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Dear Irene:

This is an unabashed "fan letter." Yesterday I went to see Dark Lullabies at the NFB. I found it very moving and wanted to tell you so. However, you were surrounded and I had to leave. Hence, this note.

There were many things in the film which moved me. Although my parents emigrated from Vienna in 1929, and I was born here in 1937, the holocaust was part of my childhood awareness. When the European war was over, my mother came to me to tell me, I was playing in my sandbox in NDG. She and my father were under the impression that the "Kinder" were unaware of the camps. Of course we knew about them, since our house was constantly full of people who had escaped Europe through Spain and Portugal. Hence, when she told me the war was over, I said: "Good, now we won't be put in concentration camps." She asked me how that could happen and I told her that if Hitler came to Canada we would be exterminated. "Where would such a camp be?" she asked me. "In St-Sauveur, opposite the priest's house," I responded. There was a school with a high fence there. "How would they know about us?" she asked. "Oh, Mr. Wallace [our neighbour] would tell them," I answered. "We have a prettier garden than his and he'd get it then." Of course I don't remember this event; my mother used to tell it in utter shock. It convinced her, I think, that children know everything anyway. After the war, I helped at the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society where my mother and some other women set up a Clothing room for the survivors. I used to help measure the clothes and tag them...and in doing so was the mouse in the wainscoting to many tales told in the lingua franca of the camps which was German, my first language. In the mid-sixties and later I began to teach the children of survivors at Sir George Williams, and became familiar with their perceptions and burdens.

In any case, as a once-removed survivor, who realizes every day of my life that there but for the grace of something or other, go I into the chambers, I was moved by the film.

I felt that the shot of Dachau with Elly Ameling singing the Brahms' Lullaby captured for me my own ambivalence

about the Kultur that produced both. The discussion with the granddaughter of the Second Kommandant reinforced my own belief that to live in good faith one must be prepared to give up fond memories and attachments, to suffer that essential alienation from ones own. A terrible price, perhaps, but the only hope for freedom from terrible burdens of privilege and mendacity.

In any case, Irene, thank you for your film, and may you make many more films. I think getting to the affective side of things...working from the inside out, as in this film, probably teaches the viewer more than long recitations of facts.

Warm regards,

Irene