understand it:

> I have just entered a development period in which I began to think about everything that we encountered. But it still happened in a very childlike way. So I racked my brain a little about the content of the sentence in the exam, until I finally dismissed it as incomprehensible, indeed too nonsensical.[109]

The quotation shows how the student attempts to reconcile with the concept of freedom, when she did not appear to have a strong grasp on what "freedom" actually meant, nor the connection to the poem containing the original quote. Other essays attempt to show their maturity through emphasizing that fantastical wishes are not mature, perhaps hinting at the Third Reich's false promises, whilst another considers it necessary to be "intellectually mature" and "educated enough" to be able to conceive of what is freedom.[110] One pertinent example is a student who thinks that children have no sense of objectivity and act on their heart, but that adults are also the same—always looking at "letters and memories of nicer days" as "memories of the good old days make old people happy." [111] Yet, the writer is unwilling to place herself into this binary of adult or child, but mature enough to judge both from a distance. This suggests that Haß's collection was, potentially, curated in order to feature the essays that shy away from allegory, in favor of articulating feelings directly and openly as young people reflected on their differing levels of maturity.

Through the examination essays, we see young women actively re-examining their emotional attachments to parents and older generations, thereby regaining their independence. Now, two years after the end of the war, "time has made me more mature, purified, and consolidated," one young woman writes.[112] The two months following the end of the war were difficult for Hilde, but she felt that her fellow cohort members would understand the "great internal struggle" that she was experiencing: "A feeling of deep resentment and abandonment retained the long, long upper hand! I locked myself up against all adults because to me, the opposing youth, their behavior was incomprehensible."[113] Speaking out against her parents, Hilde reveals not only the strength of Nazi youth propaganda, but also the now visible generational tensions.[114] She continues to believe in the value of community (*Gemeinschaft*), reminiscent of the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft*, and appears to lash out against the rise of individualism that is triumphing over collective sentiment. Each of these writers had to

resituate themselves within this new society, illustrating how the end of a political system can impact perceptions of the past, as well as individuals' abilities to deal with that past on a micro-level in the home.

Although young women attempt to showcase their growing independence, they are notably reluctant to place their trust in a partner and get married.[115] Despite the national prominence on discussions of marriage, only a few young women express their feelings on marriage openly or, alternatively, discuss their career paths, indicative of a reticence in planning for the future.[116] Since a number of these essay writers may have been hoping to enter university, it is likely that few were seeking marriage. Further, women far outnumbered men in post-war West Germany, which meant that on a practical level, marriage was not viable for many young German women.[117] The established institutions had fallen and there were few palatable and available replacements for the young women of the Hitler Youth generation.[118] In 1947, one young woman writes that as a newly married woman, a woman "looks for a picture of him [the husband], and because of the view she has of him, she loves him," but she does not truly know him.[119] Yet, the husband is still depicted as one's "life comrade" (*Lebenskamerad*), indicative of a Nazi-worldview steeped in notions of love and marriage.[120] While the essayist acknowledges that the woman's mental image of her husband may be incorrect, she maintains that her husband is not at fault if the marriage becomes estranged. Rather, the woman is the one at fault, because she falsely imagined her husband to be another way.[121] Here, the author takes issue with the current post-war situation, in which soldiers return to women who have remarried, are no longer in love with them, or are dissatisfied with the husband's return. Other writers adopt a similar stance on reunited husbands and wives, perhaps projecting their own fears that marriage and emotional commitment might end as tragically as the relationships of their older contemporaries, which they had possibly witnessed first-hand. Another student recalls an anecdote about her neighbor, a returning POW, who claims that the mental image he

had of his family is not reflective of his reality: he no longer recognizes the wife that he married, just as she no longer recognizes herself.[122] This feeling of spousal alienation must have been emotionally significant to this essayist, indicative of the fluid nature of relational identities: the writer sympathized with the POW, allegorically equating his mental rapture with her own. Young girls, cognizant of the breakdown of marriages and harboring a reluctance to trust others, may have been markedly reluctant to form long-term romantic ties.[123] These findings correlate with comments in contemporary periodicals, which profess how determined young people were to "stand alone."[124] It would seem that these writers understood standing alone as critical to their ability to navigate their emotionally fraught pasts.[125]

Despite the horrors that this generation witnessed, feelings of hope surface in numerous essays, hinting at other emotional trends manifesting in the cohort more generally. Hope manifests itself in numerous ways—but, as oral histories indicate, some forms of optimism were misplaced for the BDM generation. One student, writing on the topic "All the way through the rubble city (*Trümmerstadt*)," writes about the destruction of Berlin's streets as she wonders through it. She writes:

> I longed for people. Some came too. Still, it was no relief for me because they were soldiers returning from the war. They looked ragged and miserable. They seemed driftless and did not know that they were alive. They were people who came from another world. Was I going to a battlefield? Were these men the last survivors?[126]

Yet, she attempts to be positive on the future by concluding her essay with this message by referring to the Thirty Years War, as an allegory to juxtapose the current situation: "You have to be patient and be able to wait, it all took time back then [the Thirty Years War]. I believe

that something has to be destroyed once, otherwise there would be little space for the new."[127] Placing the fallout from the Second World War into a longer chronological framework appears to offer some level of comfort, as she normalizes the need for patience when postulating on the collective German future. Others, especially those in the Haß collection, write hopefully about their futures. Eva-Maria reflects on what has changed in her life, since the end of Third Reich: "Time has made me mature and everything has been purified and strengthened," through her faith in Christ.[128] Her words encapsulate how numerous writers tethered themselves to the past, attempting to appease the emotional frontier by expressing optimism about the changed world and adapting to the new democracy. As Reese's oral histories suggest, this generation of women, ultimately, alienated themselves from their experiences.[129] It is possible that this alienation was the result of the emotional frontier that the Allies and older generations promoted. As Christiane divulges, at the end of her essay, "I see the future calmly. I am trying to actualize my desire to study law."[130] Eva-Maria writes about how she and her family fled Dresden after it was bombed, and then were "expelled and came to W." [131] Having the opportunity to pursue her education means a great deal to her, as the "misery and need" she witnessed and experienced makes her "appreciate even more the good and the beautiful."[132] Education becomes a recurring motif in the Haß collection, the means through which these young women come back to reality and confront emotional disruptions. While we might interpret this as a mere means of serving the examiner's interests, there is no doubt that education provided psychic comfort to these young women, in allowing them to forge a new path—even if that path was far less predictable than anything they had dreamt about during the Third Reich.[133]

Conclusion

The young women whose exam collections we have considered were part of a unique generation who had "been socialized under such similar conditions."[134] This article argues that these young women articulated a broad spectrum of emotional responses to the end of the Nazi regime, whilst they were caught on the emotional frontier between the Allied educational expectations and the broader West German anti-Nazi grand narrative. Unlike later oral history studies, these exam essays provide insights into the emotional complexities of young people's lived experiences and early collective memories of the Nazi past at the time. Disregarding young women's narratives in the context of Nazi Germany, risks minimizing their role within the broader Nazi regime's "grammar of complicity."[135] This stance is especially problematic in debates concerning the role of the Hitler Youth generation and the extent to which these individuals understood their activities as tainted by the regime. Examining how young middle- and upper-class German women self-fashioned their emotional subjectivities, illuminates how they understood and presented themselves in relation to the Nazi regime and subsequent new order.[136]

These essays show how young women actively negotiated between the outward expectations of educators and teachers and the inner turmoil of growing up—which includes the complex emotions of guilt, complicity, violence, and destitution, which conflicted with childhood nostalgia. The instability of this cohort's emotional expression supports Ahmed's assertion that "emotionality…involves an interweaving of the personal with the social, and the affective with the mediated."[137] The Haß collection, curated to showcase hopes, dreams, and the emotional spectrum of the Hitler Youth generation, nonetheless shows young women eclipsing their involvement in the wider regime. In the Hans-Thoma Schule essays, the same trend is apparent, with the majority of students refraining from commenting directly on the occupation and end of the Third Reich—even when a direct essay question invites them to respond to recent events. Allegory, dreams, and the beauty of the physical landscape facilitate

the essayists' ability to discuss difficult topics. All young women are notably silent on the crimes of the Nazi regime, emblematic of a reluctance to accept total defeat or engage with the wider "grammar of complicity." Young women use silence, projection, and forgetting in performing the emotional frontier, all of which is, potentially, indicative of how re-educational policies encouraged a reframing of emotions into formats which emotionally distance these young girls from Nazism. Such techniques for managing competing emotional responses to the processing of wars also reinforces Rob Boddice's comments that young people often formulate "novel forms of emotional experience that express the frustrations of being torn."[138] The exam essays we analyzed provide a way to access these "novel forms of emotional experience" as they were articulated and represented by young people temporally closer to the end of the war, than memoirs or oral testimonies. Working through these frustrations was a complicated and hard process for young people—and one which historiography has overlooked for too long. More broadly, this study demonstrates the usefulness of exam essays in unearthing the contemporary emotional process of growing up during a transition from totalitarianism to democracy, as well as a unique, fundamental moment in the emotional re-orientation of German youth.

Endnotes:

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[28] Alex Lloyd, "Wir Wollten Doch Wissen, Wie Groß Die Gefahr War: The German War Child as Icon and Agent in Berlin School Essays, 1946," *German Life and Letters*, The War Child in the Occupation Period (1945-9), 69 (2016): 437–52.

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[31] Stephanie Olsen, "Introduction," in *Childhood, Youth and Emotions in Modern History: National, Colonial and Global Perspectives*, ed. Stephanie Olsen (Berlin, 2015), 22; Michael Roper "Slipping out of View: Subjectivity and Emotion in Gender History." *History Workshop Journal*, no. 59 (2005): 61.

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[38] Ahmed, "Collective Feelings."

[39] Alf Lüdtke, "'Coming to Terms with the Past': Illusions of Remembering, Ways of Forgetting Nazism in West Germany," *The Journal of Modern History* 65, no. 3 (September 1, 1993): 542–72; Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland in der Ära Adenauer: Aussenpolitik und innere Entwicklung, 1949-1963* (Darmstadt, 1983); Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley, 2001); Harald Welzer, Sabine Moller, and Karoline Tschuggnall, *"Opa war kein Nazi": Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust im Familiengedächtnis* (Frankfurt, 2014); Alexander Mitscherlich and M. Mitscherlich, *Eine deutsche Art zu lieben* (Münich, 1970); Gabriele Rosenthal, *The Holocaust in Three Generations: Families of Victims and Perpetrators of the Nazi Regime* (London, 1998).

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[41] DIPF, Leibniz-Institut für Bildungsforschung und Bildungsinformation, BBF, Bibliothek für Bildungsgeschichtliche Forschung-Archiv: Georg-Herwegh-Oberschule Berlin, GHO (414), GHO (417), GHO (420), GHO (422), GHO (425). Hereafter DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO.

All identifiable information (names, birthdates, home towns) has been removed from essays in this archive collection due to German privacy laws.

[42] Ekkehard Meier, "In Einer Neuen Zeit—Abiturarbeiten 1946 Bis 1948." In *Schulre-Form—Kontinuitäten und Brücke. Das Versuchungsfeld Berlin-Neukölln*, edited by Gerd Radde and Werner Korthaase (Opladen, 1993), 2:25; Fisher, *Disciplining Germany*, 72.

[43] Lüdtke, "Coming to Terms with the Past," 550.

[44] Ute Frevert, *Emotions in History: Lost and Found*, (New York, 2011), 139.

[45] Ahmed, "Collective Feelings," 39. Ute Frevert, *Emotions in History: Lost and Found*, (New York, 2011), 139.

[46] As historiography and later published ego-documents tell us, in the early postwar period, victims of sexual violence and fears of rape manifested in numerous ways in young women's writings about the war and its end. For more, see Atina Grossmann, *Reforming Sex: The German Movement for Birth Control and Abortion Reform, 1920-1950* (Oxford University Press, 1995), 193. Laurel Cohen-Pfister, "Rape, War, and Outrage: Changing Perceptions on German Victimhood in the Period of Post-Unification," in *Victims and Perpetrators: 1933-1945: (Re)presenting the Past in Post-Unification Culture*, ed. Dagmar Wienroeder-Skinner and Laurel Cohen-Pfister (Berlin, 2006), 316–226; Katherine Stone, "The Right (Way) to Represent: The Emotional Politics of Remembering Mass Rape in Germany After 1945," *Violence Against Women* 25, no. 13 (October 1, 2019): 1522–42; Atina Grossmann, "A Question of Silence: The Rape of German Women by Soviet Occupation Soldiers," in *Women and War in the Twentieth Century: Enlisted with or without Consent*, ed. Nicole Ann Dombrowski, vol. 13 (New York: Garland, 1999), 162–85.

[47] Theodor Heuss, "Rede nach der Wahl zum Bundesprasidenten vor Bundestag, Bundesrat, und Bundesversammlung" (September 12, 1949), in Dahrendorf and Vogt, *Theodor Heuss: Politiker und Publizist* (Tübingen, 1984), 378-379.

[48] Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory* (Cambridge, MA, 2013), 252; see also Till van Rahden, "Eine Welt ohne Familie: Über Kinderläden und andere demokratische Heilsversprechen," in *Zugänge zur Kinderladenbewegung*, ed. Karin Bock, Nina Göddertz, Franziska Heyden, and Miriam Mauritz, (Wiesbaden, 2020) 139–52.

[49] Robert G. Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Family in the Politics of Postwar West Germany* (Berkeley, 1996), 44.

[50] Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley, 2001), 121.

[51] Dagmar Reese, "The BDM Generation: A Female Generation in Transition from Dictatorship to Democracy," 246. For more on silence as an active process, see Eviatar Zerubavel and Eviatar Zerubavel, *The Elephant in the Room: Silence and Denial in Everyday Life* (New York, 2006).

[52] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (420), 53, 74.

[53] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (414), 13, 78-79, 86, 91, 97.

[54] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (414), 14-15. (emphasis added)

[55] See examples of this in: DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (414), 79, 50.

[56] Report 18 and Report 25 Haß and Goes, *Jugend unterm Schicksal. Lebensberichte junger Deutscher 1946 – 1949*.

[57] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (414), 55-56; see also DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (414), 15.

[58] See also DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (420), 88, 173, 265.

[59] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (414), 152.

[60] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (414), 13-14, 46, 78, 98.

[61] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (420), 74.

[62] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (420), 74-75.

[63] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (420), 54 (emphasis added); see also DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (420), 116.

[64] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (422) 52, 172, 213.

[65] Moeller, *War Stories*.

[66] E. Keightley and M. Pickering, *The Mnemonic Imagination: Remembering as Creative Practice* (Springer, 2012), 82–85.

[67] Report 62 in Haß and Goes, *Jugend unterm Schicksal. Lebensberichte junger Deutscher 1946 - 1949*, 216.

[68] Report 31 in Haß and Goes, *Jugend unterm Schicksal. Lebensberichte junger Deutscher 1946 – 1949,* 114.

[69] Report 28 in Haß and Goes, *Jugend unterm Schicksal. Lebensberichte junger Deutscher 1946 – 1949,* 106.

[70]E. Keightley and M. Pickering, *The Mnemonic Imagination: Remembering as Creative Practice* (New York, 2012), 82-85.

[71] Michael Roper, "Re-Remembering the Soldier Hero: The Psychic and Social Construction of Memory in Personal Narratives of the Great War," *History Workshop Journal* 50, no. 1 (October 1, 2000): 200 (181–204).

[72] Paul Connerton, "Seven Types of Forgetting," Memory Studies 1, no. 1 (January 1, 2008): 62.

[73] Joe Moran, "Childhood and Nostalgia in Contemporary Culture," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 5, no. 2 (May 1, 2002): 171.

[74] Gaëlle Fisher, "Heimat Heimstättensiedlung: Constructing Belonging in Postwar West Germany," *German History* 35, no. 4 (November 14, 2017): 569, 527-28. See also: Ian Connor, "German Refugees and the Bonn Government's Resettlement Programme: The Role of the Trek Association in Schleswig-Holstein, 1951–3," *German History* 18, no. 3 (July 1,

2000): 337–61; Gaëlle Fisher, "From Model to Warning: Narratives of Resettlement 'Home to the Reich' after World War II," in *German-Balkan Entangled Histories in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Christopher A. Molnar and Mirna Zakic (Pittsburgh, 2020), 180–201.

[75] Volker Ackermann, "Das Schweigen Der Flüchtlingskinder: Psychische Folgen von Krieg, Flucht und Vertreibung bei den Deutschen nach 1945," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 30, no. 3 (2004): 438.

[76] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (414), 185.

[77] Krimmer, *German Women's Life Writing and the Holocaust*, 2–3.

[78] Report 27 in Haß and Goes, *Jugend unterm Schicksal. Lebensberichte junger Deutscher 1946 - 1949*, 101. The German word 'der Treck' directly translates to a specific type of truck used to transport people fleeing from the war front and fell out of use after World War Two. As there was no direct English equivalent, we used an equivalent meaning.

[79] Report 67 in Haß and Goes, 231.

[80] Report 34 in Haß and Goes, 123.

[81] Nicholas Stargardt, *The German War: A Nation Under Arms, 1939-45* (New York, 2015), 524.

[82] Report 17 in Haß and Goes, *Jugend unterm Schicksal. Lebensberichte junger Deutscher 1946 - 1949*, 65.

[83] Gaston Bachelard, "Extract from 'The House. From Cellar to Garret. The Significance of the Hut,'" in *Visual Culture: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies*, ed. Joanne Morra and Marquard Smith, vol. 3, 3 vols., Visual Culture: Spaces of Visual Culture (London, 2006), 82–87.

[84] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (420), 262. See also DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (420), 286ff; DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (414), 205.

[85] Report 28 in Haß and Goes, *Jugend unterm Schicksal. Lebensberichte junger Deutscher 1946 - 1949*, 104.

[86] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (420), 287.

[87] Reichsreferentin Jutta Rüdiger cited in Daniela Münkel, "Produktionssphäre. Personal und Programm im NS-Rundfunk," in Zuhören Und Gehörtwerden I. Radio im Nationalsozialismus. Zwischen Lenkung und Ablenkung, ed. Inge Marßolek and Adelheid von Saldern (Tübingen, 1998); see also Lisa Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany* (Oxford, 2010); Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (New York, 1987); Jill Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Germany* (London, 2014).

[88] Dagmar Reese, "The BDM Generation: A Female Generation in Transition from Dictatorship to Democracy," 242.

[89] Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*, 1st Edition (New Brunswick, 2002), 91.

[90] Report 67 in Haß and Goes, 230–31.

[91] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (420), 138.

[92] Report 28 in Haß and Goes, *Jugend unterm Schicksal. Lebensberichte junger Deutscher 1946 - 1949*, 104.

[93] Report 27 in Haß and Goes, 100.

[94] Report 27 in Haß and Goes, 100–102; Dagmar Reese, *Growing Up Female in Nazi Germany* (Ann Arbor, 2006), 59; see also Matthew Stibbe, "In and Beyond the Racial State: Gender and National Socialism, 1933–1955," *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 13, no. 2 (June 2012): 159–78.

[95] Report 28 in Haß and Goes, *Jugend unterm Schicksal. Lebensberichte junger Deutscher 1946 - 1949*, 103; see also Sybil Gräfin Schönfeidt, "1945 war das Jahr der Frau," *Die Zeit*, November 21, 2012, https://www.zeit.de/1976/05/1945-war-das-jahr-der-

frau/komplettansicht; Sybil Gräfin Schönfeldt, “Ich war Arbeitsmaid,” *ZEIT ONLINE*, 1985, http://www.zeit.de/1985/39/ich-war-arbeitsmaid; Renate Finckh, *Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit* (Baden-Baden, 1979); Barbara Gehrts, *Nie wieder ein Wort davon* (Munich, 1975); Ursula R. Mahlendorf, *The Shame of Survival: Working through a Nazi Childhood* (University Park, Pa, 2009).

[96] Report 35 in Haß and Goes, 126.

[97] Dagmar Reese, “The BDM Generation: A Female Generation in Transition from Dictatorship to Democracy,” 229.

[98] Report 34 in Haß and Goes, *Jugend unterm Schicksal. Lebensberichte junger Deutscher 1946 - 1949*, 126–34.

[99] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (420), 120.

[100] Dagmar Reese, “The BDM Generation: A Female Generation in Transition from Dictatorship to Democracy,” 241.

[101] Moeller, *War Stories*.

[102] Alexander von Plato, “The Hitler Youth Generation and Its Role in the Two Post-War German States,” in *Generations in Conflict: Youth Revolt and Generation Formation in Germany 1770-1968*, ed. Mark Roseman (Cambridge, 1995), 210–26; Wierling, “The Hitler Youth Generation in the GDR: Insecurities, Ambitions and Dilemmas,” 312–17.

[103] Dagmar Reese, 240.

[104] Jost Hermand, “Fifty Years on: German Children of the War Remember,” in *European Memories of the Second World War*, ed. Helmut Peitsch, Charles Burdett, and Claire Gorrara (London, 2005), 281.

[105] Tiia Sahrakorpi, “Memory of the Third Reich in Hitler Youth Memoirs,” *Doctoral Thesis, University College London* (London, 2018), 131; Michelle Mouton, “Sports, Song, and

Socialization: Women's Memories of Youthful Activity and Political Indoctrination in the BDM," *Journal of Women's History* 17, no. 2 (2005): 67-68.

[106] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (420), 48.

[107] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (420), 220.

[108] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (422), 273.

[109] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (422), 313-314.

[110] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (422), 216, 217, 253, 262. See also: DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (420), 191, 224, 164.

[111] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (420), 164.

[112] Report 24 in Haß and Goes, *Jugend unterm Schicksal. Lebensberichte junger Deutscher 1946 - 1949*, 78.

[113] Report 23 in Haß and Goes, 77.

[114] Quote in Meier, "In Einer Neuen Zeit—Abiturarbeiten 1946 Bis 1948," 26; DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (420), 191-195; DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (414), 210.

[115] See for example DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (420), 127.

[116] See also, Michelle Mouton, "From Adventure and Advancement to Derailment and Demotion: Effects of Nazi Gender Policies on Women's Careers and Lives," *Journal of Social History* 43, no. 4 (2010): 945–71. Robert G. Moeller, "Protecting Mother's Work: From Production to Reproduction in Postwar West Germany," *Journal of Social History* 22, no. 3 (March 1, 1989): 413–37.

[117] Reese, "The BDM Generation: A Female Generation in Transition from Dictatorship to Democracy," 242.

[118] Helmut Schelsky, *Die skeptische Generation- eine Soziologie der deutschen Jugend* (Munich, 1957), 267.

[119] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (420), 127.

[120] See further Elizabeth D. Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make?: Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany*. (Berkeley, 2003); Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*; Annett Gröschner, *Ich schlug meiner Mutter die brennenden Funken ab. Berliner Schulaufsätze aus dem Jahr 1946.* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 2001); Ulla Roberts, *Starke Mütter - ferne Väter* (Gießen, 2005).

[121] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (420), 128.

[122] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (420), 136-140.

[123] Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make*, 116-17.

[124] Quote from the publication *Horizon* cited in Dagmar Reese, "The BDM Generation: A Female Generation in Transition from Dictatorship to Democracy," 240.

[125] Tiia Sahrakorpi, "Memory, Family, and the Self in Hitler Youth Generation Narratives." *Journal of Family History* 45, no. 1 (October 23, 2019): 88–108.

[126] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (414), 299.

[127] DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (414), 300; see also essays on freedom in DIPF/BBF/Archiv: GHO (422), 48; 321.

[128] Report 24 in Haß and Goes, *Jugend unterm Schicksal. Lebensberichte junger Deutscher 1946 - 1949*, 78.

[129] Dagmar Reese, *Growing Up Female in Nazi Germany* (Ann Arbor, 2006), 5, 60, 88,

[130] Report 31 in Haß and Goes, 114.

[131] Report 24 in Haß and Goes, 78.

[132] Report 24 in Haß and Goes, 78.

[133] Dagmar Reese, "The BDM Generation: A Female Generation in Transition from Dictatorship to Democracy," 242.

[134] Dagmar Reese, 228.

[135] Krimmer, *German Women's Life Writing and the Holocaust*, 3.

[136] Krimmer, *German Women's Life Writing and the Holocaust*; Atina Grossmann, "Trauma, Memory, and Motherhood," in *Life after Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s*, ed. Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann (Cambridge, 2003), 93–128; Adelheid von Saldern, "Victims or Perpetrators? Controversies about the Role of Women in the Nazi State," in *Nazism and German Society, 1933-1945*, ed. David Crew (London, 1995), 141–66; Matthew Stibbe, *Women in the Third Reich* (London, 2003).

[137] Ahmed, "Collective Feelings," 28.

[138] Rob Boddice, "The History of Emotions," in *New Directions in Social and Cultural History*, ed. Sasha Handley, Rohan McWilliam, and Lucy Noakes, 1st ed. (London, 2018), 50.