Abstract

Title of Document: AMERICAN BLACKNESS AND VERGANGENHEITSBEWÄLTIGUNG IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY GERMAN LITERATURE AND FILM

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This study represents a unique examination of the convergence of constructs of Blackness and racism in twenty-first century novels and films by white Germans and Austrians in order to demonstrate how these texts broaden discourses of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. The increased prominence of minority voices demanding recognition of their national identity within Nazi successor states has transformed white German perceptions of "Germanness" and of these nations' relationships to their turbulent pasts. I analyze how authors and directors employ constructs of Blackness within fictional texts to interrogate the dynamics of historical and contemporary racisms. Acknowledging that discourses of 'race' are taboo, I analyze how authors and directors avoid this forbidden discourse by drawing comparisons between constructs of American Blackness and German and Austrian historical encounters with 'race'.

This study employs cultural studies' understanding of 'race' and Blackness as constructs created across discourses. Following the example of Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark* (1992), my textual analyses show how these constructs create a "playground for the imagination" in which authors confront modern German racism. My study begins with a brief history of German-African American encounters, emphasizing the role

American Blackness played during pivotal moments of German national identity formation. The subsequent chapters are divided thematically, each one comprised of textual analyses that explore discourses integral to *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. The third chapter examines articulations of violence and racism in two films, Oskar Roehler's *Lulu & Jimi* (2008) and Michael Schorr's *Schultze gets the blues* (2008), to explore possibilities of familial reconciliation despite historical guilt. The fourth chapter compares the *Besatzungskinder* protagonists of two novels, Peter Henisch's *Schwarzer Peter* (2000) and Larissa Boehning's *Lichte Stoffe* (2007), with the (auto)biographies of actual *Besatzungskinder* Ika Hügel-Marshall and Bärbel Kampmann, exposing the modern discursive taboo of 'race' as a silence stemming from historical guilt. The final chapter demonstrates the evolution of German conceptualizations of historical guilt through the analyses of Christa Wolf's novel *Stadt der Engel* (2010) and Armin Völckers's film *Leroy* (2007).

American Blackness and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in Twenty-first Century German Literature and Film

By

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Introduction and Significance of Work

This study interrogates the confluence of constructs of Blackness and expressions of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in twenty-first century film and literature by Black and white Germans and Austrians. Applying the most recent theoretical work of Black German and memory studies, my study is unique for its recognition of modern literary and cinematic engagements with 'race'—specifically, Blackness—as participating in discourses concerning coming to terms with traumatic events throughout German and Austrian history. Despite the overwhelming significance 'race' had during the Third Reich, a paucity of scholarship on the relationship between contemporary articulations of racism, or anti-racism, and the concept of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* persists. Practitioners of memory studies often leave questions of 'race' completely unaddressed, and activists and scholars who interrogate modern racism will frequently connect it to Germany's colonial and National Socialist pasts without acknowledging that its continuation into contemporary society may be related to historical discourses of guilt and culpability. The following study will finally bridge these studies of 'race' and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* by analyzing the convergence of constructs of Blackness and racism in twenty-first century novels and films by white and Black Germans and Austrians to demonstrate how these texts broaden discourses of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* to include events before and after the Holocaust.

Interest in this study was sparked by autobiographies by Afro-German[1] authors, whose works have significantly increased in the past two decades. Particularly powerful

[1] In this study, I use the terms Afro-German and Black German interchangeably, because, despite debates about these terms, they are both self-applied terminologies. When speaking of Afro- or Black Germans, I

are the experiences of racism noted by the authors, their effect on Black German identity, and the denial of that racism by white Germans. Many notable scholars have analyzed the relationship of Blackness, Germanness, and Afro-German identity[2] or chronicled the Afro-German struggle to reclaim a German heritage,[3] but few have studied how these emergent Black German voices have affected contemporary white, hegemonic constructs of Germanness. Acknowledging that these experiential texts are seldom limited to personal explorations of identity but set out to dismantle racist structures within German society, an exploration of the effects of Black German voices on constellations of Germanness and 'race' is long overdue.

Particularly intrepid —and indispensable for the development of this study—is Noah Sow's book *Deutschland Schwarz Weiß. Der alltägliche Rassismus* (2008). She opens her work with the bold statement, "Doch in Deutschland passiert gerade etwas sehr Interessantes: Der Zugang zu *einem bestimmten Gebiet* des Allgemeinwissens wird von der Mehrheit »aktiv« nicht genutzt… Deutschland ist rückständig, was den Umgang mit Rassismus betrifft" (11). Sow's book, an open interrogation of contemporary German racism from the point of view of a Black German, begins by asserting the topic is

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follow Fatima El-Tayeb's practice of "strategic essentialism," which applies these terms in reference to those Germans of African heritage whose primary socialization and cultural experience is German. Persons of immigrant backgrounds are not excluded from this terminology, but of importance here is self-identification. The term should not be used as a blanket term that arbitrarily appropriates the national identities of all persons of African heritage within the borders of a German-speaking nation. For example, Beatrice Achaleke, the CEO of a business consultant firm in Vienna, prefers to identify as a Black Austrian of Cameroonian descent in order to preserve her African cultural identity.

[2] Notable studies into modern Afro-German identity formation have been Fatima El-Tayeb, "If You Can't Pronounce My Name, You Can Just Call Me Pride': Afro-German Activism, Gender and Hip Hop" (2003); Michelle Maria Wright, "Others-from-Within from Without: Afro-German Subject Formation and the Challenge of a Counter-Discourse" (2003); and Karein Goertz, "Borderless and Brazen: Ethnicity Redefined by Afro-German and Turkish German Poets" (1997).

[3] Of importance here are May Ayim, Katharina Oguntoye, and Dagmar Schultz (eds**)**, *Farbe bekennen. Afro-deutsche Frauen auf den Spuren ihrer Geschichte* (1986)**,** Tina Campt, *Other Germans Black Germans and the Politics of Race, Gender, and Memory in the Third Reich*, (2004) and Fatima El-Tayeb, *European Others: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe*, **(**2011).

eschewed by white Germans altogether. Sow concedes such an avoidance of the topic of 'race' is logical, calling it in the following paragraph, "geschichtlich erklärbar." She never expands on this history, leaving the comment a mere sentence fragment, but its allusion to the Third Reich is readily understood by the modern German reader. The simplicity of this expression belies the complexity of its meaning. The lacuna in her text exposes an unspoken knowledge shared by all Germans; namely, one cannot openly discuss 'race' or racism because it is a historically charged discourse, one that is now taboo.

This juxtaposition between silence and general German knowledge is reminiscent of the introduction to Toni Morrison's seminal work, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1992). In this study, she analyzes the ways in which Blackness was used in US literature in order to define what freedom meant. Like Sow, she begins her study by questioning what is expressed as generally accepted 'knowledge':

> This knowledge holds that traditional, canonical American literature is free of, uninformed, and unshaped by the four-hundred-year-old presence of… African-Americans in the United States. It assumes that this presence… has had no significant place or consequence in the origin and development of that culture's literature. Moreover, such knowledge assumes that the characteristics of our national literature emanate from a particular "Americanness" that is separate from and unaccountable to this presence. (4-5)

Morrison's work encouraged me to ask numerous questions which have remain largely unaddressed in German studies: Could there not be a similarly silenced or erased discourse about 'race' in modern German fiction, even though its German equivalent,

Rasse, is no longer used in current parlance and has almost taken on the connotation of a curse word? Are these the very silences and lacunae of a national discourse that Foucault insisted concealed the most critical topics for a culture, more specifically those that reinforce a structure of dominance? Is the national discourse truly silent on matters of 'race' and racism or, rather, have they been addressed in more surreptitious ways? Finally, why has this knowledge of 'race' and its historical origins been erased from public discourses and how have Germans (Black and white) combatted this silence?

This study follows Morrison's example and explores the ways in which Blackness is treated in texts of white Germans in order to expose twenty-first century German discourses on 'race' and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, emphasizing the influences Black German texts have had on the trajectory of these discourses. An implementation of Morrison's methods of analysis within the German context must be done carefully. These are nations for which the discourses of 'race' and Blackness have played very different roles. The historical contexts are not to be ignored. Morrison focused on nineteenth century American[4] literature, the canon of which was created in a nation economically based on the slavery of people of African descent. Furthermore, Morrison's study involves an era in which Black Americans were denied their rights to free speech; however, the discourse on Blackness in Germany is being addressed by a number of politically active Black Germans.

In light of the rather small population of persons of African descent, one might ask if Blackness is a pertinent construct for analyzing 'race' in modern German culture.

[4] Although the term American can be used to refer both to the United States and to the American continents, this project only applies the term in the former sense. This is done to preserve the meaning of "American" as used in "African American" which is a term of the self-designation of Black citizens of the United States of America. If the term is used to refer to a geography beyond the borders of the US, it will be stated.

Why Blackness? Why not Judaism, or the influx of Turkish culture? I realize that this could be seen as a type of reductionism, an attempt to simplify German racialized constructs into a Black/white dichotomy, but the historical origins of Blackness in the German context make it uniquely suited for my inquiry. I am in agreement with Noah Sow, who states:

> Zum einen ist es… leider unmöglich, Rassismus zu überwinden, ohne seine Konstrukte 'Schwarz' und 'weiß' während dieses Prozesses zu benennen… Zum anderen wird die Welt auch in jedem anderen Buch, das bisher in Deutschland erschienen ist, in 'Schwarz' und 'weiß' aufgeteilt… . (2008: 19)

In Europe, the construct of 'race' was (and is) largely built on the assumption of these two 'oppositional' peoples, Black and white—and to such a great extent that it is almost impossible to speak about 'race' without this terminology. Although one could argue there historically have been very few Black Germans, the possible verity of this statement does not preclude the role the construct of Blackness played in the establishment of a white hegemony within German-speaking Europe.

Blackness plays a very different role in current German society than either Turkish or Jewish culture, both of which have been used as viewpoints from which to analyze German racism. The study of Jewishness in the German context is indelibly marked by National Socialism, and processes of the racialization of Jews during and before the rise of Hitler have been analyzed in many historical and textual studies. After World War II, a distinction between anti-Semitism and racism was made in an effort to dismantle the construct of 'race'. For example, in modern German, one refers to an individual as being Jewish (*jüdisch*) in lieu of using the now taboo term of "a Jew" (*ein*

Jude) which is intended to emphasize Judiasm as a religion and not a biological 'race'. In the context of Afro-Germans, however, it is still common to refer to a human being as a Black (*eine Schwarze*), punctuating the supposed physicality of a human's Blackness.

The influx of the Turkish population has also been an impetus for political and social debates concerning contemporary articulations of German racism. These discourses, however, tend to focus on the concept of *Ausländerfeindlichkeit*, which many scholars, including Sow, have exposed as a means of repudiating accusations of racism. Paul Gilroy has urged scholars who wish to deconstruct 'race' in its European context to avoid focusing on migrancy, which "is part of the very intellectual mechanism that holds us—postcolonial Europeans, black and white—hostage" (2004: xxi). It is not that the issues of immigrants aren't of prodigious consequence or that they can't be used to expose racialized constructs, but if we wish to advance the anti-racist endeavor we need to address issues of 'race' directly, and the "…fascination with the figure of the migrant must be made part of Europe's history rather than its contemporary geography. The postcolonial migrant needs to be recognized as an anachronistic figure bound to the lost imperial past" (Gilroy 2004: xxi).

Gilroy argues there is a danger in focusing on immigration. It can become "doubly unhelpful when it alone supplies an explanation for the conflicts and opportunities of this transitional moment in the life of Europe's polities… " (2004: xxi). He insists, and I concur, that "if there must be one single concept, a solitary unifying idea around which the history of postcolonial settlement in twentieth-century Europe should revolve, that place of glory should be given not to migrancy but to racism" (Gilroy 2004: xxi).

In light of Gilroy's statements, the discourse of Blackness takes on greater significance.[5] Although there is Black immigration into German-speaking nations, German and Austrian discourses on immigration tend to focus on Turkish immigrants. At the same time, Blackness is very prevalent in German culture, particularly in popular culture. Black artists—mainly African American and Afro-German—consistently top the music video charts and are a staple of many blockbuster movies. Blackness has become a politically charged, racialized construct that can be analyzed without necessarily focusing on issues of immigration.

It is, however, of the utmost importance that this work be understood as standing in relation to those works which examine immigration policy and culture, even though they are not definitively addressed here. My study's focus away from immigration does not neglect the momentous research done by scholars in this area; rather this study is meant to be a further contribution to their efforts in deconstructing contemporary German racism, and should be understood as being congruent to studies by scholars from a variety of specialties, including German Turkish, German Asian, and postcolonial studies. Although this study emphasizes Afro-German scholarship and the depiction of Blackness, it is not exclusive of the prodigious work of scholars, writers and activists who engage and combat racism from other perspectives. The undertakings of scholars and activists such as Ming-Bao Yue's "On not looking German: Ethnicity, Diaspora, and the Politics of Origin" (2000) and those of German-Turkish writer Zafer Şenocak have

[5] It is important to mention that Gilroy is very empathetic to the situation of migrants into Europe. He does not believe that 'race' should be studied in lieu of migrancy, but in order to ultimately better the situation of immigrants. He later explains in his foreword, "It was racism, not diversity, that made their arrival into a problem. This is more than just a question of perspective. There are significant political interests at stake. Where migrancy supplies the decisive element, the door gets opened to patterns of explanation that ultimately present immigrants as the authors of their own misfortune…" (2004: xxi).

shaped the discourse of racism and otherness within German culture decisively, and this dissertation continues these endeavors. The causes and manifestations of German racism are manifold and cannot be exhaustively examined within any one project; therefore, I intend for this study to concentrate on two specific discourses related to modern German racism: *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and Blackness.

Blackness should not, however, be understood as a stable construct, and solely associated with popular culture. German constructs of Blackness and 'whiteness' have been developed across hundreds of years of discourses concerning German racialized identity. Representations of Blackness have converged and diverged with a myriad of discourses ranging from colonial expansion and national identity to civil rights and feminism, associating the construct with opposing ideas and stereotypes. An author's decision to racialize a character could entail activating at times paradoxical tropes and motifs. A character racialized as Black can conjure stereotypes ranging from aggression and rebellion to passivity and subservience.

Since my study investigates white German, textual explorations of discourses on 'race', the racialized constructs of Blackness will inevitably intersect with discourses of National Socialism and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Considering the relationship of the United States to Germany's Nazi past, an emphasis on the confluence of constructs of Blackness and Americanness will be particularly beneficial. The prevalence of African Americans in European pop culture can obscure Germany's long engagement with Black American culture—cross-cultural encounters that have played defining roles in discourses of German national identity. German engagements with US slavery, interest in German-American travelogues in the nineteenth century, and fascination with jazz in the

first half of the twentieth century all represent articulations of German national identity through tropes of American Blackness during key moments in its history. This is particularly significant after the collapse of the Third Reich. The ensuing redefinition of German national identity and its relationship to 'race' coincided with the presence of African American occupation forces in West Germany and Austria. Constructs of American Blackness became imbued with conflicting connotations in the Nazi successor nations. As citizens of the US, African Americans were recognized by Germany and Austria as victors of World War II; however, associations of American Blackness with oppression—which began to develop in eighteenth century discourses of 'race'—still prevailed in these nations, particularly during the apex of the US Civil Rights movement on which German and Austrian media fervently reported.

Following in the footsteps of Toni Morrison, I argue these conflicting constructs and connotations enrich the "country's creative possibilities" by fashioning a "playground for the imagination" in which authors can confront modern German racism and the historical discourses that inform it (1992: 37-38). In light of the different roles Blackness plays in the cultures Morrison and I scrutinize, I will expand my study to include texts by Black German authors, cognizant that the conceptualization of Blackness is constructed in a discourse actively shaped by both Black and white authors. In order to do so, I will broaden my theoretical framework to include, among others, the activist works of Ika Hügel-Marshall and Noah Sow and the theoretical works by Black Caribbean scholar Stuart Hall. I will combine these methodologies under the rubric of cultural studies, which allows me to conduct an interdisciplinary analysis across the various texts that make up the modern German discourse on American Blackness.

Significance and Scope of Work

The significance of my study lies in my analysis of the dynamics of white German articulations of anti-Racism and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung.* In light of the influence of memory studies on the contemporary scholarship of the subject, this study recognizes the term's transformation from the psychological process of coming to terms with a traumatic life event to processes of overcoming the guilt and shame of a painful memory—individual or collective—by textually exploring the event and its continued effects on contemporary society. Modern processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* by those who experienced the event and the subsequent generations[6] are not limited to assertions that traumatic events happened for which Germans must make amends, but also include interrogations of the mechanisms that enabled these events and their persistence into present society. This study examines events leading to the Holocaust, such as colonial genocide, and occurring after, such as the dictatorship of East Germany, as legitimate objects of German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* that are only now gaining acceptance as events for which Germans must atone.

At this point, there exists no scholarship which attempts to locate the burgeoning articulations of German anti-racism to processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung.* This study will fill this gaping academic void. Almost every study of

[6] This project closely examines the evolution of articulations across generations. For this reason, I have borrowed the terminology used by practicioners of collective memory, such as Aleida Assmann, to distinguish between them. The generation that participated in the Second World War is referred to as the *Erfahrungsgeneration*, the first, parent, or experiential generation. Following generations are called *Bekenntnisgenerationen*, or more specifically, the children of this generation are called either the child generation, or the second generation. The generation beyond this is referred to as the grandchild or third generation.

Vergangenheitsbewältigung analyzed in the first chapter's literature review references the role 'race' played in the Third Reich, but not a single study attempts to connect racism to processes of coming to terms with the past. They acknowledge the violence and the death wrought by processes of racialization as if racism were a *Ding an sich*. No one analyzes it as a construct that needs to be deconstructed in order for processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* to advance.

For example, in *Wessen Schuld? Vom Historikerstreit zur Goldhagen-Kontroverse* (1997), Wippermann acknowledges the role 'race' has played in discourses of historical memory. His study of the historians' dispute of the 1980's notes that the many analyses of the Holocaust ignore non-Jewish groups victimized by Nazi "Rassenmord" (1997: 7) and criticizes Geiss's *Geschichte des Rassismus* (1988) for attempting to locate the origin of German racism in India (1997: 63). His work alludes to a need for Germans to acknowledge the importance of racism in mechanisms of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, but offers no such analysis. In *Erfolgsgeschichte Bundesrepublik?* (2008), Gelinke et al. begin their work by asserting that the unanimous condemnation of anti-Semitic and xenophobic incidents within the German media evidences the importance of National Socialist history for united Germany (7), but not a single contribution to the over 370 page volume analyzes 'race' or racism. The need to come to terms with the violence and the death caused by processes of racialization are accepted, but the necessity to come to terms with the racism itself is ignored. My study will be the first to acknowledge the importance of coming to terms with past racisms as a neglected process of German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung.*

This study explores the dynamics between racism and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* by means of textual analyses applying tropes of Blackness and recognizes that collective memories are not interpreted as unified structures, but are contested across discourses (Fuchs 2006: 6). This study analyzes the ways in which the demand by minority voices for acknowledgement of their presence and persecution throughout German history—climaxing in the Holocaust—have prompted white Germans and Austrians to reevaluate the destructive role 'race' has played throughout history and their nations' reluctance to explore constructs of 'race'.

I agree with Pierre Nora, who credits the reassertion of formally silenced voices into discourses surrounding dictatorial violence for transitioning analyses from historical to memory based methodologies. He explains:

> The explosion of minority memories … has profoundly altered the respective status and the reciprocal nature of history and memory.... Unlike history, which has always been in the hands of the public authorities of scholars and specialized peer groups, memory has acquired all the new privileges and prestige of a popular protest movement. It has come to resemble the revenge of the underdog or injured party, the outcast, the history of those denied the right to History. …What is new, and what it owes to the abysmal sufferings of the last century … is the demand for a truth more "truthful" than that of history, the truth of personal experience and individual memory." (2002: 4)

This study demonstrates that the extensive work Afro-Germans[7] have dedicated to rediscovering their past within German-speaking borders has initiated a contestation of

[7] Although I focus on Blackness and Afro-German influences on discourses of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, Black German voices are by no means the only minority group to support anti-racism. A myriad of

German collective memory as 'white' and influenced many white Germans to re-examine their history textually with an eye toward racial discourses. Since discourses of 'race' are intrinsically linked to discourses of the Third Reich, and constructs of Blackness are tied to colonialism, the processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* engaged in these white German texts expose a continuity of racism that begins before the Third Reich, reaching its apex in the violence of the Holocaust, and persists into the present day in the form of *Ausländerfeidlichkeit* and other forms of racism.

This indelible connection in the German mind between racism and Fascism[8] is pertinently underscored in the sentiments of T. Vicky Germain, an African American filmmaker and activist living in Berlin. In an interview about the practice of Blackface in Germany, Germain expressed frustration when explaining to Germans why she felt the practice was racist. She explained, "If you try and explain why something's racist, people will often give you an annoyed look and say they aren't Nazis" (2014). The equating of racism with Fascism can pose a serious problem, because it denies modern articulations of racism and the development of racism in ideologies before Hitler.

By activating constructs of Blackness within literary and cinematic texts, authors and directors are able to expose a current German racism that is still largely denied, while demonstrating that this denial stems from racist ideologies with which Germans have not come to terms since colonialism. Currently, the only similar attempt to demonstrate the importance of 'race' and German collective memory has been Michael Rothberg in his *Multidirectional Memory* (2009). He takes a transnational approach to remembering the

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Turkish-German voices has also dedicated inexhaustible effort to expose and combat racism. My choice to focus on Afro-German work was because it relied less on discourses of migrancy and *Ausländerfeindlichkeit*.

[8] Fascism is capitalized in order to refer specifically to Nazi Fascism. When it is left not capitalized, it is used as a reference to the concept as a whole, encompassing other nationalities' forms of fascism as well.

Holocaust in order to explore ways in which the uniqueness of this event has made it a universalized symbol for racialized violence. He draws comparisons between Hannah Arendt's exploration of African colonialism's role in the Third Reich and W.E.B. Dubois's empathy with those murdered at Auschwitz as victims of racism. The study is elucidating and commendable for its attempt to defend the event's significance outside Nazi successor states, but it does little to deconstruct modern German engagements with racism.

Jeffrey Olick attributes the lack of scholarly attention paid to German racism in collective memory research to a societal taboo. He explains, "This avoidance of mentioning anti-Semitism as racism, although it contains some instrumental elements, is an excellent example of a taboo about the German past. Over the years it has emerged in different ways in different contexts, but the avoidance is remarkably consistent" (1997: 929). This project seeks to combat this taboo and take up the cause of anti-racism as espoused by Noah Sow, ManeEla Ritz, and other Black German scholars by examining how literary and cinematic texts represent the constellation of Blackness, racism, and memory.

Since discourses of 'race' are still so taboo in Germany, direct representations of racism and its historical past are often eschewed by white Germans in favor of allusions and inferences. For these reasons, explorations of American Blackness have been advantageous. The application of constructs of American Blackness allows the authors and directors to expose German racisms by depicting a racism that is not taboo and has frequently found discussion in German media. These representations of American

Blackness then serve as a jumping off point to draw comparisons and allusions to German and Austrian historical and contemporary encounters with 'race'.

Materials and Structure

Since this project employs a cultural studies approach for the analysis of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, I chose to examine as diverse a selection of texts as possible. Cultural studies' research emphasizes the study of discourses across disciplines and media. As will be examined more thoroughly in the first chapter, cultural studies challenges an understanding of 'Culture'[9] as the bastion of privileged authors and thinkers, and replaces it with a concept of 'culture' that encompasses all cultural products, high and low, and insists they be examined concurrently. By redefining a text as an event, ritual, or product (such as a film or novel) that is created through processes of cultural production, the discipline has the benefit of studying culture across a multitude of textual formats, including examining works of literature and film together. Therefore, my project's selection of texts sought to include those from various media, and considered both 'high' and 'popular' culture.

Recognizing that modern expressions of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* originate from three distinct traditions corresponding to each of the three Nazi successor states, I endeavored to include at least one work each by an author whose first encounters with the Nazi past were shaped by official Austrian, West German, and East German discourses of historical guilt and culpability. My focus on cultural studies also led me to ensure that

[9] Culture with a capital "C" designates the traditional understanding of culture as the best that has been thought and written in a society. Without the capitalization, the term refers to its definition in cultural studies, as the semiotic system through which people interpret their world.

each chapter contains a work by an established author or director (something which might be traditionally considered 'high Culture') and one that would be considered more popular culture. The taboo nature of my subject matter made me further narrow the criteria for the selection of works by more established authors. Since I maintain that the authors must often rely on inferences to 'race', its history, and its persistence in Germany, I selected established authors who had already vocally engaged in processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, choosing one each from Austria, East Germany, and West Germany. By being able to connect the works under scrutiny here with those works already recognized for participating in discourses of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, I am able to more clearly demonstrate how processes of coming terms with the past have developed over time.

There were a myriad of works I considered for examination under the scope of the project, but ultimately the above criteria limited the choices to the following six works, including three novels (Peter Henisch, *Schwarzer Peter* [2000], Christa Wolf, *Stadt der Engel oder The Overcoat of Dr. Freud* [2010], and Larissa Boehning, *Lichte Stoffe* [2007]) and three films (Oskar Rohler, *Lulu & Jimi* [2008], Michael Schorr, *Schultze gets the blues* [2008], and Armin Völckers, *Leroy* [2007]). Numerous other novels and films were under consideration, but they all failed to meet the criteria for analysis. For example, I considered Eva Demski's novel *Afra* (2004), which depicts the life story of a Black *Besatzungskind* growing up in Munich in the 1960s and 1970s. This could have made an excellent addition to my fourth chapter, which explores texts about *Besatzungskinder* by white and Black Germans. Ultimately, however, I chose to use Henisch's *Schwarzer Peter* in order to include an Austrian author already established as

working in the field of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. I also considered using Maria Speth's film *madonnen* (2007) in the fifth chapter for its depiction of culpability and guilt, but omitted it in favor of *Leroy* in order to include a youth film and broaden the variety of materials. Finally, I had considered replacing Schorr's *Schultze gets the blues* with the recent Markus Goller film *Frau Ella* (2013), which features an elderly German woman who regrets ending a relationship she had with a Black American soldier after WWII. Schorr's work, however, was more appropriate for my study, because it more clearly depicted an imagined African American geography counter to that created in Roehler's *Lulu & Jimi* which forms the basis of my third chapter.

My project consists of five chapters. The first outlines the theoretical approaches of cultural studies, which strongly influenced my selection and analysis of novels and films. Turning to scholars and critics such as Stuart Hall and Toni Morrison, I demonstrate how 'race' and Blackness are not biologically determined classifications of human beings, but constructs created across discourses and which exist in a system of hegemonic power. The chapter ends with brief literature reviews of Black German studies and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung.*

The second chapter is a historical overview of German encounters with representations of American Blackness. This historical study contains an outline of German-African American encounters that has never before been collected in a single work. This overview is an attempt to historically unmoor German and Austrian encounters with African Americans from discourses of jazz and hip-hop. It is to the detriment of German studies that scholarship concerning the influences of African Americans on German culture has been relegated to the field of 'pop culture'. Although

German engagements with hip-hop and jazz have been profound and are worthy of scholarly exploration, the discipline's neglect of the importance of discourses of Black American slavery during the nineteenth century or allusions to Black America as a 'western' Blackness during the 1911 *Reichstag* debates is at best reductive and at worse reliant on those racist stereotypes of Blackness which Black German studies is trying to deconstruct.

This historical study provides the foundation for the final three chapters which are divided thematically, each one comprising a discourse integral to explorations of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*: reconciliation, silence, and guilt. Chapter three analyzes Roehler's *Lulu & Jimi* and Schorr's *Schultze gets the blues* to demonstrate how each work participates in processes of generational reconciliation. By turning to the memory work of Aleida Assmann[10] and Edward Said's concept of an imagined geography, I analyze how each work creates an imagined Black America through which the directors can explore the full breadth of German racism tracing it to events before and after the Third Reich. Despite the continuation of racism which destroys the kinship between parent and child generations, both directors depict salvageable familial relationships by connecting the German protagonists with older and younger generations of African Americans.

The fourth chapter explores the importance of silence in processes of German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. This chapter analyzes Henisch's *Schwarzer Peter* and Boehning's *Lichte Stoffe*, both of which are modelled after the autobiographies of Afro-German *Besatzungskinder*. The works by these white authors follow the plots of Black

[10] Since both Aleida and Jan Assmann are referenced in this study, the first letter of their first name is included to distinguish between them.

German experiential narratives which depict the search of the protagonist's African American father. This chapter begins with the analysis of two Black German (auto)biographies, Ika Hügel-Marshall's *Daheim unterwegs. Ein deutsches Leben* (1998) and Harald Gerunde's biography of his wife, Bärbel Kampmann, *Eine von uns. Als Schwarze in Deutschland geboren* (2000), focusing on how the search for the women's American fathers affected the formation of their cultural identity. These works are then compared to Henisch's and Boehning's novels which apply Blackness in two ways. First, it becomes a symbol for generational silence about the Third Reich. Second, it becomes a marker for the protagonists' ability to be free from guilt and function as an 'unbiased' judge of the success of national processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.

The final chapter focuses on the most important aspect of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, guilt. Through a textual analysis of Wolf's *Stadt der Engel* and Völckers' *Leroy*, I demonstrate how German encounters with American Blackness reveal articulations of German guilt that simultaneously originate in feelings of shame and guilt for the Holocaust while extending to more universal connotations of 'white guilt' as defined by scholars such as Shelby Steele. The final section of my project will consist of a conclusion outlining my findings and suggesting further areas of study.

Chapter 1

Methodology and Literature Review

This chapter entails an analysis of my theoretical approach and brief literature reviews of Black German studies and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung,* the two areas of research which this project will be connecting for the first time under the overarching rubric of cultural studies. In the 1990's, literary studies experienced a 'cultural turn',[11] a paradigm shift from the traditional, hermeneutic methodology for the interpretation of the written word to an emphasis on the exploration of all texts (novels, films, and rituals) as a form of cultural production. The resulting scholarship on the interplay of culture and text solidified into the discipline of cultural studies. The theoretical research of this field is invaluable for my project due to its redefinition of culture, its widened understanding of a text, its emphasis on structures of power, and its recognition of 'race' as a construct. This chapter will first examine the methodological approaches of cultural studies, then review the literature of Black German studies—a specific branch of cultural studies—and discourses of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* as they apply to German cultural studies.

Cultural Studies and the Construct of 'Race'

Cultural studies has always had an insistence on the interdisciplinary, on its "description of itself as the 'undiscipline'" (Turner 2012: 40). The field has promoted the

[11] The 'cultural turn' is a term used to describe the transition of literary studies towards a focus on studies of culture and examining literary texts as cultural products (Trommler 2003: 488).

combination of methodologies from different fields and the blurring of disciplinary lines. More than simply "raiding other disciplines for bits and pieces of their methodologism" (Turner 2012: 25), cultural studies has left its mark on many other academic studies, such as feminism and film studies, redefining the way their subject matter is studied as a whole. Most importantly, unlike other fields of research cultural studies "…is not agnostic about what it studies, and has often announced that the end point of its practice is to understand and inform social and political change" (Turner 2012: 41). Its political nature and theories have been influenced by Marxism, and the field developed out of the necessity to critically reassess the definition and impact of culture, challenging its understanding as the 'best of what has been thought and said' and redefining it as a battleground of the classes (Storey 2011: 3).

Like many contemporary cultural studies practitioners, my application of cultural studies lies less with a Marxist analysis of class struggle. Instead, I focus on other forms of inequality, such as 'gender' and 'race'. Culture is scrutinized as the grounds on which power is contested. Exploration of the dynamics between culture and power involves a redefinition of culture. As John Storey explains:

> Cultural studies works with an inclusive definition of culture. This is, it is a 'democratic' project in the sense that rather than study… just 'the best which has been thought and said,'… cultural studies is committed to examining all that has been thought and said…. To put it simply, culture is how we live in nature (including our own biology); it is the shared meanings we make and encounter in our everyday lives. (2011: 3)

By challenging the concept of a high culture—one that only includes those texts and ideas that have been constructed as 'superior'—cultural studies includes all the practices, texts, and events that a society creates through processes of cultural production. Culture is not something that a person or society has; rather, it is a process. We are shaped by the events and practices of our culture, while also creating culture through the production of texts and events, "we make culture and we are made by culture" (Storey 2011: 5).

We take part in the process of culture through the production and interpretation of texts. Building on Barthes's semiotics, cultural studies has an expanded understanding of text. In his seminal work *Mythologies* (1957), Barthes argued that Saussure's concepts of the signified and signifier could be extended from the linguistic world into the visual and beyond. Photographs were not understood as mere depictions of reality, but rather they *stood for* something. In order to understand what they stood for, one had to interpret them. This is true for all things created within a culture, be it rituals, novels, films, or totemic objects. They all have to be interpreted, they "are a *text* to be *read*" (Hall 1997b: 36).

In order to interpret a text, one needs a context. A picture of a person in a white hood would be interpreted differently by an American, who would associate such garb with the KKK, and a Spanish Catholic, who might associate it with the hoods worn by priests during the *Semana Santa*. A person's cultural context informs how a person interprets the world and texts around them. Culture is:

> …the practices and processes of making meanings with and from the 'texts' we encounter in our everyday lives. In this way, then, cultures are made from the

> production, circulation and consumption of meanings. To share a culture, therefore, is to interpret the world—make it meaningful—in recognizably similar ways. (Storey 2012: 3)

Culture is a signifying or representational system. It helps us decode the texts that surround us; it gives meaning to our society's events and practices. Likewise, the production of texts involves the production of meaning and culture. This led to a critical reexamination of the importance of 'popular culture', because if *all* texts participate in this same representational system, then this must also include those texts that previously had been considered as belonging to 'low culture'.

The term 'popular' can be interpreted in many different ways. It can be understood as anything that is consumed by the masses, an interpretation that has economic implications and brought about arguments concerning the manipulation of the masses. Cultural studies scholars[12] are hesitant to promote such an interpretation because it assumes passivity on the part of those who are consumers (rather than producers) of popular texts. The second meaning attributed to the term 'popular' is more anthropological, referring to those things that people have done, the "mores, customs and folkways of 'the people'" (Hall 1998: 448). This definition, however, lacks recognition of the relationship of texts to their cultural fabric.

Cultural studies scholarship analyzes popular culture as all texts and activities that "have their roots in the social and material conditions of particular classes" (Hall 1998: 449). Stuart Hall explains that the production and consumption of popular culture must be understood as a reciprocal process:

[12] Of particular importance for the reevaluation of the 'popular' in cultural studies are Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, and John Storey. For a general overview of the development of the term within the discipline, I would suggest Hall's "Notes on Deconstructing 'the Popular'" (1998).

> [Cultural studies] goes on to insist that what is essential to the definition of popular culture is the relations which define 'popular culture' in a continuing tension (relationship, influence and antagonism) to the dominant culture… Then it looks at the relations which constantly structure this field into dominant and subordinate formations. It looks at the process by which these relations of dominance and subordination are articulated. It treats them as a process: the process by means of which some things are actively preferred so that others can be dethroned. (1998: 449)

Popular culture, although it gains new importance, is understood as another piece in the process and production of culture. It allows for the agency of those from below, but also concedes its commercial structure and envisions them as working in a network to define and contest cultural identities. It is a "contradictory mix of forces from both 'below' and 'above'; both 'commercial' and 'authentic' marked by both 'resistance' and 'incorporation', 'structure' and 'agency'…" (Storey 2012: 4-5). This redefinition of text and popular culture has prompted many scholars to study media once considered 'low culture' or popular, such as film, next to traditional forms of 'high culture' such as poetry. Cultural studies insists that only by studying a wide array of texts and media can a scholar gain full insight into any given culture and uncover the contestations of constructs which are often considered 'natural', such as 'gender' or 'race'.

The idea that texts can contest or collaborate meanings demonstrates another important concept of cultural studies: discourse. Largely influenced by the work of Michel Foucault, cultural studies recognizes that texts are contextualized not only in the time and place of their interpretation, but they also exist within a web of other texts

which work together to create knowledge and meaning. In such works as *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) and *The History of Sexuality* (1976) Foucault insisted that meaning or knowledge of a thing is constructed. Human ideas do not evolve from our biology. They are interpreted through our cultural context, and thereby, given meaning, *constructed*. No meaning, no human knowledge is either *a priori* or constructed by a single text. Discourse is made of "groups of statements which provide a language for talking about—a way of representing the knowledge about—a particular topic at a particular historical moment" (Hall 1997b: 44).

Concepts such as 'gender', 'race', and nationality are constructed. They are created by the interplay of cultural texts on a particular topic. One does not have a 'gender' or 'race', rather we speak of one being *gendered* or *racialized*. Stuart Hall has urged scholars to view 'race' as a floating signifier. Jhally succinctly explains Hall's thesis in the following:

> Signifiers refer to the systems and concepts of classification of a culture to its making meaning practices. And those things gain their meaning not because of what they contain in their essence but in the shifting relations of difference which they establish with other concepts and ideas in a signifying field. Their meaning, because it is relational and not essential, can never be finally fixed but is subject to the constant process of redefinition and appropriation. (1997: 8)

Hall is thus opposed to an essentialist concept of 'race' that can be rooted in biological or scientific fact, and maintains that it is instead a discursive category, a social-historical, cultural phenomenon. This is not said to the exclusion of the realities of subjugation and violence that have been wrought upon humanity in the name of 'race', but in opposition

to a genetic essentialist understanding of this construct. Assuming that 'race', and in this case Blackness, is a cultural phenomenon—one that is in the constant process of redefinition—it is logical to assume that this concept changes across cultures and over time.

Assuming that concepts like 'race' and 'gender' are constructs of a culture at a particular time and place, cultural studies then argues that they can be deconstructed. Bridging Foucault with other thinkers such as Derrida and Paul de Man, cultural studies practitioners analyze the discourse of a construct in order to expose its artificiality, and often its artifice. Although Derrida's work focused largely on oppositional forces within a text, he explains in a documentary interview that "one of the gestures of deconstruction is to not naturalize those things that are not natural" (2008). It is the endeavor of cultural studies researchers to attempt to disassemble these concepts that have been assumed as 'natural'—be it 'race' or 'gender'—and expose their relation to a larger structure of power.

Since people can be gendered or racialized by the discourses of their culture, questions of identity are also of significance. One is not born Black or white, German or American; rather one's identity is constructed within the cultural discourses of their origin and become nationalized or racialized. Identities are cultural. They are experienced. They are something that is both shared and individual. For these reasons, the relationship between identity and culture is key to any cultural studies analysis:

> If cultural studies is going to be anything other than the politics of representation so prevalent throughout the humanities, it must consider the historical and material conditions under which identities are formed *and* the discursive and

ideological representations that constitute and are constituted by those conditions. (Cohn 2011: 32)

Ultimately, my project will examine this process of constructing German national identities and demonstrate how they are racialized through discursive engagements with African American Blackness.

Black German Studies: The Emergence of a New Discipline

Cultural studies' interdisciplinary nature and redefinition of texts left its mark on area studies and influenced the creation of German studies which developed out of the need "for a broader view of the profession, a view that transcends language and literature" (Hohendahl 2003: 3). At its core, the field scrutinizes 'Germanness', studying it as a construct. Angelika Bammer explains that German studies must "take up… Germanness …: acknowledge it, name it, and… interrogate it about its effects and assumptions" (1997: 35). My examination of the correlation between Blackness and Germanness follows Bammer's challenge to question the naturalness of German national identity and represents a unique contribution to the body of literature of the newly emergent field of Black German studies due to my study of the relationship between 'race', Blackness, and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung.*

Although the scholarly work of this discipline harkens back to the activist work of Black Germans beginning in the late 1980s, the term has only recently received recognition as a field of study. The specific appellation finds its naissance in the Black European Studies project (BEST) developed by Fatima El-Tayeb, Randolf Ochsmann, Peggy Pietsch, and Sara Lennox. Housed at the Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz,

the initiative ran two conferences and resulted in the publication of two empirical studies on German identity, *Empirical Studies of Black European Identity: German Sample* (2007), and *Empirical Study of Attitudes towards Black People: German Sample* (2008).[13]

Although Black German studies owes much to the contributions of Black European studies, it is now widely regarded as a discipline in its own right. For example, the Black German Heritage and Research Association held conferences in 2011 at the German Historical Institute, Washington D.C., in 2012 at Barnard College, New York, and in 2013 at UMass, Amherst. In 2011, the German Historical Institute held a showing of *Roots Germania* (2007) with an interview of the Black German director Mo Asumang.[14] In 2010, the Goethe Institute, Washington DC, held a Black German film festival, entitled Afrodeutsche: Afro-Germans in Film.[15] The German Studies Association will lead its first seminar on Black German studies in September 2014, and the University of Connecticut's German department now boasts a Black German studies specialization within its PhD program.

The success of this emergent field is based on substantial work over the past two decades on both sides of the ocean. Audre Lorde's work in Berlin is often considered the impetus for the Afro-German movement. Inspired by her seminars and encouraged through her friendship, movement initiators—May Ayim and Ika Hügel-Marshall, just to name a few—joined together to foster the growth of an Afro-German community.

[13] Three further Black European studies compendia stand out for their contributions to Black German studies: *Black Europe and the African Diapora* (2009) edited by Darlene Clark Hine et. al.; *Colors 1800 / 1900 /2000: Signs of Ethnic Difference* (2004) edited by Birgit Tautz; and *Schwarze Frauen der Welt. Europa und Migration* (1994) edited by Marion Kraft and Rukhsana Shamim Ashraf-Khan.
[14] Record of the event and promotional material can be found on the GHI's website here: http://www.ghi-dc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1186&Itemid=1047
[15] For a record of the event, promotional material, and a schedule of the events, see the Goethe Institute's archive at: http://www.goethe.de/ins/us/was/ver/acv/flm/2010/en6265714v.htm

Perhaps the most influential work of the period was the publication, *Farbe bekennen. Afro-deutsche Frauen auf den Spuren ihrer Geschichte* (1986), edited by May Ayim, Katharina Oguntoye, and Dagmar Schultz. This work's interweaving of historical scholarship with personal stories and artistic projects by Black Germans spearheaded an influx of prose, scholarly writing, and artistic production by Afro-Germans.[16] The following review of Black German studies' scholarship will focus on the influences of feminism, activism, identity research, and its engagement with African American and popular culture as well as critical studies of 'whiteness'.

As exemplified by Lorde's contribution to the movement, feminism and gender studies have had a lasting influence on the discipline, particularly during its initial phases in the 1980s. Scholarship within the United States was bolstered by the Coalition of Women in German (WiG), a professional organization dedicated to the contributions of women to the field of German studies. It was in their *Women in German Yearbook* that the first studies into Afro-German identity appeared.[17] Female-centric publishing also played, and continues to play,[18] a central role in Black German scholarship in Germany**.** Orlanda Frauenverlag, a feminist publishing house, was the first press to boldly print *Farbe bekennen,* Ika Hügel-Marshall's autobiography *Daheim Unterwegs*, and May Ayim's poetry.

[16] This section is intended as a literature review and therefore focuses on the secondary literature which contributed to the Black German studies as a field of study. For a more in depth review of the fiction and art created within this first phase of the movement, see chapter two.
[17] Important publications by WiG for Black German studies include: Ika Hügel-Marshall's, "Wir kämpfen seit es uns gibt" (1993) which describes institutional racism in Germany from the perspective of a Black German, and Dagmar Schulz's "Racism in the New Germany and the Reaction of White Women" (1993) which outlines the hesitation of white German feminists to acknowledge the differentiated needs of Women of Color.
[18] In 2013, Orlanda republished a collection of May Ayim's poetry and a book commemorating Lorde's Berlin years, Peggy's Piesche's *Euer Schweigen schutzt euch nicht. Audre Lorde und die Schwarze Bewegung in Deutschland* (2012).

The feminist roots of the movement also encouraged activism. One of the first Afro-German activist groups was ADEFRA e.V. – Schwarze Frauen in Deutschland. Founded in 1986, the same year as the publication of *Farbe bekennen,* ADEFRA is a forum in which Afro-German women can gather and discuss the most pressing issues facing Women of Color. Some of the founders of ADEFRA also helped establish the Initiative Schwarze Menschen in Deutschland (ISD). Originally titled Initiative Schwarze Deutsche, the ISD welcomes all People of Color in an effort to foster racism awareness. At its inception, the organization primarily focused on community building; however, during the last decade the ISD has refocused on a more political agenda. It has published position papers and solicited names for petitions.

Other publishing houses have followed Orlanda's example of anti-racist publishing. Unrast Verlag, a publishing house dedicated to political critique, lists *Anti-Rassismus* as a genre of literature.[19] Edition Assemblage has recently developed the "Witnessed – Black Author Book Series," edited by Sharon Otoo.[20] This series is dedicated to bringing Afro-German voices into the English-speaking arena and has most recently published, *Homestory Deutschland: Black Biographies in Historical and in Present Times* (2014), an English-language catalogue to the ISD exhibition, *Homestory Deutschland*.

Black German activism is by no means tied to traditional forms of publication such as books. For example, der braune mob e. V., led by Noah Sow, functions as a media watchdog dedicated to eradicating racist language from various online German

[19] For example, Unrast counts *This Is not About Sadness* (2010) among its publications, the first English language novel by May Ayim Prize recipient Olumide Popoola.
[20] Sharon Otoo was born and raised in England but moved to Berlin after finishing a degree in German. Although she works in German, she has published extensively in English both as an author and editor.

news channels. Within the framework of der braune mob, reports are written and published concerning the continued use of racist language in media, often focusing on Germany's most popular online newspapers and magazines, including taz.de and Spiegel-Online. The company's website even has pdf guidelines instructing journalists on correct anti-racist word usage.[21]

Noah Sow's *Deutschland Schwarz Weiß* also contains two chapters that identify common racist vocabulary found in German media and explains the various ways in which they support institutional racism. Although the work is largely an analysis of German society, her volume is written from a distinctively personal (first person) point of view. Her research is coupled with autobiographical stories, a strategy common to Afro-German writing,[22] and emphasizes questions of national identity and belonging.

The centrality of questions of identity for the discipline is evidenced by the influx of Black German autobiographies. ManuEla Ritz's *Die Farbe meiner Haut* (2009), *Vielfalt statt Einfalt. Wo ich herkomme* (2011) by Beatrice Achaleke, a Black Austrian of Cameroonian descent,[23] and Theodor Michael's *Deutsch sein und schwarz dazu. Erinnerungen eines Afro-Deutschen* (2013) are just a few of the most current examples of popular Afro-German autobiographies. Employment of experiential narratives is seldom

[21] Sow's work on language usage is strongly informed by the volume *Wie Rassismus aus Wörtern spricht. (K)erben des Kolonialismus im Wissensarchiv deutsche Sprache* (2011) edited by Susan Arndt and Nadja Ofuatey-Alazard. The essays in this volume demonstrate how racist language originating during colonialism has continued into the modern German language usage.

[22] A similar combination is found in the works of ManuEla Ritz and Beatrice Achaleke.

[23] Achaleke has purposefully chosen to identify herself as a Black Austrian of Cameroonian heritage, in order to demonstrate a unity between her migrant, racialized, and national identities. She explains it most succinctly in an online interview she made for the 2010 Elevate festival. The interview can be found here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5U3vqpcDGxg.

simply a means of entertainment. They are but one strategy used to incite empathy, raise awareness, and evoke social change.[24]

The most extensive research of Black German autobiographies has been conducted by Dirk Göttsche. His article published in *Orbis Litterarum*, "Self-Assertion, Intervention and Achievement: Black German Writing in Postcolonial Perspective" (2012), is the most expansive outline of Black German writing. It traces the transition of writing in the 1990s dedicated to the assertion of Black German identity to the contemporary emergence of Black German fiction and autobiographical texts by pop culture icons, such as movie star Günther Kaufmann's *Der weiße Neger vom Hasenbergl* (2004).[25]

Processes of identity formation have also been interrogated, most notably by Tina Campt, Fatima El-Tayeb, Caroline Hodges, Timo Wandert, and Michelle M. Wright. The aforementioned studies edited by Wandert and published under the auspices of the BEST project represent the only attempt at a scientific analysis of Black German identity. Most research into Black German identity has been conducted through literary and cultural studies and often emphasizes the uniqueness of the Black German situation within the Black Diaspora. In her article, "The Private/Plural Selves of Afro-German Women and the Search for a Public Voice" (1992), Hodges notes the articulation of isolation found in many Afro-German texts. Esteemed African American scholar Molefi Asante builds off

[24] For excellent studies on Afro-German strategies for evoking social change through participation in German and international discourse on 'race' and Blackness, see Anne Adams, "The Souls of Black *Volk*: Contradition? Oxy Moron?" in *Not So Plain as Black and White*, edited by Patricia Mazón and Reinhild Steingröver (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2005) 209-232, and Carmen Faymonville, "Black Germans and Transnational Idenification," *Callaloo*, 26.2: 2003, 364-362.

[25] Göttsche has most recently published a book analyzing the renewed interest of colonialism in German literature and film entitled *Remembering Africa: The Rediscovery of Colonialism in Contemporary German literature* (2013).

of Hodges' work and examines Afro-German identities as socially and culturally dislocated in his article "Afro-Germans and the Problems of Cultural Location" (2009).

Wright's discursive analysis of Black German identity is particularly significant for my project, especially chapter four. She compares Afro-German identity to similar discourses in African American and Black British and French literature. She distinguishes Afro-German identity formation from other nationalities', noting Black minority groups in other European and American contexts are recognized as "Others-from-Within," implying they are recognized by dominant social groups as belonging to the same nation-state. Black Germans, she argues, are instead regarded by white Germans as foreign, regardless of their place of birth. This places the Afro-German in a unique position when compared to the literary expressions of other Black European communities. Afro-Germans are at once regarded by the dominant white culture as "Others-from-Without," yet speak as "Others-from-Within," creating what Wright calls "Others-from-Within from Without" (2003: 297).[26]

The importance of historical research for the reassertion of Black German experiences into German culture cannot be understated, but it will not be studied in depth here, as it will be covered in the second chapter. However, a few works must be mentioned for their advancement of the methodology of German studies. Notable works include *The Imperialist Imagination* (1998) edited by Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop and *Colonial Fantasies* (1997) penned by Zantop alone. These works pioneered research into German colonialism through textual analyses that demonstrated how colonial attitudes shaped German identity from the beginning of the

[26] Tina Campt commends Wright's work, but cautions in *Other Germans* (2005) that although this concept may be appropriate to the situation of modern Afro-German texts, the application of this term to historic periods could be erroneous (2005: 103-104).

eighteenth century well into the twentieth. Fatima El-Tayeb's *Schwarze Deutsche: Der Diskurs um 'Rasse' und nationale Identität, 1890-1933* (2003) and Yara-Colette Lemke Muniz de Faria's *Zwischen Fürsorge und Ausgrenzung* (2002) are also of significance because they represent some of the first historiographical examinations of discourses of German national identity from distinctively Black German perspectives. Tina Campt's *Other Germans* (2004) radically expounds the meaning and experiences of Afro-Germans during the Third Reich through a combination of historical and personal memory research. And finally, Martin Klimke and Maria Höhn explore the cultural exchange between Germans and African Americans immediately after the war, most recently in their project *A Breath of Freedom* (2010).

Klimke and Höhn's research represents some of the few studies concerning German-African American cultural exchange not dominated by studies into popular culture. A number of studies into Black American pop culture in Germany do merit mention. Uta G. Poiger's *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels* (2000) surfaces from among the sea of research on Jazz and Rock n' Roll in Germany (East, West, and Weimar) due to its analysis of Black American music's influence on German racialized, gendered, and class identities. Also noteworthy is Priscilla Dionne Layne's dissertation, *Black Voices, German Rebels: Acts of Masculinity in Postwar German Culture* (2011), an analysis of literary and cinematic works by white male authors that employ tropes of African American pop culture in order to challenge constructs of masculinity between 1950 and 2000. Layne's work also testifies to the incitement of research into German 'whiteness' through studies into German Blackness.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, *Colonial Fantasies* and *The Imperialist Imagination* documented how discourses of Blackness and 'race' had created a racial hegemony which privileged 'whiteness' from the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century till the early twentieth. Three works continue this analysis into the post-WWII context. This first is Uli Linke's *German Bodies* (1999), in which she studies naked white and Black bodies in media, advertising, and art after WWII in order to expose how latent Nazi ideologies of 'race' linger past the Third Reich. Katrin Sieg's *Ethnic Drag* (2005) is unique for its analysis of the intersection of performance and ethnicity. She examines performances of 'race' in the twentieth century, developing the concept of 'triangular thinking', in which a member of a privileged group identifies with members of an oppressed group to evade feelings of culpability and contrition. Finally, *Mythen, Masken und Subjekte* (2005) edited by Maureen Eggers, Frada Kilomba, Peggy Piesche, and Susan Arndt substantially changed the interrogation of 'whiteness' within the German context by scrutinizing it from an Afro-German perspective. The work makes a concerted effort to privilege Black German scholars' analyses of 'whiteness' and studies 'whiteness' within German culture across numerous disciplines including child rearing, philosophy, and history.

My own work follows the example of Eggers et al. by referencing Black German scholarship not as an object of study, but as an authoritative voice on subjects of Blackness and 'racism'. This project is a novel contribution to the emerging field of Black German studies not only in topic—namely, the relationship between constructs of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, 'race', and Blackness—but it also represents an effort to drive the discourse of the discipline forward. Whereas much scholarship to this point

regards Black German voices as a vocal minority lost in a sea of white hegemonic discourses on 'race', or in the words of Wright as a "counter discourse" (2003:296), this project dares to inquire how these voices have actively changed German self-perception. I do not underestimate the breadth of scholarship and experiential narratives of this field, but recognize that this influx of research must have had a cogent influence on contemporary German identity formation. This project privileges these voices and Black German activist works as the theoretical authority. Studying *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* through the anti-racist demands of Black German activists, I will demonstrate new, twenty-first articulations of German guilt and responsibility for racism that, although it encompasses and prioritizes the anti-Semitism of the Third Reich, extends to earlier historical events.

Vergangenheitsbewältigung: Coming to Terms with Unmasterable Pasts

In order to demonstrate how minority voices have incited white Germans to reevaluate their relationship to their history and processes of coming to terms with violent past events, a brief introduction to the development of and current research on *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* is needed.[27] In its broadest sense, the term can be applied to an individual's journey to overcome a personal trauma or culturally as a political effort to make amends for the wrongdoings of a nation-state. My project focuses on its significance for German studies. Within the discipline, the concept was originally

[27] *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* is frequently translated into English as "coming terms with the past". The verb *bewältigen*, from which the term derives, can also carry the connotation of "to master", implying that the term could be translated as "to master the past"; however, most scholars eschew this sense of the word, focusing instead on processes needed to work through past traumas which will never be completely mastered.

restricted to discourses concerning the National Socialist past and efforts by perpetrators and victims of the Holocaust[28]—and their descendants—to come to terms with the atrocities committed during that period. Practitioners have analyzed the phenomenon through psychological, political, mnemonic, and literary and cultural studies approaches, but the relationship between racism and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* remains unaddressed.

Five aspects of the development of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* are indispensable for my project's thesis. First, one must recognize that the guilt for Fascist crimes fell onto three culturally distinct Nazi successor nations (Austria, East and West Germany) which resulted in three differing trajectories for dealing with the guilt of these atrocities. This project includes representative texts from each successor nation, and the authors and directors will at times critique a specific nation's past engagements with its history. Second, literary and historical discourses have successfully been utilized to challenge societal taboos surrounding the subject. My project demonstrates how literary and cinematic texts are beginning to explore the relationship between contemporary and historic racisms, a discourse which was once forbidden. Third, generational transitions have caused reevaluations and redefinitions of successor nations' relationships to the past, and the term has evolved to address the needs and concerns of generations with no

[28] There is much debate concerning the use of the word Holocaust to describe the genocide of the Third Reich. For example, Richard Evans purports the term is unsuitable and suggests using the Hebrew term Shoah (1989:142), the self-designation of the event by Jewish people. This project recognizes the importance of self-identification, particularly by those who were undoubtedly the most targeted group by the Nazis. However, this project also acknowledges other racially targeted groups such as the Sinti and Romani, who identify the event as *Porajmos* (Woolford & Wolejszo 2006: 872), and Black Germans, who have no self-designation for their suffering at this time. Since this project explores how contemporary Germans, through explorations of American Blackness, attempt to come to terms with the continuity of racism from colonial to modern times—including the anti-Semitic and racist policies of the Third Reich—I use the term Holocaust in order to emphasize the mechanisms of racialization that were instituted by the Nazis in order to identify, single out, hunt down, and annihilate millions of human beings.

personal experience with these critical events. Fourth, this has resulted in a widened understanding of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung,* one that can encompass histories such as the collapse of East Germany and German colonialism. Finally, as the generations engaging these pasts become further temporally removed from the events themselves, they encounter them not through personal but through collective memory. This overview will begin with a brief summary of the most defining events and scholarly works of each nation's initial processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Attention will then be placed on the development of the term after reunification, when scholarly discourses of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* begin to coalesce under the rubric of collective memory.

After Germany's capitulation in 1945, questions of guilt, shame, and culpability for the Nazi genocide came to the foreground of international discourse. Of the three Nazi successor nations, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) was burdened with the majority of the guilt (Reichel 2004: 19). Within the Austrian and East German contexts, culpability was eschewed through political and cultural discourses that relied heavily on constructs of victimhood. The development of these 'victim mythologies' is integral for this project, because my analyses of Christa Wolf's and Peter Henisch's works will reveal a critique of these myths. The Austrian 'victim mythology' developed from the Moscow Declaration of November 1943, in which the allies labelled Austria the first victim of Nazi expansionism (Utgaard 2003: 70). Austria echoed these sentiments in the Proclamation of 27 April 1945 which nullified Germany's annexation of Austria and listed ways in which the Austrian people had been victimized by Hitler's regime (Utgaard 2003: 28).[29] The mythology of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) developed from

[29] Hella Pick's *Guilty Victim* (2000) expands on outside influences that aided Austria in its development of a victim identity. She analyzes the geopolitical significance of Austria as a border state during the Cold

the history of communist persecution during the Third Reich.[30] Since the communist party openly rallied against the NSDAP, and since communists were pursued alongside racialized victims, official discourses were dedicated to the memory of the persecution of the communists, largely suppressing the Jewish question (Herf 1997: 160).[31] The development of these 'victim mythologies' did not completely halt processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, however, and numerous literary and cultural studies practitioners have identified articulations of guilt and memory in Austrian and East German texts.[32]

Joseph McVeigh's *Kontinunität und Vergangenheitsbewältigung in der österreichischen Literatur nach 1945* (1988) documents and examines Austrian literary and theatrical texts depicting the Third Reich between the years of 1950 and 1980. McVeigh traces a belatedness of Austria's engagement with its National Socialist past to its 'victim myth', which he argued encouraged authors to avoid discourses of culpability and contrition. By the beginning of the 1960's literary works depicting life in Austria during the Third Reich began to surface, and McVeigh concludes that although the

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War, demonstrating ways in which 'western' powers fostered a victim mythology within Austria in an effort to encourage the development of a new Austrian military which might serve as a safeguard against communist forces. Although her book does little to explain machinations of victimhood encouraged by Austrians themselves, it does help to explain why its 'victim mythology' wasn't decried by other nations.

[30] Jeffery Herf's *Divided Memory* (1997) remains one of the most authoritative historical analyses of actions taken by and against communists during WWII and the instatement of that persecution into German Democratic Republic (GDR) official memory after the war. His research into the (at the time of publication) newly available SED (*Socialistische Einheitspartei Deutschland*) archival resources did much to expose a hypocrisy inherent in both the GDR's interpretations of the Holocaust and its postwar actions against those who suffered as the hands of the Fascists.

[31] Bill Niven's *Facing the Nazi Past: United Germany and the Legacy of the Third Reich* (2002) substantiates Herf's archival research. His examination of concentrate camp memorials in East and West Germany reveals limited commemoration of Jewish experiences within the GDR. He explains, "The GDR understood Fascism to be a barbaric form of capitalist exploitation. Anti-semitism and racism were regarded at best as secondary manifestations, or mere by-products. Given this fact, there was little room for the history of racial persecution in GDR representations of camp life" (2002: 22).

[32] There were also important Austrian and East German non-literary engagements with the Nazi past: Olaf Kappelt published *Braunbuch DDR: Nazis in der DDR* (1981), in which he identifies former Nazi officials holding GDR political posts; in *Entnazifizierung in Österreich* (1981) Dieter Stiefel describes governmental, economic, and juristic processes of denazification within Austria.

memories of the past could be acknowledged, questions concerning "das Erbe des Faschismus," the legacy of Fascist ideals into postwar Austria, were strictly taboo (1988: 219).[33] He does, however, find exceptions to this trend in, for example, Hans Lerbert's *Die Wolfshaut* (1960). McVeigh analyzes how the story's plot—a small Austrian village endures a series of murders in order to cover up a war crime the entire town instigated—depicts the persistence of Fascist values into the new republic (1988: 219), and demonstrates the significance fictional texts can have on challenging taboos.

Similar to the Austrian context, literary expressions of guilt for the Holocaust found readership in East Germany despite the official moral amnesty the GDR awarded its citizenry. The works of Christa Wolf have been analyzed by many[34] as participating in discourses of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Her semi-autobiographical novel *Kindheitsmuster* (1976) chronicles the journey of the narrator as she revisits the places of her childhood under National Socialism and directly addresses questions of remembering and forgetting the horrors of the Nazi regime. Although GDR and Austrian authors had to circumnavigate the taboo of culpability, they were able to participate in discourses of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* through the production of cultural texts. This project will demonstrate a similar strategy found in contemporary Austrian and German texts used to delineate and connect discourses of guilt and racism.

[33] McVeigh's project is the most comprehensive study of the articulations of Austrian *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in literature before 1990, but there are notable studies of authors' individual works. Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler identified veiled articulations of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in Ingeborg Bachmann's 1961 short story "Unter Mördern und Irren" (1996: 430). Utgaard stresses that works like Bachmann's short story, Ilse Aichinger's *Die größere Hoffnung* (1948) and Carl Merz's *Der Herr Karl* (1961) combatted Austria's 'victim mythology' by refusing to 'forget' the past (2003: 167).

[34] For specific examples, see Klemens Renoldner, "Im ungeistigen Raum unserer traurigen Länder" (1982), in which he compares Wolf's and Bachmann's literary engagements with the Nazi past, and Robert C. Holub's "Fact, fantasy, and female Subjectivity: Vergangenheitsbewältigung in Christa Wolf's *Patterns of Childhood*" (2000).

Unlike Austria or the GDR, West Germany was not able to elude culpability for the Holocaust.[35] The military trials of 23 prodigious Nazi political and military leaders were held in Nuremberg in 1945-46, the Federal Republic paid restitutions to Israel in the form of 110 billion Deutschmarks between 1953 and 1991 (Herf 1997: 287), and interrogations of culpability and emotions of guilt began well before reunification. West German discourses of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* are far too expansive to be exhaustively analyzed here; therefore, this section limits its analysis to the most important scholarship and political events that shaped the development of the term, generational conflicts, and historical discourses before analyzing its transition after reunification.

The term *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* came to usage shortly after the FRG reached statehood, but there were pivotal critiques of the official process of national remorse and its nomenclature. Perhaps the first influential voice probing Germany's initial processes of coming to terms with the past was Theodor Adorno. A philosopher and leader of the Frankfurt School, Adorno fled to the United States during WWII and became intensely critical of the FRG after the war. His work on the subject of Germany's turbulent past integrated elements of psychology, politics, and sociology. His first work directly dealing with *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* was *Was bedeutet Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit* (1959). The essay expresses his concern that official claims made of working through the past were little more than half-hearted attempts to avoid emotions of

[35] Although one cannot speak of a 'victim mythology' in the FRG similar to that of Austria or the GDR, Herf and Niven both document West German attempts to mitigate guilt by foisting blame onto the GDR. Herf argues West Germany countered East German identification with victims with accusations of a postwar dictatorship reminiscent of the Third Reich, and Niven describes these accusations exchanged between West and East Germany as form of finger pointing, an attempt to unload the burden of the guilt on the other nation (2002: 7).

contrition. He also consciously chose the term *Aufarbeitung* in lieu of *Bewältigung*, because the latter term could imply the possibility of closure. Adorno was careful to emphasize that the process of coming to terms with the past was not something that could ever truly be completed (Olick 1998: 548-549). Despite the influence of the essay, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* became the preferred nomenclature academically and in the media.

Adorno's many works on the subject traversed discourses of silence, guilt, and remembering that grew more dynamic during the Student Movement of 1968, exploding into a contemptuous generational conflict. During this period, the generation of children of those who had participated in the Third Reich began to question the accountability of their parents. Student protests encompassed issues of curriculum reform, the Vietnam War, and the perceived authoritarianism of the FRG government, which was frequently labeled 'Fascist'. There was a demand on the part of the children to learn the specific roles their parents played in the Holocaust and a fear that those Fascist structures and attitudes that enabled the genocide had not been dismantled (Bude 1998: 17).

The changing significance of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* across generational lines is critical for my project which focuses primarily on works by authors born after the war. Scholars studying the effects of the Student Movement emphasize the role younger generations played in breaching discourses uncomfortable for older generations. Josef Isensee credits the movement's demands of the parental generation for reviving discourses of guilt that might otherwise have been erased from FRG historical discourse.[36] For Enstine Schlant, the Student Movement's defamation of the parental

[36] For Isensee's specific interpretation, see his "Nachwort" in Battis et. al (eds) *Vergangenheitsbewältigung durch Recht. Drei Abhandlungen zu einem deutschen Problem* (1992 : 91-111).

generation is most poignant in its expression of a perceived inheritance of guilt and responsibility for the actions of the parents during the Holocaust.[37]

This generational conflict was also expressed literarily, in the genre of *Väterliteratur* which developed in the 1970s. Books of this genre interrogated the culpability of the average German of the Third Reich, probing questions concerning the knowledge the everyday German had of the Holocaust and his or her support of racial persecution. Most frequently, the books centered on a son's confrontation with his father's activities during the Second World War. The novels were frequently written from the first person. Many were autobiographical, and their impetus was often the death of the father. These works were often allegedly written as objective studies, including references to newspapers and interviews (Schlant 1999: 98).[38]

Debates concerning remembrance and historiography also influenced national discourses of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. In the late 1980s, the so-called *Historikerstreit* (historians' dispute) played out in the German media where scholars debated the place of the Holocaust within modern historiography. Conservative scholars such as Ernst Nolte and Andreas Hillgruber argued that the Holocaust was neither the first nor the worst European genocide, but rather a continuation of genocidal activities which began in Russia. Nolte's article of June 6, 1986 in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, "Vergangenheit, die nicht vergehen will: Eine Rede, die geschrieben, aber nicht mehr

[37] Not all interpretations of the Student Movement were positive. Schlant commends the Movement for rescuing interrogations of guilt from a discursive silence, but also contends that personal aims superseded political ones (1999: 82). In *Vergangenheitsbewältigung. Von der Läuterung zur Manipulation* (1968), Armin Mohler, an influential, conservative scholar, accused Student Movement members of instrumentalizing *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in order to manipulate public opinion.

[38] A critical example of *Väterliteratur* for my project is Peter Henisch's *Die kleine Figur meines Vaters* (1975). Henisch's book was inspired by the death of his father, who had worked as a photographer during the Second World War. The novel consists of transcriptions of interviews Henisch recorded with his father and the author's reflections on his father's explanations and circumlocutions of his wartime activities.

gehalten werden konnte" summarized much of his career's oeuvre in which he concluded that Hitler's war was a *Präventivkrieg*.

The most vocal liberal voice was Jürgen Habermas, who, in a series of articles in *Die Zeit*, staunchly accused the conservative historians of attempting to relativize Germany's actions in WWII. The conservative historians defended their theses in a separate series of articles and accused the philosopher Habermas of lacking the requisite knowledge needed to make a historical critique. Despite this, public opinion was largely in favor of Habermas.[39] The event has been interpreted by scholars such as Wolfgang Wipperman, [40] Charles Maier,[41] and Jeffrey Olick and Daniel Levy as an effort to seize control of the discourses of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in search of a usable past. Olick and Levy's analysis of the event is particularly valuable for my project because they interpret it as a moment in which a once taboo discourse, that of the Holocaust, becomes permissible for public debate (1997: 931).

As the *Historikerstreit* raged in the FRG, Austria also found itself in the middle of the Waldheim Affair. In 1986, rumors surfaced that Kurt Waldheim, former UN Secretary-General, would become the presidential candidate for the ÖVP (*Österreichische Volkspartei*). Inquiries into his past revealed his participation in "Operation Black," a vicious campaign against partisans and civilians in the Balkans during WWII. Despite calls for his withdrawal from candidature, he remained in the election. He defended his military service, claiming he had only processed paperwork

[39] A few years after the debate, the conservative historians involved published *Die Schatten der Vergangenheit. Impulse zur Historisierung des Nationalsozialismus* (1990) edited by Uwe Backes, Eckhard Jesse, and Rainer Zitelmann. The collection contains an article by Nolte entitled "Abschließende Reflexionen über den sogenannten Historikerstreit," in which he dissects Habermas's criticisms, concluding that Habermas lacks the breadth of historical knowledge needed to critique a historian.
[40] See in particular, Wolfgang Wippermann, *Wessen Schuld?* (1997: 63-64).
[41] See in particular, Charles Maier, *The Unmasterable Past* (1988: 45-47).

during the campaign, and he went on to win the election. In 1988 in conjunction with the fiftieth anniversary of the *Anschluß*, he apologized on behalf of all Austrians for their complacency during the war (Utgaard 2003: 164). This event is frequently interpreted as the end of Austria's 'victim mythology', something which would soon end in the GDR as well. Two years after the Waldheim affair, the GDR Prime Minister Hans Modrow conceded the GDR's shared responsibility for the past at the 1990 Jewish World Congress (Schlant 1999: 202).

The dismantling of these 'victim mythologies' coincides with the collapse of the GDR, which had profound effects on interpretations of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Analyses of the construct progressed from discourses of reparations and individual culpability towards issues of inherited guilt and collective memory. The fall of the Wall succeeded in expanding the application of the term to encompass historical events beyond the Third Reich, further complicating generational interpretations of guilt, and catalyzing new methodological approaches to the subject, including cultural and memory studies.

A redefinition of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* followed the dissolution of East Germany. Scholars began to debate the appropriateness of applying the term to the situation of the former GDR, drawing parallels between East Germany and the Third Reich. The GDR's dictatorial government and secret service, the Stasi, created a citizenry of victims who would now have to live beside their formerly government sanctioned persecutors. Prominent conservative scholar, Armin Mohler, staunchly opposed any comparison of the two situations in his *Der Nasenring. Die Vergangenheitsbewältigung vor und nach dem Fall der Mauer* (1991), accusing younger generations and non-Germans of idly accusing the former government of being "Fascist" in order to

manipulate public policy. In a series of articles, including "'Vergangenheitsbewältigung' nach totalitärer Herrschaft in Deutschland" (1994) and "'Entnazifizierung' und ‚Entstasifizierung' als politisches Problem. Die doppelte Vergangenheitsbewältigung" (1992), Eckhart Jesse disagrees with Mohler, arguing the sitatutions were two sides of the same coin: "In dem einen Fall ging es um die Herrschaft einer Klasse, in dem anderen Fall um die einer Rasse" (1994: 162).

Bill Niven also applies the term *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* to the situation of former East Germany. In *Facing the Nazi Past* (2002), Niven develops the concept of a 'double memory'. Through his comparative analysis of methods of commemoration of concentration camps in East Germany before and after unification, he demonstrates that East German processes of coming to terms with their GDR past are similar to and sometimes coincide and collide with those of the Nazi past.[42] Aleida Assman's most recent study, *Das neue Unbehagen an der Erinnerungskultur* (2013) expands the idea of a double memory in her project's fourth chapter, where she develops the concept of "doppelte Bewältigung", demonstrating that Germans will have to come to terms with the histories of both of these dictatorships.

Niven's and A. Assmann's arguments are integral for this project, particularly my analysis of Larissa Boehning's novel *Lichte Stoffe* in chapter four. Although the Holocaust remains the most virulent history with which Nazi successor states must come to terms, it is not the only instance of dictatorial or racial crimes for which these nations

[42] Niven's study focuses on the complications 'double memory' cause processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. For example, some concentration camps were converted into Soviet Special Camps, secret internment camps erected after the war. Since these camps functioned as a place of suffering for both Germans and the racialized victims of the Nazis, contradictions of mourning and remembrance sometimes occur. This is particularly evident in the case of the cross left in Buchenwald for Otto Koch, who was both a political prisoner of the Soviets and responsible for the ghettoization of Jews in Weimar (2002: 47).

must make amends. Niven's concept of a 'double memory' demonstrates that processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in the German context can be applied to multiple, related histories which are connected by similar types of violence. Just as the fall of the Wall created a 'double history' of German dictatorships, a renewed interest in colonial history and anti-racist discourses has linked histories of racial persecution from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the violence against asylum seekers during the *Wende* and to the Nazi genocide, all of which are subject to processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.[43]

The 1990's also saw the emergence of a third generation of Germans and Austrians, the grandchildren of those who experienced the war. A few notable studies have examined encounters of the child and grandchild generations with the legacy of the Third Reich. In *Schuldig geboren. Kinder aus Nazifamilien* (1988), Sichrovsky interviewed the children and grandchildren of former NSDAP members. Although the interviews reveal starkly diverse responses as Sichrovsky probes feelings of inherited guilt—some express overwhelming guilt, others claim to suffer more than their Jewish counterparts—all of the participants express a familial 'silence' concerning family members' involvement in the Third Reich. Claudia Brunner and Uwe von Seltmann's work *Schweigen die Täter, reden die Enkel* (2004) actively combats this familial silence by writing about their personal experiences as the grandchild generation of family members of Nazi aggressors. Both Brunner and Seltmann acknowledge feelings of shame when addressing their familial histories but deny emotions of personal guilt, focusing

[43] Important studies of these historical continuities are: *German Colonialism: Race, the Holocaust, and Postwar Germany* (2011) edited by Volker Max Langbehn and Mohammad Salama; *Nazi Empire: German Colonialism and Imperialism from Bismarck to Hitler* (2011) by Shelly Baranowski; and *The Holocaust as Colonial Genocide* (2013) by Carroll P. Kakel III.

instead on what Brunner terms *Phantomschmerzen*, the feelings of shame and confusion the children and grandchildren suffer from their family's silence.

In *Gefühlte Opfer: Illusionen der Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (2010), Ulrike Jureit and Christian Schneider attempt to radically change the trajectory of discourses of guilt by examining the importance of empathy for *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. They critique practitioners of collective memory and the seminal work of Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich, *Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern* (1967), which did much to develop the concept of collective guilt. Jureit and Schneider argue that the emotions of guilt and shame contemporary (and possibly future) generations are obligated to feel hinder their ability to free themselves of the past. Although their specific critique of collective memory scholarship will be analyzed in this project's following section, their acute analysis of the possibilities for resolving issues of guilt through empathy for victims of the Holocaust is truly unique.

Research into memory work has most fundamentally transformed literary and cultural studies of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. As authorship passes to generations further removed from the historical event, cultural representations of the past can no longer be accurately analyzed in simple terms of "remembering". Instead, literary and cultural studies analyze expressions of guilt and shame as participating in a mythology (Gedy & Elam) or in collective memory discourses (Aleida and Jan Assmann; Olick; Reichel). Peter Reichel's *Erfundene Erinnerung. Weltkrieg und Judenmord in Film und Theater* (2004) typifies this scholarship. His interrogations of representations of the war in theater and film span sixty years through which he demonstrates how the archive of memories which informed the authors' literary

worlds transformed from one of personal experiences to a form of collective memory. In an earlier study, *Politik der Erinnerung* (1995), Reichel even suggests replacing the term *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* with *Erinnerungskultur* (memory culture),[44] which demonstrates how indispensable acts of remembering and forgetting across generations are for the identity formation of citizens of Nazi successor states. Germanness and Austrianness are intrinsically linked to a history from which its citizens are becoming more temporally removed, but younger generations remain beholden to this history and must interact with it through processes of collective memory; that is, through encounters with texts and cultural products about this history.

Collective Memory:
Vergangenheitsbewältigung and Cultural Studies in the Twenty-first Century

My project's focus on processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* by generations removed from events with which they feel they must come to terms entails the activation of collective, as opposed to individual, memories. The following sections will trace the most important scholarly contributions to the development and critique of this term, emphasizing the influence studies of culture have had on the terminology's evolution.

Maurice Halbwachs was one of the first scholars to address the ability of people to "remember" events that they neither experienced nor witnessed. In his seminal work *The Collective Memory* (1980: originally published as *La Mémoire collective* [1950]), he describes this ability. Halbwachs postulated recollections of events one had experienced

[44] In his 2007 work *Vergangenheitsbewältigung in Deutschland*, Reichel uses the terms interchangeably, but emphasizes the importance of cultural memory for analyses into commemoration and literary engagements with the Third Reich.

and of those one only knew from media were similarly processed by the brain. He contended that human beings were capable of two levels of remembrance: the first was an individual level, in which the mind records an experience through a person's senses; and the second was a collective memory, which was developed through a person's interactions with other people, either directly or through textual production (Olick 1999: 336). He argued that the memories of human beings, as social creatures, are negotiated through interactions with other people. He maintained that gaps of an individual's memory could be filled by the stories others tell of that same event, and that individual memory is interpreted through a person's social milieu.

Halbwachs' theories are joined by those of other influential theoreticians, but he is generally credited with laying the groundwork for modern practitioners of memory studies who examine *Vergangenheitsbewältigung.* Although collective memory studies have done much to explain the continued significance of representations of Fascism in the cultural products of members of successor generations, the scrutiny of the terminology has been contentious. Jeffrey Olick, in his seminal article "Cultural Memory: the Two Cultures" (1999), demonstrates how the interdisciplinary application of the term has resulted in an ambiguity of its definition. He derives this uncertainty from two competing understandings of the culture, one which views culture "as a subjective category of meanings contained in people's minds" in opposition to "one that sees culture as patterns of publicly available symbols objectified in society" (Olick 1999: 336).

He designates the form of collective memory associated with the first, individualist principles as 'collected memory'. This interpretation of culture understands collected memory to be "the aggregated individual memories of members of a group"

(Olick 1999: 338) and he describes this memory as being purely psychological. The interpretation of collective memory derives from an understanding of culture that has been informed by discourses of cultural studies he terms simply as 'collective memory'. He defines this memory as one that is created by individual memories articulated through texts and connected across discourses. This form of memory is constructed similarly to cultural identity, and the dynamic between these two concepts will be critical for this project. Just as cultural identity can be informed by discourses of 'gender' or 'race', so too can collective memories help "construct or deconstruct collective identities and the hegemonic values that constitute political cultures" (Langenbacher et al. 2012: 3).

The three most influential, contemporary scholars of collective memory studies are Aleida and Jan Assmann and Pierre Nora. The Assmanns have worked closely on certain volumes, such as their *Schleier und Schwelle* series (1997-1999). Aleida's scholarly work has profoundly advanced the theoretical development of collective memory, and Jan's research is more narrowed, focusing on cultural memory and identity in relation to ancient religions and cultures. Aleida's research covers cultural memory as well, and both she and Jan interpret it as a subcategory of the larger rubric of collective memory. Aleida has tackled diverse subjects from the effects of technology on memory ("The Printing Press and the Internet" [2006]) to interrogations of memory in literature.

Although her theories have undergone refinement throughout the past decade, she generally distinguishes between three forms of memory: neuronal, social, and cultural (Tamm 2013: 29). The first is a biological function of the individual, and the final two are associated with the memory practices of groups. She defines social memory as memory that is passed down through the personal interactions between differing generations, and

her definition of cultural memory corresponds with that of Jan, who explains, "The concept of cultural memory comprises that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose 'cultivation' serves to stabilize and convey that society's self-image" (1995: 132).

The Assmanns' theories have found criticism, particularly Aleida's theoretical theses. In *Gedächtnis und Geschichte* (2005), Friederike Eigler criticized the Assmanns' focus on memory for neglecting processes of forgetting, but the fiercest recent criticism has come from Jureit and Schneider in their *Gefühlte Opfer*. This work even calls into question the possibility of the existence of a collective memory, arguing:

> Denn spätestens jetzt sind konkurrierende Identitätsangebote und widerstreitende Zugehörigkeitsempfindungen, sind Kontingenzkausalitäten und die unübersehbare Vielfalt von Gemeinschaftskonstruktionen, die sich weder auf *eine* Geschichte noch auf *gemeinsame* Werte beziehen, kaum mehr zu integrieren. (2010: 70)

Their emphasis on the multitude of competing German identity formations is something that cannot be overlooked, but it relies on the assumption that contesting identities and feelings of belonging have not always existed, that the contestation of memories cannot be harmonious, and that collective memory exists as a singular memory.

The extensive work of scholars of women's and minority studies has demonstrated through textual, psychological, and sociological analyses that there have always been competing identities in Germany, and I argue with Olick that power structures have discursively favored and promoted certain articulations of collective memory and identity over others (Olick 1999: 342). Today's acknowledgment of these competing identities has not rendered meaningless concepts such as collective memory or

national identity, but obliges scholars to acknowledge their fluidity and ability to be altered. Literature and culture must be understood as the battleground of these competing memories which are then negotiated across discourses. This project, for example, will demonstrate how the Black German movement, which has challenged the presumed 'whiteness' of Germanness, has created contesting German identities that in turn have altered white German interactions and assessments of their past.

Pierre Nora's concept of 'sites of memory' (*lieux de mémoire*) represents the most influential alternate view to the Assmanns' theories of collective memory. Nora does not necessarily challenge the Assmanns' concept of a collective memory, but studies its expression within a specific 'site of memory' which he defines as "any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community…" (Nora 1996: XVII). Through seven weighty volumes, he explores French cultural memory as it is found in everything from memorials, to street signs, to gastronomy. His concept of a site of memory has influenced scholars of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. In his article "Die Erinnerung der Generationen" (1998), for example, Bude contends that generational contestations of memory are not well enough addressed in modern theories of collective memory and suggests analyzing generations as sites of memory instead. Since Bude's article, however, the significance of generational transition has become of greater importance in the works of Aleida Assmann, especially in her *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit* (2006), which will be explored in this project's third chapter.

In *Politik der Erinnerung*, Reichel is able to combine the theories of Nora and A. Assmann, by interpreting Nora's concept of a site of memory as a useful model for

analyzing commemorative practices. Influential as Nora's theories are, they will not play a role in this project. His extensive analyses interpret so many diverse texts as sites of memory that, in the words of Jeffrey Olick, it raises "the question of what is not a *lieu de mémoire*" (1999: 336). Nora's interpretation of objects as being imbued with a historical significance through association with historical discourses seems very similar to the cultural studies concept of a 'text'. Working within cultural studies, which already views texts as cultural products, his theories, although interesting, are not significant for this project.

There are also those scholars who question the endeavor of memory studies altogether. Gedi and Elam contend that the terminology is vague and could easily be replaced with the concept of a myth (Gedi & Elam 1996: 30). A. Assmann, however, argues that the term of myth can too easily be associated with the idea of a lie or a fictitious story that can be deconstructed through historiography (2006b: 40). David Art's project, *The Politics of the Nazi Past in Germany and Austria* (2006), is particularly relevant because his is the first to attempt to break with the methodology of collective memory in the study of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.

Art combined analyses of public debates concerning Germany's and Austria's interactions with discourses of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* with almost 175 interviews with elite political and mass media actors. He attempted to show the importance of topics for Austrian and German processes of coming to terms with the past by measuring the intensity of specific subject matters within the media during a specified time. Although Art's project represents a truly unique approach to the subject, it ignores forms of memory that may be relegated to familial transmission of memory and never find

articulation within public media because they are taboo. For example in "Re-framing Memory" (2010), A. Assmann traces how memories of German suffering, which had long been taboo, resurfaced into public discourse after being "quietly" sustained through familial, social memory. Even Jeffrey Olick suggests "social memory studies" would be a more accurate alternative to "collective memory studies," but concedes that trying to change "an established designation is to waste time tilting at semantic windmills" (1999: 346).

Within this project, collective memory will play a pivotal role in analyzing processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in the cinematic and literary texts studied here. Created in the twenty-first century, none of the texts under scrutiny were created by persons who had adult memories of the historical events they engage. Therefore, any representations of or allusions to the German and Austrian past before their births can only be found in memories that have been transmitted either socially (through family stories) or discursively (through texts). Although this project recognizes the importance of collective memory, it will use the terminology of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in lieu of newly emergent terms, such as *Erinnerungskultur*. Although some scholars have admirably applied the term to specific textual analyses, the concept is still highly contested, and my project seeks to emphasize the evolution of articulations of coming to terms with the past due to burgeoning voices of minority scholars. This can best be accomplished by retaining the more developed terminology.

Before this project can progress to the textual analyses, a brief outline of the most important historical encounters of Germans with Blackness, specifically American Blackness, must be made. The following chapter will expatiate on the historical

relationship of Germany to African American culture, demonstrating the importance of American Blackness in the development of German historical articulations of racism and national identity. This historical analysis is integral for understanding why white German authors who have been influenced by German minority voices to reevaluate the 'whiteness' of Germanness have turned specifically to constructs of American Blackness in an effort to breach forbidden discourses connecting contemporary and historical racisms.

Chapter 2

Conflicting Constructs of Blackness

The texts examined within this project represent interrogations of Germany's murky past that connect contemporary racism to a history of bigotry that extends into and beyond the Third Reich. Such an endeavor is predicated on a vast expanse of historical research. A comprehensive history of the discourses of Blackness is too expansive for my purposes here; therefore, I have narrowed my focus to the most pertinent historical events, focusing on the influence of Blackness on the establishment of German national identity. Specific texts analyzed within this chapter are representative of their discourse and were often chosen over other suitable texts in order to summarize the most current research on the subject.

The connection of African peoples to the land where Germany now stands long predates the establishment of a German nation-state. In her film *Roots Germania* (2007), Mo Asumang interviews Kark Banghard, the director of the Freilichtmuseum of Oerlinghausen, who suggests that the first people to live on what is now German soil may have migrated from Africa. The exact origin of the first settlers may never be verifiable, but it does emphasize the land's long history with Africa. The following historical research is critical for my project because it verifies the development of multiple, sometimes conflicting constructs of Blackness, specifically those associated with the United States and Africa respectively. Throughout this chapter, I emphasize how constructs of African American Blackness influenced German discourses of self-definition. Although there are many conflicting constructs of Blackness in German

culture, African American Blackness has consistently been discursively employed as an example of a 'westernized' Black population.

African Americans were constructed as a group of Black individuals who had been removed from their geographical origin and therefore could be 'scientifically' studied and referenced in an effort to distinguish and measure varying effects of biology and environment on a human being, as will be explored in the sections on eugenics and the 1912 Reichstag debates concerning '*Mischehe'.* In many ways, the authors and directors of this project participate in this tradition of examining and defining German Blackness and 'whiteness' through the constructs of American Blackness. The following analysis will highlight only the discourses before World War II which are specifically relevant for my project.The period after the rise of Hitler will be studied more expansively, because my project's texts employ collective memories which often directly refer to these historic moments.

Between Physiology and Aesthetics: The Enlightenment Notion of 'Race'

German discourses of 'race' first intersect with constructs of American Blackness during the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, as the concept of 'race' begins to solidify into European scientific terminology. At this time, there was no consensus on how to explain the differences among human beings (Adickes 2010: 407). Scholars like Henry Home (Lord Kames) espoused polygeneticism, dividing human beings into

various species with differing progenitors.[45] Others, such as Kant in his "Von den verschiedenen Racen des Menschen" (1775/77),[46] attempted to explain human differences while maintaining the unity of mankind.[47]

For Kant, the idea of 'races' of people offered an excellent alternative to polygeneticism. Although he was by no means the first philosopher to use the term, he is often regarded as the first person to attempt to create a clear division between the concepts of 'race' and species.[48] In his "Von den verschiedenen Racen des Menschen," he defends the unity of humankind by defining a species as a set of organisms that can produce fertile offspring. He then defines 'race' in terms of hybridity, stating that a 'race' can be established if the child of parents from two different 'races' shows traits of both 'races' equally. Kant does not conclusively define or defend his concept of equal hybridity, but debates about 'racial' mixing and the inheritance of 'racial' characteristics will come to dominate the scientific discourse on 'race' well into the twentieth century.

Arguments concerning human similarities and differences were also heavily rooted in the identification of physical variety. Skin color was the most commonly referenced phenotype used to distinguish 'racial' differences. Kant, for example, argues for the existence of four 'races', distinguished by skin color, and he interprets the

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[45] See Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Sketches of the History of Man Considerably Enlarged by the Last Additions and Corrections of the Author,* edited and with an introduction by James A. Harris (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2007), 3 Vols.

[46] The original version of Kant's essay was published in 1775 and it was then edited and republished two years later. This project references a republication of Kant's expanded 1777 version.

[47] Zammito notes that Kant was particularly displeased by polygeneticism for religious-metaphysical reasons. He states, "[Polygenetic] race doctrine smacked to him of materialism and atheism ushered in by an all-too-beguiling literary flair—an aestheticization of science with lethal religious-moral consequences" (2006: 39-40).

[48] For an excellent summary of Kant's division of species and race see Robert Bernasconi, "Who Invented the Concept of Race? Kant's Role in the Enlightenment Construction of Race," in *Race*, edited by Robert Bernasconi, (Malden Mass.; Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 11-37.

differences among them as adaptations to climate that became permanent (AA II: 433).[49] Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, a student of Petrus Camper, contested the emphasis on skin color. In his dissertation *De Generis Humanis Varietate Nativa* (1775: *Über die natürliche Verschiedenheit im Menschengeschlechte*, 1798), [50] he argued that the variation of skin color within a 'race' was so extreme that it was dubious to make it the basis of 'race' differentiation. Instead he classifies humans on the basis of skull measurements. [51]

The debate surrounding the diversity of mankind was never limited to questions of biology and physiology, but also encompassed issues of power and morality. The polygenetic debate itself most likely had its origins in colonialism. Europe's integral role in the Triangle Trade perpetuated the enslavement of Africans. Many scholars felt the need to justify the institution morally. As most slaves came from Africa, skin color quickly became the demarcation between owner and slave, empowered and powerless, and likewise 'superior' and 'inferior'.

[49] All of the quotations of Kant's works come from the *Akademieausgabe von Immanuel Kants Gesammelten Werken*, the most complete collection of Kant's work. His works are chronologically separated into 23 volumes. Due to the overwhelming number of works, I follow the examples of Robert Bernasconi and Susan Shell who abbreviate the text as "AA" and then follow the work by the volume and page numbers.

[50] Later, in Blumenbach's 1795 edition of this work, he will turn to skin color as a means of determining race (Bernasconi 2006: 85).

[51] Petrus Camper and Samuel Thomas von Soemmerring also both based 'race' differentiation on the measurement of skulls and facial angles. In the sixth chapter of the second section, "Das Gerippe des Orang überhaupt, und in Vergleichung mit dem des Menschen und anderer Affen," (176-180) of his *Naturgeschichte des Orang-Utang und einiger andern Affenarten, des Africanischen Nashorns und des Rennthiers* (1791), Camper compares humans with other primates. While teaching at Kassel between 1778 and 1784, Soemmerring spent a good deal of time dissecting the corpses of Africans on the *Negerkolonie* at the castle Wilhelmshöhe (Gründer 2006: 135). While here, Soemmerring wrote his *Über die körperliche Verschiedenheit des Mohren vom Europäer* (1784), in which he follows his teacher Camper's example of comparing the jawlines of Africans and certain primates. After being attacked by Blumenbach—among others—he later stated that such physiological similarities had no connection to the intellect or character of a person, but this reference would be repeated throughout racist discourses for centuries after.

Although Kant later recants his assertions of the inferiority of non-European peoples, some of his earlier career is dedicated to distinguishing between the relative values of different cultures. In *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen* (1764), Kant relates '*Nationalcharakter*' to the ability of a group to create and perceive art. This is published a decade before his essay on 'race', but the idea of grouping humans into categories of relative value is already present. He compares the 'national characters' of Germany, Holland, France, Spain, and England to those of Africans, Lapps, and Native Americans.[52] Germany is described as the nation with the greatest ability to comprehend aesthetics. Conversely, the 'nation' with the least refined feelings of the beautiful and the sublime are Africans, of which he comments:

> Herr Hume fordert jedermann auf, ein einziges Beispiel anzuführen, da ein Neger Talente bewiesen habe, und behauptet: daß unter den hunderttausenden von Schwarzen, die aus ihren Ländern anderwärts verführt werden, ... nicht ein einziger jemals gefunden worden, der entweder in Kunst oder Wissenschaft... etwas Großes vorgestellt habe.... So wesentlich ist der Unterschied zwischen diesen zwei Menschengeschlechtern, und er scheint eben so groß in Ansehung der Gemüthsfähigkeiten, als der Farbe nach zu sein. (AA II: 253)

He places white and Black people at polar ends of the spectrum of aesthetic aptitude and then likens the difference in artistic prowess to the difference in skin tone. It must not be overlooked that he supports this claim by referencing Africans living in Diaspora, an

[52] In a critical study of 'whiteness' in Kant's works, Peggy Piesche ties Kant's ideas concerning *Nationalcharakter* to those of 'race' as well. She characterizes these differentiations between types of 'whiteness' as a process of "othering from within" (2005: 35), which see views as a predecessor to racialization of (previously considered white) Jews during the Third Reich. For an indepth explanation, see her article, "Der 'Fortschritt' der Aufklärung – Kants 'Race' und die Zentrierung des *Weißen* Subjekts," (2005).

allusion to slaves, possibly African American slaves. He offers the lack of "talent" demonstrated by these people as evidence of their "biological" inferiority, despite his acknowledgement that they were entrapped (*verführt*) and therefore denied equal access to education. Although the association of persons of African heritage with slavery was often utilized as justification for their 'biological' inferiority, many of these same Germans were simultaneously strongly opposed to the institution.

Immigration, Travelogues, and Constructs of Black Slavery

Constructs of African American Blackness were also extremely influenced through discourses of slavery. Peter Martin even locates slavery as the catalyst for the change of perceptions of Blackness among the German-speaking people from an association with the construct of the intellectually superior '*Moor*' to one associated with subjugation (2001 :83). A brief overview of discourses of slavery will demonstrate how constructs of African American shackle slavery were discursively developed and then later applied to African slavery after the abolition of slavery in the US and Europe in an effort to garner support for German colonial exploits.

Athough other nations exploited slavery, the American version of this peculiar institution was particularly prominent in German abolition discourse. The US was the most sought-out nation for German emigration in the nineteenth century. A sizable cultural exchange developed between the emigrant Germans and their countrymen at home. *Amerika-Literatur* became particularly popular, and perhaps the most beloved genre was the travelogue. The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw an emigration

of almost five million Germans, most of whom went to North America. Travelogues were intended as guide books for potential immigrants to the United States (Bade 1980: 348). Alongside their recorded experiences, they often included studies of indigenous flora and fauna, maps, and descriptions of the local peoples.

Just a few examples of the most popular travelogues of the time were Ludwig Gall's *Meine Auswanderung nach den Vereinigten-Staaten in Nord-Amerika* (1822), Paul Wilhelm, Duke of Württemberg's *Erste Reise nach dem Nördlichen Amerika 1822-1824* (1835), and Gottfried Duden's *Bericht über eine Reise nach den westlichen Staaten Nord-Amerikas* (1829). All of the voyagers observed and recorded with vigor the interactions between white colonizers and African and Native Americans. Although the evaluations of the new nation varied, the US was characterized in almost all accounts by its racial diversity. The works of Gall and Duden begin with expressions of shock at the confrontation with the multicultural nature of US cities (New York and Baltimore respectively). Gall describes being struck by the affluence of all the locals, "selbst die Negerinnen" (1822: 6). Duden expresses a similar sentiment. Although he first comments that he finds the presence of so many People of Color rather unpleasant, he is quickly won over by the grandeur of their carriages.[53]

Whereas philosophers and natural scientists of the last half of the eighteenth century endeavored to create an overarching category of 'race' based on 'black' skin color, American travelogues of the first half of the nineteenth century were beginning to distinguish between the Blackness of Africa and the Blackness of the United States. This is particularly evident in Duke Paul Wilhelm's text. The author first encounters enslaved

[53] The first African Americans the two travelers meet are not slaves which helps explain the affluence the authors attribute to them. In both texts, as the men travel away from the cities, the description of Black Americans changes from the one associated with opulence to one of the destitution of slavery.

Africans at the port of a South American island. The Duke describes at length the diversity of the Africans whom he observes at a slave market. As the Duke travels northwards, up the coast of the United States, he notes a distinct change in the "*Charakter*" of the enslaved African Americans. Whereas the natively born Africans were marked by their diversity—both in demeanor and appearance—he describes African Americans as having paler complexions and homogeneous phenotypes.

The Duke's description focuses on phenotypical and behavioral differences without acknowledging any effects that cultural upbringing could have on an outsider's discernment of the diversity of a group. These perceived differences between Africans and African Americans exemplify the construction of differing Blacknesses in the German-speaking context which continue to develop well into the twenty-first century.

The oppression of African Americans did not go unnoticed by all German travelers, however. Many writers—Gall, for example—openly criticized the practice of slavery.[54] German anti-slavery sentiment applied to both the American and the African contexts. Although abolitionists called for the end of slavery on every continent, it is my contention that Black slavery was not understood in any uniform sense. It was constructed in various ways to conform to the various needs of German culture during a specific time. As my dissertation focuses on the ways in which African American constructs of Blackness informed German constructs of Blackness, it is important to note particular moments of divergence between these constructions. Abolitionist discourses encompass one of these moments.

[54] Christof Mauch mentions that although nineteenth century German literature about Native and African Americans was popular, the German media focused mainly on issues of slavery (1995: 628-629).

A system of shackle slavery equivalent to that within the United States never existed on mainland Europe, and anti-slavery laws within German borders even predate German unification. Prussia signed a treaty in 1841 with Britain, Russia, and Austria which banned slavery not only within the nations' borders, but also ceased any participation of the undersigned nations in the slave trade.[55] Numerous abolitionist groups sprung up throughout Europe. Perhaps the most ardent anti-slavery protestor on the European continent in the late nineteenth century was Cardinal Lavigerie. A French cardinal who had set up a number of missionaries in Africa, he toured Europe lecturing against slavery. He was popular in Germany, and a compilation of his treatises was widely published in multiple editions under the title of *Der Sclavenhandel in Africa und seine Greuel* (1889) in which he called for a type of anti-slavery "*Kreuzzug*" into the depths of the African continent (Bade 2005: 531).

One influential German abolitionist was Friedrich Fabri, who tried to gain support for Lavigerie's call for a crusade (Bade 2005: 531). Fabri first gained fame in 1879 for his widely read treatise *Bedarf Deutschland der Colonien?*, in which he outlines a number of economic and demographic justifications for establishing colonies in Africa. Fabri's support of Lavingerie's cause did not, however, encompass any form of slavery that existed within the German colonies. These colonies had largely adopted household or worker slavery, a form of slavery in which enslaved persons often worked alongside slave owners (Bade 1977: 41). The form of slavery Fabri protested was shackle slavery,

[55] For current studies on history of the slave trade within German Colonial holdings see Holger Weiss, "The Illegal Trade in Slaves from German Northern Cameroon to British Northern Nigeria," in *African Economic History*, 28 (2000): 41-197, and Andreas Eckert, "Slavery in Colonial Cameroon, 1880's to 1930s" in *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* 19.2 (1998): 133-148.

of which abolitionist groups were keenly familiar due to the prominence of African American slavery in the media throughout the nineteenth century. Although this slavery was now illegal in the US and Europe, it was still practiced in many Arab nations.

The Black African subject was constructed as a victim, incapable of protecting herself from Arabic slave traders, and the European was Africa's potential protector. Fabri's form of abolitionism demonstrates how African anti-slavery sentiment could be coupled with colonial desires. His protests are a political tactic to gain popular impetus for German expansion into Africa (Bade 2005: 531), but focusing on a form of slavery that had become well known due to its association with American culture, he is able to evade discussions of those forms of slavery which Germans abroad actually did practice. However, characters in works examined in the fourth and fifth chapters of my project will challenge Germany's abolitionist history which framed Germans as heroic humanitarians.

German Colonialism

Although there has recently been an influx of research on German nineteenth and twentieth century colonialism, many scholars note the prevalence of the belief among Germans that this history was ephemeral and innocuous.[56] However, my fifth chapter will examine characters that actively fear retribution from persons of African heritage for

[56] Henning Melber refers to twentieth century German engagement with its colonial history as being marked by a "kollektive Amnäsie" (2002: 67), and Medardus Brehl refers to the subject's treatment within German historical discourse as marginalized (2005: 140). Kien Nghi Ha refers to the term *Kolonialismus* as an "Unwort" and compares modern discourses of colonialism to those of racism, stating "Wie die Rassismuskritik löst die Erinnerung an koloniale Unterdrückungen bei Weißen das Bedürfnis nach augenblicklicher Distanzierung aus" (2005: 105), a statement which reflects comments by Noah Sow that began this project and noted German hesitation to engage racism directly.

the crimes Germany perpetrated within their colonial holdings, and therefore a brief overview of Germany's colonial history is necessary.

Germany became a unified nation-state in 1871, and its first official African colonial claim, German Southwest Africa (today Namibia), was made in 1885. The German Empire continued to expand into Africa, but the endeavor abruptly ended with the loss of all overseas holdings at the end of the First World War in 1918. Although German expansion into Africa wasn't as extensive as that of Britain or France, German cultural engagements with Africa began well before the establishment of their first colony.

German encounters with colonialism were often located within the borders of Europe. Contributions to the 'scientific' discourses[57] of 'race' were one means of participation in the conquest of foreign lands. Another, beckoned by the industrial revolution, was a burgeoning consumerism of colonial cultural products, ranging from *Kolonialausstellungen*[58] to the employment of exploitive images of racial stereotypes for advertising[59]—for example, the servant *Mohr* of the Sarotti products. The *Völkerschau* was a particularly degrading form of exhibition in which indigenous people presominantly from the colonies and other regions were brought to Europe to display

[57] This chapter's expatiation of the discourse of 'race' from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century is only one brief example of numerous complicated discourses that came together to justify and foster colonial expedition. Jochen Dubiel in *Dialektik der postkolonialen Hybridität: die intrakulturelle Überwindung des kolonialen Blicks in der Literatur* (2007), gives an excellent analysis of these discourses through the postcolonial theories of Edward Said and Homi Bhabha, see in particular pages 27-82.

[58] The collection edited by Robert Debusmann and János Riesz, *Kolonialausstellungen – Begegnungen mit Afrika?* (1995) remains one of the most expansive compilations on the subject of colonial exhibitions in the German context.

[59] There are numerous excellent articles analyzing the consumerism of colonial products from the 1880s into the twentieth century. Some noteworthy contributions include János Reisz, "'Kolonialwaren': die grossen Kolonialausstellung als 'exotische' Warenlager und Instrumente kolonialer Propaganda," (1999), which analyzes the use of colonial products and exhibitions as propaganda for imperial expansion in Paris; and Nana Badenberg, "Mohrenwäschen, Völkerschauen: Der Konsum des Schwarzen um 1900," (2004), which examines the use of stereotypes of African Blackness for the sale of cosmetics at the turn of the century.

traditions of their culture that were considered 'primitive' by Europeans. The largest show in Germany was associated with the first colonial exhibition in Berlin in 1896. It employed over 103 people from overseas, [60] most of whom were educated (Arnold 1995: 14). [61]

After the establishment of colonies, white Germans continued to regard people of African descent as 'inferior' to Europeans. As mentioned previously, house and work slavery was still practiced on German plantations despite its illegality. Africans were exploited in times of famine, and at its lowest point, the German colonial army literally decimated the Herero people in the *Hererokrieg*, a series of brutal battles that amounted to a massacre between 1905 and 1907 in German Southwest Africa. The incident was sparked when the Herero people began revolting after years of increasing poverty and destitution wrought by colonial rule (Brehl 2007: 94-95). On the night of January 11-12, 1904, the Herero rebelled against the Germans in a surprise attack against a colony (Brehl 2007: 96). The Reichstag placed military control under Lieutenant General Lothar von Trotha, who looked at the war as "der Anfang eines Rassenkampfes" (qtd. Brehl 2007: 97). His approach was brutal and he instated an "extermination order" that extended to any Herero man, woman, or child who remained within colonial borders (Smith 1998:109-10). By the end of the massacre, the Herero population stood at only 15,140 according to a census in 1911, although it was estimated at approximately 100,000 before the war (Brehl 2007: 99).

[60] For biographical sketches of a few participants as well as other Afro-Germans within Berlin of the time, see Ulrich von der Heyden, ed, *Kolonialmetropole Berlin: eine Spurensuch*e, (2002: 195-228).
[61] Stefan Arnold also documents how anthropologists tried to acquire more skull measurements, similar to those done by Camper and Soemmerring in the eighteenth century, but some people refused to participate, finding it degrading (Arnold 1995: 14-15).

Lothar von Trotha's military actions were not without criticism. Helmut Walser Smith's examination of the Reichstag's debates on the Herero War of Liberation records a number of dissident voices. However, he notes, "Only the Social Democrats, and in particular August Bebel, perceived the uprisings as a revolt for freedom…" (1998: 110). Smith's analysis points out that Bebel's defense of the Herero was littered with articulations of racism, noting "Bebel's critique was not… of colonial rule, but of its harshness" (1998: 111).

Juxtaposed against the cruelties suffered by the Herero and Name under the military rule of Lothar von Trotha, the political aloofness of the Reichstag debates demonstrate just how deeply racialized structures of power had become in the colonial mindset of many Europeans. European colonialism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which found expression in the literature, art, entertainment and even consumer goods of the era, was indelibly linked to discourses of 'race' which placed those nations and people constructed as white above all others.

Eugenics: A German-American Dialogue

The brutality of colonial rule, based on the posited 'superiority' of white people, was often buoyed by 'scientific' discourses. Eugenics was just this sort of pseudo-science. Coined in 1883 by Dr. Francis Galton, the field ostensibly attempted to better human populations by ensuring that 'desirable' traits and phenotypes were passed down through 'proper breeding' (positive eugenics) and 'undesirable' traits bred out of the population. These 'undesirable' traits could be anything from criminal behavior to

physical handicaps; primarily, the field focused on characteristics associated with 'race'. Strongly influenced by Social Darwinism, eugenicists contended that physical, mental, and social traits were all genetically hereditary. Much like those discourses that established 'race' in the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, eugenics was a transnational discourse that heavily relied on an American-German exchange of racially biased 'scientific' discourses. Within the United States, the bulk of studies were conducted through the observation of African Americans, and the stereotypes propagated in these 'studies' were then proliferated into German culture. Some of the United States' most abhorrent practices, such as sterilization, were even later integrated into the racial persecution of the Third Reich.

From the end of the nineteenth century until the end of World War II innumerable eugenics organizations were founded throughout Europe and the United States. The task of preserving 'white superiority' was a discourse that encompassed all of the colonizing nations. In the German context, the most eminent study was conducted by Eugen Fischer in 1907, in which he attempted to trace the inheritance of certain racialized phenotypes in bi-racial children in German Southwest Africa. He hypothesized that traits of Africans would be inherited more frequently than those of European Germans, and that this would negatively affect the intellectual and physiological health of the studied individuals. He studied over 50 people of mixed heritage, carefully measuring height, weight, and skull structure to determine if these people were genetically more similar to their European or their African parent. Published in 1912 as *Die Rehobother Bastards und das Bastardierungsproblem beim Menschen,* his work found no evidence of either 'race' being favored hereditarily; rather, he concludes:

> Die anthropologische Untersuchung der Rehobother Bastards zeigt eine wohl charakterierte, aber sehr stark variable Bevölkerungsgruppe. Die anthropologischen Merkmale der beiden Stammrassen kombinieren sich in der mannigfaltigsten Weise…. Die Mischbevölkerung ist gesund, kräftig, sehr fruchtbar. (301)

This did not mean that he in any way contested the racial and bigoted stereotypes that prevailed in the early twentieth century discourse of miscegenation. He would contradict his own findings in support of racist assertions made by eugenicists before him. For example, he finds the families he studied to be large and healthy. This directly challenges claims by Joseph Alexander Tillinghast made in *The Negro in Africa and America* (1902), in which he claimed that bi-racial children within the US suffered from infertility.[62] After stating his conflicting findings, Fischer writes:

> Dem stehen andere Beobachtungen gegenüber. Die… Untersuchungen Tillinghasts weisen ausdrücklich auf geringe Fruchtbarkeit von Mulatten unter sich hin, ebenso tun es zahllose andere, aber exakte Beobachtungen, wirklich sichere Zahlen sind es nicht, das fehlt noch vollständig - Allerdings muß man sagen, diese Eindrücke sind so zahlreich, daß Mulatten unter sich…. entweder zum Teil steril oder ganz minderfruchtbar sind. Das zeigt z. B. Fehlinger an den Ziffern der vorhandenen Kinder in einzelnen Staaten Nordamerikas (1912: 181).

[62] The question of fertility among bi-racial children can be viewed as a lasting remnant of the Enlightenment discourse on polygeneticism. Most Enlightenment proponents of monogeneticism emphasized that all human beings were of the same species because they were capable of producing viable offspring. Claims of sterility or lessened fertility were attempts at challenging the idea that all humans were of the same species by implying that the 'mixed-race' offspring were not biologically viable. These claims continued throughout the beginning of the twentieth century. For example, the Danish anthropologist Wieth-Knudsen published an article in 1908 entitled "Rassenkreuzung und Fruchtbarkeit" in which he claimed that Jewish-Christian relationships had lower birthrates.

Fischer readily abandons his results in support of the superstition of infertility among bi-racial children, even though he states that these claims are made without any sort of scientific support.

Perhaps most telling is his final chapter entitled "Ergologie der Bastards," in which he describes the customs and habits of the Nama and Herero people in derogatory language. Unable to find any scientific argument on which to base his claims of 'inferiority', he asserts that cultural traits are passed down from generation to generation, and asserts these endanger the German *Nationalcharakter*. Fischer's work is exemplary of eugenics of his time, and his work was influential. In 1921, he co-authored one of the first textbooks on human genetics in German, *Grundriß der menschlichen Erblichkeitslehre und Rassenhygiene* (1921). He later became the leader of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics, and was appointed president of the Frederick William University of Berlin by Adolf Hitler in 1933.

"*Mischehe*" and German Southwest Africa

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the concept of 'race' as a scientific category and the power structure that this formed had been well established and widely accepted as 'fact' by the general German population. Very few questioned white authority over the colonies, and it was generally believed that their imperialist *Reich* put Germany on par with other European colonial powers (El-Tayeb 2003b: 50).

As demonstrated earlier, eugenicists had been particularly preoccupied with the inheritance of psychological and physical traits among bi-racial children. Like Fischer,

most eugenicists asserted that only 'negative' traits of the non-white parentage were passed onto their children. Particularly influential was Gobineau's infamous work *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1853-1855), in which he concluded 'racial mixing' would lead to chaos. Not all European eugenicists were as extreme in their estimation of effects of miscegenation, but it was popularly believed interracial relationships could result in unhealthy offspring.

These beliefs partnered with the Herero uprising had devastating consequences for bi-racial Germans throughout the colonies. In October 1906, Friedrich von Lindequist enacted the *Eingeborenenverordnungen*. These ordinances made it illegal for white Germans colonizers to marry *Eingeborene*, which inhibited African women in relationships with German men and their children from sharing German citizenship, and the accompanying civil rights.[63] These ordinances became stricter in 1908, when all interracial marriages before 1906 were nullified, and all marriages conferred outside German Southwest Africa were no longer recognized. The repercussions were devastating for the wives and children of the German colonizers who were no longer considered German during the Herero war. Essentially what was created was a *one-drop rule*[64] that was even more stringent that the one found in the United States (Lusane 2003: 43).

These laws were controversial and sparked a debate both within the Reichstag and among the nation as a whole. Though veiled behind political rhetoric, scholars have aptly

[63] It was not possible for a German woman to pass her citizenship to husband or child. Wildenthal notes that if a German woman married an African man, technically she would have lost her citizenship, although she can find no cases in which this happened (1997: 265).
[64] The *one-drop rule* is a colloquial term denoting standards within the United States which determined racial classification. The term implied that any person with any African heritage was considered Black in the eyes of the law.

recognized this as a discourse on racialized German national identity. Those in favor of the prohibition of interracial marriages defended their position with an emotionalized mixture of eugenics and sexualized rhetoric. Friedrich Wilhelm Solf, *Staatssekretär* of the *Reichskolonialamt* urged representatives to rely on their instincts when considering the repercussions of granting Africans citizenship (Campt 2004: 46). He also frequently turned to the United States as an example of the possible problems with racial parity, citing the political unrest within the nation as a possible outcome for Germany (Campt 2004: 46).

Fear of a Black German population spread through Germany,[65] expressing itself in the metaphor of a national body being infiltrated with 'bad blood'. Building off of Mary Douglas's *Purity and Danger*, Campt succinctly explains, "Racial mixture can be seen to violate social boundaries analogous to those that threaten the core of a living organism" (2004: 41). The media and members of the Reichstag would frequently apply the metaphor of an infection of the "Volks*körper*" (El-Tayeb 2003b:119) by 'black blood'.[66] An analogy between the female body and the *Volkskörper* began to be made. Proponents of the law argued that the white female German needed to be protected from the sexual ferociousness of male Blackness in the same way the white German 'race' needed to be protected from 'black blood'.[67]

[65] For a more thorough study of the development of "negraphobia" during this time, see Lusane *Hitler's Black Victims*, 43-58.
[66] This fear of 'impure blood' is integral for my project, and in chapter three I will demonstrate how these discourses continue today.
[67] It is interesting to note that there was also the claim that the legalization of miscegenation would endanger the indigenous people, stating that there were so few women in the colonies that the indigenous women needed to be reserved for the indigenous men.

Since miscegenation was seen as the point of contingency through which this imagined infection spread, sexuality became a primary issue of contention.[68] Although there was no evidence to defend such an idea, some parliament members argued that racial parity of Black Germans with whites would result in the rape of white German women by Black men. El-Tayeb notes that 'race' relations in the United States were called upon in the defense of an argument concerning increased instances of rape. One parliamentary representative, von Richthofen of the *Nationalliberale Partei*, refers to rumors of increased crime, particularly rape, committed by African American males since the end of slavery (El-Fayeb 2003b: 127).

Despite the emotionalized pleas of proponents of the *Eingeborenenverordnungen*, a resolution affirming the legality of colonial mixed marriages was passed in 1912. This should not, however, be interpreted as a declaration of racial equality. Even the Sozialistische Partei Deutschland (SPD), the most outspoken opponents to the ordinances, publicly emphasized that marriage between Black and white Germans was unwelcome. In the words of Reichstag member Mumm, of the SPD, "Wir waren in der Kommission darüber einig, daß Ehen zwischen Schwarzen und Weißen nicht erwünscht sind" (qtd. in El-Tayeb 2003b: 129).

"Die Schwarze Schmach am Rhein" and the *Rheinland Bastarden*

The end of World War I saw the re-emergence of miscegenation as a subject of national debate. By 1915, Germany lost control of its colonial holdings and became a

[68] In *Other Germans* (2004), Tina Campt does an excellent job of deconstructing the discourses of gender and 'race' that were used to support the *Eingeborenenverordnungen*. For more, see pages 25-62 of her work.

land of occupation. African soldiers from French colonial holdings were deployed along the Rhine, which ushered in what Campt calls "the first German confrontation with Blacks within its national boundaries" (2004: 32). I agree with Campt and El-Tayeb who argue this reversed the roles of ruler and subject as established by colonialism—which traditionally placed Europeans in positions of power over Africans—and threatened Germany's 'whiteness': that is, its inclusion in the colonial hegemony that had developed through the discourses of 'race'. The placement of Black occupation troops within the borders of Germany was interpreted by many colonial powers as an intentional affront to Germany's 'rights' as a white nation. The transnational debate surrounding the placement of a Black military force in Germany would surface twice: first, at the time of the occupation; and second, as the children of these soldiers began primary school.

The decision to use Black troops for the occupation was manifold. First, the French were concerned that training and arming its colonial subjects could lead to possible uprisings if they were allowed to promptly return to the colonies. Campt, building on the work of Pascal Grosse,[69] argues that a second motive may have been the psychological effects these troops had on their opponents. Campt explains, "The issue of the particular qualities attributed to Africans played a central role, because the racial/anthropological traits associated with Africans were seen as making them especially well-suited to… warfare and an invaluable source of military manpower" (2004: 33).

As mentioned in the previous section, there was a budding negrophobia developing among Germans, and this combined with stereotypes concerning Africans'

[69] See, in particular, his article "Kolonialismus und das 'Problem der Rassenmischung' in Deutschland: Zur Geschichte der anthropologischen Psychologie 1920-1940," (1995).

innate military prowess exacerbating the fear German troops had of Black soldiers. This is supported by an article entitled, "Germans feared Negros," published in January of 1919 by the *New York Times*, in which the reporter claims the Germany military offered a 100 Reichsmark reward for any Black soldier captured. The article quotes a German who stated that during the war, German troops were so frightened of the Black soldiers they would often choose to flee rather than fight Black soldiers.

The deployment of Africans as an occupation force aggravated these fears and unleashed "alle Ängste und Phantasien, die auf [den Afriker] projeziert worden waren" (El-Tayeb 2003b: 160). The media polemically protested the use of the troops, and the occupation quickly became dubbed "die Schwarze Schmach am Rhein" (El-Tayeb 2003b: 160). El-Tayeb, Campt, and Oguntoye et al. demonstrate how the media returned to the trope of Black sexuality that had been constructed during the 1912 debates on colonial marriage in order to vilify the troops. El-Tayeb describes, "Das gesamte Propagandamaterial hatte einen mehr als deutlich pornographischen Aspekt" (2003b: 160). Ads and posters depicting Black male soldiers in sexually exploitive positions with white women were frequently employed as propaganda (Oguntoye et al. 1986: 50), and El-Tayeb, Oguntoye et al., and Campt, all demonstrate how images of sexually exploited white females became a symbolic location of the supposed 'degradation' of German 'whiteness'. The subjugation of white Germans to Black occupation forces becomes analogous to rape.

Protests against the occupation came from interest groups from the US, the Netherlands, and England (El-Tayeb 2003b: 165). Within the German context, US 'race' relations were called upon to defend racist views being propagated in the German media.

Just as in 1912, when parliament members referenced the supposed violence of African Americans against their white counterparts since the end of slavery, so too is the situation of African Americans used as a standard for relations between a hegemonic white majority and a Black minority residing within the same national borders (El-Tayeb 2003b: 165). The existence of a Black German population is circumlocuted in political discourses of German national identity. Instead of examining the nation's own Black German history,[70] racial strain within the United States—or more precisely, the situation as it is portrayed in German media—is used as a cautionary tale, depicting the alleged criminality of a 'westernized' Black population within a white dominated nation.

Although the African troops were removed by 1923, the concern for miscegenation returned as the first large generation of Afro-Germans born within German borders entered primary school. These children, demeaningly called the *Rheinland Bastarde,* were the offspring of white German women and the Black occupation forces. In this same year, there was an attempt to record the number of *Besatzungskinder* living in Germany. The term *Besatzungskind* is misleading, however, because the census was less concerned with a record of children with a non-German parent than children of non-white heritage. Those children fathered by white occupation soldiers were not counted among the

[70] Although the Afro-German population was not as large as it is today, there were still a number of Black voices that spoke out publically against the defamation of Blackness within Germany. Louis Brody, a well-known Black actor wrote a letter in the name of the "Afrikanerbundes" which was published in the *Berliner Tageblatt* in 1921, in which he outlines the repercussions of the campaign against the Black occupation troops for Afro-Germans living within Germany. A reproduction of the letter can be found in El-Tayeb (2003b: 162). Martin Dibobe, representative of the Cameroonians in Germany also presented to the Weimar government a petition for equal rights in former African colonies. Exceptionally interesting is that it begins by protesting "die Vergewaltigung der Kolonien," (Reed-Anderson 2000: 47). Although the rape of the colonies is meant figuratively, the metaphor of the sexual assault of white Germans against the Black colonized peoples forms a striking opposition to the images white German discourse are creating of the sexual deviance of Black occupation soldiers. An abbreviated version of the petition can be found in Reed-Anderson's *Rewiting the Footnotes* (2000: 47, 49, 51).

Besatzungkinder, but Black children whose fathers had *not* been part of the occupation were (El-Tayeb 2003b: 170).

A concrete number was never determined, but estimates show that between 500 and 800 Black German children lived within Germany by 1933 (Pommerin 1979: 72). Similar to the debates of 1912, fears of an infection of the *Volkskörper* returned, and eugenics organizations and the media began to clamor for the prohibition of miscegenation and the sterilization of these children in order to stop the supposed dilution of white German 'blood'. El-Tayeb describes:

> So verabschiedete der Münchner Ärzteverein bereits 1917 Leitsätze, die Sterilisierung und Eheverbot für "Minderwertige" forderten. Eine Initiative der Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene führte 1920 zu einem Gesetzeszusatz, der Standesämter verpflichtete, Ehepaaren Merkblätter zur Verhinderung "minderwertigen, unbrauchbaren Nachwuchses" auszuhändigen. Im selben Jahr wurde ein preussischer "Ausschuss für Rassenhygiene und Bevölkerungspolitik" gegründet, der für freiwillige Sterilisierung und Eheberatungsstellen eintrat. (2003b: 175)

Proponents of legalized, forced sterilization pointed to similar laws enacted in the US as a prototype of Germany (between 1907 and 1930 more than half of the American states passed sterilization laws).[71] Although during the Weimar Republic the sterilization of a person for reasons of 'race' would never become legalized, the debate resurfaced under the Nazi regime.

[71] In his article "The Cooperation of German Racial Hygienists and American Eugenicists before and after 1933" (1998), Kühn demonstrates some of the ways in which German and American eugenicists worked together, and some ways in which US laws served as a basis for certain Nazi racial policies.

‘Blackness’ in the Third Reich

Until recently, the experiences of Afro-Germans in the Third Reich were a neglected field of study. Within the last decade, however, a few fruitful studies have been conducted that have not only brought to light the stories of Afro-Germans within Nazi Germany, but also helped further deconstruct Nazi conceptualizations of ‘race’ that were used to justify the atrocities of the regime.[72]Although anti-Semitism undoubtedly provided the backdrop onto which the Nazis constructed the ‘Aryan race’, the main objective of National Socialists “was to exclude from German citizenship and membership in the German people all those who were not of ‘German blood’, without consideration for religious belief” (Ehmann 1998: 115). Roma and Sinti, homosexuals, and people of African descent were only a few groups persecuted alongside people of the Jewish faith. However, one cannot speak of any systematic persecution of Black Germans during the Third Reich.

Afro-Germans were not accepted members of the Nazi state, and most had their citizenship revoked; however, their experiences were manifold. Whereas some Black Germans were sent to concentration camps, there were also Afro-Germans who fought in the *Wehrmacht*. Although the Nuremberg *Rassen*- and *Blutschutzgesetze* of 1935 were targeted towards Jews, they could be applied to any person identified by the regime as being non-German. The laws did not, however, specifically identify Black Germans, and a certain amount of interpretation could be made on the part of those enforcing the laws.

[72] Especially enlightening are Fatima El-Tayeb’s *Schwarze Deutsche* (2003) and Tina Campt’s *Other Germans* (2004). Campt and El-Tayeb’s studies are both laudable in their inclusion of the gender aspect in their studies. El-Tayeb studies the development of Blackness at the discursive level, by comparing representations of Black Germans across a wide variety of discourses. Tina Campt’s work is based on oral histories of two Afro-German survivors.

This did not result in leniency in the cases of most Black individuals; rather, it resulted in truly diverse individual experiences. In Hans Massoquoi's autobiography *Destined to Witness* (1999), he describes how he worked as a machinist during the war. Fasia Jansen describes how she was forced to work in the kitchen of a concentration camp (Campt 2004: 139-140). Hans Hauck, who described himself as a *Rheinland Bastard*, describes how he was sterilized and later drafted into the army (Campt 2004: 211-220).

In 1933 the Law for the Protection of Hereditary Health was enacted, which made sterilization compulsory for anyone who suffered from an inheritable disease, ranging from schizophrenia to blindness. This law was largely modeled after the 1922 sterilization law in California.[73] The number of individuals sterilized is unknown, and estimates range from 225,000-450,000. The statute did not designate any 'racial' groups as targets of sterilization; however, the debate concerning the sterilization of the children of the occupation existed before the rise of National Socialism, and by 1933 Nazi officials had already accumulated a list of almost 400 names of so-called 'Rheinland Bastards' for sterilization (Pommerin 1979: 69).

Alongside sterilization, some Afro-Germans were sent to death camps, but they were never a group specially targeted for extermination (Campt 2004: 64). Many scholars have suggested that the population was too small and sparse to necessitate systematic persecution.[74] A second reason may have been the international political repercussions that a publicized discrimination of a Black German minority might have brought. In his research, Lusane demonstrates how the US 'racial' policy was often portrayed in German propaganda in order to prove the hypocrisy of US criticisms of Nazi Germany. If the

[73] For a more detailed comparison of the California and the Nazi laws, see Lusane (2003: 135-136).
[74] Most scholars, including Campt (2004: 79), Pommerin (1979: 60), and Lusane (2003: 101) mention this as a possibility. Massoquoi also alludes to this fact in the first chapter of his autobiography (1999: 3).

persecution of Afro-Germans came to light internationally, they would have lost a powerful weapon in their discursive battle against the US.[75] Lusane also argues that Afro-Germans were 'spared' execution by "the nature of their blackness" (2003: 99). White German constructs of German Blackness were often linked to constructs of German colonialism, which was glorified in Nazi propaganda. Individuals racialized as Black were, therefore, perceived as having ties to Africa and the glory days of German colonialism.

Lusane's view may be slightly optimistic; nevertheless, the role of German colonialism for the construction of Blackness and 'race' in the Third Reich should not be underestimated. In *Farbe bekennen*, Doris Reiprich and Erika Ngambi Ul Kuo, Afro-German sisters who lived through the Third Reich tell a heartfelt tale of their African father's encounter with an SS Officer. They recount how on his way home one evening, he was stopped by the SS officer, who demanded to see his identification which he had forgotten. The officer was going to arrest him, but some of the locals came to his aid, reassuring the officer that he was an immigrant from the former African colonies. This was enough justification for the officer to allow him to continue on his way without further inquiry (Oguntoye et al. 1986: 60-65). Due to Germany's colonial past, there appears to have been a discursive location in the Third Reich for Blackness. The existence of a Black colonial subject was acceptable, even desired, whereas there existed no equivalent for the racialized Jewish individual. Although it is not the objective of this project, such discrepancies call for further inquiry into the influences of colonial conceptualizations of Blackness and 'whiteness' on the construction of 'race' in the Third Reich.

[75] For a more detailed interpretation see Lusane (2003: 181-191).

Blackness was also informed by African American culture. Perhaps the most popular aspect of African American culture at this time was Jazz. After WWI, Jazz blossomed throughout Europe, and many African American Jazz artists toured Germany. Perhaps most successful was Josephine Baker, an American-born singer, dancer, and performer, who moved to France in 1925. She was so popular within the Third Reich that she was able to gather information for the French Resistance while socializing at parties with Nazi officials. Officially, Jazz was prohibited from the airwaves in 1938[76] due to its association with the Avante-Garde (Rasula 2004:35) and with Blackness which was "an intensely stereotyped marker of a… threat… of Americanization" (Ostendorf 2001: 54).

Despite its prohibition, Jazz was listened to with vigor throughout German-occupied Europe. Thomas Kater and Horst Bergmeier and Rainer Lotz outline how Goebbels created radio shows that were based on Jazz music, what Kater calls a "Nazi ersatz jazz" (2001: 22). In order to appeal to a large listening audience, Goebbels often insisted that music performances carry anglicized names, like the big band "Charlie und His Orchestra" in order to choose "titles which were sufficiently Anglo-American to be mistaken for the real thing" (Bergmeier & Lotz 1997: 133). Jazz's popularity and inconsistent use within the Third Reich also informed constructs of African American Blackness, imbibing it with connotations of rebellion and subversion, an association that would greatly affect the relationships of Germans with African Americans after the war.

[76] For an explanation of the contradictory defamation of Jazz within the Third Reich see Ostendorf (2001: 64).

Besatzungskinder and the African American Civil Rights Movement

The end of the war found Europe in ruins. The now transparent atrocities of the Holocaust combined with the simultaneous suffering of the surviving Germans and created new questions of German national and racial identity, defining them at once as victims and villains. Faced with the guilt of genocide and the misery of the consequences of war, Germany began a process of "denazification," politically and culturally—not only removing National Socialists from political power, but also participating in a type of "racial reconstruction" (Fehrenbach 2005b: 31). The concept of 'race' had become integral to German national identity and could not be easily dismantled. Although the word *Rasse* would eventually be wiped from socially accepted parlance, the construct remained, undergoing a myriad of changes, many of which would be largely informed by US constructs of Blackness. The influx of African American soldiers represented a complete reversal of the racial hierarchy established under Hitler, and the resulting German-African American relationships brought about a second generation of biracial *Besatzungskinder*. Furthermore, the United States was facing a comparable, albeit different, process of "racial reconstruction" after WWII, and the American Civil Rights Movement became a topic of importance in the German media.

In 1945, just as in 1918, Germany became an occupied nation. Within the Federal Republic, the US set up military bases on which white and African American soldiers were stationed. German-American relations were complicated. Some viewed the US military as the final defense against the Soviets and others viewed it with disdain, blaming US soldiers for proliferating moral corruption into once quaint, rural West

German villages. The female body once again becomes the discursive space in which allegations of moral decadence are debated—and in stunning similarity to the debates of the "Rheinlandbastarden" during the French occupation after WWI.

Perhaps the most criticized influence of the American soldiers portrayed in conservative media was the introduction of night clubs which catered to Americans (Höhn 2002: 110). Of these so-called *Ami-bars,* the most disparaged were the *Neger-bars* that catered solely to Black soldiers. "Veronikas," a pejorative term employed throughout the West German media to condemn women who "fraternized" with American soldiers, were portrayed as materialistic, sexually promiscuous, and often synonymous with prostitutes. Women who developed relationships with African American men were depicted as morally corrupt (Höhn 2002: 124). Similar to the occupation after WWI, the constructs of 'race' and female sexuality intersect. The female body is in need of policing because it has been constructed as a conduit through which foreign elements can be brought into the national body.

These political debates, however, were overshadowed by the realities of everyday life for those Germans living next to the American military. The local economies surrounding US bases were largely supported by US soldiers and the economy of the FRG flourished under the Marshall Plan. From an American perspective, amicable relations between soldiers and the locals were encouraged, and in 1945, the Alien Spouse Act was enacted, which allowed soldiers to marry local women from occupied nations. Interracial relationships were not necessarily protected under this act, because miscegenation was still illegal in many US states. The influx of children born to German mothers and US soldiers created a second generation of *Besatzungskinder*.

The mothers of these children faced extreme difficulty, and they were frequently denied access to American and German social assistance due to the difficulties of determining legal paternity.[77] These issues were exacerbated in cases of German-African American relationships, because although many Black soldiers petitioned for marriage, they were denied the right, sometimes being shipped back to the US before the child was born (Lemke Meniz de Faira 2003: 345). Within certain *Bundesländer*, any child born to a single mother was considered a ward of the state, and the families were observed by state social workers. Many social workers actively urged mothers of Black Germans to release their children to an orphanage. Despite this, the *Deutscher Verein für öffentliche und private Fürsorge* reported that of 88 bi-racial children under their care in 1946, 76 lived with their mothers and only 12 in orphanages (Lemke Meniz de Faira 2008: 344).

Even though only 4,776 of the 67,770 children of occupation soldiers born in the FRG were fathered by African American soldiers, they became the focus of a new national discourse of 'race' (Lemke Meniz de Faira 2008: 31). There was a fear that these children would not be able to correctly adapt to German society due to their racialized lineages. There was even a movement to completely separate Black children from white German society. A number of private, 'charitable' organizations were founded that endeavored to create orphanages specifically for Black German children. One such organization, the *Hafen der Hoffnung*, was founded by Käthe Nicak and Margarete Benkenstein, who wanted to start a home for Afro-German children in which they would be taught German and English to prepare for their ultimate return 'home' (Lemke Meniz de Faira 2008: 39).

[77] For an excellent summary of the intricacies of paternity and social assistance for German children of US soldiers see chapter one of Lemke Meniz de Faira's *Zwischen Fürsorge und Ausgrenzung* (2002: 6-35).

The debate concerning the separation of Black German children also found its way into scientific discourse, particularly anthropology, which returned in many ways to the questions pre-dating even the First World War; namely, the inheritance of racial traits among bi-racial children. The term *Mischling* takes on new meaning just five years after the war. During the Third Reich, the term could refer to any number of supposed 'racial mixings' like German-Jewish or German-Slavic. Post WWII, eastern Europeans and Jewish people were no longer recognized as 'races' by the Federal Republic. Only 'races' that could be demarcated through skin color became acceptable categories. For example, in 1950 the West German Interior Ministry conducted a survey to determine the number of *"Negermischlingskinder*," living within the FRG's borders. There existed no equivalent survey for any other type of *Mischlingskinder* (Fehrenbach 2005b: 31).

With the impending arrival of the first day of school for the *Besatzungskind* came discussions at the federal level of potential educational separation. Most representatives believed that the children should not be separated, but others, Frau Dr. Rehligh for example, ultimately suggested the deportation of these children to the United States, a land that they had never known (Gerunde 2000: 5). Arguments for the deportation of Afro-Germans to the United States reveal the attitude that not only did Black German children come from 'elsewhere' but also that German Blackness was akin to American Blackness. This is particularly evident when noting that not all of the Black *Besatzungskinder* had African American parentage, yet their 'home of origin' was still regarded as the US. For example in *Farbe bekennen*, Helga Emde identifies herself as a *Besatzungskind* although her father was African (1986: 104). The government never

sanctioned a racially separated educational system, but fear of racial mixing continued until the first day of school.

On US bases within Germany, the Civil Rights Movement became more pronounced which affected German constructs of Blackness. American Blackness took on connotations of poltical activism, and certain sections of the German Student Movement became closely associated with the Black Panther movement (Klimke 2008:99). The Student Movement was anti-authoritarian, anti-fascist, anti-elitist, and often socialist in its concern for class difference. The Black Power movement in the US fought specifically for the rights of African Americans, but certain members of the Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund (SDS) saw similarities in both group's rebellion against anti-egalitarian political and social injustices and attempted to form an alliance with the Black Panther movement (Höhn 2008: 135).

Karl Dietrich Wolff was perhaps the biggest proponent of this cooperation. He invited Huey Newton and Kathleen Smith to give talks in Germany and later toured the US in an effort to forge a bond between the two groups (Klimke 2008: 6). Members of the SDS briefly published an English language magazine, *Voice of the Lumpen*, with Black Panther members residing in Germany. Although the Black Panthers were not fighting for equal rights along class lines, and racism was largely seen as an American problem by the SDS, many Germans identified with the African American struggle, often viewing it another form of class suppression (Höhn 2008: 136-138).[78] Cooperation

[78] Martin Klimke cautions that identification by the Student Movement with the Black Panther movement may have had little to do with anti-racism. He explains, "Solidarity with African Americans was often to a vast degree part of a process of German self-definition, whether it be culturally or politically motivated (2008: 8)."

between the two groups ultimately dissipated when Black Panther members began to feel that race was no longer the key issue for the SDS (Höhn 2008: 141).

From Audre Lorde to May Ayim: Afro-German Voices Speak Out

The student movement ended, but collaboration between African American and German activists continues to today. As explained in chapter one, Black feminist author Audre Lorde and her class on African American poetry at the Free University of Berlin in 1984 were influential for the Black German Movement (Michaels 2006b: 22). While in Berlin, she sought out and engaged Black Germans, who were often unaware of other Black Germans' existence. ManuEla Ritz remembers stories of Lorde's first lecture in her autobiography, *Die Farbe meiner Haut* (2008). She relates the memory passed down to her from women present at the class:

> Plötzlich bat [Lorde] alle weißen Frauen, den Seminarraum zu verlassen... Als alle weißen Frauen draußen waren, sagte Audre zu den Gebliebenen 'So, und von euch verlässt keine den Raum, bevor sie nicht mit einer anderen schwarzen Frau gesprochen hat'. (Ritz 2009: 59-60)

Lorde encouraged her students to form a community and let their voices be heard (Michaels 2006: 22). Lorde also helped coin the term Afro-Deutsche, an effort she saw as invaluable for the development of a cultural identity. In an interview with Karla Hammond, Lorde explains, "If we don't name ourselves, we are nothing. As a black woman I have to deal with identity or I don't exist at all" (1980:19).

Community building initiatives resulted in the foundation of ADEFRE and the Initiative Schwarze Menschen in Deutschland in 1986. They were established in Berlin, and branches of both groups quickly sprung up in cities throughout the nation, including Munich, Frankfurt, and Hamburg. In 1988 the ISD published the first issue of the short-lived journal *Onkel Tom's Faust*, in which the editorial team stated, "Wir wollen mit unserer Zeitung… Rassismus überall dort, wo er auftaucht, anklagen" (*In eigener Sache* 1988: 3). Michaels mentions that the title's reference to Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* pays homage to the African American influences of the editors (2006: 26). These influences cannot be ignored, but a closer look at the first issue reveals the title is an act of defiance, an attempt to deconstruct the stereotype of the voiceless, passive Black man that was perpetuated in Germany by the popularity of the book in the nineteenth century. The journal reads:

> Jeder kennt die 'literarische' Figur des Onkel Tom, des Sklaven der in 'rührender' Weise sein Schicksal trägt. Onkel Tom wehrt sich nicht, er bietet Rassismus und Sklaverei letztendlich nicht die Stirn. Der Name *Onkel Tom's Faust* ist eine Methapher, mit der wir symbolisieren wollen, daß Schwarze von heute Rassismus und Unterdrückung nicht mehr hinnehmen werden! Wir haben Onkel Tom eine Faust gegeben…" (*In eigener Sache* 1988: 3).

Onkel Tom's Faust had an important literary predecessor, *Farbe bekennen. Afro-deutsche Frauen auf den Spuren ihrer Geschichte* (1986). The seminal work came to fruition through the exhaustive work of many Afro-German women, particularly

Katharina Oguntoye and May Ayim.[79] The book is a combination of historical research, personal narratives, and creative works, all of which center on the discovery of Afro-German female identity. This work was groundbreaking and caused—together with feminist movements—many German scholars to reevaluate the German canon (Hopkins 1992: 125). It is important to note that although Audre Lorde's guidance and friendship encouraged many Afro-German women to give voice to their experiences, the Black German movement was not an idea of Lorde's thrust upon the women of her workshops. In an interview with ManuEla Ritz, Tahir Della, chairman of the ISD, remembers the strong bond Lorde had with the founders of the ISD, but is sure to stress the initiative and achievement of the Black German founders: "Ich meine, Audre Lorde hat diese Frauen nicht mal aufgefordert sich zu organisieren, sie hat nur gesagt, redet miteinander, schreibt eure Geschichte auf. Und das hat zu dem Buch *Farbe bekennen* geführt"(Ritz 2009: 54).

Many of the contributing authors to *Farbe bekennen* went on to build illustrious careers. May Ayim, perhaps the most well-known Afro-German author, published her first collection of poems in 1995 under the title *blues in schwarz weiß*. The poems examined tropes of marginalization and racism in modern Germany. Her second collection *Nachtgesang* was published posthumously in 1997.[80] The city of Berlin commemorated her in 2009 by renaming a street in her name, the May-Ayim-Ufer. The number and volume of Afro-German voices has only increased into the twenty-first century, including names readily recognizable in German pop culture like Noah Sow and

[79] In the original edition of the volume, May Ayim is identified as May Opitz, which was her legal name at the time. However, she eventually takes her father's surname, Ayim. This is the name I use, because it is her preferred nomenclature.

[80] For an excellent study of questions of identity and belonging in May Ayim's poetry, see Jennifer Michaels, "'Fühlst du dich als Deutsche oder als Afrikanerin?': May Ayim's Search for an Afro-German Identity in her Poetry and Essays." *German Life & Letters* 59.4 (2006): 500-514.

Mo Asumang. As Afro-Germans have become more visible, many white Germans have been influenced to reconsider the association of German identity with ‘whiteness’. The texts examined in this project are examples of such work. In the following, I will demonstrate how they challenge German ‘whiteness’ through constructs of Blackness.

Chapter 3

Between Righteous Rebels and Saintly Martyrs:

Imagined Black America and White German Generational Reconciliation

The advent of the twenty-first century represented not only a symbolic break from the horrors of the previous century, but significant generational transitions for German and Austrian cultural and social memory of World War II as well. Aleida Assmann notes that the turn of the century sees the passing of the *Erfahrungsgeneration* (2006d: 192), the witnesses of the Second World War, and according to Rainer Böhme, 2005 is the year in which members of the rebellious 68er generation first arrived at the age of retirement (Böhme 2005). Babies born in the twenty-first century will constitute the great grandchildren of the *Erfahrungsgeneration*, possibly growing up to have no memories of contact with survivors of this defining historical event. Generational transitioning is ill-defined at best, but such extreme examples signify the temporal distance that has been traversed since the Holocaust and exemplify the importance of taking a closer look at processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in the new century. This chapter will explore articulations of German suffering and generational reconciliation which have most recently come to the foreground of collective memory studies. Recognizing that films are a "*text* to be *read*," as explained in the first chapter, I will analyze the ways in which two cinematic texts, Oskar Roehler's *Lulu & Jimi* (2008) and Michael Schorr's *Schultze gets the blues* (2003), explore imagined geographies of Black America. This chapter will demonstrate how constructs of American and German Blackness are utilized in order to expose forms of racism that persist after the Third Reich, but developed in histories

before this. Uncovering racism allows these texts to explore and redefine constructs of culpability and victimhood allowing for the possibility of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Vergangenheitsbewältigung and the Third Generation

The coming to terms with a traumatic event is inexorably linked to time, the reconciliation of the memories of a traumatic past with the present identity of the self. As Aleida Assmann explains, "Das Ziel der Vergangenheitsbewältigung ist die Überwindung einer schmerzhaften Erinnerung um einer gemeinsamen und freien Zukunft willen" (2006b: 71), and she analyzes it as a process of remembering and forgetting on the individual and collective level. As concerns memory and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in the twenty-first century, she emphasizes the emergence of a renewed interest in German suffering in German public discourse. She even characterizes 2003 as being "a year in which memories of German suffering, experienced fifty-eight years previously, returned with a unique and unexpected impact" (2006d: 188) and attributes the discourse's public appearance to generational transitioning. She views the generation coming of age at the beginning of the twenty-first century as one more capable of empathy with the experiential generation than that of the 68ers, who were characterized by anger and resentment towards the parent generation. Through literary analysis, A. Assmann traces the emergence of a new *Bekenntnisgeneration*, whose expressions of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* manifest themselves as *Familienromane*,[81] novels that

[81] Some of the examples the A. Assmann cites in her work *Geschichte im Gedächtnis* (2007) are Stephan Wackwitz's *Ein unsichtbares Land* (2005), which is labeled as a *Familienroman* and Dagmar Leupold's *Nach den Kriegen* (2006).

explore this contentious history from a familial perspective in an effort to establish continuity with previous generations (2006a: 26).

Generational demarcations are far from simplistic. A. Assmann identifies a trend of participating empathetically in discourses of German suffering across all generations. For example, Günter Grass's novella, *Im Krebsgang* (2002), has become perhaps the most critically acclaimed literary work to explore this theme, but with a birth year of 1927, the Nobel laureate does not clearly fall into the child generation. Wulf Kansteiner designates members of this generation as memory hybrids, those who were "too young to stop the horrors of the war but too old not to be born afterwards" (2006: 20). The emergence of this new interest in German suffering should not be understood as belonging to a specific generation, but spurred on by their presence. Applying and augmenting Wilhelm Pinder's concept of the "Ungleichzeitigheit der Gleichzeitigkeit," A. Assmann accentuates the idea that although people may be alive at the same time and in the same place, their differing ages will create a dissimilar experienced time for each individual. It is the presence of the grandchild (or third) generation's temporal experience and their desire to come to terms with memories that they do not have on the individual level that has driven this national discourse (2006b: 65).

As A. Assmann argues, memories of German suffering were not suppressed only to finally find articulation in the twenty-first century, but were preserved as familial narratives. It is the surfacing of this discourse to the public level that is so novel. Influenced by Ernst Renan's claim that national memory is determined by acts of winning or losing, A. Assmann argues that national memory is affected not merely by the

act of losing but by trauma, and she distinguishes between an *Opfergedächtnis* and *Tätergedächtnis,* claiming:

> Die Erinnerung an das vikimologische Opfer kann nicht innerhalb der Gruppe der Betroffenen bleiben, sondern verlangt nach Ausweitung ihrer Träger in Form von öffentlicher Anerkennung und Resonanz… Dem Opfergedächtnis entspricht kein ebenso klares Tätergedächnis, weil Täter gerade nicht um öffentliche Anerkennung, sondern im Gegenteil um Unsichbarkeit bemüht sind. (2006b: 81)

The memories of persecutors are not forgotten, but hidden from public discourse and kept alive within the circle of the family. The popularity of *Familienromane* brings with it the promise of a new perspective on the aftermath of the war. According to A. Assmann, texts that engage themes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* through the prism of familial generations succeed in bridging familial memories into national discourses:

> [Sie] erzählen die kollektive große Geschichte im Kleinformat von Familiengeschichten und verbinden private Innenansichten mit Außenansichten. Damit kommt ihnen aber noch eine weitere und wichtigere Bedeutung zu. Sie dokumentieren die Nachgeschichte des Zweiten Weltkriegs im privaten Milieu der Familie und thematisieren damit eine grundsätzliche Diskrepanz zwischen offizieller und privater Erinnerung, die die deutsche Nachkriegsgeschichte bestimmt hat. (2006a: 25)

The public presence of discourses of German suffering has not emerged without criticism. In his introduction to *Germans as Victims* (2006), Bill Niven outlines public debates concerning the fear of Germans viewing themselves as "absolute victims" and thereby obscuring their participation in and responsibility for the Holocaust (2006: 15).

Although this concern is shared by many—it is even a theme in Grass's *Im Krebsgang*—articulations of German suffering are often intrinsically linked to discourses of German guilt and violence. This chapter will deconstruct the intersection of discourses of suffering, family, and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in the twenty-first century by analyzing two films. Drawing on A. Assmann's work on *Familienromane*, I will demonstrate how discourses of German suffering can be deconstructed in texts that do not directly deal with the histories of World War II, but instead create a racialized, American geography onto which the battle of identification as victim or perpetrator can be projected.

The United States represented in the texts analyzed here is not to be understood as representing any real America. The Black America explored and employed in these texts is a discursive location, an imagined geography. The concept of imagined geographies has most successfully been developed and applied by practitioners of Postcolonialism, in which scholars categorize 'the Orient' as an imagined geography. Although my analysis focuses on Black America, similarities between the discursive constructions of this geography and the 'Orient' make the application of the term to African American culture within German discourses of Blackness appropriate. Imagined geographies were first suggested by Edward Said in his seminal *Orientalism* (1978). He uses the term to describe areas of knowledge about a place and its people that are not fake or fantastical but "textual universe[s]" created in the imagination of a nation through the convergence of intertextual discourses (1978: 52). The history of the German engagements with constructs of African Americans in the previous chapter demonstrated how Black America existed in German culture as a "textual universe." This chapter analyzes how

two directors project generational conflicts of white Germans on the imaged geography of a Black America, in order to explore constructs of historical victimhood and aggression.

Forgiving Father: Black American Rebellion in Oskar Roehler's *Lulu & Jimi* (2008)

The first text analyzed in this chapter, *Lulu & Jimi* (2008), is in essence a love story, one that expands beyond the traditional genre of romance to encompass elements of adventure, suspense, and fantasy. The film was written and directed by Oskar Roehler, who has been recognized as one of the most important directors of post-unification Germany. Known for an auteur style of filmmaking reminiscent of directors of the Neues Deutsches Kino,[82] Roehler first shot low budget 'trash' films with directors such as Christoph Schlingensief and inaugurated his solo career in the 1990's (Abel 2010: 75) with the psychological thriller *Gentlemen* (1995), an unofficial adaptation of Bret Easton Ellis's novel *American Psycho* (1991). He ended the century by focusing on themes of sexuality and the instability of heterosexual relationships in the modern era, and began his twenty-first century career with his masterwork *Die Unberührbare* (2000). The critically acclaimed film portrayed the downfall of a communist West German writer after the fall of the Wall and won a German Film Award. Roehler returns to themes of history in *Jud Süß - Film ohne Gewissen* (2010), in which he depicts the effects of the

[82] For an excellent analysis of Roehler's films as an extension of the *Neues Deutsches Kino*, see Johannes von Molkes "*Terrains Vagues*: Landscapes of Unification in Oskar Roehler's *No Place to Go*" in Jaimey Fisher and Brad Prager, eds, *The Collapse of the Conventional: German Film and Its Politics at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010). Using Roehler's *Die Unberührbare* (2000) as a case study, he traces the legacy of auteur cinema from the NDK to Roehler's twenty-first century works.

filming of the Nazi propaganda film *Jud Süß* (1940) on the film's leading male, Ferdinand Marian. His films have enjoyed commercial and critical success, securing numerous awards for the director and his cast and crew throughout Europe, and *Lulu & Jimi* is no exception.

The movie was well reviewed for its visual aesthetics as well as its message. Wolfgang Höbel, former editor and chief of the culture section of the *Spiegel,* described it as "[e]in ganz schöner Trip…. Und das in mehrfacher Hinsicht: Seine Romanze ist ein Farbrausch, die Helden sind auf der Flucht, der Zuschauer kann delirieren und sich amüsieren zugleich. Ach, und kritisch ist der Film auch" (2009). The film attests to Roehler's autobiographical tendencies and political engagement while adhering to his contemporary subjects of sexuality and heterosexual relationships. In an interview, Roehler cites American directors Ethan and Joel Coen and David Lynch as inspirations for the film. The influence of Lynch's *Wild at Heart* (1990) is readily apparent. Lynch's film follows Lula as she flees her oppressive mother with her lover Sailor, whom the mother tries to murder. Roehler's incorporation of supernatural elements distinguishes *Lulu & Jimi* remarkably from Lynch's film and makes it difficult to categorize into a traditional genre.

Marco Abel has convincingly argued that Roehler's works from the late 1990's up to and including *Lulu & Jimi* belong to the international trend of postromance, a term that "refers … to a recently emerging 'genre' of international art house films that engage issues of love, sex, dating, and romance, usually set in contemporary urban environments… [and] present audiences with an essentially pessimistic outlook on romantic relationships" (2010: 77). Although the movie contains similar themes, its use

of fairy tale elements, such as magic and a happy ending, as well as its historical setting and overt engagement in the German discourse of *Vergangenheitbewältigung* make it difficult to categorize. Part adventure, part romance, and part fantasy, the film weaves an intricate tale of familial suffering, culpability, and redemption that garners a deeper look into its commentary on American Blackness and its role in German national processes of coming to terms with its National Socialist past.

The film is set in postwar West Germany in 1959. Lulu Bertel comes from a family in financial strife. Her father Carli no longer works because of an unexplained illness. Gertrud, the family's domineering matriarch, attempts to marry Lulu, the only daughter, into a rich family, but is hindered when Lulu falls in love with Jimi, an African American. Gertrud forbids the relationship, but Lulu continues to court him. In a pivotal scene, Jimi escorts her to a party of the town's socialites where her brother, Richard, starts a fight with Jimi. During the altercation, Richard's back breaks as he falls onto the heel of a stiletto after Jimi pushes him. Jimi is initially arrested, but found not guilty of any wrongdoing. Upon his release, he and Lulu run away, intending to sail to the United States.

During their journey towards the harbor of Hamburg, the young couple runs into a series of obstacles including robbery and discrimination. Lulu discovers she is pregnant and the two grow closer. Lulu discloses her family's dark history: her father's philandering past and her mother's physical retribution. Jimi shares a similarly troubled childhood, recounting how he narrowly escaped his father's abuse through the help of a white German he only knew as Daddy Cool. Their escape is further complicated when Gertrud enlists the help of Doctor von Oppeln, who uses mystical powers to entice Lulu

from Jimi. When this fails, she hires her lover Schulz and a violent WWII veteran, Hass, to hunt down and kill Jimi. Jimi is shot, and Lulu narrowly escapes by shooting Hass. After months of difficult recovery, Jimi returns to Lulu's familial homestead in search of her. Her mother has passed away, secretly smothered by Richard, allowing Jimi to join the Bertel family, now consisting of Carli, Lulu, Richard, and Lulu's baby.

Although the lines between perpetrator and victim are blurred, the line between 'good' and 'evil' is clearly demarcated. This film, which Roehler called "ein Märchen für Erwachsene" (2008a), challenges the traditional fairy tale constellation of 'good' versus 'evil', which cultivates the story's hero from an innocent victim, and replaces it with a construct of 'good' which exists in concordance with culpability. The juxtaposition between the film's stark differentiation between 'good' and 'evil' and its foggy distinction between victim and perpetrator begs the question: how does the film identify a character as good or evil? This question is central to unfurling this work's relationship to the national process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in the twenty-first century.

The reconciliation of heroism and culpability is referential to A. Assmann's literary analyses of *Familienromane*. Whereas her work primarily examines novels written in the first person with plots that deal directly with representations of the history of World War II, the text under scrutiny here, a film with an omniscient mode of story-telling, never explicitly references the Second World War. A. Assmann's work does, however, provide insight due to her focus on the possibility of empathy towards the *Erfahrungsgeneration* as an important component of modern processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.

It is not my intention to view the film as a cinematic reinterpretation of a *Familienroman*; rather, the themes of generational break, continuity, empathy, suffering, and victimhood explored in the movie broaden A. Assmann's conclusions of generational identity beyond the genre. Generational change plays a key role in the film. For the director, the 1950's existed as a time of transition. In explaining the importance of his choice of the setting's era, Roehler commented, "Die fünfziger sind ein ganz merkwürdiges Jahrzehnt, weil sie ein Jahrzehnt sind zwischen einer ganz, ganz dunklen Zeit, die in den Köpfen der älteren Generation noch weitergespukt hat, und einer Zeit der Aufklärung" (2008a).

The fifties are a time of generational transition, one which is tainted by memories of a dark past. The film depicts three distinct generations: the parent generation, that of Carli and Gertrud; the child generation, to which Lulu, Richard, and Jimi belong; and the grandchild generation, as represented by the birth of Lulu and Jimi's baby. The conflict that drives the plot, that of Lulu and Jimi's union, however, is not easily distinguished as a generation clash, because it eschews universal judgment of any specific age group. Gertrud and Schulz are openly antagonistic to Lulu's interest in Jimi, but her father Carli happily welcomes him into the family. As pertains to the children's generation, Richard comes to accept Lulu's relationship with Jimi, but Lulu's peers mock him at the party. There is also no clear empathy with or desire to break from the older generation. The Bertel children are dedicated to Carli, one member of the parental generation, but antagonistic towards the mother, a member of the same generation. Just as there exists a lack of clarity between victim and perpetrator, so too are the dynamics between age groups ambiguous.

The generational relationships are not governed by age or similarity of experiences, but in relation to a character's willingness to part from the ideologies of the "ganz dunkle Zeit" of the Nazi past and adopt the new "Aufklärung" of postwar Germany. Each character is then depicted as 'good' or 'evil' according to their willingness to separate themselves from enduring Fascist beliefs. By examining the family's journey of freeing itself from the horrors of their personal pasts and the dictatorial weltanschauung instated by the Nazis, the text's participation in national discourses of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and German suffering can be exposed.

Identifying the origin of a character's belief system is not a straightforward task. Within this text, an individual's reliance on Nazi values is revealed through his or her interaction with the Black American presence—represented by the character of Jimi—and the acceptance of Lulu's relationship with him. The battle between old and new mindsets rages upon the battleground of gendered and racialized bodies. As Toni Morrison notes, the inclusion of a racialized character by a white author is never arbitrary:

> Race has become metaphorical—a way of referring to and disguising forces, events, classes, and expressions of social decay and economic division far more threatening to the body politic than biological 'race' ever was. (1999: 63)

Jimi's 'race', his Blackness, becomes a cinematic device against which a white character's adherence to Fascist ideologies is measured. 'Race' and its potentiality of provoking the racism that is associated with the Third Reich within a white character becomes a way of referring to the social decay of postwar Germany. Characters who are willing to accept

Lulu's decision to have a child with a Black man, Jimi, are depicted as heroic, whereas those who shun the union are vilified.

The construct of 'race' is also informed by and linked to gender constructs. It is Lulu's freedom to choose the father of her children—her body—that is being contested. This is poignantly demonstrated by the movie's final scene. After seeing his baby, Jimi leaves the baby's room with Lulu, walking downstairs to rejoin the remnants of the Bertel family. The film ends with a shot of Jimi and Lulu on the stairs, with Richard in his wheelchair below. The scene is shot from a low angle, giving Jimi and Lulu a pronounced stature against the crestfallen Richard below. The set is lit from the front sides, creating a contrast with the stairs in the background, down which the couple descends. Richard is pointed directly at the couple as he moves from one lit room to the other. The film reverses to a high angle, full of Richard, whose face looks up to Jimi ambivalently, resentful but accepting. It returns to the full frontal shot of Richard and the couple. Richard pushes himself into the lit room stage left, which is Lulu and Jimi's destination as well. The film ends with Lulu assuring Jimi that he doesn't need to worry about Richard.

These few shots expose Richard's mixed feelings for Jimi. Although Richard was willing to sacrifice his mother's life to save Lulu's unborn child, it is obvious that the deed was carried out on his sister's behalf. Although Jimi's paternity is accepted by Richard, the tolerance of his membership into the family is ambiguous. It is unclear if Richard's disdain for Jimi is racially or personally motivated, and it is moot for the continuity of the film. Lulu and Jimi are aware of Richard's feelings, as is represented by Lulu's cool dismissal of Richard's behavior, but this does not stop Richard from entering the lit room,

the one containing the jubilant Carli, into which Lulu and Jimi are destined to unite with the Bertel men as a family. Richard may not have overcome his racist sentiments, but his devotion to Lulu and her child is beyond contestation. Richard ends the film as a hero not because he has overtly overcome any racist sentiments associated with the Third Reich, but because he has accepted a new future for the family and Germany, one that is represented by the Black German baby.

The film's employment of the female body as the discursive site of national contestations of German ‘whiteness’ has significant historical precedents. As laid out in the previous chapter, there have been multiple public debates concerning German 'racial purity' in the twentieth century. The film deals most directly with the processes of racialization that occurred during the Third Reich. Uli Linke connects constructs of race and gender to National Socialist discourses of blood and purity in her *Blood and Nation: The European Aesthetics of Race* (1999). She succinctly states, "The protection of German blood came to be the primary political purpose and goal of the state. By exterminating all that was alien and by regulating marriage, the state could serve as an instrument whereby the Germans could accomplish the rebirth of their nation" (1999a: 209). Tracing mythologies of blood, procreation, and purity from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century, she examines the female body as a discursive location onto which fears of German 'purity' could be projected.

Such discourses did not arise from a vacuum. African occupation forces left in Germany by the French at end of the First World War were publically decried in the German (and other European) media. Tina Campt successfully deconstructs the debate concerning the accused aggression of the troops along gender lines, noting the construct

of the female body played a paramount role in the vilification of the Black soldiers. Accusations of the rape of white women were among the most prevalent grievances iterated by those who opposed the troops. She connects fears of racial purity after WWI to the debate concerning the citizenship of biracial colonial subjects at the beginning of the century. Adapting Mary Douglas's anthropological work on purity in her seminal *On Purity and Danger* (1966), Campt argues that "[r]acial mixture can be seen to violate social boundaries analogous to those that threaten the core of a living organism" (2005, 29) and as the child bearer, the female body was constructed as the vehicle through which this 'violation' of German 'whiteness' took place.

The connection drawn between these historical discourses and the constructs of the female body in the film is not intended to create any sense of teleological inevitability, but to demonstrate the persistence of discourses of race and gender since nineteenth century German colonialism in Africa, discourses in which the film knowingly participates. During the party scene in which Lulu takes Jimi to meet her friends, two of her acquaintances engage Jimi in a conversation about culture. One friend asks Jimi if he understands the difference between civilization and Culture. Jimi immediately recognizes this as a degrading reference to colonial discourses that drove the colonization of non-white peoples by Europeans, who justified their exploits under claims of bringing Culture[83] to savage civilizations. Jimi flippantly dismisses the comment replying, "Es gibt keine Kultur in Amerika" (Roehler 2008b), but his refusal to look his conversant in the eye exposes his umbrage. The insinuations about the United States as a Cultureless nation will be explored later in the chapter; for the purposes here, it is important to note that the

[83] I am capitalizing the term Culture here to denote its reference to a hegemonic discourse of culture that attempted to distinguish between a superior form of Culture that was encapsulated in a nation's great works of art and a 'lesser' culture, which refers to the mass culture of everyday life.

film links racism to a history beyond that of the Third Reich. The characters must free themselves not only from the Fascist past, but from a discourse that has entrapped German thought and knowledge production for centuries.

These historical discourses of ‘impurity’ and the national body are written on Lulu's character, who is overtly sexualized and strongly policed by her mother and von Oppeln. She is also in constant danger from the white male’s gaze. Elizabeth Grosz and Judith Butler both explore the female body, its sex, as a discursive construct, challenging its understanding as "a simple fact or static condition of the body" (199:, 8). In *Volatile Bodies* (1994), Grosz challenges the 'naturalness' of bodies, particularly female bodies, stating:

> ...[B]odies cannot be adequately understood as ahistorical, precultural, or natural objects in any simple way; they are not only inscribed, marked, engraved, by social pressures external to them but are the products, the direct effects, of the very social constitution of nature itself. It is not simply that the body is represented in a variety of ways according to historical, social, and cultural exigencies, while it remains basically the same; these factors actively produce the body as a body of a determinate type. (1994: x)

Lulu's body and her sexuality must be understood as constructs, and the “naturalness” of her femaleness and heterosexuality must be called into question. The character’s sexual preference is not being challenged rather female heterosexuality must be understood as a construct that lends meaning to the story. The construction of a heterosexual female brings with it specific cultural connotations. For example, despite having two children in the family, the possibility of rescuing the family’s finances by marrying Richard into a

rich family is never suggested, because procreation is inscribed on the female body. Since the body "can and does function to represent, to symbolize, social and collective fantasies and obsessions: its orifices and surfaces can represent the sites of cultural marginality, places of social entry and exit, regions of confrontation or compromise" (Grosz 1994: 193). As a potential child bearer, the heterosexual female body becomes inscribed as the symbolic entrance into the family and German society as a whole. Lulu's family and society value her exclusively for her outward appearance's ability to draw heterosexual male attention and its potential for giving birth to that man's child, reducing her body and procreative power "to currencies of masculine achievement" (Linke 1999a: 4).

She is portrayed numerous times in front of the vanity mirror putting on make-up or dressing. In one such scene, Richard enters the open door to her room to find her in underwear holding up dresses in front of a mirror. Lulu asks which dress he thinks looks best, and he replies, "Du bist so erwachsen geworden," obviously sexually aroused by his sister's nakedness (Roehler 2008b). Von Oppeln, the psychiatrist, is only able to observe her medically while she is in an undershirt and underwear, and when she asks permission to get dressed again, he becomes enraged. Lulu is beset from the threat of the white male gaze at all times.

In a particularly disturbing scene, Hass enters the couple's hotel room while Lulu is alone in order to tell her he could not sleep because he couldn't get the image of her legs out of his mind. When she asks him to leave, he forces his body up to hers. In an extreme close-up of her face, Lulu is portrayed from the side, her lips tremble slightly from fear. Hass's face is a few centimeters from hers. His gaze into her eyes is unyielding. He orders her to say, "Nimm mich," but she remains mute (Roehler 2008b).

He orders her again, more loudly and violently. She succumbs, and the film cuts to a full shot of the two, still standing inches apart. The front of Hass's pants becomes wet from ejaculate, and he exits nonchalantly. Lulu is left on the bed trembling from fear, essentially raped by his gaze.

Lulu is unable to escape the white male gaze even while alone. She is always being watched by von Oppeln through his crystal ball. Von Oppeln's magical device also empowers the mother (whose gaze is the most threatening of all) to observe her daughter. Inge Stephan characterized the literary representation of the female gaze as dangerous, using Medusa as the archetype (2006: 75). A similar danger exists in the mother's appropriation of the power to see. Eliciting von Oppeln's help, Gertrud is able to castrate Carli, whose preoccupation had been beautiful women, which is demonstrated in his identity as Daddy Cool, a man who drove in a convertible with multiple nearly nude women. His castration results in his subservience to his wife and the death of his sexual alter ego. Sequestered in his home, his power to gaze at women has been squelched as is demonstrated in his first appearance. Found in the garden by Lulu, Carli is grasping longingly at a small group of azalea blossoms that form a tight ball. Carli's hand reaches out to grab the flower, but not by the stem or by the bottom of the blossom as if to smell it, but from the front, in a motion similar to grasping a breast. Physically castrated, no longer allowed to gaze at women's bodies, Carli becomes impotent as a leader as well. The patriarch of the family overthrown, Gertrud emerges as the evil matriarch.

The importance of seeing, being seen, and the power structures they created cannot be overstated in this film. As a work of cinema, a movie is visual in nature, something to be seen, but this text in particular places primacy in the visual over the

dialogue. The lead roles were even cast without a reading of the German script. Neither of the leading roles is played by a German. Ray Fearon (Jimi) is English, and Jennifer Decker, who is French, had never spoken a word of German before being cast as Lulu. In an interview, Fearon even expresses his shock at being offered the part. He explains, "I didn't cast for [the role]. I thought [Roehler] had seen my work, but he'd only seen my photo in a magazine. He said, 'Your photo stood on my bedside table for months.' And he thought, 'I've got to meet this chap. This chap is perfect'" (Fearon 2008) The look of the actors, the visual aesthetics of the scenery, and the direction and power of the gaze are meticulously choreographed.

Jimi's Blackness, like Lulu's femininity, also draws the white gaze, but not due to its physical beauty but its perceived threat to German 'whiteness'. When Lulu first meets Jimi, he lives on the periphery of German culture, working for a travelling carnival. At the fair, all of the rides have English names, and American Rock n' Roll plays incessantly in the background. The carnival represents an almost utopian American geography within the borders of Germany, and Jimi, as a transient Black American who never belongs to any German town, is able to blend into his Americana scenery and live happily and unseen. He is only subjected to the white gaze once he enters German society with a white German woman.

When Jimi enters a room with Lulu, all eyes turn to him. At the party, the guests turn their heads and follow the couple as they move through the courtyard, whispering disapprovingly. When they step onto the dance floor, the people in the crowd aim their gazes towards them and slow their movements hesitantly. The power of the gaze is particularly evident in a gymnastics tournament sequence, which consists of a number of

shots cutting between Lulu's performance on the floor, Jimi's reaction in the audience, and the judges at a side table. As Lulu tumbles through her routine, she pauses to blow Jimi kisses, or wave slightly. These images are at first cut with full shots of Jimi, sitting forward in his chair, his eyes transfixed on Lulu, returning her smiles and waves. As the sequence continues, shots of Jimi become wider, revealing the audience. At first, you notice the white women sitting immediately around him. Visually, they create a stark contrast to Jimi. They are all wearing light colored clothing, soft pinks or purples, against Jimi's black leather jacket and dark blue jeans. They are well perched in their seats, straight backs, and without turning their heads or divulging any expression they peak at Jimi in quick glances. When the camera returns to Jimi later, there is a wide shot, in which the audience is revealed in its entirety. Those sitting further back are glaring at Jimi disapprovingly. The camera cuts to the judges table where the evaluators, noticing the glances between white Lulu and Black Jimi, turn their heads completely from Lulu, who should be the target of the gaze, to Jimi, and begin pointing and chatting to each other. The sequence ends outside the auditorium, Lulu running happily into Jimi's arms, even though they acknowledge her loss was due to their relationship.

Jimi's gaze at Lulu upsets the audience and horrifies the judges for two reasons: it empowers Lulu's, a female, gaze and threatens German 'whiteness'. Demonstrated throughout the film, the male gaze is an act of possession, power, and sexuality. In contrast with the other male gazes in the film, Jimi's gaze is reciprocated. The power to see is heavily gendered. Even Gertrud must endure it from her lover Schulz. For example, in the only scene that portrays the physicality of their affair through an embrace, Schulz grabs her from behind and tells her how beautiful she is, forcing her gaze away from him,

out a window towards Lulu. Within the heterosexual relationship, Gertrud is denied the right to gaze at her male lover.

Between Lulu and Jimi, however, there is an equality of the gaze. These two lovers—who fell in love at first sight—exchange glances and smiles throughout the gymnastic scene. The female gaze is threatening because it disrupts gender roles and places women in a position of sexual power. Despite the myriad of male remarks about the visual appeal of women, there is only one female remark of a man's physical appearance. Jimi and Lulu are portrayed in Jimi's convertible on a hill behind the fair shortly after having made love. Lulu is fully dressed, sitting on top of the car painting her toe nails and looking down towards Jimi who is lying below her in the backseat with his shirt off. Lulu pauses for a moment, gazes at Jimi and remarks, "Du bist sexy" (Roehler 2008b). The color of his skin and his racialization as Black make Jimi a sexual object to be looked at and enable Lulu to see instead of being seen.

Secondly, gazing upon Lulu, Jimi asserts his possession of a white woman and his sexual intentions, thereby disrupting the white male gaze, which moves from Lulu to Jimi expressing a perceived threat to German 'whiteness': miscegenation. The specter of mixed race relationships and their offspring is a discourse that resurfaces throughout German twentieth history reaching its destructive zenith in the Holocaust. The audience's expression of disgust at Lulu's relationship with Jimi articulates a continuation of the Fascist racism that relies on constructs of purity and blood. Inscribed as a point of social entrance, women are charged "as the guardians of sexual purity" (Grosz 1994: 197),[84] in

[84] Grosz uses this phrase to describe women's role in the contemporary AIDS discourse. She describes how female bodies are constructed as the gateways for disease. In light of Campts assertion that 'race' was constructed throughout the twentieth century as a construct of purity, and Uli Linke's tracing of constructs

this case as guardians of racial sexual purity. The potentiality of a non-white German baby challenges the construction of Germanness as white as well as the privileges that come with that 'whiteness'. Like Blackness, 'whiteness' is a discursive location, one "of power, a designation of political space" (Linke 1999b: 31). Dependent upon a National Socialist construct of race as one being transferred through blood and 'whiteness' as resulting from a "purity of blood" (Linke 1999a: 4), miscegenation is perceived as a potential 'impurity' and threat to the national body.

Gertrud's interests in Lulu's procreative powers are also racially motivated. Lulu's betrothal to Ernst, the son of a rich family, would have been endangered by the interloping of any heterosexual male, but the standing of the family is further jeopardized by Jimi's Blackness. After Richard and Jimi's brawl, the movie jumps forward a few weeks. The new setting is introduced with a close up of a newspaper lying on the table. The headline reads, "Justizskandal in Schweinfurt/ Neger-Geliebter auf freiem Fuß/ Bertel-Tochter sagt gegen Familie aus" (Roehler 2008b). The camera pans out to reveal Richard in his wheelchair, behind him Gertrud and Schulz talk about Lulu. Gertrud expresses her concern about allowing her daughter to leave her room while Jimi is free and decides to take her to Dr. von Oppeln. The congruency of the newspaper and Gertrud's concern for Lulu's interest in Jimi emphasizes Gertrud's racial motivations.

The newspaper is more than a cinematic device to establish the setting. It is also used to express the public opinion of the family's situation and declining social standing. Labeling Jimi's lack of imprisonment as a scandal of justice articulates the systemic racism still thriving in Germany. The article title indicates that Lulu's testimony freed

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of racial purity to discourses of blood and procreation, I feel it is appropriate to borrow Grosz's term applying it to the white German female's role in keeping the German national body 'racially pure'.

Jimi from incarceration, and openly interprets this as an act against the family. Her testimony is scandalous not because it represents any corruption of the judicial process, but because Black violence against a white German, even if provoked by the white German, should not go unpunished. Juxtaposing the newspaper's articulation of racism with Gertrud's suppression of Lulu's freedom reveals a concern for the family's further social decline. The family's reputation is reliant upon its 'whiteness', and this 'whiteness' is threatened by Lulu's sexuality.

The next sequence is set at von Oppeln's dark office, where he observes Lulu for the first time. He ends the observation by asking Lulu if she were pregnant with Jimi's baby. After she denies a pregnancy, von Oppeln ominously warns her, saying:

> Neger-Embryos wachsen schneller im Mutterleib als normale Kinder. Wusstest du das nicht? Ab dem fünften Monat besteht die Gefahr, das seine Gebärmutter nicht schnell genug mitwächst. Sie kann platzen. Und daran kannst du sterben. (Roehler 2008b)

This statement is intended to scare Lulu and dissuade her from a sexual relationship with Jimi. Whether von Oppeln and Gertrud place any credence in this disturbing assertion is unclear. The statement's potential power to frighten Lulu is not based on any belief of factuality but rather it is discursive. Regardless of the mother's or von Oppeln's belief in a biological category of race, they are aware that Lulu has been exposed to a myriad of racial constructs that stake their claims in biological and medical discourses of racial difference. They rely on her internalization of these ideas to provoke anxiety despite her love for Jimi or even any rational understanding of race, hoping this will prevent the creation of a Black German baby.

Jimi's Blackness was tolerated as long as it was kept separate from any claim to Germanness. Not only did he live on the periphery of German society, in a migratory America, but he never characterized himself as German. The Black man who lived longer in Germany than the United States and who used German as his daily language longer than English, never self-identified as German. He even relied on his Americanness as a form of protection. When accosted at the party with the question concerning the difference between Culture and civilization, Jimi replies that he knows nothing about the subject because America has no Culture. He attempts to redirect the conversation from a discourse of 'race' to a discourse of nationality. At the same party, when asked for his full name, Jimi replies, "Jimi American." Identifying himself clearly as American, he both acknowledges his otherness and disassociates himself from any desire to claim Germanness.

Whereas the Black American is 'othered', a Black American presence permeates white German culture throughout the film. The soundtrack is influenced by the American Rock n' Roll of the fifties and sixties, often rerecording hits from the era. English terms like "baby" are strewn throughout the dialogue, and American products are referenced or visibly placed in shots. The ubiquity of American culture even seems to reach hyperbole in the prevalence of American convertibles. Every car driven by a major character, with one exception, is an American manufactured convertible. Despite the abundance of American cultural objects, it is incorrect to assume the portrayal of a singular construct of American. There are multiple Americas represented in this film and constructed across racial lines.

An analysis of the appropriation of American cultural artifacts by white Germans exposes an imagined geography of a Black America. The Blackness of this geography, like the Blackness of Jimi, becomes a testing ground for the exposure of Fascist ideologies. The United States is represented through a multitude of cultural expressions and associated with numerous often contradictory principles, such as: consumerism, lack of discipline, or freedom of expression. The imagined geography of the United States associated with positive attributes such as freedom of expression and racial tolerance is racialized as Black. This is best demonstrated through a comparison of two party scenes.

Lulu's first public appearance with Jimi is at the party where Richard is paralyzed. After Lulu's first meeting with Dr. von Oppeln, she is able to sneak out of the house to meet Jimi at a second party. Just like the first party, there is a fight scene that ensues when a white German male attempts to stop Jimi from dancing with Lulu. Both of the parties are staged with American cultural artifacts; however, Jimi's acceptance and role at these parties are wildly different, conveying a different means of appropriating American culture and constructing different imagined geographies.

The mise-en-scène of these parties clash significantly. The first event is outside, well lit, and marked by the color white. The tables behind the dance floor are covered in white table cloths and the wardrobe of the women is muted pinks, whites, and lilacs, similar to the clothing worn by the women in the audience of the gymnastics tournament. The men are all wearing suits with either white or black jackets. Lulu's dress—black on top with bold maroon polka dots and dark maroon with black dots on the bottom—conflicts with the rest of the female attire, and Jimi's outfit is less formal than that of other men. Even Lulu's deep dark brown hair creates a contrast. In the aerial shots of the

dance floor, the couple is easily spotted, not because of Jimi's skin tone, but because the darkness of Lulu's pompadour-like hairstyle contrasts conspicuously with the hair of the other women which is predominantly blonde.

The second party is in a bar. The room is dark, and both male and female wardrobes are less formal and prominently black. Most of the men are wearing black leather jackets, including Jimi. Lulu's deep burgundy dress melts with the other girls' black and burgundy dresses, and her hair color and style are mimicked by the other dancing females.

Interestingly, both parties feature music made popular by African Americans. At the open-air party, the guests crowd onto the dance floor once the band—wearing iridescent sandy beige suits and blonde crew cuts—begins playing *Mellow Saxophone,* a Rock n' Roll hit written by Ray Montrell. The band at the club, who are sporting bold purple and red sports jackets and long dark hair, first play *Train keep a'Rolling*, a jump blues song by Tiny Bradshaw—who is considered instrumental in the creation of Rock n' Roll—and they end the scene accompanying Jimi as he sings *Stand by Me,* immortalized by Ben E. King. What differs between the two groups is the reaction of the crowd to Jimi's Black American presence and to the racism he faces. At both parties, Jimi and Lulu execute a number of air steps that are associated with the dance moves of the swing and jazz era of the 1930's. Whereas this draws the white gaze of guests at the outdoor party, their fellow dancers at the club take no note of it because they are dancing in the same fashion.

Both parties also come to a halt when a white male challenges Jimi's right to be with Lulu. In the first instance, Richard's cry of "Halt!" stops the music and draws the

dancers' attention. In the club, Jimi motions suddenly with his arm pointing at the lead singer on stage to silence the band and grab the attention of the dancers who then gather around him. This confident gesture, which is made more pronounced with a spot light that creates a steam of white light seemingly springing from Jimi's body and piercing through the crowd to the stage, is a mark of Jimi's power within the club. It is his dominion, and in this place, he commands the white gaze. This club functions, like the fair, as a type of imagined America on German soil. This is further emphasized by the attendance of American soldiers and sailors, who can be seen in the background of the fight scene. The darkness of the setting, the prominent use of black in the mise-en-scène, Jimi's ability to blend in with the crowd, and the acceptance of swing dance and music racializes this imagined geography as Black.

Jimi controls this island of Black America and is able to bluntly fight Fascist ideologies still upheld by some white Germans. His provocation to stop the band and combat a white German only occurs after this man slings a racial slur at Lulu. The drunk, who wears a leather jacket and a pompadour, asks Lulu to dance. Upon hearing her rejection he replies, "Verdammte Negerbraut. Früher hätte man dir die Haare abrasiert" (Roehler 2008b). This reference to the Holocaust and the shaving of inmates' hair upon arrival at a concentration camp incites Jimi to action. At this moment, Jimi calls for silence and lectures the boy, saying, "Du plädierst also für die Rückkehr in die Barbarei? Hast du eben die fundamentalen, demokratischen Rechte beleidigt, die sich dieses Land gerade mühsam zurückverdient (Roehler 2008b)?" In this statement, Jimi is finally able to directly confront the persistence of National Socialist ideals of race in post-war Germany and emphasize the detriment they pose to Germany's rehabilitation as a

democratic nation. As the scene progresses, he is even portrayed as being able to ultimately overcome these racist sentiments.

The inebriated German doesn't seem able to follow Jimi's argument and retorts a number of times with a confused "Heh?" finally responding with, "Halt die Fresse, du Arsch." Realizing the German isn't able to understand his argument against racism and the damage it causes the German nation, Jimi brings him to his knees, holding him still by grabbing his hair and orders him to apologize, saying, "…[E]ntschuldigst du dich bei der Dame und bei allen anderen für die Verschmutzung des politischen Klimas, der Gastfreundschaft, und für deine Störung der Völkerverständigung" (Roehler 2008b). The German is scared and humiliated. He apologizes and Jimi allows him to stand, offering him a piece of chewing gum which the German accepts before returning to the dance floor.

Compared to expressions of racism at the first party, this scene more directly locates the origins of German conceptualizations of 'race' within the history of the Third Reich and portrays a possibility for overcoming them. Despite their love of American music, the guests at the first party still propagate racist ideals. They simply don't speak about them in public. They contain their racism to hushed whispers among friends and disguise it as intellectual conversation through racially informed historical references. Their appropriation of Black American culture as represented through the song *Mellow Saxophone* subjugates the Black American to the dominant white German. The Germans will dance to a song by an African American, but only in a German fashion. The song is performed by Germans that the Nazis would have categorized as Aryan, and the guests

readily reject Jimi's dance moves which are too reminiscent of the swing era which were branded by the Nazis as *entartet*.

Returning to Said's explanation of an imagined geography, Black America, like the Orient, means "something more than what was empirically known about it" (1978, 55). There is little real about the Black America that is constructed in this film. A historical analysis of American race relations in the 1950's would reveal a country which offers little to an interracial couple. The setting of this film, 1959, is only 5 years after Brown vs. Board of Education which, although it made segregation federally illegal in the United States, was still not recognized in many states. It would not be until 1967, eight years after Lulu and Jimi's supposed flight to America, that miscegenation would be universally legal. Even more sobering, during the filming of this movie, Paul Saltzman and Morgan Freeman were simultaneously filming *Prom Night in Mississippi* (2009), documenting the first racially integrated high school prom at Charleston High School in Charleston, MS, in 2008. The goal is not to demonize the United States, but to accentuate the imaginary character of the Black America constructed in this film.

The imaginary is critical. The plot is driven by fantastical events and the era is as imagined as the geography of Black America. In an interview, Roehler states that it was never his intention to form any real estimation of the 1950's. He wanted the film to have the aura of the era and created a world that was purposefully overly aestheticized. The hair styles and wardrobe were influenced by the fashion of the 1950's, but they are exaggerated in the film. The colors are often bold and saturated. For example every room in the Bertel home is a different color, and all of the furniture is of a similar color. The

mother is introduced in the gold trimmed, pink wallpapered living room sitting on a pink couch wearing a gold dress with a dog that has been dyed pink at her side.

In similar fashion, the imagined America depicted throughout the film is not intended to refer to any actual America, but serves to identify, confront, and remedy German racism. Jimi's role is to "represent the larger whole from which [he] emanate[s]" (Said 1978: 63), and as the representative of this imagined geography is tasked with the daunting task of resolving German racism. He becomes an agent of German national *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.

The gum Jimi offers the drunk German at the club, and which he in return accepts, is a kind of peace offering, a symbol of acceptance and friendship despite their altercation. The gum represents Jimi's acknowledgment of the white German's apology and the forgiveness of his racism. Black America becomes a place of salvation, and Jimi, as a Black American, can offer absolution for Germany's past transgressions.

Just as Jimi's Blackness is used as a cinematic device to test a German's retention of Nazi ideologies of race, it also offers the potentiality for reconciliation with the National Socialist past and enables both the recognition of German suffering and forgiveness of the *Erfahrungsgeneration* by younger generations. The film's final shot is of Jimi and Lulu standing in the foyer about to enter a side room containing the newly reconstructed Bertel family, consisting of Jimi, Lulu, Richard, Carli, and the baby, who is still upstairs. Although both Richard and Carli are guilty of offenses against the family, they are portrayed as impotent and suffering.

Carli's infidelity is located as the origins of sufferings specific to the family. His affairs provoked Gertrud to elicit the help of Dr. von Oppeln which brings dark magic

into the household. Carli is not, however, the originator of the violence the family faces. The violence is demonstrated as stemming from the brutality perpetrated during the Third Reich. Tested against Jimi's Blackness, Gertrud exposes herself as a racist who retains destructive Fascist values. Her castration of Carli is uncovered as the same violence that causes her to attempt to kill Jimi. This violence then permeates through to the younger generations, either teaching her children to attack those who are different, as is the case of Richard's accosting Jimi, or forcing them to protect themselves from this historic violence, as depicted by Lulu's murder of Hass.

Carli is also tested against Jimi's Blackness, but unlike Gertrud, reveals himself as a man who has disposed of National Socialist bigotry. Whereas Gertrud attempts to take Jimi's life, Carli saves it. Carli's love of Rock n' Roll and his alter ego as Daddy Cool, who rides around in a Cadillac with girls of many 'races', depict him as a member of the imaginary geography of Black America. Freed of the racism of the Third Reich, Carli is allowed to return to the family. He returns not as the man he was, but as a castrated man who has suffered for his sins.

Richard's membership to the Bertel household is also dependent on a configuration of suffering on the backdrop of an imagined Black America. Rendered disabled by Jimi, a Black American, Richard suffers for his bigotry and incestuous urges towards Lulu. Although his personal feelings for Jimi remain ambiguous at the end of the film, the murder of his mother serves as both a penance for his wrongdoings, and perhaps an omen of the possibility of a continuation of the ideological violence of National Socialism. Disempowered by Jimi, Richard is allowed to reconcile with the family regardless of his opinion of the family's new patriarch.

With the removal of the mother and the disempowerment of the Bertel men, a patriarchy is re-established, but with a Black American as the head of the family. Jimi's ascent was not of his own doing, however. By revealing Carli as the Daddy Cool that saved Jimi from his father's aggression, Lulu and Jimi's union seems to be predestined by her father. Lulu's options for suitors, Ernst and Jimi, are exposed as a confrontation of the mother's and the father's choices for the future of the family. Jimi and his son become the father's chosen heirs. Through the surrogacy of Jimi, Carli becomes the savior of the family. His decision to save Jimi allows Lulu to find a lover who empowers her to gaze, it predestines Richard to be rid of his bigotry, and ultimately enables the overthrow of the matriarchy and the creation of a new, racially mixed future symbolized by the baby.

The agency of the father is actually foreshadowed briefly and subtly in the mise-en-scène of one of Dr. von Oppeln's house visits. Gertrud brings Lulu into the pink living room, where the doctor waits. Richard sits in the unlit dining room, his wheelchair perched at the threshold between the two rooms. For one brief moment, the camera is angled in such a way as to frame a family portrait between Lulu and Gertrud. In the painting, a young Richard stands to the left of his father gazing in the direction of camera. Sitting to Carli's right is the child Lulu, who looks up dotingly at her father. The Gertrud of the painting cannot be seen, because the actress playing her is standing in such a way as to cover her image in the portrait. The future of the family seems to be set. Gertrud will be removed from the household, and Lulu will gain the power to gaze, empowered by the presence of her father.

The film ends hopefully. A promising new generation sleeps in a room above the congregation of representatives of the *Erfahrungsgeneration* and *Erlebnisgeneration* in the living room. Lulu is reunited with her love, and the new racially mixed family has disposed of its evil mother and her proliferation of Nazi values. The Bertel men, having each suffered for the pain they wrought upon the family can be rejoined into an empathetic and caring household.

Songs from Abroad: Finding Saxony-Anhalt in Black Louisiana, Michael Schorr's *Schultze gets the blues* (2003)

Michael Schorr's debut feature length film *Schultze gets the blues* differs greatly from Roehler's *Lulu & Jimi*. Whereas Roehler's major motion picture was well-funded and used the most modern film techniques, including computer animation, Schorr's project had a budget of €1.3 million and used a video camera built in the 1970's for the majority of its filming. *Schultze* is marked by long periods of silence and negative space. The lead character has no dialogue for the first 15 minutes of the movie. A work of mixed genres, this part comedy part tragedy eschews any of the fantasy that typified Roehler's work, drawing instead on documentarian techniques in an effort to capture everyday life of both a small town in eastern Germany and the Louisiana bayou. The film has also been categorized as an *Autorenfilm* for "Schorr's multifaceted involvement as writer and director… and his use of a small film crew" (Pirro 2008: 71), which is reminiscent of Herzog's early work in the Amazon on such films as *Aguirre – der Zorn Gottes* (1972) and *Fritzcarraldo* (1982).

Schorr's film garnered bountiful accolades, dominating the 2003 Venice Film Festival, bringing home the Special Director's Award as well as prizes for Best Film and in the categories of debut film, lead actor, and screenplay. It was well reviewed, complimented for its direction and social critique (Beier 2004: 166). Set in twenty-first century Saxony-Anhalt, *Schultze* abjures any direct commentary on German history analogous to Jimi's monologue concerning Germany's postwar processes of democratization, articulating its critique in silences and lacunae. The process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* also extends beyond discourses of WWII into discourses of German unification. By analyzing Schultze's quest for identity on the backdrop of an imagined Black America, a process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* with German history of both National Socialism and re-unification can be exposed.

The film follows the reticent and rotund Schultze on his journey to America shortly after his early retirement. The story begins with an extreme wide shot of the landscape of Teutschenthal in Saxony-Anhalt, a former state of East Germany. Schultze is shown biking across a flat grassy landscape against a background of a lone windmill, off to his final day at work as a miner. Schultze and his friends Jürgen and Manfred have been forced into early retirement. After a short celebration with their fellow miners, Jürgen expresses his dissatisfaction with the forced retirement, an allusion to the difficulties facing the mining industry of the area.

Schultze retires to spend more time in his garden and with his accordion. As a member of the local chapter of the town's music club, he is set to perform a tried and true polka tune—the one he plays every year—for the club's 50th anniversary celebration. While flipping through the radio one evening, he comes across a Creole Zydeco song that

has a melody played on the accordion. The music ignites in him a passion for the new genre and the Creole culture associated with it. His newfound love for this foreign culture has the effect of ostracizing him from his community. Conservative sects of the town begin to view him as an outsider, and as he plays the tune at the music festival, he is jeered offstage.

His friends loyally and lovingly support him and give him a flight to Texas where their sister city, New Braunfels, has invited one member of the town's music club to play at their annual Wurstfest. Schultze arrives hopeful, but becomes disillusioned with the Wurstfest when he sees that the musical selection is restricted to traditional German *Volksmusik*. Crestfallen, Schultze leaves the festival and steals a boat with which he explores the backwoods and waters of Texas and Louisiana. His journey ends at the boat home of an African American woman. She and her young daughter invite him to dinner and then take him to a club where they play traditional Zydeco. That night, the woman leaves him to sleep on the deck of the houseboat, tucking a blanket over him. He falls asleep on the deck of the boat, never to wake again. He is buried in his hometown, where they throw him a funeral reminiscent of a Louisiana Jazz funeral. The final scene returns to the landscape of the first image, the grassy field and lonely windmill remain the same. This time, however, from the left comes the funeral procession which is playing Schultze's Zydeco tune, celebrating his life in the African American tradition of Louisiana.

This film, for which music is so important that the word Blues is in its title, is marked by long stretches of silence. More time is allotted to the repetition of Schultze's Zydeco tune than to his dialogue. This silence has the effect of punctuating Schultze's

loneliness and creating a feeling of emptiness. It is particularly significant for the construction of generational constellations. Schultze has no real connections to any generation but his own, particularly in the familial sense. Without any children, Schultze's only possible connections are to his parents' generation who are silent. He demonstrates his loyalty to his deceased father in a moment of silence. Staring at a picture of his father, he removes his hat from his head and holds it in front of his heart dutifully. His mother is also silent, unable to speak or interact due to an age-related illness. Essentially, Schultze is therefore cut off from interactions with any other family. Schultze seems to be the only member of the only generation in his family.

However, one particular lacuna inexorably links him to his familial history: his lack of a first name. The lead character is solely known by his last name, his family name, which makes every reference to him a reference to a form of continuity with his family. The director did this deliberately, saying, "… [E]inen Vornamen gab's tatsächlich nie. Ich hatte immer das Gefühl: Ein Vorname würde das nur verwässern" (Schorr 2004). Lacking a first name, the wandering hero's individuality within his family is minimalized as his familial identity is simultaneously accentuated.

The character of Schultze is imbued with a multitude of such paradoxes. Whenever he is with friends, he is also depicted alone. For example, at a party thrown in his honor, the guests sit around the table conversing joyfully, while he stands alone in a back doorway smiling to himself. During a chess tournament, he sits at a table alone while the rest of the club sits across from their opponent. And just as Schultze begins to feel excluded from the town, his friends return his sense of community by sending him to another country alone. Conversely, when he is portrayed on camera alone, he still always

has ties to people. This is best explained through the humorous scene in which he attempts to cook Jambalaya. Schultze stands in his kitchen alone, stirring up the Cajun meal according to directions given by a radio cooking show. The radio announcer tells his audience to leave the stew on the stove covered for twenty minutes. Schultze places the lid on the pot, but after a few seconds lifts the lid again and at that very moment the announcer says, "Ah, ah, ah, nicht aufmachen," as if he were speaking to Schultze personally (Schorr 2003).

Schultze's identity crisis hovers in the paradoxical space between the search for individuality and the need to fit into a larger community; that is, his cultural identity is disrupted. The critical moment of destabilization occurs at the music club's anniversary celebration. After Schultze plays the Zydeco tune, there is a moment of silence, then an audience member shouts, "Scheißnegermusik" (Schorr 2003). Lisa, the waitress from his regular bar, tries to intervene and give the comment a positive spin by jubilantly raising her glass and toasting with the other friends to *Negermusik*.

Stuart Hall emphasizes the importance of conceptualizing cultural identity not as any singular or stable construct, but as a question of becoming, he explains that cultural identity "is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past" (Hall 1994: 225). This pivotal scene asks those questions that Hall emphasizes in comprehending the full depth of cultural identity, namely: What have we become? What historical processes produce our identity? The reference to *Negermusik* is an implicit reference to the Third Reich and its demonization of African American music. The outburst of this word and its associative historical connotation demonstrate that

Schultze's new individual identity cannot coincide with the cultural identity of Teutschenthal, an identity that is dependent on its 'whiteness'.

Community and belonging is not only critical for the plot, but it was formative in the making of the film as well. While shooting in Teutschenthal and various US cities, the crew relied on the actual townspeople to participate in the making of the film. The choir that sings for the music club's festival is a local singing group. The priest that reads at Schultze's funeral is an actual clergyman from a local parish. The crew populated scenes like the chess club and the festival with Teutschenthal citizens, and the many stops on Schultze's journey through the USA are actual shops and bars from the areas where they shot. This gives the film a documentary feel.

This film is not a documentary, however, and its attempt to depict the 'real' America belies its reliance upon racialized imagined geographies of the US. Just as in Roehler's film, *Schultze* depicts two competing imagined Americas. The first is a materialistic culture of consumerism that has been proliferated across Saxony-Anhalt and is racialized as white. Schultze's good friend Jürgen represents this America. In a scene shot in his home, he talks to his wife about their son as he puts together a kit he ordered from the US. His son competes in dirt bike races, and Jürgen explains that the young man will eventually have to move to the United States. When the wife inquires why, he explains that the United States is where dirt bike racers make the most money. The imagined geography with which Jürgen and the other Teutschenthal citizens engage and identify is the white America, an economic power that in no way challenges their 'whiteness' as Germans.

The representation of consumerism in the former East German states is also a critical discourse of the twenty-first century. It is associated with the United States and Western Germany, and is often characterized as a process of colonization.[85] Jozwiak and Marmann describe the former East German states as being doubly colonized, explaining, "East Germany has experienced double colonization within the past fifty years, first through its Sovietification after 1945, which created the territorial, economic, and intellectual isolation of the East, and subsequently through Westernization… in the aftermath of 1989," even referring to unification as a "take-over" (2006: 781). Although not all explorations of the Westernization of East Germany are as dramatic, the loss of East German identity is a well explored theme in German cultural studies of the last two decades. Films articulating this loss through a nostalgic remembrance of the nation's now lost daily life are often categorized as *Ostalgie* films. *Ostalgie*, which is a combination of the words "Ost" and "Nostalgie," denotes a sentimental attitude expressed by East Germans in the remembrance of their fallen state, a "re-evaluation of East German things which were brought back into living rooms, displayed and sold at events, and, later on, reproduced commercially" (Gallinat 2009: 184). *Ostalgie* films, such as Wolfgang Becker's *Good bye Lenin!* (2003), focus on the sentimental depiction of daily life in East Germany.

A regional, East German feeling permeates *Schultze gets the blues* as well. Manfred and Jürgen cajole each other in a friendly manner, calling the other a "Saupreuß" or a "Sachsenarsch" (Schorr 2008n). The depiction of the mining facility and the men's early retirement reflect the flagging industry, a dying commerce in the new

[85] In his *Representing East Germany Since Unification: From Colonization to Nostalgia* (2005), Paul Cooke even goes so far as to draw on the theories of Postcolonialism to analyze construction of East German identity after unification in terms of an 'exotic other."

economy. Although the film punctuates the sense of a loss of culture in the new German provinces, it would be mistaken to associate it with the sentimentality of *Ostalgie*; rather, the film reflects stunted processes of *Vergangenheitsbewäligung* associated with both unification and the Third Reich.

It is important to note that the film's director, Schorr, grew up in West Germany, a fact that is often overlooked in analyses of the film. For example, in her dissertation, *Black Voices, German Rebels: Acts of Masculinity in Postwar Popular Culture*, Priscilla Dionne Layne interprets *Schultze* as an East German text.[86] Although the film depicts a city of former East Germany and engages in discourses concerning reunification, Schorr's West German upbringing places him in the position of an outsider to the East German experience. Considering the power dynamic that existed, and still exists, between the newly united regions, it is more appropriate to explore the text as an exploration of East Germany from the perspective of a West German, and articulations of *Vergangenheitsbewäligung* as stemming from a West German and not an East German context, which focused on a 'victim mythology'.

Just as Roehler connected the history of the Third Reich to that of German colonialism through the employment of a Black American presence, so too does Schorr connect this dark history with German reunification through the Black American cultural product of music. Schultze's zydeco music was chosen to replace his usual submission, which one of the other club members referred to as the "Schultzepolka." Once again, the use of the protagonist's surname implies continuity between generations, because the song's nickname as "Schultze's polka" refers to both the protagonist and his father. This

[86] For Layne's interpretation, see *Black Voices, German Rebels: Acts of Masculinity in Postwar Popular Culture* (2011: 110-113).

association between father and son is further emphasized after Schultze expresses a desire to deviate from his typical musical score and the festival director asks him what his father would think if he chose a new song. This response exposes the importance the town places on its musical heritage, which is approximately fifty years old—judging from the club's semicentennial celebration—placing its founding within the inaugural years of East Germany. The festival appears to have outlasted the nation, but the locals retain the tradition and its customs unwaveringly. Although the townspeople are willing to embrace the technological products of the West, they doggedly adhere to their cultural values, even if those values could potentially be rooted in a darker history, as implied by the derision of Schultze's Creole music as *Negermusik*.

Schorr's Black America participates in discourses of American Blackness similar to those of *Lulu & Jimi*; however, he relies on contrasting stereotypes of African American culture to construct his version of an imagined Black American. This racialized America is mainly constructed musically. Schultze's racialized music is a cultural artifact from an imagined Black America, and his quest to find the origin of this music is a journey to find the roots of Black America. His disappointment at the Wurstfest was not only disillusionment over the musical preferences of the US and its similarities to Germany, but also the realization that this white America may reject him just as white Germany did. As Schultze journeys deeper into the bayous of Louisiana, the film constructs a Black America that is hidden, impoverished, and eerily analogous to his hometown. As Jürgen and Manfred sit at their regular table in the local bar imagining Schultze's future in American—the inevitability of his rise to stardom and impending affluence—the film's hero stumbles upon an aging citizenry in dying towns. The decline

of the oil industry has affected Louisiana just as the mining industry damaged Saxony-Anhalt's economy. This comparison is purposefully made by Schorr, who commented in an interview:

> Es war klar, dieses Spiegelbild-Thema ist ganz entscheidend, dass Schultze in der Fremde jetzt nicht das Land findet, wo Milch und Honig fließt, das totale Paradies, sondern er trifft eigentlich auf das Gleiche wie das, was er verlassen hat. Es ist zwar anders, aber es sind gleiche Sachen. Die Leute spielen dann halt Domino-Poker und nicht Skat, aber es gibt ähnliche Ausprägungen, aufgrund der ähnlichen sozialen Umstände. (Schorr 2004)

The imagined geography of Black America becomes a metaphor for life in Germany, in Schutlze's hometown. Racialized as Black, however, it cannot be understood as a one to one analogy for Teutschenthal. Within this imagined geography, Schultze can retain his sense of home and nurture his love for Zydeco because the historical production of Black American cultural identity represented here lacks the National Socialist history which still taints the identity of Schultze's German townspeople.

Schorr's film presents a very different representation of Black America than Roehler's while still participating in the same German discourses which construct Black America as place of emotional freedom and escape from German prejudices. Filming some of the poorest towns of the United States, Schorr creates a geography that is impoverished. Attempting to deconstruct an America represented through consumerism as the land of milk and honey, Schorr's documentarian filmmaking constructs in its stead a Saxony-Anhalt abroad. Roehler's film, through his character Jimi, depicts a powerful and revolutionary Black America. A piece that stands for the whole of the imagined

geography (Said 1978: 23), Jimi's presence constructs a Black America capable of freeing the white German of his historical wrongdoings. Roehler's African American is marked by his physical power and sexual prowess. Schorr's African Americans live on the peripheries of society, finding strength in musical communities. The marked differences between the constructions of Black America punctuate its imaginary nature. The location is a "kind of free-floating mythology" (Said 1978: 32) created across intellectual and artistic discourses of Blackness in America and from which authors and auteurs can pick and choose the cultural artifacts that suit their needs. In German culture, the Black American can at once be strong and rebellious and impoverished and downtrodden.

Both texts also explore these geographies along gender lines. On his journey, Schultze is guided by exotic women, both within Germany and the United States. As Markus Raith explains, "L'éducation et la quête identitaire de Schultze sont initiées et accompagnées par des femmes" (2010: par. 7).[87] At home in Germany, Schultze is encouraged to explore his love of Creole music by Lisa and Madame Lorant. Lisa is a new waitress at the local bar. After she introduces herself to Schultze and his friends, she expresses her desire to move to Spain and begins dancing the flamenco on a table. The men stare mutely, shocked by her outgoing behavior. Later, this surprising extroversion allows her to speak up at the music festival in Schultze's defense. Madame Lourant is associated with France. She insists that the workers at the retirement home refer to her as Madame and enunciate her name with a French pronunciation. She also encourages

[87] I was only able to access this Raith's article, "*Schultze Gets the Blues*: le voyage comme quête identitaire," electronically. In lieu of pages numbers, this version includes paragraph numbers which I include in the inline citation for ease of searching.

Schultze to explore his more adventurous side, and talks him into going to a casino and a masquerade.

Raith convincingly argues that during Schultze's journey, he leaves Germany, which is depicted as a stagnant world associated with masculinity in order to explore the geography of Black America, which is depicted as more feminine. He asserts that Schultze's previous life as a miner was more masculine, because it was associated with stone, a symbol he interprets as masculine and rigid. Schultze then slowly leaves this world to find a more flexible, feminine territory symbolized by water (2010: par. 13). The works of Layne and Grosz support his thesis. Layne outlines how East German masculinity was constructed around concepts of manual labor which "was respected more than intellectual and artistic careers" (2011: 112). By leaving his job as a miner, albeit unwillingly, and pursuing his musical, artistic side, Schultze becomes "the opposite of the East German male ideal" (Layne 2011: 113).

Schultze abandons the expectations his society has of him as a male and delves into a world that is both racialized as Black and gendered as female. Throughout *Volatile Bodies*, Grosz makes connections between constructs of fluidity and the female body, noting that discourses of fluid are often integral in the construction of femininity. She contends, "The female body has been constructed not only as a lack or absence but with more complexity, as a leaking, uncontrollable, seeping liquid; a formless flow… a formlessness that engulfs all form, a disorder that threatens all order" (1994: 203). The imagined Black America is not only constructed as a formless flow, but it is also the domain of women.

The first shot of America is a waterscape, a wide shot at water level that entails the movement of small waves on the background of a jungle-like forest. The angle and width of the shot are analogous to the introductory image of the Teutschenthal landscape. The scene then cuts to Schultze alone in his hotel room playing the accordion. After a few moments, he decides to put on his bathing suit and go to the hot tub. He arrives to find an African American woman already in the tub. He tries to excuse himself and take his leave, but the woman encourages him to join her with a friendly wave. Schultze steps into the tub, although he is obviously uncomfortable, and the woman begins to speak to him. Hesitantly at first, without knowing the English language, Schultze slowly begins to converse with her through cognates and gesticulations. The scene ends with a shot of the two in the pool, smiling over their new friendship. The association of Black America, specifically African American females with water, continues with the family Schultze later meets.

Schultze's final resting place is on a houseboat with the African American mother and daughter who are his final guides to Zydeco. Robert Pirro argues that the mother could be a stereotype of a caregiving "mammy' and reads the woman in the hot tub as a possible allusion to a history of the segregation of pools within the United States (2006: 78), but there is little support for these claims. It is more convincing to associate these African American women with undines or perhaps water nymphs, like those that spurred on Odysseus, another adventurous seafarer. Schultze's relationship to women and water places emphasis on mobility and transitioning, from old to new, from the masculine to the feminine, and from the living to the dead. Grosz's interpretation of fluidity as it pertains to the female body would support this thesis, because she builds on Kristeva's emphasis

of fluidity as a borderline state, a state of transition (1994: 195). These women, associated with liquid, represent the transitional state of Schultze's identity, guiding him to the next stage of his voyage. It is also noteworthy that the most famous of Odysseus's water nymphs was Calypso, whose name is immortalized as a form of Afro-Caribbean music.

Judith Butler's work on the performativity of gender developed in her two seminal books, *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies that Matter* (1993), is also invaluable for the deconstruction of gender roles within the movie. Butler's work challenged the traditional split between sex and gender that was largely espoused by feminist studies until that time, and according to which gender was constructed discursively and sex was simply a matter of 'nature'. She challenged this notion, evidencing that the concepts were constructed through not only textual discourses, but also through daily acts, which she referred to as performativity. In *Gender Trouble*, she explains, "gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which 'sexed nature' of 'a natural sex' is produced and established as 'prediscursive', prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts" (7). Gender and sex must be understood as having a reciprocal relationship, in which gender makes sex interpretable within a specific context. For Butler, the construction of sex (understood as both gender and physiological sex) stems from its ritual practice, a concept which is demonstrated through constructs of masculinity within the film.

Schultze's life is introduced as being tied to his routine. His bike ride to his job, the elevator ride into the cavern where he works, the interaction with his colleagues, every action is prescribed through ritualized habit. Viewed from the perspective of

performativity, these routines, such as his manual labor, are then not only descriptive of his masculinity as Layne argues, but also perpetuate his masculine (and I argue national) identity. This is punctuated by the retirement sequence at the mine. At the end of their final day, the three men are sent off with a rather apathetic rendition of the *Bergmannslied*, a traditional mining song, sung by their colleagues. The chorus of workers quickly leaves, allowing the men to examine their parting gifts, rock salt lamps. After a brief exchange of disappointed glances and disgruntled comments, the friends soon leave, and the final shot is of the empty break room, an empty table, and a pot of sausages on the stove. I agree with Layne who interprets this scene as representative of "how empty and meaningless Schultze's participation in these rituals has become" (2011: 131), and expand her interpretation with Butler's concept of performativity. These rituals—going to work, singing the *Bergsmannslied*, cooking sausages—are all acts which construct Schultze's masculinity. Forced into retirement, he is no longer capable of performing these habits through which he expressed his masculine identity.

Pirro argues that Schultze's retirement should not disrupt his normal routines, but Layne criticizes this, and I agree, citing the scene above as evidence of a void felt by the retiree. Layne analyzes his newfound musical passion as a desire to rebel against hegemonic German masculinity which would force him to continue performing these now meaningless rituals, but she stops short of asking why these once meaningful rituals have lost their value? From what source should the meaning come? They are not arbitrary, daily performances, but they had been prescribed by a discourse of power. Butler's *Bodies that Matter* is extremely useful here, because in it she expands upon the relationship between performativity and power. In this work, she redefines performativity

"not as the act by which a subject brings into being what she/he names, but, rather, as that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains" (2). Performativity is not determined by the individual, but within discourses of power which define and interpret bodies. Since both manual labor and the music club are defined in terms of East German values, a nation that no longer exists or has the power to drive a discourse, the meaning it once gave these discourses dissipates. In a sense, Schultze's refusal to perform the "Schultzepolka" represents a refusal to enact a masculinity that has been defined by a now defunct national discourse.

Schultze must redefine his rituals and traditions within new power constellations which are driven by 'western' values, as highlighted by Jürgen and Manfred's new consumerism. Unlike his friends, Schultze shows no interest in the new technologies that are beginning to redefine his homeland, and which the film associates with an imagined white United States. Instead, he is attracted to the cultural products of African Americans which are shunned by his fellow townspeople. Although the entire city is in the process of reformulating constructs of nationality and masculinity, their rejection of Schultze's new identity through racialized terminology such as *Negermusik* demonstrates that post-unification definitions of East German masculinity and nationality must be racialized as white, and that this 'whiteness' derives from enduring constructs of 'race' associated with the Third Reich.

Schultze's new cultural identity can only exist outside of newly unified Germany, and his guides through this process of identity formulation can only be those who exist outside of the hegemonic discourses of white Germany masculinity, by women associated with non-German cultures. This forms an important contrast to Roehler's construction of

femininity in which the female sex is discursively constructed as an entrance into white German culture. Despite this difference, the intersection of discourses of race and gender are integral to the construction of Blackness and Germanness in both texts. Whether presented as guides out of white German hegemony or as conduits into white German structures of power, those characters constructed as female drive the male forward, guiding him to reconcile his Blackness, physically or spiritually, with his Germanness. As the object of Jimi's love, Lulu draws the American—who had been content to remain on the periphery—into German society, and brings him into her family, a group of Germans who have shed Fascist ideologies. Schultze, who is at first diffident about his musical inclinations, is incited to explore his new identity through the exotic German women who help plunge him into the watery feminine of Black America.

With the help of his African American guides, Schultze is able to track down the Zydeco music which spurred his identity crisis and reconcile his love of a racialized cultural artifact with his homeland as represented by its mirrored image of the imagined Black America. Schultze will never return to his hometown, but his influence permeates the town that once ostracized him. His funeral, conducted like that of an African American burial in Louisiana, demonstrates not only the town's acceptance of Black American culture, but also Schultze's transformation into Blackness. He is still treated in a manner that is foreign to German tradition, but the white Germans now regard it with respect.

The question of the title however remains: did Schultze get the Blues, and if so what are the cultural repercussions? Despite the inclusion of the word in the title, no Blues songs are included in the soundtrack. "To get the Blues" can mean to become sad,

but despite the tragic ending, Schultze leaves the world happy and satisfied. It is perhaps more appropriate to understand the verb "get" in the sense of "to understand." Schultze understands the Blues, a melancholy but powerful music of African American origin (Pirro 2006: 77). The title denotes his reconciliation with his newly racialized sense of self. The melancholy associated with the term should not be disregarded. As a tragicomedy, the film alternates between the happy and the sad. Schultze comes to understand himself, but he does not come home. Only through his death is his town willing to begin integrating artifacts and traditions that are racialized as non-white.

Finally, his death and "getting the Blues," represent a form of reconciliation with his parents' generation, those people who were responsible for proliferating the racist attitudes that excluded him from his hometown but who were completely silent. Schorr associated Zydeco with generational mixing. He explains:

> Zum einen habe ich früher so eine Rucksack-Greyhound-Tour durch die USA gemacht und bin in New Orleans gelandet, habe dort erst nach Blues-Musik gesucht und kam in diese Zydeco-/Cajun-Ecke rein - und war total begeistert, wie da am Wochenende plötzlich alle Generationen, auch alte Leute, abgetanzt haben zu der Musik. Ohne Rücksicht auf Verluste. Das fand ich Klasse, weil ich das von Deutschland so nicht kannte. (Schorr 2004)

Through his final night of dancing, Schultze is able to participate in an act of generational harmony. Unable to dance with his parents or share with them this moment, Schultze accomplishes this impossibility through the surrogacy created by the imagined Black America, one that is made analogous to his home state. His death is tragic, but a final act of connection with his parents, who are also forever silenced.

Conclusion: Locating Racism Before and After the Third Reich

The Black American presence in the films analyzed here enables these texts to participate in a larger national process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Exploring the themes of familial and community ties on the imagined geography of a Black America, these texts explore a generational continuity with the *Erfahrungsgeneration* as proposed by Aleida Assman. Through "the dramatic polarity created by skin, the projection of the not-me" (Morrison 1993: 38), the auteurs are able to dissect their Germanness and 'whiteness'. Through the process of 'othering' the African American presence, the works are able to redefine what it means to be German and Germany's relationship to its turbulent histories. Roehler's work presents the persistent racism of restoration West Germany as constructed in histories before the Third Reich and with which the nation also must come to terms. Schorr's engagement with *Vergangenheitsbewäligung* uncovers lingering racist constructs associated with National Socialism that only become visible through the redefinition of East German cultural identity.

Also significant in both texts is the construction of sex. In both films, characters gendered as female create a freedom from male suffering and enable generational reconciliation. The congruence of suffering and culpability in Roehler's work was expressed in each of the film's characters in a different way. Lulu's powers of procreation allow for the continuation of the Bertel family line, one that will be both different from past German generations and brought up by members of the generation who suffered and learned from their mistakes. In *Schultze gets the blues*, it is the lead

character who must suffer for his newfound passion. The bigotry that stained his national past threatens him today with expulsion from his homeland and community. Unlike Roehler's characters, he has no older generation to turn to, either to blame or to ask for guidance. He is temporally abandoned. His friendship with the African American family enables him to connect symbolically with different generations. In his act of dancing to Zydeco, he moves together with generations old and new. The two seemingly contradictory sides of his identity reconcile, and he finds his final peace on the houseboat of the African American women. He is freed of his personal suffering and that of his illness and joins his father in eternal silence.

These films also speak of a cautiously optimistic future. Ending his film with the reunion of the family and the birth of a new generation, Roehler depicts a future for Germany that has the potential to come to terms with its racist pasts. The presence of the Black German baby is a symbol of new Germany and a new German, one that defines itself in a new way. The long and joyous procession that begins its journey at the end of the film depicts a cautious hope for the future. Schultze leaves the newly Westernized town with a roadmap to a new identity. The song they play, the one they first rejected as *Negermusik,* offers East Germany a culture that is relegated neither to a German National Socialist past nor to the consumerism associated with West Germany and the white United States. However, such optimism is tempered in both movies. *Lulu & Jimi* concludes with Richard's ominous resentment and possible retention of racist values, and in Schorr's film, Schultze can never return home.

Chapter 4

Visible Secrets:

Besatzungskinder, American Blackness, and Family Secrets

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated how two texts engaged questions of culpability, innocence, and generational reconciliation through constructs of American Blackness in order to expose the historical roots and troublesome persistence of German racism. The families of the two protagonists, Roehler's Lulu and Schorr's Schultze, were ensnared by familial silences and secrets. Lulu's family was held hostage by the mother's violent black magic which she used to cripple the father and threaten Lulu in order to keep their shameful sexual indiscretions secret from the world. Schultze's family was reduced to silence. His father was little more than a photograph hanging on a wall, and his mother was silenced by illness. Any personal history they may have had to bequeath their son had been cast into secrets, never to be revealed. Themes of silences, secrets, and erasures are integral to studies of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, and collective memory practitioners have consistently demonstrated a hesitation of the experiential generation to openly engage their past.[88] This corresponds to the hesitation to acknowledge racism by Nazi successor nations which has been decried by Black German scholars since the beginning of the *Schwarze Bewegung*. The continuity of racism from the Third Reich to the present day may very well be the most taboo (and therefore least analyzed) discourse associated with German processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. This chapter analyzes

[88] For studies that examine the effect of silence on successor generations see, Dan Bar-On , *Legacy of Silence* (1989) in which he interviews the children of perpetrators; Ursula Hegi, *Tearing the Silence* (1997), in which she interviews German children who grew up in the US; finally, Brunner and Seltmann, *Schweigen die Täter, reden die Enkel*, which was discussed in the first chapter.

'race' and racism as forms of silence which interrupt successor generations' abilities to come to grips with the past and to form stable cultural identities.[89]

In the following, I will first compare the representation of Diasporic identity formation in the autobiography of Ika Hügel-Marshall, *Daheim Unterwegs* (1998), and the biography of Bärbel Kampmann, *Eine von Uns* (2000), written by her husband Harald Gerunde. The secrets surrounding their African American parentage and the origins of German racism interrupt the formation of their German cultural identity and force these women to go outside the borders of Germany to find their fathers and create Diasporic identities. I will then compare these texts to two novels by white Germans which were influenced by Afro-German autobiographies and feature Black occupation children as protagonists, *Schwarzer Peter* (2000) by Peter Henisch and *Lichte Stoffe* (2007) by Larissa Boehning. These white German novels adopt themes of silence and Blackness from the Afro-German texts in order to challenge contemporary racism and explore the effects of historic processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* on successor generations.

Secrets only Skin Deep: Choosing Identity in the (Auto)biographies of Black German *Besatzungskinder*

Kampmann's biography and Hügel-Marshall's autobiography depict the disruption of cultural identity formation among two Afro-German women caused by their

[89] The analysis of racism as a form of familial silence or secret and its effects on successor generations is not without precedent. In her contribution to *Das kollektive Schweigen* (1988) entitled "Auswirkungen anhaltender nationalsozialistischer Weltanschauungen in Familienschicksalen," the therapist Almuth Massing cites a case in which lingering racist and classist National Socialist beliefs of parents emotionally scarred the son by labelling his behavior as a product of bad breeding. Unfortunately, Massing's analysis is very brief and in many ways she also avoids directly talking about racism by making inferences to genetics and inheritance in lieu of defining racism.

being racialized as Black by German society. Although their Blackness brought with it the full force of the latent and often violent racism of German society, this racism and its effects on their identity were secrets their families never spoke about. The texts examined represent a small selection from a plethora of autobiographies of Afro-German *Besatzungskinder* born to African American soldiers and white German mothers during the first decade after the war.[90] Hügel-Marshall's and Kampmann's texts have been chosen as representative of the genre due to their commercial success and focus on the search for their American fathers. This chapter can best deconstruct modern processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* by focusing on the works of Kampmann and Hügel-Marshall who identify themselves as occupation children and their familial history as being surreptitiously linked to the Third Reich. This first section will demonstrate how these women were impelled to leave Germany in the hopes of discovering the secrets of their origins—journeys which created transnational relationships enabling them to develop Diasporic identities and assert their own definitions of Blackness and Germanness.

The concept of a Diasporic cultural identity has been strongly influenced by the work of Stuart Hall, who defines cultural identity as a fluid construct negotiated across discourses. Cultural identities can then be racialized or gendered, as explained in chapter one, according to the specific cultural context in which an identity is formed. Since these identities are discursively constructed, individuals' identities can be influenced by

[90] Other autobiographies by *Besatzungskinder* include: Thomas Usleber's *Die Farben unter meiner Haut* (2002); Jimmy Hartwig's *Ich möcht' noch so viel tun...* (1994); Günter Kaufmann's *Der weiße Neger vom Hasenbergl* (2004). Neither Hartwig nor Kaufmann seek the origins of their fathers in their works, although both do refer to their paternal heritage as a hidden or lost history (Hartwig 1994: 28; Kaufmann 2004: 37). Similar in content to Hügel-Marshall and Kampmann's stories, Usleber's autobiography primarily lends attention to his development of a Diasporic identity and the role the search for his father played. However, born in 1960, he is roughly a generation younger than Hügel-Marshall or Kampmann and is may be spurious to categorize him as a *Besatzungskind*.

cultures in which they do not live. For example, the daughter of an immigrant can identify with the country of her parents' emigration without ever visiting that country. An identity is described as Diasporic when its formulation occurs outside of the geographical origin of culture with which it identifies, being created largely through textual and social associations. The term is most commonly associated with migrant communities who retain a cultural connection to their country of origin. Persons who formulate Diasporic identities do not, however, need to have any geographical origins within that culture. This pertains to the case of Black Diasporic identity. The term developed from the concept of the African Diaspora, which is defined as the emigration of peoples from Africa, forced or chosen, to other parts of the world, who maintain a cultural relationship to their continent of origin, although many never actually visit Africa (Stephens 2007: 27).

Both Kampmann and Hügel-Marshall were fathered by Black Americans and denied a Diasporic community as children. The taboo nature of Blackness and 'race' led to an isolation felt by many Afro-Germans. As Audre Lorde summarizes in a question she posed in her introduction to the English translation of *Farbe bekennen* (*Showing Our Colors* [1992]), "What does it mean to be a black German woman in a land where there are no blacks?" This quote represents a paradox that should not to be overlooked. If one is a Black German woman, then certainly there is at least one person in Germany who identifies as Black. What Lorde is referring to is not the actual absence of Blacks in Germany but to a shared sense of isolation and to the erasure of Black German experiences from the annals of German history. Reconsidering Stuart Hall's comment that "[c]ultural identities come from somewhere, have histories," one must ask how a Black German develops his or her cultural identity when his or her existence in history is

a secret (1993: 394). I will demonstrate how Kampmann and Hügel-Marshall turn to African American culture as a transnational space of the Black Diaspora in order to create new racialized identities, and are able to redefine their role as Afro-Germans and the role of racism in German history.

Both Ika Hügel-Marshall and Bärbel Kampmann were born to white German mothers and Black American fathers, Ika in 1947 and Bärbel in 1946. As children, they belonged to the generation of *Besatzungskinder* whose entrance into primary school was deeply debated in 1952 as examined in chapter two of this project. Although these children would never meet, their experiences as *Besatzungskinder* growing up in post-WWII Germany are remarkably similar. Neither had contact with her father during their childhood, and both articulate an at times debilitating isolation from German society. They suffered a separation from their mother due to her marriage to a racist white German man, and were later denied their right to an education despite their obvious intellectual acumen. As adults, they married white German men, but ultimately divorced them because their relationships could not endure the daily racism they faced as an interracial couple. Ultimately, both women attempted to discover the secret of their Blackness and the racism they suffered by searching for their African American fathers.

The women describe happy beginnings to their childhoods, ones full of familial love. This changes quickly as they begin to perceive their difference from other Germans through the hushed whispers of their townspeople. In an interview with the *Neues Deutschland*, Bärbel Kampmann explained that she learned she was different through the glances and silence of white German strangers, and Hügel-Marshall echoes this in her autobiography when she describes the unspoken discrimination she faced at the

orphanage. Although their difference from white Germans was something that could be seen, their families never spoke about the racism. The girl's isolation from mainstream German society, the family's suffering due to racism, or its historic origins were strongly guarded secrets. Bärbel's story is filled with quotes of questions she was never allowed to ask. For example, during an interview she is asked if she was ever able to speak about her father, and she replies, "Nie. Das war ein absolutes Tabu-Thema" (qtd. Gerunde 2000: 30).

Ika is sent away to a children's home, and she interprets her exile as her stepfather's attempt to conceal the 'race' of his stepdaughter from the rest of the community. She, as a person racialized as Black, becomes the secret her family doesn't want society to see. During her vacations back to her familial home, she was forced to remain in the house while her sister, mother, and stepfather went shopping. The attempts to keep her a secret strained her relationship with her mother and destroyed any possibility for a bond with her stepfather, a foreign element in her family. She describes her relationship with her stepfather with the following quote:

> Für meinen Stiefvater habe ich keinen Namen. Er spricht nicht mit mir. Im Winter schaufelt er Schnee zusammen, um meiner Schwester und mir eine halbwegs funktionierende Schlittenbahn zu bauen. Radfahren bringt er mir bei und das Pfeifen auf zwei Fingern. Er schlägt mich nie und benachteiligt mich nicht in materiellen Dingen, und ich weiß nicht mehr, mag ich ihn deshalb oder weil ich nie Angst vor ihm haben muß? Nur ein Vater will er nicht für mich sein. Wie könnte er auch? Ein weißer Mann, der ››ehrenhaft‹‹ in der deutschen Wehrmacht gekämpft hat und vor einem Jahr aus der Kriegsgefangenschaft zurückgekommen

ist, heiratet eine Frau mit einem unehelichen Kind, obendrein ein ››Besatzungskind‹‹, noch dazu von einem ››Neger‹‹. (Hügel-Marshall 1998: 41).

Although the stepfather shows her kindness, and she expresses that she likes him, no meaningful relationship can be forged between the two. Disrupting their familial bonding are the racist ideals of the surrounding society, denoted by the quotation marks around certain words. The stepfather is considered to be "ehrenhaft" because of his military service and this is threatened by his marriage to a woman who has a Black German child. Blackness and honorable military service during the Second World War are constructed as oppositions within this excerpt, demonstrating the link between the Third Reich and racism after the war.

The reason for Ika's removal from her home—which is the family's desire to mitigate the racism they suffered—remained a secret that destroyed the relationship her younger sister, Lisa, had with both Ika and her parents. Only in adulthood, does Ika discover the unsurmountable fear and grief her younger sister felt due to the parents' decision to send Ika to a home. Lisa explains how her parents never explained her older sister's disappearance, despite the anguish it caused her: "Ich habe nie eine Antwort von den beiden bekommen, wenn ich sie gefragt, warum sie dich ins Heim gegeben haben... Du kannst dir gar nicht vorstellen, wie das war, als du plötzlich nicht mehr da warst. Wochenlang habe ich nach dir gerufen, und immer wieder haben sie mir erzählt, du kämst ja bald wieder" (Hügel-Marshall 1998: 58). She also describes the fear she lived with due to this silence: "Lange Zeit habe ich Angst gehabt, sie würden mich auch weggeben" (Hügel-Marshall 1998: 59).

The books' epilogue is a sort of tribute to her mother, in which she explains the conflicting emotions she harbors for her mother, trying to resolve her emotions of abandonment with those of forgiveness. She tries to empathize with her mother, recognizing her birth brought with it enormous difficulties for her mother. She understands the isolation from her mother as part of an *Überlebenskunst* (Hügel-Marshall 1998: 48) that mother and daughter must endure to mitigate the hatred and racism of the whites of their community.

Bärbel's relationship with her mother is even more conflicted. Abandoned by her mother after marrying a man Bärbel refers to as a "Nazi," she looks to her grandmother as her sole parental caregiver. Unlike Ika's mother who shirks from the racism she must endure from other whites, Bärbel's grandmother strikes back, defending herself and her granddaughter. In one episode, the grandmother physically strikes a group of children who run behind Bärbel and her grandmother, chiding, "Negerbaby! Negerbaby!" (Gerunde 2000: 58). Bärbel was grateful, but the secrets and silence about the racism they faced hardened into the little girl as a distrust which she even directs towards her grandmother. She questions if her grandmother loves her, or if she acted out of self-interest.

Bärbel's biographer, who is also her husband, describes her life in a series of taboo questions which she is never able to have answered. She wasn't allowed to ask about her father. She wasn't allowed to ask her grandmother, "Hast du mich wirklich geliebt?" (Gerunde 2000: 58), and she was never able to ask her mother the most probing question of all, "Wie kannst du eigentlich deine Nazi-Überzeugungen damit vereinbaren, daß du mit einem Schwarzen geschlafen hast? Und wie kommst du da mit mir zurecht,

der Konsequenz (Gerunde 2000: 31)?"

Through the inclusion of newspaper interviews, Kampmann's biographer is able to record Bärbel's association of her family's secrets with a form of unaddressed Nazi ideologies —including her family's desire to keep her Blackness hidden and their refusal to speak openly of racism. Bärbel explains that she is not able to ask the questions she needs to form a coherent identity because generational relations between the experiential generation and their descendants were based on silence and secrets. She is quoted as saying:

> Die Generation, die die NS-Zeit mitgetragen und mit zu verantworten hat, vermittelt ihren Kindern meist durch nonverbale Botschaften, daß sie in der Gegenwart nur leben können, wenn sie ihre Erinnerungen auf ein erträgliches Mindestmaß reduzieren. Unbewußt setzten sie ihre einzige Hoffnung in ihre Kinder. Aber gesprochen wird darüber nicht. Für aufmerksame, loyale Kinder heißt das, die Eltern nicht mit Fragen zu belasten und selbst mit dem Schleier des Vergessens zu leben, auch auf die Gefahr hin, nicht wirklich zu wissen, wer man ist, woher man kommt und wem man vertrauen kann. (Gerunde 2000: 30)

Both Bärbel and Ika express an inability for the child generation to develop cultural identities due to an unspoken prohibition against asking the experiential generational about the past. The discourses of Fascism, racism, and its persistence into modern times are absolutely taboo, and they must suffer never fully understanding the bigotry they faced until adulthood.

Upon reaching adulthood, however, these women are able to combat this silence through the creation of texts—through interviews, scholarly work, and experiential

narratives. They endeavor to expose contemporary forms of racism by referring to it directly as *Rassismus* and study its relationship to historical discourses predating the Third Reich. Bärbel's biography references racism's colonial roots. Gerunde interweaves interviews with Kampmann with stories of her work and historical narratives in an effort to reveal German racism as a construct created long before the Third Reich and which continues after the fall of Hitler. The biography interlaces expressions of Bärbel's grandmother's pride in her late husband's military service in the German colonies with histories and statistics of the Herero massacres, deconstructing the grandmother's comment (a reflection of a belief held by many Germans of her generation), "Die Deutschen waren gute Kolonialherren" (Gerunde 2000: 47).

As an autobiography, Hügel-Marshall's text is able to focus more on personal reactions to bigotry, and a careful analysis of her explanations for the silences surrounding the racism she faces reveals its historical roots. This is perhaps most shockingly demonstrated in a scene from her autobiography in which she describes how one of the nurses of the children's home brings her to a church to have her Blackness "exorcised" from her body. The exorcism is described as a form of torture. She is locked in a dark room with a priest who performs the ritual over and over for hours, until she finally vomits from fear. She understands neither the ritual nor why she is being punished. The only explanation she receives is, "Wir wissen, daß du eine Rabenmutter hast, die sich mit einem Neger eingelassen hat – das ist eine schwere Sünde. Dein Blut ist nicht rein, und du hast viele Teufel in dir." (Hügel-Marschall 1998: 39). The implication that her blood is impure alludes to constructs of 'mixed-race' children which were constructed in the nineteenth century and then applied to the racist dictatorship of the

Third Reich. Ika cannot question what 'impure' supposedly means. She cannot understand why she is being tortured. Her Blackness is an immutable silence, a secret kept hidden from her through its ineffability.

The inability to ask about their origins and the racism they suffer not only damages personal relationships, but it also evokes a certain fascination for the forbidden, racialized side of their identity, the side which the racist society has only allowed them to develop in terms of self-loathing and isolation. Schmidt and Heimannsberg in *Kollektive Schweigen* note that the pain caused by a secret can also provoke a seemingly paradoxical fascination (1992: 4). Or, as was more recently observed by Aleida Assman, these secrets take on "die Aura einer besonderen Faszination" (1997a: 18). Although the Afro-German women fear what they may discover about their Blackness should they uncover the secrets of their personal histories, they decide to search for their fathers and their Black history.

Their paternal search is integral, but it must be stated that these women combine the exploration of an identity abroad with one at home, seeking out and creating relationships within a community of Afro-German, African, and Black Caribbean women living within Germany. Their interactions with these women allow them to explore the transnational space of the Black Diaspora in order to formulate new cultural identities. The concept of Diaspora offers an attractive backdrop for Black German identification and, as Paul Gilroy argues, Diasporas produce "an alternative to the different varieties of absolutism which would confine culture in racial ethnic or national essences" (1993: 7). Stuart Hall also emphasizes that scholars must recognize the difference in the development of Diasporic identities, understanding that no two persons experience the

Diaspora in the same way. Despite strikingly similar childhoods, Kampmann and Hügel-Marshall experience the Diaspora in different ways.

Hügel-Marshall first begins to assert herself by getting a degree. Despite her initial prohibition from attending the upper level high school which would allow her acceptance into a university, Hügel-Marshall passes her graduation examinations and begins studying Anthropology and Sociology. During her university career, she attends Audre Lorde's class and forms a deep friendship with the world-renowned feminist and other Afro-German students. Lorde urges her students to take control of their racialized identities, and on a more personal level, Lorde encourages Ika to continue the search for her father.

Ika's relationship with her father is complicated even before she meets him. She begins her story speaking of the complexity of emotions she associates with the word father, "Doch bei dem Wort Vater, das so oft und an so vielen Orten ausgesprochen wird, verspürte ich jedesmal den gleichen tiefsitzenden Schmerz. Ich will wissen, wer ich bin" (Hügel-Marshall 1998: 11). He represents her racialized self, her Blackness—a part of her that is at once easily recognized and must be kept secret. Although initially afraid of what her Blackness could reveal about herself, after establishing ties to women such as Lorde with whom she shares a Diasporic, although not national, identity, she is overjoyed when her American friend, Sara Lennox, informs her that she has located her father and he would like to meet her.

Ika is able to make one trip to the United States, where she finds a welcoming family waiting for her. Although she only knows her father for a year before his death, she expresses emotions of elation for the family she has inherited from him. She closes

her autobiography by stating that now she feels that she is both Black and white, and that no one else had the power to identify her. In this excerpt, Ika responds to a white woman who commented that she didn't consider Ika to be Black. She explains why she identifies as Afro-German and the importance of her Diasporic identity in the following:

> Ich nenne mich stolz Schwarze, Afrodeutsche oder Schwarze Deutsche, auch wenn es weißen Deutschen, wie dir zum Beispiel, nicht gefällt. Niemand hat das Recht, mich zu definieren, außer mir selbst. Niemand hat darüber zu entscheiden, ob ich mich als Schwarze Frau bezeichnen ››darf‹‹ oder nicht. Ich weiß sehr wohl, daß Weiße ständig das Bedürfnis haben, mich und andere Afrodeutsche der einen oder der anderen Seite zuzuordnen. Das heißt: Ich bin in deinen Augen nicht Schwarz genug, nicht afrikanisch genug, ich passe nicht in das Stereotyp, das du möglicherweise von ››Negern‹‹, von Schwarzen hast. Ich setze mich nicht deiner Willkür aus, indem du mich als ››Schwarz‹‹ oder ››nicht-Schwarz‹‹ definierst, wie es dir gerade paßt. Ich kann sehr gut beide Kulturen, die Schwarze und die weiße, in mir vereinen, es geht ausschließlich darum, wie du als weiße Frau damit umgehst. Die Schwarze Geschichte ist auch meine Geschichte und bedeutet für mich Afrika ebenso wie Amerika und wie Europa. Ich bin stolz auf die afrikanische, afroamerikanische Geschichte, ich bin stolz, ein Teil dieser Geschichte zu sein – ich kann auf mehr als nur eine Kultur zurückgreifen. (1998: 106)

The formulation of a Diasporic cultural identity allows Ika to answer the secrets of her Blackness that had remained detrimentally taboo for too long. She is able to fill in the

gaps of German history which have tried to erase German Blackness from the official annals of historiography, and most importantly, she is able to openly battle racism.

Bärbel also finds her father, but her experiences are substantially different. In contrast to Hügel-Marshall's experiences, Kampmann's biography is written from a very anti-capitalist, anti-American perspective, one that reflects Bärbel's own anti-imperialist views. Her father is described as small and weak, and his patriotism for a country that denied him his rights for so long is strongly critiqued. A comparison is even drawn between his American patriotism and the National Socialist dedication to the fatherland. Within the span of a few pages, the narrative switches from a depiction of the father's loyalty to the United States and his military funeral to descriptions of German colonial history, ending with a quote from Ribbentrop, Hitler's foreign minister, which states: "Nein, Amerikaner scheinen das nicht verstehen zu können. Wir Deutsche sind ein besonderes Volk; wir sind so treu" (Gerunde 2000: 39). The juxtaposition of her father's loyalty to the United States to Ribbentrop's description of the Germans of the Third Reich as "treu" creates a parallel that is carried through a description of German colonialism. These three points in history are depicted as being interrelated.

Bärbel's interactions with the racism and capitalism of the United States end with disillusionment. Instead, she turns to Africa to create transnational relationships. She travels on three different occasions to Guinea and befriends the inhabitants of a village there. It is here that she finally feels at home. The dynamic history of cultural mixing and subjugation that she found in Africa helped her to reconcile her two seemingly contradictory identities: her Black identity which she understands as being African, and

her white identity which is equated to her German grandfather's service in the colonial military.

Gerunde ends Bärbel's story on an optimistic note, despite her untimely death. The story is framed with a description of the villagers in Guinea with whom Bärbel met during her travels through Africa. The first chapter of the book describes a belief of the village which states that members of the tribe return to Africa after their death, to be spiritually reunited with their ancestral home. Gerunde, who at this point speaks in the first person as Bärbel's husband and travel companion, imagines that all of Bärbel's family must be with her in this village, both her German and her African American family. At the end of the book, he conjectures that she too must have found her way back to Guinea to rejoin both sides of her family.

Ika and Bärbel are forced to explore geographies outside of Germany in order to construct cultural identities and by doing so redefine Germanness. The silence surrounding the subsistence of racism into postwar Germany hindered the women's ability to explore their role as Afro-German women in the national narrative of German historiography. By creating relationships with other Persons of Color, Africans, Black Americans and Caribbeans, the women are able to explore a history that was hidden from them during their formative years: Bärbel is able to engage with the German colonial past and Ika is able to discover a family she had never known. Identifying themselves from more than a single reference point, the women are not only able to create a supportive network of friendship that had been denied to them, they are also able to identify the ways in which they are German. Bärbel discovers herself within the historical narrative of German history, connecting to Africans who were once subjects of European

imperialism. Ika is able to assert her German identity through her scholarly work, which she first reads in front of an American audience.

Integral to this chapter is the recognition that these women's journeys to define German Blackness were not limited to personal experience, but had a lasting effect on white German culture as well, as is attested by the texts of white authors studied here. Although there is no evidence that Boehning's *Lichte Stoffe* or Henisch's *Schwarzer Peter* are directly modelled after these specific Afro-German texts, the similarities in plot and subject matter make the influence of the experiential narratives of Afro-German *Besatzungskinder* on the white German and Austrian texts undeniable. Boehning's and Henisch's novels encompass the lives of Black German and Austrian occupation children who experience historical and familial silences similar to those analyzed by Hügel-Marshall and Kampmann. Both works depict the journeys of Afro-Germans searching for the African American GIs who represent their hidden paternal heritage. Writing as white Germans, they employ constructs of German and American Blackness in order to explore the importance of memory and silence in successor generations' processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung.*

Grandmother's Confessions: German Blackness as German Victimhood in Larissa Boehning's *Lichte Stoffe* (2007)

Larissa Boehning's debut novel, *Lichte Stoffe*,[91] was well received by critics, receiving the 2007 Mara-Cassens-Preis and a nomination for the Deutscher Buchpreis.

[91] After considering other texts, I finally chose to examine Boehning's and Henisch's novels together because they employ the stories of Afro-German occupation children to differing ends. Since Peter Henisch is a well-established author, I wanted to pair his text with the work of a more novice writer. Although Boehning has so far only published two novels, *Lichte Stoffe* and *Das Glück der Zikaden* (2011), these

The book features three generations of German women all of whom carry the burden of a family secret, albeit in different ways. Grandmother Gudrun dies, leaving her granddaughter, Nele, tape recordings in which she explains her life immediately after the war and her brief affair with Harold, an African American soldier and father of Nele's mother, Evi. Gudrun's original intention was to bequeath the recordings to Evi, because they reveal the identity of Evi's father and of a Degas painting which he had found in the rubble of Berlin and promised to give their child. However, she is unable to speak to her daughter, even indirectly through recordings. Nele, who lives in the US with her boyfriend Eric, decides to travel to New York in search of her grandfather and the promised inheritance. Written in the third person, the perspective switches between that of Nele, Evi, and Bernhard, Nele's father, intertwining the secret lives of each family member with the silences of their pasts. In the following, I will demonstrate how the novel employs Blackness as a metaphor for historical and familial secrets, exploring 'race' as a secret in ways similar to the Afro-German texts above. Furthermore, I will analyze how the white author utilizes discourses of American and German Blackness in order to deconstruct and critique processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* from the end of the Second World War to the twenty-first century.

Evi and Bernhard lead a typical suburban life, living just outside of Hamburg in a quaint home with a small garden. Their only daughter, Nele, studied art and upon graduation moved with her boyfriend to Chicago to work for a company that designs athletic shoes. The outward appearance of the domestic tranquility belies the turbulence

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works and her shorts stories have been well received. She has been featured as an emerging writer in *Transitions: Emerging Women Writers in German-language Literature* (2013) edited by Valerie Heffernan and Gillian Pye, and she has a third novel set for publication later this year, *Nichts davon stimmt, aber alles ist wahr*.

of their inner lives. Each character has been burdened with a secret which weighs on them greatly. Bernhard was laid off from the bakery where he worked for almost thirty years and absconds on a secret trip with his neighbor, Ade, in order to conceal that he isn't attending an important yearly industry conference. During his absence, Evi flies to Mallorca with a car dealer from the neighborhood. Ostensibly she makes this trip to help him empty his recently deceased father's home, but she has romantic feelings for her neighbor. Even while abroad, Nele withholds an overwhelming secret from her parents, the recordings of her grandmother, which reveal the long sought-after identity of Evi's father.

Each of these secrets plays a role within the dynamics of the family and within the national history of Germany as a whole. This is poignantly demonstrated in the case of Nele, whose secret is not her own, but one which she inherits. Nele must wrestle with the decision of revealing the details of her grandmother's relationship with an African American GI to her mother. The relationship between Evi's mother and father is not only a family secret, but due to Evi's and her father's Blackness—their 'race'—it becomes the unspoken story of Germany's transition from an openly racist society to one in which racism is denounced yet persists within everyday society.

Not only must the identity of Evi's father remain hidden, but the Blackness she shares with him as well. This becomes evident during Evi's interior monologue while relaxing in a bath. She reflects on the silence associated with the identity of her father and her discovery of his proclamation of paternity:

> Von ihm war nie die Rede gewesen. ... Natürlich war sie neugierig gewesen. Vor vielen Jahren. Hatte in den Papieren ihrer Mutter geblättert an einem Morgen, als

> sie beim Arzt gewesen war. Ihre Mutter stellte sie nie zur Rede, aber Evi ahnte, daß sie – an die Kleinigkeit, einer ungeknickten Papierecke, an der Reihenfolge der Ordner im Regal – ihre Suche bemerkt hatte. Ihr Mutter bemerkte alles. (Boehning 2007: 148)

Similar to Kampmann's comment that her father was an absolute "Tabu-Thema" within her family, Evi is never allowed to question her mother, and Gudrun, even upon noticing that Evi had found the paternity declaration, never confronts her daughter. Evi soon learns that her mother's silence is not only the result of her mother's personal history with the soldier, but due to his Blackness, which Evi inherits. Two paragraphs after describing the discovery of Evi's father's name, her memories of learning her mother's craft of millinery is described:

> Nähte schließen, der Befehl ihrer Mutter fiel ihr ein, Stich für Stich, jede Naht muß gut verschlossen werden, mit Knoten, die niemand sieht, denn auf jedem Knoten sitzt eine Perle. ... Das, was im verborgenen bleiben sollte, mußte am auffälligsten geschmückt sein. (Boehning 2007: 149)

Images of a hat being decorated or used as decoration are employed throughout the novel. The Degas painting which Harold had offered Gudrun even depicts the interior of a milliner's store. Hats are objects that hide a person while simultaneously decorating her. This excerpt exemplifies the paradox of being at once hidden and seen as it is constructed through the metaphor of the hat. Through Evi's experiences with millinery, her mother teaches her that things that are highly visible, such as the pearls on a hat, disguise the most undesirable parts of a whole, such as the hat's stitching.

Evi comes to understand her Blackness as a similar visible indication of an undesirable secret—one she associated with her father. As a young child she began to try to hide herself in an effort to blend into white German society, in the hopes of hiding the marker of her secret. Nele describes her mother's life as "ein unauffälliges, sehr zurückgezogenes Leben," and she even learns to overlook her mother: "So passierte es, daß Nele ihre Mutter auf eine Art übersah, sich an ihre Verschweigenheit gewöhnte" (Boehning 2007: 94). Evi's desire to hide the secret of her father from the world is both a learned behavior and a survival strategy. On the tapes, Nele hears her grandmother explain how she tried to keep Evi hidden from both the townspeople and her own mother, whom she calls the Frau Generalin:

> Du kamst zur Welt, meine Mutter sagte nur, das braune Ding da muß ins Heim, ich hielt dich im Arm und fand dich wunderschön, ich sah deine Farbe gar nicht. Erst nach Wochen fiel sie mir auf . ... Wenn ich irgendwie konnte, zog ich dir keine weißen Sachen an, in Weiß hast du noch schwärzer geleuchtet. Ich achtete darauf, daß die Frau Generalin dich nicht so oft zu Gesicht bekam, ich begann, dich zu verstecken. (Boehning 2007: 268)

Gudrun must protect the baby from her mother, who wants to give her up for adoption, and begins to hide her. Masking the color of Evi's skin is an integral step to hiding her. It is Evi's Blackness which upsets the Frau Generalin and threatens Evi's domestic stability. The dismissive and pejorative reference to Evi as "das braune Ding" is representative of the racist society which persists after the fall of Hitler.

Evi remembers her childhood as a consistent challenge to avoid racism. Just as her mother attempts to save her from the Frau Generalin by hiding her, she begins to hide

herself. The ability to become invisible is developed as a survival strategy similar to the one described by Hügel-Marshall;[92] however, Boehning's characters deviate from the Afro-Germans' experiential narratives in two crucial aspects. First, despite Evi's identification as Black, her daughter never speaks of any racial self-identification or personal history of racial discrimination as either a Black German woman or as the white daughter of a Black German woman, implying that German racism abated at some point after Evi reached adulthood.[93] Secondly, whereas the Blackness of Kampmann and Hügel-Marshall becomes a link to the Africa Diaspora, within Boehning's novel, it becomes a symbol of white German guilt, shame, and secrecy after World War II. This is apparent in a passage in which Evi describes her childhood fantasy of being brought to the United States by her father:

> ... und da in Amerika, da rannte ihr niemand mehr nach und rief Brikett... da konnte sie sich unsichtbar machen,... da konnte ihr niemand mehr seine Abscheu entgegenschleudern, diese Scham der Gescheiterten, da konnte ihr niemand mehr die Schuld für etwas geben, dessen sie sich nicht schuldig fühlte. (Boehning 2007: 151)

The novel alludes to racism against Black Germans as a continuation of forms of racism from the Third Reich into the postwar period. The reference to a group of Germans as "die Gescheiterten" while describing their racist actions is revealing. The readers recognize this is an allusion to the German loss of WWII, but one must also ask why the novel connects this failure to Evi's Blackness. What is it about Evi's Blackness

[92] It is worth noting that the English translation of *Daheim Unterwegs* chose the title *Invisible Woman* (2001) which reflects the importance of the subject of hiding in the autobiography.
[93] The identification of Nele as Black or white is never directly spoken to in the novel. Nele speaks of her mother's physical appearance and identification as black (see page 97), but addresses these characteristics of herself.

that evokes "Abscheu" and "Scham" in those that lost the war? I argue that Evi's Blackness, which is a marker of her 'race', could possibly remind Germans of the Holocaust for which they feel guilt and shame, but of which they do not speak. Her highly visible Blackness evokes the painful secrets of the white German past.

Despite this allusion to German guilt, the novel stops short of attacking racism in all its forms as is done by Afro-German centric texts. Whereas Hügel-Marshall and Kampmann view Blackness as an integral part of their identity as Afro-Germans, within the novel, it becomes a discursive space in which Boehning can examine German-American relations and the effects of historic silence on the second and third generations within Germany. Due to the numerous discourses that intersect to create constructs of American Blackness, they can be employed as a metaphor for victimhood, as depicted in the above passage, or as a sign of liberation. This is described in Boehning's text as Evi reflects on how her status as a Black occupation child was interpreted by white Germans during her childhood. She explains that she has been seen as "[e]in Kind von Befreier, Besatzer oder Feind, je nachdem, wie man es sah" (Boehning 2007: 94). By first clearly establishing the dichotomy of Evi's Blackness as both victim and victor, Boehning then draws parallels between her and white characters in order to explore the effects of historical silence on white Germans.

Although Evi is the only character who experiences racism, the novel depicts the generational conflicts she faces as universal for all Germans, Black and white. Both Bernhard and Schultens, the car dealer with whom Evi becomes briefly romantically involved, resent a parent due to their emotional absence and taciturn natures. Evi's character even draws parallels between the suffering of white and Black Germans. She

travels to Mallorca with Schultens, who asks her to help him empty his father's home, but arrives to find that the son's intention was to destroy everything in the house. As she watches him destroy paintings of his father, the novel describes a feeling of empathy she has for him, "Da hatte sie das Gefühl einer geheimen Verbindung zwischen ihnen gehabt, einer Nähe, die entstanden war, weil das Verhalten seines Vaters mit dem ihrer Mutter verwandt schien. Das Schweigen, die Abwesenheit, die Mißachtung, teilten sie einen Phantomschmerz (Boehning 2007: 173)?"

Evi's reference to a phantom pain corresponds to a term used by Brunner and Seltmann in their *Schweigen die Täter, reden die Enkel* (2004) as a description of the pain descendants of perpetrators felt by not knowing their family's guilty history and which is discussed further in the first chapter. Within the novel, these *Phantomschmerzen* result in generational resentment, rebellion, emotional emptiness, and distrust. All three characters of the child generation feel forced to rebel against their parents even after they've died. Evi buries her mother quickly and attends the funeral as the only attendee. Shortly thereafter, she has her mother's remains moved to Hamburg, even though her mother's final wish was to remain in Berlin. Schultens destroys his father's most beloved objects, his paintings, and Bernhard refers to his marriage to Evi as his only act of rebellion against his father.

The children must also struggle with a sense of emptiness created by their parents' secrets. As Bernhard rifles through the basement searching for a wire, he reminisces about his time at the bakery and his childhood. Similar to the father in *Schultze gets the blues*, Bernhard's father is described only as a portrait that hung in the kitchen. His father's life story remains untold, perhaps unknown even to his son.

Bernhard associates his father's portrait with the word "pflichtbewußt" (Boehning 2007: 41), implying perhaps that his father had served in the military. The memories of the absence of his father are also associated with a desire to hold something that has a history: "Etwas in der Hand halten, das Geschichte hatte, mit seiner Geschichte verbunden war" (Boehning 2007: 43). Evi shares this desire to fill her life with material objects which are associated with stories or histories that have disappeared from human memory. Bernhard categorizes the type of objects she collects as "der Müll anderer Leute, das Übriggebliebene, das komplett Überflüssige, das niemand mehr haben wollte" and in an inner monologue he likens her hoarding to an attempt to collect stories, saying, "Evi sammelte fremde Geschichten ein, die keiner mehr kannte, keiner entschlüsseln konnte" (Boehning 2007: 43). As a Black German, Evi's compulsion to collect objects considered worthless by other people is also a reflection of her self-worth. Just as her mother tried to save her from being cast aside to an orphanage, Evi attempts to save objects and the stories they hold from being thrown away and forgotten.

Evi's Blackness becomes emblematic of the loss of history white Germans of the second generation felt due to national secrets. Just as Evi is driven to collect material goods in order to fill this void, on a national level, white Germans turn to consumerism. This is poignantly demonstrated by a comment Gundrun records. In describing her desire to be with Harold, a Black GI, she explains that she desired him as "jemand…, der für andere der letzte Dreck war. Wie wir auch als der letzte Dreck angesehen wurden" (Boehning 2007: 241). The racism confronting African Americans is reduced to a metaphor for the international shame the Germans faced after the war. This shame is then

countered by a growing consumerism and dependence on the United States, as is demonstrated by Bernhard's attitudes towards *Pflicht* and work.

Not only is Bernhard's father's portrait associated with duty, but he associates it with the experiential generation as a whole. The novel describes Bernhard's association of the word with his parents in the following, "*Pflicht* war meist eines der ersten Worte, die er hörte, wenn er nach Hause zu den Eltern kam. Niemals etwas nur machen, es immer so machen, daß man seine Pflicht perfekt erfüllte" (Boehning 2007: 41). What this duty entails is unraveled in his disparaging description of his neighbor Ade, who has consistently failed at various entrepreneurial endeavors, "Ade ging auf die Sechzig zu, wirkte unumstößlich, aller Witterung zu trotzen fähig und irritierte Bernhard dennoch, weil er so ein unerklärliches Leben führte, nicht gewillt, die Zeichen seines Scheiterns zu verbergen, im Gegenteil, er stellte sie geradezu aus" (Boehning 2007: 50). This passage intricately intertwines the concepts of failure, concealment, and professional success. Bernhard cannot abide Ade because he is unwilling to keep secret his commercial failures. For example, his backyard is full of pools that he was unable to sell. This lack of success is described as a "Zeichen seines Scheiterns" and is reminiscent of the description of white Germans as "die Gescheiterten." Just as the Germans were unable to win the war, Ade is unable to succeed commercially. Without a war to battle, for which to be *pflichtbewußt*, the children of the experiential generation are expected to be professionally successful. Furthermore, if they should fail, they are expected to hide this failure, just as their parents have kept their histories during the war secret.

The importance of fiscal success to West German processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* was emphasized by Charles Maier in *The Unmasterable Past*

(1988) and Jeffrey Herf in *Divided Memory* (1997). Both of these scholars analyzed West Germany's dedication to an American style capitalism as a symbolic means of moving on from the past. Embracing capitalism allowed the FRG to economically and politically ally with England, France, and America, three major opponents against the Third Reich. The nation was also able to formulate an anti-communist, anti-GDR identity, which was constructed in the West German media as a continuation of the Fascist dictatorship. In light of these scholarly works, the drive for success depicted within *Lichte Stoffe* and its association with unspoken familial secrets can also be analyzed as reflections of national processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Bernhard's *Pflicht*, his duty to succeed commercially, can be deconstructed as a desire to make amends for his parents' participation in the Third Reich.

Similar to Schorr's criticism of comsumerism in *Schultze gets the blues*, the commercialism and Americanization of Germany is starkly criticized within the novel and depicted as a failed attempt by successor generations to come to terms with Germany's past and their parents' secret experiences within that past. The Germany in the novel has become so Americanized that German cultural identity is in danger of being completely usurped by American culture. Before his dismissal from the bakery, Bernhard is unnerved by the Anglicization of the company's terminology. He notes that *Backhalle* becomes "production center" and *Abläufe* is changed to "transportation and logistics," even some of the bakers are given English titles, and he remarks that "server management" used to be called Herr Hinrich (Boehning 2007: 54).

Nele also notices a usurping of German culture by America upon her return to Hamburg from the United States. Her homecoming is described as the following, "Nele

war zurück in Deutschland, zuerst abzulesen an den wandhohen Streifen von Werbung, oft dieselbe Werbung wie in Amerika, Leuchtkästen voller Werbung, nur mit deutschen Textkrümeln. Sie war wieder in Deutschland…" (Boehning 2007: 310). The "German" advertisements that welcome her back to her homeland are actually American advertisements with German script.

Perhaps the most polemic criticism of the United States and its effects on Germany are found in the scenes depicting Bernhard's participation in a US military anti-terrorist training simulation at Hohenfels, near Nuremberg. Bernhard travels to the US Garrison with Ade, who participates in the simulations every year for monetary commission. Bernhard has no interest in the training exercises, but must leave for the weekend so Evi does not realize he is unable to attend a trade conference that same weekend because he is now unemployed. Bernhard finds the Americans to be completely arrogant and disrespectful. They address the Germans with the informal "du" and expect them to follow orders blindly.

During the exercise, Bernhard is reminded of a memory of his childhood, in which US soldiers threw candy on the ground expecting German children to crawl around in the dirt to find it. Bernhard then associates this childhood resentment with feelings of his college years in which he protested against the Americans during the Student Movement. Bernhard goes so far as to even exclaim of the Americans, "Mann, ich hasse die" (Boehning 2007: 210). This climax of the novel's criticism of the US is tempered by the comments of Ade, who states, "Wenn du die Amerikaner so haßt, hättest du dir das natürlich nicht antun sollen... Aber man haßt doch immer nur das, was einem zu ähnlich ist, oder (Boehning 2007: 210)?"

The similarities and shared histories of the United States and Germany are also hidden in the history of the Hohenfels Garrison itself. The US military operation that Bernhard so polemically critiques is actually the repurposed prisoner of war camp Stalag 383. This double history of this military site as it is depicted in the novel is an example of Niven's concept of double memory. Bernhard's feelings of victimization by the US military are set within a geography that once held Americans as prisoners of war. The garrison's National Socialist past is not mentioned within the novel, and it is possible that the author was unaware of it altogether, but this does not negate Niven's concept of double memory. He has demonstrated how certain spaces can become symbolic for the suffering of two different groups of people, and how sometimes the memories of anguish can conflict, because one of the groups suffered at the hands of the second group. This book is an excellent example of this. As the historic site of an allied POW camp and the current site of US occupation of Germany, Hohenfels created a double memory. It is a sight of suffering for both people. However, Boehning ignores the space's National Socialist history, and creates a lacuna similar to the silences her novel is attempting to engage and challenge.

This is but one example of the novel's association of increasing commercialism and Americanization with the production of secrets and lies which are depicted as being perpetuated by members of the second and third generation. For example, Nele is forced to work for a company whose marketing is built on lies. They fabricate stories for the shoes they design, claiming they are made from materials from the space program, or out of paper from the Watergate scandal. Her employment with such an amoral corporation combines with the lack of openness about her familial past, and, like Kampmann, she

finds it difficult to trust anyone. She distrusts her coworkers and even her grandmother's account of her experiences with Harold, questioning if the Degas painting even exists. Although Nele's life is filled with lies that adversely affect her, she is also the only character with the opportunity to stop the proliferation of lies and secrets created by her family or by US commercialism.

Nele is depicted at a crossroads. She and Eric are about to move to Las Vegas as the result of his promotion within the company. After they move, she is scheduled to start working for the company's corrupt marketing department, which is interested in her because she studied camouflage during her education in design. She can either choose to continue to help the company create falsified stories, or leave Eric and her career and search for her grandfather, which could potentially help her mother feel a sense of closure about her past. Nele, as a member of the third generation functions as a point of reconciliation. The novel describes the granddaughter as a midway point between the experiential and the child generations, stating, "Nele war die Mitte, die Hälfte des Weges" (Boehning 2007: 235). By receiving the tape recordings of her grandmother, Nele is faced with decisions which could redefine her mother's relationship to her own mother, her past, and her father. Only Nele can choose to journey to New York to find Evi's father, or to recount her grandmother's story to Evi, or to let it remain secret; only she has the knowledge needed to redefine the relationship of the child generation to the secrets of their parents and fill their silence with a history.

Nele decides to try to break the pattern of creating lies, and leaves her job to go to New York and find Harold. She discovers that he is a sickly old man who cannot rise from his recliner because he suffers from Labyrinthitis, a disease that affects balance and

the inner ear. Nele tries to explain to him that she is his granddaughter from Germany, but he denies ever having had a German daughter. Instead, he rambles on about his pride in his military service and describes being stationed in Germany as the most liberating time of his life. Nele sees the Degas painting on the wall and briefly considers taking it, but as Harold grows angrier, she decides to leave him and the painting behind. Although she tries to unburden herself of the familial secret by meeting her grandfather, she is instead encumbered with another secret. She must decide if she should tell her mother about Harold's denial of paternity.

These decisions plague her on her flight back to Germany, during which she talks to the gentleman next to her, whom she only refers to as the Tweedmann. Serendipitously, he is not only a German art dealer, but he specializes in the restitution of pieces stolen during the Second World War to their rightful owners. Nele's conversation with him frames the novel. At the beginning of their conversation, Nele accidentally hints to the Tweedmann that she may know where a stolen Degas painting is, and he urges her to come forward to the authorities so that it could be returned to the rightful owners. As the novel progresses, the Tweedman reflects on his experiences in art restitution and his dissatisfaction with the work. He explains:

> Ich würde [die Gemälde] gleich zurückgeben an die Nachfahren der Besitzer, die sich die Gemälde dann ins Wohnzimmer hängten, und mir war klar, daß jedes Bild eine offene Wunde in der Familiengeschichte bepflastern würde... Kann das Bild etwas wiedergutmachen? Kann es eine Leerstelle füllen? (Boehning 2007: 278)

His experience with the victims of WWII parallels that of Nele's family. Her search for the Degas was an attempt to fill the emptiness her grandmother's secrets created in both her and her mother, just as the restitution of artwork to victims of WWII was intended as compensation for their loss. These sorts of reparations are typical of political and financial forms of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* associated with the beginning of the restitution era in the FRG. Ending his comment by questioning whether this act of reparation was actually successful, the novel challenges another traditional form of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung.*

After realizing the futility of making amends through traditional forms of restitution, the Tweedmann reverses his initial counsel and says, "Behalten Sie das Bild… lassen Sie es dort, wo es ist. Erfinden Sie eine Geschichte drum herum, wenn Sie es wollen. Erfinden Sie was. Fangen Sie einfach an. Wiederholen Sie eine Geschichte. Das ist sie dann: ihre Geschichte" (Boehning 2007: 279-80). Upon arriving at her mother's she decides to follow the art dealer's advice, and tells her mother half-truths which will make her happy. She divulges the secret of the Degas and the meeting with Harold, but lies about his denial of Evi.

The novel ends on an ambiguous note. Evi feels closer to her daughter and bonds with her through the falsified story of Harold by asking Nele to keep it a secret between them. This shared secret represents a point of reconciliation and union between the two women, but the lies and secrets that caused so much damage after the war are continued. The continuation of lies simultaneously represents the failure of processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and a chance at reconciliation. None of the characters are able to come to terms with their past. The grandmother was never able to tell her

daughter about Harold. Evi never learns the truth about the painting, and Nele chooses to lie to her mother. However, by choosing to create new stories, the novel depicts hope for the family's future.

Danger, Silence, and Racism in Peter Henisch's *Schwarzer Peter* (2000)

Similar to Boehning's premiere novel, Peter Henisch's *Schwarzer Peter* also constructs Blackness as a literary space in which the secrets of a shameful past can be explored on a familial and national level. The texts differ in their depiction of racism, however. Whereas Boehning's novel evades any discourse of contemporary racism, Henisch's text boldly exposes its existence, persistence, origins, and repercussions on Austrian society. Henisch's text employs a Blackness that is historically informed by discourses of colonialism, slavery, and the Third Reich, making it more similar to the texts by Black Germans which succeeded in redefining German national identity. He follows the examples of Afro-German authors by interrogating the effects of racism on the identity formation of his protagonist, depicting a drive to create Diasporic relationships in an effort to stabilize the character's racialized identity. His novel is unique in my project, because it is the only Austrian text and it critiques Austria's 'victim mythology' and the consequences this had on Austrian politics and society.

Henisch's text begins by exploring Blackness and 'race' as a secret which must be hidden, similar to Hügel-Marshall's and Boehning's texts. The bulk of the novel focuses

on the themes of secret and unknown histories, and like Boehning's novel, Henisch ties the secrets of the protagonist's personal history with the Austrian national discourse of World War Two. The protagonist, Peter, originally disregards his personal history in the same way that Austria attempts to silence national discourse concerning any participation in National Socialism. However, the longer discourses of racial persecution remain unaddressed the more violent acts of racism against Peter become. The protagonist's Blackness becomes a gauge against which to measure the damage of this silence. It becomes a code needed to decipher the secret, latent racism mounting in Austrian culture. In *The Politics of the Nazi Past in Germany and Austria*, David Art demonstrates how Austrian reluctance to confront and work through the past, its silence, allowed for the resurgence of right extremists and their consolidation of political power. Henisch's novel deftly reflects this silence and its repercussions through a literary silence of its own. Just as Art demonstrated that questions of guilt and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* faded from national discourse, these themes fade from the novel as well. Henisch is able to demonstrate the effects of this silence through the depictions of individual Austrians' reactions to Peter's Blackness. The following section will first survey Henisch's novel in respect to his oeuvre, then give a brief overview of the plot before proceeding to the analysis of the text's construction of Blackness, silence, racism and articulations of Austrian *Vergangenheitsbewäligung.*

The title of Henisch's text *Schwarzer Peter* is imbued with significance. It is a reference to the novel's protagonist, a children's card game, and Henisch's first novel, *Die kleine Figur meines Vaters* (1975). The card game of the same name was not the inspiration of the title, but the 'otherness' implied by this allusion—the person left

holding the "Schwarzer Peter" card loses the game—is not without significance. Henisch first refers to the idea of a "Schwarzer Peter" in his inaugural novel, *Die kleine Figur meines Vaters.* As was explored in the first chapter, this text is representative of the *Väterliteratur* genre of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The text explores the relationship of Henisch and his father, and at the beginning of the work the son refers to himself as a "Schwarzer Peter," the outsider of his family (Henisch 1971: 9). The reference to this semi-autobiographical novel not only raises questions of possible similarities of the plot to the author's own life, but it also brings processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* into the foreground. As a work of *Väterliteratur*, Henisch's novel openly and polemically explored the child generation's relationship to the guilt of the experiential generation. *Schwarzer Peter*, Henisch's longest novel, continues this exploration in the twenty-first century.

The novel traces the life of Peter Jarosch across Europe and the United States from his birth in Vienna to his arrest by the Austrian border control in his forties. Like Boehning's and Gerunde's texts, the novel is framed by a narrative of the protagonist in a foreign land. In this case, Peter is in a bar in New Orleans, where he narrates the story of his childhood in Austria and immigration to the United States from the stool of his piano. The frame narrative allows the protagonist to reflect on his experiences and on his identity, which he openly engages, questioning if he feels more Austrian or African American. He begins his tale in the year before his birth, explaining how his Austrian mother, a street car conductor, met his father, an African American GI, and how his father disappeared before his birth.

The dynamics between secrecy, silence, and 'race' follow a pattern similar to *Lichte Stoffe* at the beginning of the novel. Peter knows nothing of his father, of whom there is little talk. His life and familial history is limited to his mother and grandmother, who dies when he is young. From a young age, Peter begins to understand that he differs from other Austrian children and prefers to play alone, hiding himself away. Other Austrians also attempt to hide his Blackness. For example, after the death of his grandmother and his entrance in primary school, his mother starts a relationship with a Herr Horak, who moves in with them and is obviously uncomfortable with Peter's Blackness, although he struggles to conceal his racism. In an effort to win Peter's affection, he gifts the boy a Native American costume, which Peter describes as "unpassend" and makes him more suspicious of his mother's suitor (Henisch 2000: 29). Although the intentions of Horak are described as an attempt to bribe him, Peter's suspicion of him combines with Horak's eventual racist remarks—comments which cause his mother to end their relationship—and the reader wonders if this outfit was not an attempt at hiding Peter's skin color by disguising it as part of a costume.

This association of his Blackness with a costume is emphasized a page later when he is chosen to play the part of the Magi Balthazar in his church's Christmas pageant. This king is traditionally portrayed as being Black, or as he is referred to in the text, the "Mohren König" (Henisch 2000: 30). As the older Peter reflects on this, he explains, "Das eigentlich Peinliche war, daß meine Hautfarbe eingesetzt werden sollte wie ein Teil einer Verkleidung" (Henisch 2000: 30). As Peter ages, the attempts to hide his Blackness cease, but his encounters with racism increase. During his first years in school, he is bullied, but this aggression he faces isn't racialized. Both he and his friend Puschling, the

son of a Soviet Soldier, are harassed for being occupation children. He doesn't begin experiencing racism from his peers until after the 'victim mythology' is established within the novel.

The development of this myth is only directly alluded to in one critical passage. The occupation forces are leaving Austria, and Peter's teacher attempts to explain to his elementary students the importance of the constitution which was about to be signed:

> Zehn Jahre sei unsere Heimat nun von fremden Soldaten besetzt gewesen. Nach einem schrecklichen Krieg, der über unser armes, kleines Land hereingebrochen sei, wie ein verheerendes Unwetter. Aber demnächst werde diese finstere Zeit ein Ende haben und Österreich, unser schwer geprüftes, aber viel gerühmtes und geliebtes, wie es in der Bundeshymne hieß, die wir nun in der Musikstunde dauernd singen mußten, würde endlich frei. (Henisch 2000: 53)

In this brief excerpt, the teacher combines sentiments of national pride with Austria's history in the Second World War. He completely evades Austrian participation in the war by comparing it to a storm that crashed over the nation, likening it to an act of nature beyond their control.[94]

Although this is the only passage which directly depicts the construction of the 'victim myth', there are more surreptitious allusions to a lack of Austrian guilt and a denial of their history. For example, Peter describes the renaming of a bridge over the Donau from *Brücke der Rote Armee* to *Reichsbrücke* after the end of the occupation. Peter is sure to mention the distressing use of the word "Reich" in its name, which in his

[94] Peter Utgaard's *Remembering & Forgetting Nazism: Education, National Identity and the Victim Myth in Postwar Austria* (2003) gives an excellent overview of the proliferation of Austria's victim mythology within its primary and secondary education system.

mind draws an association to the Third Reich. He explains that white Austrians are able to ignore any association it may have with this history:

> Obwohl das Wort *Reich* nach wie vor etwas anrüchig klang. Man konnte nicht umhin, es mit dem Reich zu assoziieren, an das sich im Jahr ’38 dem Vernehmen nach die meisten ziemlich begeistert hatten anschließen lassen. Aber angeblich hatte der Name der Brücke gar nichts mit jenem Reich zu tun, sondern hatte schon vorher, mit welcher Bedeutung immer, existiert, und man sah... keinen Grund, sie nicht wieder so zu nennen. (Henisch 2000: 216).

Although the term *Reich* immediately invokes memories of the Third Reich, the people of Vienna do not see this as a reason to find a new name for the bridge. They are able to evade this history by choosing to associate the term with the *Reich* of the first Austrian Empire.

As the passage above demonstrates, as an Afro-Austrian Peter has insight both as an insider and an outsider. His Blackness becomes a literary space through which the author can both explain normalized Austrian attitudes and criticize them. He is constructed as an ‘Other-from-Within-from-Without’, as proposed by Wright (2003: 297), who develops this theory through analyses of Afro-German writing, including Hügel-Marshall’s autobiography.[95] Henisch utilizes this feature of Afro-Austrian identity to criticize Austrian culture, but not at the expense of erasing its painful effects on those Austrians who have been racialized.

Within the novel Blackness is undeniably constructed as being in opposition to Austrianness within the white Austrian mind, and this causes Peter to constantly question his cultural identity. At one point Peter comments, “*Schwarz is häßlich / weiß is schön –*

[95] For a more thorough explanation of Wright’s work, see chapter one of this project.

dieses Vorurteil sitzt den blassen Bewohnern nicht nur der alten Stadt Wien tief in den Stammhirnwindungen" (Henisch 2000: 89). Within the novel, Blackness is not only regarded by white Austrians as ugly, but also as sinful and lazy. Peter, however, does not completely internalize these white values. Instead, he constantly questions his "Austrianness." At the end of the first section of the novel, the narrator Peter ties his language, Blackness, and national identity together, commenting:

> Und dann waren auch die Erinnerungen da, die Bilder. *Aus* dieser Sprache, *in* dieser Sprache, der meinen. Einer Sprache, die mir vor rund fünzig Jahren in den Mund gelegt worden ist. Und jetzt kommt sie wieder daraus hervor, das ist eine Art Zungenreden.
>
> Nun hat sie mich wieder, die Sprache, was soll ich tun? Ein Wort gibt das andere, ein Satz gibt den anderen. Österreichisch oder genaugenommen weinerisch gefärbt. Meine Haut is nicht österreichisch gefärbt, kurioserweise. (Henisch 2007: 77-78)

As he begins to tell stories of his childhood, he begins to identify with his native language, one which he describes as being given to him. The specificity with which he describes his language punctuates his cultural identification with his native land. The German he speaks is an Austrian German, or more specifically Viennese. However, just as the act of speaking begins to tie him back to his Austrian roots, his Blackness demarcates him as being different from other Austrians.

Henisch is careful to contextualize Peter's identity formation within a history that is Austrian and cannot be mistaken for German. For example, although Peter as a Black Austrian is the only character who experiences racism, the novel includes white

characters that are depicted as being 'othered'. In particular, characters that represent the former Austro-Hungarian Empire are depicted as being both Austrian and an 'other'. The most notable character is Freislinger, a young man with whom Peter is stationed while doing his obligatory military service. Freislinger comes from Südburgenland, which Peter describes as, "Aus einem der letzten österreichischen Winkel" (Henisch 2000: 248). Freislinger grew up bilingual, German and Croatian, and he is easily recognized by his accent. Peter explains, "Trotz seines deutsch klingenden Namens sprach er mit Akzent" (Henisch 2007: 248). The novel emphasizes accents as a marker of both geography and history, and Freislinger is created as a reversal of Peter. Freislinger's name and appearance seem Austrian, but his accent marks him as an outsider. Peter's accent concretely identifies him as an Austrian but his skin color ostracizes him from his native land.

After consistently being ostracized by his native culture, Peter begins to search for a culture that Europeans would associate with his skin color. After graduating from high school, Peter tours Europe, traveling with international students he meets during his journey. His closest friend is Amadou, who comes from the Ivory Coast. Amadou tries to coax Peter into traveling to Africa with him, but Peter is hesitant. Amadou teaches Peter about the colonialism and slavery of people of African descent. Peter recalls:

> *Côte d'Ivoire*, was für ein schöner Name. Allerdings erinnert er an den Raub zahlloser Tonnen von Elefantenzähnen. Es folgt die *Goldküste,* dann die *Sklavenküste*. Mit diesen Namen, meint Amadou, kann man die ganze frühe Ausbeutung Westafrikas beschreiben.

> Tausende... werden in Schiffbäuchen zusammengefercht nach Amerika deportiert. (Henisch 2000: 187).

As an Austrian with an African American father, Peter begins to understand his culture as being international, like Hügel-Marshall. Although he does not yet turn to the African Diaspora as a space for his identity formation, Africa symbolizes a land of history to which he feels he is related.

His racialized identity is closely tied to his gendered and sexual identities as well. Black masculinity depicted in this novel mirrors that of Roehler's Jimi in the previous chapter. Within white society, Black males are exotic, strong, and hypersexual. During his travels through Europe, he meets two Swedish girls who believe "daß ein *black man* ein *strong man* sein muß" (Henisch 2000:186), and while in the hospital, a doctor comments to Peter, "Für ein Neger – Entschuldigung – hast du erstaunlich fragile Gelenke" (185). Peter, however, has difficulty performing these masculinities, much like Schultze in the previous chapter.[96] His wife Natascha accuses him of being a "Feigling," and he is happier performing traditionally 'feminine' tasks such as staying home to raise his children, than those acts considered masculine.

Peter's failure to perform the expected racialized masculinity demanded of him from white society is coupled with his bisexuality, which is also constructed as a performative failure. Building off of the previous chapter's discussion of Judith Butler's works, this chapter analyzes sexuality as discursively constructed as well. Peter's bisexuality, which he eventually gives up for a heterosexual life can best be understood

[96] Armin Völcker's film *Leroy*, which is examined in the next chapter, will also engage in these stereotypes, but it will attempt to deconstruct them.

as a decision to conform to the expectations of white society through performance of his heterosexuality.

Peter's first sexual encounters are with his friend, Puschling. The boys abscond to the Donau Canal's shores, where they explore each other's bodies. Peter does not express any shame for his homosexual acts, and his curiosity in women develops with his attraction to men. He does not realize his attraction for men is considered inappropriate until he makes advances on a second white German friend, Reiter, who wields the secret over him as a threat. Eventually, Peter replaces his natural inclinations with a form of hetero-hypersexuality. Peter becomes an Austrian pop star, but at the expense of his sexual and racialized identities. His agent gives him the stage name Paul White and forces him to sing songs he dislikes but are commercially successful. When Peter goes on tour, he has a series of affairs with women. In contrast to Schultze, who refused to perform the traditional Polka songs expected of him and thereby failed to perform his masculinity, Peter embraces his role as a Black pop star. His sudden inclinations toward hypersexuality can, therefore, be interpreted as a performance of his masculinity and his Blackness.

He is unable to maintain this performance indefinitely, however. As his singing career comes to an end, his childhood nemesis, Reiter, reenters his life. Reiter's experiences create an antithesis to Peter's. While Peter's journey into adulthood entailed conforming to the expectations of white German society, as punctuated by his stage name Paul White, Reiter left Europe and became wealthy by exploiting the native people of southern Africa. Reiter, who is attracted to Peter's wife, eventually splits up the couple by telling his wife about Peter's sexual indiscretions. Reiter's desire to ruin Peter's life is

not simply personally motivated, but racially motivated as well. Reiter had always held racist attitudes. As children, he bullied Peter before befriending him. His years in Africa, however, solidify these racist beliefs. Peter describes Reiter's memories of Africa as follows: "Ja, dieses Südafrika ist ein schönes Land und war damals, als Robert Reiter hinkam, noch ein gutes Land für Menschen weißer Hautfarbe, die bereit waren, die dort herrschende Ordnung nicht für skandalös zu halten, sondern für vernünftig" (Henisch 2000: 493). Reiter has embraced a racial hegemony reminiscent of the colonial era or the Third Reich, and Peter, racialized as Black, is targeted and victimized by him.

The novel depicts this extreme racism as increasingly "normal" for Austrian culture. Peter's Blackness makes him a target of racialized aggression. It is also employed within the novel as a means of measuring the damage Austria's 'victim mythology' has on its society. The longer Austria's guilt for the racial genocide remains silent, the more prevalent fascist-like racism resurfaces. Peter's life is punctuated by acts of racial aggression which become increasingly aggressive. As a child, he is bullied by Reiter and other school children, but he is able to find a place in society on his soccer team. As he becomes an adult, he finds that he is turned down for jobs due to his skin color and eventually he and his family are turned away from restaurants. One bar tender even snears, "Solche wie euch hätten wir vor fünfundzwanzig Jahren noch ins Gas geschickt," a distinct reference to the Holocaust (Henisch 2000: 345).

This racism is paralleled with a rising and equally violent anti-Semitism. About the same time as Peter begins to be turned away from restaurants, his boss, the Jewish Herr Jericha, is informed of a complaint made against him by the owner of the building in which he rents shop space. After Jericha protests, Peter quotes the owner as responding,

"Tut mir leid… Die Frau ist ja wirklich imstande, uns zu vernadern.[97] Seien wir froh...daß wir jetzt 1970 schreiben und nicht 1938" (Henisch 2000: 421).

Austrian public denial of any involvement with the Third Reich and its genocide incites white Christian Austrians to ignore emotions of guilt and fear no repercussions for their racist attitudes. The novel depicts this increasing racism in the political area as well, a criticism which is substantiated by David Arts empirical study of Austrian articulations of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in the media. This is most distinctly demonstrated in a comparison of two instances in which Peter tries to enter Austria after losing his passport. The first instance happens after his graduation, while he is traveling through Europe. While in Spain, he is stopped by an immigration officer, who is suspicious of his being an Austrian citizen and utters in disbelief, "*Sie* wollen ein Österreicher sein? Ist das echt wahr oder halten Sie mich zum Narren (Henisch 2000: 190)?!" The Spanish civil servant's incredulity stems from Peter's identity as being both Austrian and Black. Peter is about to substantiate his nationality quickly, and Peter explains, "Man telefonierte und telegrafierte nach Wien. Ich bekam ein Papier, das meine österreichische Identität bestätigte" (Henisch 2000: 191). Although Peter is insulted that his Austrianness is challenged—he later comments "ich *war* einfach einer"—the Austrian government substantiates the citizenship of a Black Austrian with the same perfunctoriness it would a white Austrian.

Returning to Austria after almost thirty years in the United States, Peter once again loses his passport and is subjected to a degrading incarceration. He is picked up by Austrian police who accuse him of being an illegal African immigrant. He is taken to Rossauer Länder, a detention center for illegal immigrants, where no one is able or

[97] This is an Austrian phrase similar in meaning to *denunzieren*, *verraten*, or *verleumden*.

willing to substantiate his identity. His native Viennese accent, which had before always functioned as sign of his Austrianness, is disregarded. He protests his arrest, trying to assert his Austrian origins, shouting, "Na hören Sie! – Hören Sie meine Sprache! Spricht *so* ein Afrikaner? – I'm an African American with a particular accent. An African American of audible Austrian origin" (Henisch 2000: 403). His protests are ignored and instead a nameless civil servant writes, "*Verdacht des Rauschgifthandels / aggressives Verhalten gegenüber Organen der öffentlichen Sicherheit / Verursachung ungebührlicher Weise störenden Lärms*," listing off charges against him which are obviously false (Henisch 2000: 403). He is forced to remain in prison for weeks until he is finally able to contact his younger, white half-sister who can identify him.

In a manner that follows the patterns expressed by the texts of Afro-Germans at the beginning of this chapter, the novel demonstrates how this mounting racism destabilizes the protagonist's cultural identity and forces him to turn to cultures outside of Austria for a sense of identity. Peter's first attempts to connect with Black culture are through fictional texts, movies and literature, featuring African American characters, such as Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* (1884). These texts, however, often had racist undertones, and catered to a white audience. The characters of these texts are racialized as Black and are stereotyped in a way that corroborates and supports white hegemony. Peter internalizes this as a child and begins to make up stories about his history in order to ingratiate himself to white Germans. While he travels through Europe, he claims to be American, which appeases his travel companions. As a child, he ingratiated himself to a neighbor boy by spinning fictional tales of his father's experiences growing up in the

jungles of Africa. His soccer team believed he was of Brazilian heritage, which functioned as an allusion to a famous Black Brazilian soccer player of the time.

This desire to make up stories in order to fill in the secrets of an unknown personal history mirrors the decision of Boehning's character Nele, who fictionalizes her encounter with her grandfather in an effort to mitigate the damage the experiential generation's secrets caused her mother. In both novels, these fictionalizations function as survival techniques. Peter wishes to mitigate the racism he faces by conforming to stereotypes acceptable to white Austrian society, and Nele wishes to mitigate the pain her grandmother's decisions caused her mother. Within Boehning's novel, Nele's decision to perpetuate the familial lies ends the story on an ambiguous note. Mother and daughter are reunited, but through an act of deception. Within Henisch's novel, the fictionalization of his familial past is depicted as completely unsatisfactory, incapable of addressing the instability Austrian racism has caused his identity.

This is most apparent as he works as an English tutor at his university. He claims to be a native speaker and tells his students and colleagues that he was born in Mississippi. The older Peter reflects on this fictionalization of his heritage, explaining this version of his childhood in the following:

> Mein Vater hatte meine Mutter bei seiner Rückkehr aus Europa nicht dort drüben sitzen gelassen, sondern hierher mitgenommen. Und ich war nicht im Wiener Rudolfsspital geboren, sondern in einem kleinen Haus in Mississippi. Im Traum war ich manchmal wirklich im Haus. (Henisch 2000: 228)

This is the only fictionalized history of his life that he describes as his dream. This belies his desire for something greater than a story. The tales he spun as a child were for the

benefit of the white Germans who sought to ostracize him. The story of growing up in Mississippi exists for him as a form of wish fulfillment.

As an adult, he finally goes to the United States, to New Orleans, where his father was last reported to live. During this time, he joins a world in which most people are of African descent. For the first time, he feels that his Blackness allows him to blend into society. He makes real friends, the most influential of which was Joe, a man old enough to be his father. Joe gives him a home and encourages him to search for his father. He introduces him to other African Americans, and Peter eventually gets US citizenship. He even identifies himself as African American, but he cannot shake the feeling that he still does not belong. He explains, "Ich war ein Fremder. Obwohl ich wie ein Einheimischer aussah" (Henisch 2000: 205). He cannot completely disregard his Austrian identity.

Eventually Joe finds him a job as a musician, and it is in the creation of Jazz, a Diasporic genre of music, that he is finally able to reconcile the two sides of his identity, Austrian and Black. His relationship to African American music, Jazz and Blues, began as a child. Although the genre always appealed to him, he was discouraged by most white adults to practice it, such as his father-in-law, who didn't think that Jazz could even be studied in Vienna. Those white Europeans with whom he did connect emotionally, including his mother and wife, always encouraged his relationship to American music. His favorite teacher even had a Jazz band named the "Original Old Vienna Dixie Band." By writing and singing Jazz, he is able to symbolically align himself with those individuals of Austria with whom he felt a kinship, while simultaneously expressing his African Diasporic identity. This is particularly evident in the following passage in which

he arrives in New Orleans for the first time and hears an African American singing a song he describes as being a mix between Blues and a "Worksong":

> *It's been a long way,* sang er, also vielleicht kein Worksong, sondern einen Vagabundensong, einen Trampsong, einen Pilgersong, doch auch das, diese Existenz, ging mir damals auf, war Arbeit, Leben war Arbeit, Geschichte war Arbeit, seine Geschichte, die ich nicht kannte, aber durch den Song ahnte, und die Geschichte seiner Leute, seiner Leidensgenossen, seiner und meiner Vorfahren: Arbeit, und was für eine, Zwangsarbeit, Skalverei, ich hatte davon gehört und gelesen, ich konnte mir das vorstellen und doch nicht vorstellen, Afrika: die Senegalmündung, Amerika: das Mississippidelta… (Henisch 2000: 95)

For Peter, African American music is a Diasporic music, one that creates and preserves the history of the people of African heritage, a history to which he feels connected. By working as a musician, he works at his history and his life. He is able to slowly stabilize his identity as an Afro-Austrian.

The book ends with Peter's recollection of meeting Mr. Meredith, the man he believed was his father. After contacting numerous men with the same name, he finally finds one who served in Vienna during the time of his parents' romance. He tells Meredith that he is a journalist from Austria conducting research on the US occupation of Vienna, and the old man agrees to meet him at a restaurant for an interview. Peter arrives to find that Mr. Meredith, "war weiß, sogar, sehr weiß, mit rotblonden, schütteren Haaren und Sommersprossen" (Henisch 2000: 541). Peter recollects the encounter lightheartedly, without expressing any regret. Instead, he ends the story and the book with a description of the musicians playing in the street after he leaves the restaurant. Having reconnected

with his Diasporic identity through music, he no longer needs to find his biological father.

Conclusion: What Secrets Reveal

The narratives of the lives of Hügel-Marshall and Kampmann both describe how silences concerning the contemporary and historic racism and their personal heritages ostracized them from German society and forced them to create Diasporic identities. These themes are picked up by the white German texts in order to explore the effects of these secrets on white German and Austrian society. Boehning's *Lichte Stoffe* and Henisch's *Schwarzer Peter* both turn to constructs of Black occupation children in order to explore the success or failure of white German and Austrian processes of coming to terms with the past. By constructing German Blackness as a metaphor for secrets held back by the experiential generation from successor generations, Boehning demonstrates the impossibility of ever truly coming to terms with the past, offering instead the idea of creating stories for the future. By drawing parallels between Evi's life, a Black occupation child, and the lives of white Germans of the same generations, Boehning criticizes certain aspects involved with the FRG's historic processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, such as its focus on commercial success.

The Blackness of Henisch's protagonist creates a literary space in which the repercussions of Austria's 'victim mythology' can be deconstructed through representations of the increasing racism of Austrian society. Unlike Boehning's novel, however, Henisch's openly depicts racism and its effects on Black Austrians. Henisch demonstrates how Austria's 'victim mythology' enabled white Austrians to evade any

guilt and any repercussions for the war, and these unaddressed discourses of culpability eventually lead to increased extremism. Although white Austrian experiences are not ignored, they are secondary to the repercussions this racism had on racialized individuals. Henisch's character Peter is forced to flee Austria, and like Hügel-Marshall and Kampmann, must create a new Diasporic cultural identity.

The plots of both novels created an intertextual relationship to experiential literature of Afro-Germans, but by focusing on white German and Austrian perspectives of the failure or success of processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, both threaten to propagate forms of silence or exclusionary racism which the texts intend to deconstruct. Although Boehning's text explores the racism Evi must endure as an occupation child, the story of her daughter, Nele, is narrated without ever referring to any encounter with racism, either in the Germany or the United States. This erasure of modern German racism is particularly poignant in a novel which problematizes silence so openly.

Peter Henisch's novel more readily interrogates the influence of racism on Black European identity, but it is noteworthy that his protagonist, Peter, is the only Black Austrian in the novel. Kampmann and Hügel-Marshall must first create meaningful relationships with other Black Germans before they create Diasporic identities. With the exception of a Caribbean woman dating the owner of the bar, Peter never confronts another Black Austrian. By constructing Peter as the only Black Austrian, the novel threatens to reinforce the 'otherness' of Black Austrians that it attempts to deconstruct.

Chapter 5

Who Bears the Burden of 'Race'?: 'White Guilt' and Black Experiences

The preceding chapters have examined how texts interplay processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* with constructs of American Blackness in order to explore the role 'race' played in histories with which the German and Austrian people must come to terms. Exploring issues of family dynamics and historical silence against the backdrop of Black American geographies, authors and directors expose a racial hegemony with roots that extend to histories far earlier than the Third Reich which were never fully dismantled after those horrific events. This final chapter will more thoroughly explore one of the most prodigious features of emotional explorations of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, living with guilt. As explained in the first chapter, conceptualizations of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* transformed greatly after 1968. German discourses of making amends, either financially or politically, to the Jewish people dissipated, giving way to emotional and psychological processes of working through traumas of the past, centered on issues of guilt. Although the third chapter explored, to a lesser extent, issues of culpability for violence and its effects on familial processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, this chapter will analyze two texts, Christa Wolf's novel *Stadt der Engel oder The Overcoat of Dr. Freud* (2010) and Armin Völckers' film *Leroy* (2007),[98] exposing the complexities and transformations of constructs of emotional guilt for Nazi 'race' crimes in the twentieth-first century. Both

[98] This is the first chapter in which I analyze a novel and a film together. As mentioned in the first chapter, cultural studies widened the understanding of a text. Assuming that culture is the meaning-making process of a people (as proposed by Stuart Hall), then texts become the objects through which we interpret this process. Therefore a text can entail rituals, novels, films, or totemic objects. All "are a *text* to be *read*," and therefore can be analyzed together (Hall 1997b: 36).

texts depict acts of violence against People of Color and Germans, Black and white, who engage Black American culture in an attempt to combat German racism. White Germans within both the film and the novel express feelings of shame for their compatriots' racism and often find themselves caught up in articulating a guilt that is indelibly linked to Nazi racial persecution while also being informed by a more global form of guilt attributed to white people who feel culpable for living in societies that have historically and still continue to privilege individuals racialized as white.

German Shame, 'White Guilt', and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*

Expressions of 'white guilt' are first discussed in Black German studies in Dagmar Schultz's landmark essay "Racism in the New Germany and the Reaction of White Women" (1993). Schultz describes the belated integration of concerns of Black German feminists into the agenda of white German feminists. She attributes this delay to a lack of 'white guilt' felt by white feminists which obscures the white feminists' recognition of responsibility for modern racism. In this essay, she explains:

> The attitudes of white [German] women toward Black women are, in my opinion, less influenced by guilt feelings. In part, this has to do with the fact that German colonial history is considered insignificant …. Therefore, white women develop no guilt feelings about it, but also no feeling of responsibility. We can grow up in Germany without learning that apartheid … originally developed … in German-Southwest Africa, that Germans who emigrated to Namibia to avoid retribution for crimes they committed during National Socialism still live there, adhering to

> the principles of contempt for Black people and of the National Socialist race hatred. (1993: 244)

The articulations of 'white guilt' in the texts analyzed in this chapter demonstrate that much has changed since Schultz's observations of white feminist disengagement from issues of guilt for participating in the global construction of a white hegemony. White characters in Wolf's and Völckers' works openly express emotions of guilt for modern forms of racism demonstrating an amendment to discourses of guilt since the 1990s. The term 'white guilt' should not be applied as any sort of blanket term, however, and is constructed according to cultural contexts. It is noteworthy that Schulz ends her reflection on the importance of German colonialism almost involuntarily returning to the issue of the Third Reich. Constructs of German 'white guilt' are not analogous to its American or British counterparts but are inexorably linked to "the National Socialist race hatred."

This project recognizes that the work of Black German studies and Afro-German activists has done much to familiarize the German population with its colonial past and engagements with 'race' before and after the Third Reich, demonstrating how this has impacted German expressions of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Since this concept is so closely linked to feelings of guilt and contrition for racial crimes, the constellation of 'white guilt', *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, and modern racism must be investigated. The texts analyzed in this chapter directly confront this constellation and return to the demands posited by Noah Sow's *Deutschland Schwarz Weiss* at the beginning of this project's introduction; namely, a challenge to her white readers to consider their racist sentiments and own roles in perpetuating this racism.

Sow's work may be provocative in its demand for white German self-scrutiny, but it lacks an accusatory tone. Despite the lifelong experiences with racism that she has faced as a Black German, she maintains faith in the capacity of white Germans to change and understand their privilege and role in maintaining a white hegemony. She simultaneously challenges and reassures her white reader in the "Vorwort":

> Ich gehe grundsätzlich davon aus, dass Sie ein guter Mensch sind. Wenn ich denken würde, dass Sie doof und böse seien, würde ich mir nicht die Mühe machen, ein Buch zu schreiben, in dem ich versuche, Ihnen verschiedene Dinge zu erklären. ... Gleichzeitig werden Sie auf den folgenden Seiten aber hin und wieder auch ganz schön hart angefasst werden. Nehmen Sie's als Erfahrung. (2008: 12)

She does not exonerate the white reader of his or her participation in a racist society, but concedes her endeavor will reproach practices and beliefs in which white Germans find security. This process of self-analysis—one which involves uncoverning everyday white German cultural practices that perpetuate racism—will not be painless. She explains, "Denn Rassismus zu bekämpfen heißt zunächst einmal, ihn zu verstehen. Dieser Prozess wird für weiße Deutsche nicht schmerzfrei vonstatten gehen können" (2008: 12). The pain white Germans may experience during this process is not only a feeling of offense, but also one of guilt.

Stanley Steele has categorized the guilt associated with white persons who feel remorseful for the crimes of slavery, colonialism, and their aftermath as 'white guilt'. As demonstrated by Schultz's quote, this guilt is not typically associated with German constructs of racial guilt, which have been profoundly affected by culpability for the

Holocaust. However, Noah Sow's comment suggests that scrutiny into those "alte 'Wahrheiten'" that have long been held by white Germans in an effort to maintain hegemonic power should invoke painful feelings beyond a recognition of the faults of generations' past. The texts analyzed in this chapter represent white authors' encounters with literary Blackness in an effort to expose and challenge racism. This task results in articulations of guilt that are tied to processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* while also participating in a transnational discourse of 'white guilt' that extends beyond the German twentieth century history,

The term 'white guilt' came to usage in the United States in the 1970's, and its value for the annihilation of white hegemony is still widely debated. Perhaps the most well-known scholar in the field is Shelby Steele, African American senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institute. Upon reflecting on the nature of 'white guilt', Steele explains, "I think 'white guilt', in its broad sense, springs from a knowledge of ill-gotten advantage. More precisely, it comes from the juxtaposition of this knowledge with the inevitable gratitude one feels for being white rather than black in America" (1990). In his works, he argues that political initiatives within the United States intended to assist Black Americans exist to assuage 'white guilt' rather than creating any true assistance for the African American community. Although his conclusions concerning its possible hindrances[99] for the advancement of African Americas are highly debated, the origins of

[99] Steele's most comprehensive study of the subject, *White Guilt: How Blacks and Whites Together Destroyed the Promise of the Civil Rights Era* (2006), is still intensely debated. In it, he argues that political measures instituted by the US government purportedly for the advancement of African Americans are detrimental for the Black American community, and only instated to appease the 'white guilt' government officials and their white constituents felt. Although this is an important debate, it is less applicable to German and Austrian discourses, where many Afro-Germans are still petitioning for political recognition.

'white guilt' in the knowledge of the advantages one has for being racialized as white have become crucial to the understanding of the term internationally.

Steele's studies generally pertain only to American society, but scholars from other nations have explored the phenomenon within other cultural contexts. For example, Branscombe and Boosje's *Collective Guilt: International Perspectives* (2004) includes studies of 'white guilt' and its effects on Australian policy pertaining to the Aboriginal peoples. Within the German context, there is very little scholarship on the subject, as questions of collective guilt tend to focus on the crimes of the Second World War. This chapter represents an attempt to reverse this lack of academic engagement. The articulations of guilt in the works by Völckers and Wolf are informed by Germany's Fascist past without being beholden to them. They represent contemporary racism as having persisted through the Fascist dictatorship and into the twenty-first century, but emphasize that racism cannot be equated with Fascism. The guilt felt by white characters of the texts must be reframed in a context that encompasses more than its Nazi past. In the following examination, I will analyze the texts' literary and cinematic presence of American Blackness and how that presence is used by the authors in order to explore articulations of white German guilt.

Reprogramming White Supremacists in Armin Völckers' *Leroy* (2007)

Armin Völckers' film *Leroy* debuted to great success. It was well received by critics and won numerous film prizes at home and abroad, including the Deutscher Filmpreis, the Tokyo Sakura Grand Prix from the Tokyo International Film Festival, and

the Grifone d'Oro from the Griffoni Film Festival. The film was first conceived as a short film entitled *Leroy räumt auf* (2006). This movie was the product of the Berlinale Talent Campus Script Station and enjoyed enough success to win funding for a feature length film which retained the same characters and leading man, Alain Morel. At the heart of both films is a comedic love story reminiscent of Romeo and Juliet, in which the lovers, Leroy, a Black German, and his girlfriend, the blonde, white Eva, are separated by families warring along racial lines. In both versions of the movie, Eva's brothers are skinheads, which strains the relationship and upsets Leroy. Whereas the short film is constructed around the running commentary of Leroy as he traverses Berlin with his friend Dimmi pondering aloud the state of contemporary German racism, the feature length movie expands the plot and cast significantly. This analysis focuses on the feature length film, because it appeals to a larger audience and develops many of the ideas put forth by its predecessor, although the short film will be referenced in order to fully substantiate certain hypotheses. After a brief synopsis of the film's plot and genre, I will analyze the employment of constructs of Blackness, in particular American Blackness, which participate in a discourse on German "race" and racism and explore how this literary Blackness interplays with and comments on literary 'whiteness', most specifically on expressions of 'white guilt'.

Leroy's life is portrayed as that of a typical German. He is depicted in his bedroom where he is playing classical music on his cello. His audience consists of the bust of Goethe that resides on his windowsill. He lives in Berlin with his parents, and is excelling academically. His parents, a white mother, Gisela, and a Black father, Ben, seem to be happy. His father, a scientist, provides comic relief through the wacky

inventions he engineers and the ensuing antics. Leroy's typical and easy going life is only turned upside down when he takes notice of a girl at school named Eva Braun,[100] whose family is ultraconservative. Her brothers belong to an aggressive group of neo-Nazi skinheads. Eva reassures him that her brothers aren't violent, but Leroy finds himself in multiple altercations with them. As a couple, Leroy and Eva establish a strong circle of friends, including Leroy's Greek friend Dimmi, Eva's boss Jerome, a Jewish photographer who is homosexual, and a number of other high school students from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Despite the support of his new friends, Leroy experiences an identity crisis. Leroy identifies himself—and he is identified to the viewer—as being typically German. The congruence between Leroy and the German cultural icons of his bedroom (such as the bust of Goethe) even lends the protagonist the quality of being almost hyper-German. His German identity, however, is threatened when confronted by the violence of the skinheads, who label him as an outsider due to the color of his skin. This intense racism leads him to try to discover his Black identity, his racialized identity. While wandering through Berlin one day, he enters a music store with black proprietors who introduce him to Black American and Caribbean pop culture products of the 1960's and 1970's, such as the films *Shaft* (1971) and *Blackula* (1972), and Leroy begins identifying with the Black Power movement. After multiple encounters with the skinheads which lead to the hospitalization of Eva and Jerome, the film climaxes in a final battle between the skinheads and Leroy's motley group of friends. The almost cartoonesque fight ends when Leroy and Eva's oldest brother exchange a knowing glance, and in an epiphanous

[100] Although the reference is never explicitly stated in the movie, a German audience would understand her name as an allusion to the historical figure of Eva Braun, who married Hitler shortly before their suicides at the end of the Second World War.

moment the skinhead comprehends the futility of his hatred. Eva and Leroy reunite with her brothers, and the film concludes when Leroy decides to completely destroy Fascism in Germany by turning the brothers into a skinhead boy band.

The coming-of-age theme and the adolescence of the leading characters make Völckers' film this project's sole example of youth fiction. The intended audience of a text can greatly affect artistic decisions made during its creation. A text targeted to children eschews content deemed unsuitable for the youth of a given culture. My project's inclusion of a work of youth fiction is informed by cultural studies, and a brief overview of the genre is necessary for my analysis of the movie. Cultural studies encourages analyzing a construct across multiple discourses. This entails the inclusion of various forms media, 'high' and 'pop' culture texts, and works across disciplines. As a teen film, *Leroy* meets these criteria and demonstrates the processes of racialization from a unique perspective.

Although the aging process is often considered 'natural', concepts such as 'adult' and 'teen' must be examined as cultural constructs. Audience expectations of a character constructed as an 'adult', which is interpreted as a person who has completed his or her process of cultural maturation, differ from those of a 'teen' character, which is constructed as a being in the process of maturing. A genre that focuses on the depiction of maturation lends insight into a culture's processes of racialization. Cultural studies' insistence that 'race' and identity are floating signifiers is crucial for my project. It emphasizes that no person is born Black or white, but that the culture in which they live compels them to undergo a process of racialization. Although cultural studies emphasizes that a person's identity, regardless of age, is not stable, I argue the genre of teen film

allows for a more overt depiction of a culture's processes of racialization, because the audience expects a story focusing on the protagonist's identity formation. Racialization is presented as a 'natural' part of human development.

Child and adolescent characters are often constructed with connotations concerning possible positive changes for the future, lending youth fiction a pedagogical facet. They instruct the upcoming generation in the proper behavior of that culture. By attempting to provide the youth audience with standards of morality and guide them through processes of socialization, youth fiction's didactic nature can expose the author's or director's "own issues, doubts about existing institutions, and hopes for an improved society" (Knuth 2012: 12). Guidance is provided both within the text to characters constructed as 'children' and *through* the text by the morals conveyed in its plot to its youth audience. Völckers' *Leroy* is no exception. The protagonist is guided through his crisis by adult Black Germans, and I argue the text is intended to instruct white German youth in 'proper treatment' of non-white Germans.

Völckers' Black teenaged protagonist, Leroy, is caught in a coming-of-age crisis typical of a teen film.[101] Encounters that focus on his identity formation into a Black German heterosexual male encumber his journey through maturation. He is depicted at the precipice of an identity crisis that is deeply entrenched in questions of racial and sexual identity. Much like Henisch's Peter and Roehler's Jimi, Leroy's processes of racialization cannot be disentwined from his sexual and gendered identities. The film

[101] Scholars such as Catherine Driscoll, David Considine, Alexandra Seibel, and Timothy Shary all stress the centrality of questions of maturation for teen films. Driscoll explains, "[The] possible components for teen film are assembled around a central narrative trajectory, 'coming-of-age' and, just as importantly, a key narrative obstacle, 'maturity'. Maturity is a question and a problem within teen film rather than a certain set of values. … [The] teen film is less about growing up than about the expectation, difficulty, and social organization of growing up" (2011: 66).

establishes his world in two 4-second downward panning shots. The first is angled from a high perspective to display the setting: a bedroom typical of a German student. The camera tilts from the school books on the hanging bookshelves down to the sheet music and top of a cello, both which are resting on a music stand. The second shot is an extreme close up of the white sky through a window. The soundtrack transitions from the theme music, which is in the style of 1970's American Funk, to a Funk version of the theme from *Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). The camera pans down to reveal the top of a dark rounded circle, which is then revealed to be the top of Leroy's afro. His introduction to the audience is one of concord, a world in which his German and Black identities exist in harmony.

His sexual identity, however, is quickly depicted as being uncertain. After a brief voice over, in which he introduces his family and home city, Berlin, he is shown sitting at a table having breakfast with his parents. Again in voice over, he comments that his mother is preoccupied with the fact that he isn't dating. He informs his parents he must tutor a girl after school. His mother asks, "Versteht ihr euch gut?" And immediately afterwards, his father inquires, "Kommst du mit Jungs oder mit Mädchen besser zu recht?" Obviously uncomfortable by the interrogation, Leroy avoids the conversation by responding with a question of his own, "Wem soll ich erst antworten?" Within the first two minutes of the film, his sexuality is probed, and the viewer is left questioning his sexual preference.

Sexual identity must be understood as a crucial factor of his gendered identity. In teen films, heterosexuality is a prerequisite for entrance into the male power structure, and this movie is no exception. The following two sequences further reinforce male

heterosexuality as hegemonic. In the first sequence, Leroy waits outside his friend Dimmi's house so they can walk to school together. Dimmi, seeing Leroy from inside his apartment, greets Leroy from his bedroom on the second floor. He sticks his head through the open window with a toothbrush hanging out of his mouth. In his left hand, he holds a magazine which falls open to reveal pornographic photographs of women. Leroy then describes Dimmi's obsession with women and sex to the audience in a voiceover. Once Dimmi finally emerges from the house, they walk to school while Dimmi councils Leroy on how to meet women, and Leroy's heterosexuality is quickly reaffirmed. As they walk, Eva runs past, and Leroy stares at her, obviously interested in her sexually.

The following scene overtly establishes male heterosexuality as a critical subject matter. Having arrived at school, the boys attend Frau Brechwoldt's German class. In the hallway outside the classroom door, two members of the school administration converse about how well the German teacher keeps her pupils quiet. The scene then cuts to inside the classroom. The camera is placed behind Frau Brechwoldt looking at the class. The female instructor is sitting on her desk in a halter top dress. She unties the halter showing the students her bare breasts. The camera shows a group of girls looking disappointedly at their own chests and then a group of mesmerized boys. The camera shot then moves to the students' perspective, as the teacher ties her shirt back around her neck. She tells the students that she expects 45 minutes of silence during the lesson. Her motivational technique is revealed.

The sheer absurdity of the situation provides more than comic relief. It also divulges much about the text's cinematic world. This is a society in which male heterosexuality dominates. The teacher bares her body solely to placate the heterosexual

male adolescents in the classroom. The emotional damage that it causes the females—as revealed in their disappointment in their own bodies—is glossed over. There is no sign of potential protest from these discontented females, nor are there any indications of possibly homosexual students of either gender. (The film only depicts two genders.) Women and homosexuals (should there be any in the classroom) are depicted as passive. They quietly endure this daily distress in order to assure that the hormonal teenaged boys don't cause a disturbance. The paradoxical condemnation and commendation of the potential unruliness of heterosexual boys is commonplace in teen films. Perry Nodelman explains that through fiction "we often tell boys that their wildness is inevitable, even desirable, while also telling them that to enact it is wrong. More accurately, we tell them it is wrong in a way that makes a double standard clear and also secretly allows it" (2002: 5). Such a double standard is clearly made here. The male heterosexual adolescents are depicted as a threat, as potentially disruptive to the student body's education, while simultaneously being rewarded for exactly this in the form of the teacher's naked body, the object of their sexual desire.

Leroy's heterosexuality will also later be viewed as threatening by Eva's brothers, who—like Gertrud in *Lulu & Jimi*—try to prevent miscegenation within the family. Eva and Leroy's relationship is depicted as one of love, mutual trust, interest, and sexual desire. Due to Leroy's 'race', however, he may be prevented from partaking in an important rite of passage—the loss of virginity—which would allow him to establish his heterosexuality and gain access to the power structures granted adult males.

The brothers openly protest the couple's possible sexual relationship. In his first encounter with the family, Leroy saves their pet canary, Rommel, from a suicide attempt.

The family stands around the cage and each of them refers to Leroy as "Neger." Even the misguided mother uses the racial slur while trying to thank him, saying, "Das war sehr menschlich von dir, auch wenn du ein Neger bist." Without cause the brothers begin aggressively interrogating the couple on their relationship status, and upon finding out that they're dating one brother comments, "Das ist Rassenschande." Leroy leaves shaken, unsure if he will be able to continue his relationship with the Brauns' daughter.

Sexuality, sexual experimentation, and loss of virginity are common, critical motifs in teen films. The genre's depiction of virginity is seldom associated with 'purity' as can often be the case in traditional coming-of-age literature, particularly when constructs of virginity are connected with those of femininity. In the teen movie, loss of virginity, especially in the case of heterosexual male virginity, is depicted as a rite of passage, which is understood not as a literal 'rite' but more as an 'experience of limits' (Driscoll 2011: 66). The adolescent must pass through the experience on his journey into adulthood, but the experience alone does not transition him into male adulthood. Sexual exploration also succeeds in exploring "historically specific and highly gendered experiences of adolescence with the political opposition between tradition and change" (Driscoll 2011: 71).

The intersection of Leroy's sexuality, gender, and 'race' deftly conveys a social opposition between the old and the new. The combination of his male heterosexuality with his Black Germanness makes him a target of the Braun brothers' violence, who, as representatives of Germany's Nazi past, are trying to preserve white hegemony in Germany. Like Lulu and Jimi, Eva and Leroy's interracial romance directly challenges a

traditional Germanness that is exclusively constructed as white. They represent a step towards a new German, one that can be racialized as Black.

The aggression of the skinheads is concretely located in the racially motivated violence of Germany's Nazi past. Many characters are targeted by the Fascist skinheads' aggression. Achmed, a Turkish friend of Leroy, recognizes Eva's brothers at her birthday party as the perpetrators of an assault he suffered a few weeks prior, and while Eva visits Jerome in the hospital, he names the neo-Nazis as his assailants as well. These two acts of violence could be explained by *Ausländerfeindlichkeit* and anti-Semitism or homophobia respectively. The motivation for the attacks on Leroy, however, does not comfortably fit into any of these categories. After visiting the hospital to see Eva, the distraught Leroy sits down next to Achmed outside the councilor's office at school. Both boys are seeking guidance in dealing with the violence they have received due to their being labelled by the neo-Nazis as not German. Achmed shakes his head and curses the skinheads and the Germans as a whole, to which Leroy quickly replies, "Ich bin auch Deutscher." The boy mutters an apology, unsure of how to react.

In this stillness hides the unspoken knowledge the boys share. Leroy is not targeted for his religion or sexuality, in contrast to Jerome, nor due to his 'foreignness', as was the case of Achmed. The only marker left to differentiate Leroy from the other victims is his Blackness, and this exchange clearly negates Blackness as being synonymous with foreign or non-German. By process of elimination, the violence against Leroy and his perceived Blackness must be racially motivated.

Leroy's Blackness, which was first introduced as being securely unified with his German identity, now draws racially motivated violence and threatens his relationship

with Eva. He is thrown into an identity crisis and turns to adults for guidance. His mother, who strongly supports the relationship originally, forbids Leroy from going to the Brauns' house after discovering that Eva's father is the bigoted Gottfried Braun. When Leroy doesn't return home the night of Eva's birthday party, his mother goes to the Brauns' to retrieve him and openly quarrels with Gottfried, accusing him of attempting to hurt her son. This throws Leroy deeper into distress, and at the climax of the crisis, his father catches him throwing out of his window those objects that had before denoted his Germanness, such as his bust of Goethe. His father disagrees with his wife and reassures Leroy that love sees no color, encouraging him to remain with Eva. After all, his relationship with his white wife was successful. The conversation revives Leroy's resoluteness to be with Eva, but the identity crisis remains.

He seeks professional counseling at the school, where he runs into Achmed, but the boys never actually meet with the school psychologist. Instead, Frau Brechwoldt sees the waiting boys and takes them to her classroom to assist them personally. After advising them to be more patient with their white girlfriends—their interracial relationships were the root of their issues—she pushes their heads against her chest, allowing the boys a long, unobscured look down her low cut shirt.

Leroy is able to find solace concerning romance and sexuality in the comforting words of his father and bosom of his teacher, but it is not enough to reconcile his gendered and racialized identities. This incompatibility is poignantly demonstrated at Eva's hospital bedside, where the film experiences it's 'all is lost moment'.[102] Eva

[102] The 'all is lost moment' is a screenwriting term applied to feature film movies that follow the traditional three act construction that is associated with Hollywood movie conventions. It normally takes place about two-thirds through the film, or roughly on pages 75-90 of the screenplay. It is the moment when the protagonist is depicted as being furthest away from achieving his goal.

awakes to find Leroy alone, idly playing with her bra which was presumably removed upon her admission to the hospital. The couple exchanges a few jokes, but the blithe tone quickly dissipates. Eva, who had jumped onto the back of one of Leroy's aggressors, reproaches her suitor's poor performance in the fight, commenting, "Hätte mich besser verteidigen sollen. Was willst du denn von diesem Black Power Scheiß?" The astonished Leroy stumbles out, "Ich kann nicht Karate." Leroy's masculinity is challenged within this brief exchange. Eva valiantly fought to protect Leroy, and expresses a confidence in her ability to defend herself. By positioning this confidence next to a question about Leroy's understanding of the Black Power movement, she exposes her association of this movement with Black male aggression, something about which Leroy knows little.

His guides on his journey to Black manhood are the proprietors of the music shop that also serves as a meeting place for Black Germans. After Eva's hospitalization, Leroy finds himself at a crossroads in the formation of his Black national identity. He faces two choices as embodied by the proprietors of the shop. The owners agree on few things, although they both cherish US Blaxploitation[103] cinema of the sixties and seventies. The first owner gifts the teenager *Shaft* and suggests that he come back later to join a group of Black German activists demonstrating against discrimination in the workforce. The other co-owner hands him a copy of *Blackula* whispering, "Wir müssen die Weißen beißen," an obvious display of resistance to white hegemony. These two men become the faces for two differing strategies in combatting racism in Germany, one which is built on community building and the other on violent resistance.

[103] Blaxploitation is a US film genre that flourished in the late 1960's into the early 1970's. The term is derived from the combination of the term "black" and "exploitation." Originally intended for urban African American audiences, they quickly grew popular across the country. The films are normally associated with Funk music and depict Black stereotypes.

Blackula will become an important figure in Leroy's life. Watching this African American retelling of the infamous vampire creates a father-son bonding moment, and after returning to the site where Eva sustained her injury, Leroy runs into the shop owner who had gifted him *Blackula*. The proprietor is on his way to a costume party dressed as Blackula and speaks disparagingly of his co-worker's activist group, advising Leroy instead to gather a group of friends and attack the skinheads. Leroy must choose between two distinct Black identities. One is American and meets the expectations of the Black heteronormative male that Eva and white society expect of the Black Power movement. The other is encoded as German. It is non-violent and represented by the Black activist group and Leroy's father, a kind, intelligent man, who is largely financially supported by his wife, and not the masculine protector Leroy believes Eva is looking for.

Leroy chooses to turn to African American cultural products for guidance in his identity formation and for a solution to his difficulties with Eva's family. One cultural icon that he turns to is *Shaft*, which is best known for its theme song[104] which characterizes Shaft as "one bad mother—." This defining Blaxploitation film, which launched two sequels and a series of TV-movies, recounts the story of Shaft, a private detective who is hired by the Italian mob to rescue a mafia boss's daughter. The PI is able to locate the damsel in distress, but can only save her in the assault of a hotel in which she is imprisoned. As is evidenced by the theme song and plot, the character of Shaft is constructed as hyper-masculine. His womanizing and aggression are hyperbolized versions of the characteristics Eva and white heteronormative society demand of the Black male, that of a heterosexual protector.

[104] The German film's soundtrack also shows the influences of Isaac Hayes' headlining song from the US film entitled, "Theme from Shaft". The movie is interspersed with music evocative of 1970s US funk, and features a lead male bass vocal with female back-up singers that models that of "Theme from Shaft".

In looking for Black heterosexual male role models, Leroy turns not to Black Germans, but to the African American male stereotype presented to him in the character of Shaft. He begins wearing the emblematic long leather jacket and takes on some of the attributes of the macho detective. He loses his passive nature and begins to talk about physical resistance to the skinheads. He gathers his multicultural band of friends, including Achmed and Dimmi, and prepares them for battle by taking them to a karate class, learning the martial arts he believed could have prevented Eva's injury. After extensive preparation, the group incites a battle with the neo-Nazis.

When it comes time to arm themselves for the clash, Leroy adds glasses like those of Malcolm X to his outfit, and they are worn by the entire entourage. The group is further Americanized by the baseball bats they wield and which a weapons dealer referred to as *Amikeule*. These allusions to the Black Power movement are not lost on modern Europeans. The director knows that the German audience will recognize these items as signs of racial tensions within the United States and for which there is no German equivalent. These cultural products of Black America, the glasses and jacket, provide the German audience with a visual archive from which the director can then reproduce a scene of racial resistance set within Germany. The American struggle for racial equality is transcribed to the German context. This motley band of Germans carries cultural markers of a racial struggle and is, therefore, fighting not against *Ausländerfeindlichkeit* but racism.

The battle should function as a second rite of passage into German masculine adulthood, but unlike the cinematic battles of Shaft, there is no display of heroics or clear winner. The fight is won instead in the conscience of Eva's eldest brother, Hanno. An

extreme close up of his face cuts with a medium close up of Eva. The camera motion is slowed, and her torso is at times obscured by flailing fists and arms in the foreground. The camera cuts to a similar shot of Leroy and then another close up of Hanno. Images of his past wrongdoings are shown as flashbacks interspersed with close ups of his face. The scene ends with him exchanging a smile with Leroy from across the room, a sign of his newfound acceptance and understanding of Eva and Leroy's love.

The film resolves with all sides granting their blessings to the happy couple, and the brothers' renunciation of fascism. The conversion of the skinheads to anti-racism represents a rather open interrogation and denouncement of German racism, but to what extent does the film actually undermine the structures of white privilege or racialized power within Germany? Keeping in mind Morrison's assertion that "it may be possible to discover, through a close look at literary 'blackness', the nature—even the cause—of literary 'whiteness'" (1993: 9), a closer examination of the construction of German racism in the film reveals a startling relationship between Black experience and white German guilt.

This film is commendable in its candid examination and discussion of racism. It is composed in such a way as to evade any obfuscation of the issue of racism in Germany. The violence portrayed in the film cannot be confused with *Ausländerfeindlichkeit* or reduced to personal qualms between characters. However, non-white experiences with racism are subservient to those of white; it is no coincidence that no one is motivated to challenge the criminality of the skinheads until a pretty white girl is injured.

There is a crucial internal inconsistency in the film's construction of racism. The racism of the skinheads is presented at once contextualized within the German National

Socialist past and disassociated with this history. One the one hand, expressions of the racism of the Brauns and the neo-Nazis rely heavily on a Nazi language; the pets are named after high ranking NSDAP officials, Rommel and Goebbels; they use vocabulary and language associated with the era, such as *Rassenschande*; and they listen to patriotic music from the era. On the other hand, Leroy refers to the neo-Nazi movement as a "Subkultur" and states that it can be eradicated through commercialization, which caused other trends, like Rock n' Roll, to lose their rebellious overtones. Such a comparison threatens to reduce racially motivated aggression to a form of juvenile delinquency spurred by generational conflicts rather than systemic power structures based on 'race'.

Although the Braun brothers' violence is unmistakably constructed as racist, it is also represented as a generational conflict. For example, when the unconscious Eva is first admitted to the hospital, Leroy waits for the doctor alongside the rest of the Braun family. Eva's mother takes Leroy's hand and places it on Eva's. Gottfried then places his on top. This sign of acceptance of the interracial couple signifies the parental generation's forsaking of their racist ways. The brothers show no signs of remorse and remain steadfastly bigoted despite their culpability for their sister's hospitalization. This disjuncture between generational reactions to Eva's predicament represents a rupture between the parental and child generations. Although the parents and their sons shared racist ideals, this scene portrays the brothers' continued devotion to the neo-Nazi racism as a result of their loyalty to their peer group, negating the earlier establishment of racism as an ideology passed down from parent to child generation.

Expectations of teen film spectators assist in reconstructing the conflict along generational lines. The teen film audience awaits stories of rambunctious boys rebelling

against the conventions and institutions established by older generations,[105] and the Braun brothers' insubordinate nature and epiphanous redemption fits comfortably within this archetype. Their interactions frequently mimic the slap-stick antics of the Three Stooges, and all of the members of the skinhead gang are marked by a comedic immaturity, which endears them to the audience and allows for the credibility (and inevitability) of their eventual rehabilitation. Gottfried—who also harbors racist sentiments—frequently scolds their delinquent inclinations giving the impression that their criminality is more a result of some unruly teenaged male nature than a consequence of the bigotry that has been perpetuated by a racist society. Racism is depicted as the justification for an unavoidable adolescent delinquency located within generational conflict.

By constructing neo-Nazi racism as a fashionable trend, the movie appeals for leniency for racists and reconstructs German collective guilt from a contrition associated with the atrocities of Second World War to a more racialized guilt similar to American or English articulations of 'white guilt'. The racists of this film are all adolescent males with the exception of Gottfried and his wife. As previously explained, the racism of the boys is constructed as a function of their essence as male adolescents, but the bigotry of the Braun parents cannot be as easily ahistoricized. Numerous allusions designate Eva's parents as Nazi sympathizers, most notably the choice in naming their daughter after Hitler's consort and later wife, Eva Braun. The consequences of their racism, however, are depicted as being startlingly harmless. Only when this racism is passed down to their

[105] Timothy Shary's "Bad Boys and Hollywood Hype: Gendered Conflict in Juvenile Deliquence Films," in Murray Pomerance and Frances Gateward, eds, *Where the Boys Are: Cinemas of Masculinity and Youth* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 21-40 is an excellent introduction to the motif of the juvenile delinquency in teen films.

sons and combined with the rowdiness inherent in male adolescence are there violent results.

Gottfried and his wife are depicted as confused and frightened individuals who have simply never been exposed to a multicultural society. This is demonstrated in a brief analysis of a split screen scene. Shortly before Leroy arrives at Eva's birthday party, Gottfried expresses to his wife his concern that his daughter's safety is being jeopardized by her relationship with Leroy. The screen splits. To the left, the Brauns continue their conversation, and, on the right, Leroy's parents are shown in the kitchen of their home. The split screen is a common cinematic technique used to express actions happening simultaneously in different locations. Leroy's mother articulates a concern similar to Gottfried's, stating that she fears for Leroy's safety when left with the Brauns. Leroy's father and Eva's mother attempt to calm their respective spouses by assuring them that love conquers all. The two worried parents start mimicking each other's words, even though they could not be aware of the other's conversation. For example, Gisela says, "Wir müssen die Sache im Auge behalten, und zwar ganz genau," and a few moments later, Gottfried exclaims to his wife, "Wir müssen die Sache im Auge behalten, schärfstens im Auge behalten." The split scene combined with the mirrored dialogue effectively equates the two parents' concerns. Gottfried's racist prejudices become equivalent to Gisela's fear of racism. This equivalency solicits leniency and patience for people who adhere to racist ideologies. The film encourages the spectator not to judge the Brauns any more harshly than they would Gisela, despite the film's depictions of racially motivated violence which would justify Gisela's fears.

Depicting neo-Nazi racism as an adolescent trend also locates the origins of German racism and guilt to a time before WWII. Shortly before the scene moves into a split-screen, Gottfried lectures Eva on the possible dangers of dating someone of African heritage, telling her, "Ich glaube, du unterschätzst den tiefsitzenden Hass des Afrikaners auf unsere Kultur. Allein die Kolonisation…" Although his idea is not completed, his reference to colonialism is revealing. Gottfried is afraid that his daughter is in peril while with Leroy because he fears Leroy, being racialized as Black, and whom he associates with African heritage, will somehow seek retribution for the crimes committed against the peoples of Africa during colonialism. This reference to colonialism as opposed to the Holocaust acknowledges, if only momentarily, Germany's role in the European institution of colonialism and locates modern German racism in a history that extends to an era before Hitler's rise to power. This recognition of the centuries old origins of German racism is accentuated by the characterization of the boys' neo-Nazi practices as a fad. Although the boys articulate their racism through fascist cultural products, this is just a façade through which they can express their bigotry. German racism itself—although its criminal potentiality climaxes in its Fascist ideology—can exist separate from Germany's Nazi past.

Just as Leroy's Blackness forces the father to concede German culpability for colonialism (or at least express the rationality of an African's potential anger with Germans for their colonial past), the presence of his Blackness also redefines German guilt. As explored earlier in this chapter, German guilt and national processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* are most frequently linked to the history of the Second World War. This film positions German racism in a history before this pivotal event, and

redefines articulations of German guilt in the film. The most prominent example is expressed in a series of conversations between Dimmi, Leroy, and Eva. On the phone with Dimmi, Leroy explains Eva has invited him to an art exhibition in which her Jewish friend, Jerome, is showing some of his pieces. Dimmi then responds, "Sag mal das Wort 'Jude'," and to Leroy's inquiry as to why he should say the word, Dimmi replies, "Hallo! Weil du jüdisch sagst wie alle anderen Deutschen." Leroy tries to explain to his Greek friend that it's a completely natural thing to say, but later echoes these sentiments to Eva while they go through photos in her bedroom.

She shows him a picture of Jerome and mentions again that he's Jewish. Leroy interrupts her story to question why she insists on saying a Jewish person instead of using the term *Jude*. Eva squirms upon hearing him say this word—like *Rasse,* the term became taboo after WWII. She covers his mouth with her hand and tells him never to use the word. Leroy protests saying, "Das ist doch kein Schimpfwort, das ist das deutsche Schuldbewusstsein." Eva cannot free herself from the guilt associated with the word the way Dimmi or Leroy can. As a white German she must bear the burden of guilt that stems from the racism perpetuated by other white Germans. She explains that she will not say the word because her brothers use the word "Jude ohne Schuldbewusstsein." Maintaining guilt is an enactment of German national duty and a way of combatting her family's racism. Leroy, however, remains nonplussed, free from the guilt Eva seems to have inherited as a white German. Constructed as a Black German, Leroy does not have to share Eva's guilt, and this juxtaposition of a guilt ridden white German next to a calm Black German redefines this shame from a 'German guilt' into a 'white German guilt'.

Although the redefinition of traditional forms of guilt as 'white German guilt' does not negate the shame experienced by the white Germans as pertains to their National Socialist past, it is reframed into a much larger context. Just as Gottfried alludes to German culpability in European colonialism, the guilt felt by Eva is connected not only to her nationality but to her 'whiteness'. German guilt becomes associated with the concept of 'white guilt' as it is defined in the context of other white dominated cultures, such as the United States or Australia.

This form of white German guilt is most easily recognized in *Leroy räumt auf*. While walking with Dimmi, Leroy eagerly expresses his confusion at white Germans unwillingness to use the word *Jude*, or speak of anything other than guilt and shame. Serendipitously at that very moment, the boys pass a white German, a complete stranger, who comes from around a blind corner to grab Leroy's shoulder. He begins apologizing for himself, "Es tut mir leid… das mit dem Weltkrieg und der Sklaverei…". This white German openly expresses his membership to a community that is greater than Germany alone. His apology for those things than happened during the war falls within traditional constructions of German guilt, but his compunction for slavery reflects his affiliation with a history of racially motivated crimes against humanity that extends beyond the twentieth century and German national borders.

The film is commendable in its demonstration that the inception of racism in Germany involves discourses beyond that of a single historical event. The question remains, however, if this film's anti-racist sentiments challenge white privilege as demanded by the Afro-German community or does it "reproduce precisely the oppressive structures" (Sow 2014: blog) it wishes to combat. The problematic ending of the film

functions almost as an apology for or renunciation of Leroy's physical resistance to the violence of the skinheads. Leroy who has learned an African Americanized style of resistance, gives this up in recognition of a more peaceful form of protest: art. In a youth film, a movie intended to instruct young viewers, the retraction of such a glorification of violence is not unexpected; however, it also reconfigures white Germans' accountability for their participation in the white power structure. His renouncement of the resistance associated with the Black Power movement marks a return to the more German style of protest that was presented to him by the music shop owner who preferred *Shaft*. This new form of protest lacks the active resistance to white hegemony associated with the Black Power movement.

Rather than rebelling against white German racism, Leroy is now tasked with reeducating the entire population. Responsibility for the eradication of racism becomes the obligation of the Black German, leaving the white German to passively become reprogrammed. Leroy spearheaded the physical confrontation as well—leading into action white and Turkish Germans who were dedicated to anti-racism before they met Leroy—but in this original configuration, despite its extolment of violence, Leroy is a leader among likeminded people. The white Germans, Eva and the members of the karate school, are willing to follow Leroy, which in a certain sense is a form of giving up power to another person.

The scenario in which Leroy creates a boy band is very different. Leroy is responsible for securing commercial success for the white brothers. Although they are singing words that he wrote and dancing to music he composed, to the viewer of the music video the anti-racist sentiments are coming from the white boys. It could be argued

that the white band simply becomes a mouthpiece for Leroy's anti-racist agenda. By being forced into the background, however, his Black Germanness becomes hidden from society, something against which the Afro-German community's numerous political protests, increased media presence, and autobiographical publications have been battling.

Finally, the outlandish scenario relies on the racist stereotype of a Black record producer to maintain internal plausibility. Leroy is associated with music throughout the film, but his ability to suddenly find the financial backing and materials needed to form a popular band is almost miraculous. Though the film dares to speak of modern racism in the racialized terms of Black and white, it ends with a final plea for tolerance for racist white Germans, implying that the hate and violence they proliferate is little more than a passing fad.

Personal Shame and 'White Guilt' in Christa Wolf's *Stadt der Engel oder The Overcoat of Dr. Freud* (2010)

Christa Wolf's final novel, *Stadt der Engel* differs greatly in intended audience and content from Völckers' *Leroy*. The feature length film was produced to appeal to a large, general youth audience, and Christa Wolf's semiautobiographical novel marks the final chapter in the long career of a nationally celebrated author. Despite these differences, analyzing these works together as texts proves to be productive for scrutinizing the German national discourse on 'race'. An examination of Wolf's novel will expand upon the ways in which constructs of American Blackness can be employed to engage and challenge the German discourse on racism and provoke the literary

imagination of 'whiteness'. The film's exploration of African American constructs was accomplished through allusions to the Black Power and US Civil Rights movement, equating historical moments in US history to contemporary German social struggles. Wolf's novel reverses this relationship by telling the story of a German in the United States, creating an imagined geography similar to the constructed Black and white American dichotomy introduced in *Schultze gets the Blues* in this project's third chapter. After a brief summary of the novel's plot and recent criticism, I will examine the author's employment of constructs of American Blackness and demonstrate the text's participation in the German discourse on racism. Using Katrin Sieg's concept of 'triangular thinking', I will then show how the author enters the racial 'other' to explore constructs of German guilt for current and historical racially motivated crimes.

Published a year before her death, Wolf's novel was met with lukewarm reviews. Praised for its skilled storytelling, but criticized for the lack of plot action,[106] the novel represents a problematic ending to an illustrious career. In his review of the book in *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, Joachim Günther characterizes the book as political in nature, and comments that avid readers of Wolf will enjoy the work:

> Als Reisebericht einer Ostdeutschen, die, obgleich sie auf Landesverteidigung gar nicht geeignet ist, den Amerikanern erklärt, dass das wiedervereinte Deutschland trotz Asylanten-Hatz kein rassistisches oder gar antisemitisches Land sei; als Reflexion einer gelernten Marxistin, die ihre Kapitalismuskritik durch kalifornische Obdachlose bestätigt sieht; endlich auch als Bekenntnis zu den

[106] For representative reviews, I suggest Joachim Güntner "Weich abgefederte Selbstbefragung *Stadt der Engel oder The Overcoat of Dr. Freud* – Christa Wolfs kalifornisches Räsonnement" *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, June 22, 2010, and Richard Kämmerlings, "Christa Wolf: *Stadt der Engel oder The Overcoat of Dr. Freud*. Mein Schutzengel nimmt es mit jedem Raumschiff auf" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 18, 2010.

> mittlerweile enttäuschten Hoffnungen, die sie in den Kommunismus als Rettung der Ausgebeuteten einst gesetzt hat – kurzum, als politisierenden Traktat mögen passionierte Christa-Wolf-Leser dies Alterswerk wohl goutieren. (2010)

This citation elaborates the complex nature of the text; the plot, however, is easily explained. Shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the protagonist, a celebrated East German author, goes to Los Angeles to do research at the CENTER, a prestigious academic institute. She arrives in California under the guise of writing a book, but the actual motivation for the journey is to find the lifelong friend of her own friend and confidant, Emma, who recently died. The narrator only knows the woman as "L.", which is how she signed her letters to Emma, a collection of which the narrator inherited. While searching for L., news of the narrator's *Täterakten*, files that log the author's brief collaboration with the Stasi, becomes public, and the narrator falls into an emotional crisis as she is criticized and her character attacked in the German—and to a lesser extent American—media. Action is limited to a few scenes in which the narrator visits a Native American reservation, meets with members of the 'Second Generation',[107] children of survivors of the Holocaust, or chats with her upstairs neighbor, Peter Gutman.

Supported by little plot action, the novel is largely driven by the protagonist's thoughts and inner monologue as she deals with her overwhelming feelings of guilt which she admits to having since childhood. The narrator does not, however, comprehend herself as a unified whole, and her sense of self is split temporally and literarily, although they will often converge. The most common construct of the narrator's self is the version from the early 1990's who serves as the protagonist of the journey. The contemporary

[107] Within this project, the generation referred to as 'Second Generation' denotes the child generation of the 'racial' victims of the Holocaust and should be distinquished from the second generation which only encompasses the generation of children of the perpetrators.

construct of the narrator interjects rarely into the story, but upon occasion exposes herself, in an almost postmodernist manner, as the author of the novel and as a form of omniscient narrator who knows how the world will look after the 9-ll attacks and 2008 financial crisis. The narrator-author admits to having difficulty in remaining in the past tense when describing her former selves, and explains that this is why the story is primarily written in the first person present. The final version of the narrator's self is the person who she was before travelling to the United States. In the novel's many flashbacks, the narrator (either through the narrator-protagonist's inner monologue or the narrator-author's commentary) most often refers to this past-self as 'you', using the informal second-person 'Du'. Clemens Götze asserts that the switching between literary tenses and narrative modes is emblematic of the identity crisis the narrator-protagonist suffers, an attempt to distance herself from the past actions and decisions that have led to her post-GDR guilt.[108]

The attention the novel has received largely concerns the narrator's relationship to her past, which both destabilizes and restructures her 1990 and contemporary identities. The identity crisis caused by a traumatic past combined with the narrative form and subject matter has prompted several comparisons to her earlier semi-autobiographical work *Kindheitsmuster*,[109] and noted author Ingo Schulze characterized *Stadt der Engel* as

[108] In his article, "Nichts vergessen – Autobiographisches Schreiben als Selbsterfahrung in Christa Wolfs Roman *Stadt der Engel oder The Overcoat of Dr. Freud*" in Clemens Götze ed., *'Ich werde weiterleben, und richtig gut.' Moderne Mythen in der Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Berlin, 2011) 57-78, Götze analyses the relationship of the narrator-protagonist to her past-self at length and convincingly locates the divide created by switching from first to second person in the narrator's need to distance herself from her past wrongdoings. He does not, however, address the relationship of the narrator-author to this past, which deserves further study.

[109] The most thorough exploration of the relationship between these two novels is found in Michael Minden. "Social Hope and the Nightmare of History: Christa Wolf's *Kindheitsmuster* and *Stadt der Engel*" *Publications of the English Goethe Society* 80.2-3 (2011): 196-203.

a sort of continuation of this earlier novel.[110] The novels' shared flashbacks, such as the grandmother's death by starvation while fleeing the allied forces, have led a number of critics to identify the work as little more than a thinly veiled autobiography packaged as a novel.[111] The focal point of critical studies, however, remains the narrator's emotional breakdown after media reaction to the *Täterakten*, the situation of which isn't introduced until about halfway through the novel.

My analysis regards the novel as a work of literary fiction in order to examine the text as a whole. The acknowledgement of the creative and imaginative forces at work in this text is not in opposition to its autobiographical nature but is a means of challenging the authenticity of any detail presented in the book that might otherwise be assumed as historical fact. Many scholars and critics consider the setting in Los Angeles as being autobiographically arbitrary. Jörg Magenau argues, "Los Angeles, 'die Stadt der Engel', ist für Christa Wolf nur als Ort der Geschichte relevant" (2010). By recognizing the setting of the story as a literary choice and not simply as a historical fact, the context for my analysis is greatly expanded. Los Angeles, which is referenced in the very title of the novel,[112] serves as the battleground on which her inner struggle plays out, and the significance of depicting this identity crisis on the backdrop of such a racially divided city needs to be examined. It is no accident that Joachim Günther first characterizes the book as the "…Reisebericht einer Ostdeutschen, die … den Amerikanern erklärt, dass das wiedervereinte Deutschland trotz Asylanten-Hatz kein rassistisches oder gar

[110] This statement comes from his introduction of the novel at its book premiere at the Berlin Akademie der Künste on June, 16 2010. There is no public transcript of his speech, but this comment has been quoted in both Minden, "Social Hope," on page 196, and in Wilfried Mommert's article about the book premiere, "Christa Wolf: Grosser Andrang zur Buchpriemere," news.de June 17, 2010.
[111] Kämmerlings and Morgenau both make this assertion.
[112] The title, *Stadt der Engel*, is a reference both Los Angeles, which means city of angels in Spanish, and the guardian angel that she meets at the end of the journey, and who flies her above the city at the text's conclusion.

antisemitisches Land sei" (2010). My analysis explores how constructs of 'race', particularly American Blackness, play an integral role in the narrator's identity formation, although her sense of self remains in crisis at the end of the novel.

The protagonist is introduced as she lands in Los Angeles, and the fragility of her national identity immediately comes to the foreground when the immigration officer asks upon seeing her East German passport, "Are you sure that country exists?" She is distraught over the loss of her nation and only speaks cautiously about her past in the German Democratic Republic. She admits to feeling like an outsider at the CENTER, despite her insistence that everyone is welcoming. She attributes this feeling to either her age—she is the oldest scholar—or her lack of national ties. She is aware that Americans view communism as 'bad', and must constantly explain herself and her choice to have lived under the dictatorship. She fears speaking about the current situation in East Germany, where anti-Semitism is on the rise and asylum seekers are frequently attacked. She defends her country, but in doing so she reveals the conflation of the constructs of race and nation that build her identity. For example, she justifies her countrymen's actions to fellow scholars at dinner one evening, attempting to explain why there had been recent attacks against asylum seekers in a small village in East Germany. She says:

> Warum zum Beispiel, sagte ich, während die runde Platte mit den chinesischen Gerichten sich drehte, warum hat niemand mit den Leuten in der kleinen Stadt gesprochen, warum hat niemand sie gefragt, was sie eigentlich wollen, warum hat man es dazu kommen lassen, dass sie als fremdenfeindlich angeprangert wurden? Nein, hörte ich mich sagen, nein, ich glaube es nicht. Die Berichterstattung in euren Medien ist einseitig, als gebe es in Ostdeutschland nichts anderes mehr als

> brennende Asylbewerberheime. Das ist es doch, was man hier von den Deutschen erwartet. Aber es wird die Wiederholung nicht geben, vor der ihr euch fürchtet. Das werden wir nicht zulassen.
>
> Wer: Wir? Fragte Francesco, das laute Echo der Frage, die ich mir im stillen selber stellte. (Wolf 2010: 38)

The inquiry into this "Wir" represents one of the defining issues facing the protagonist. When she says, "Das werden wir nicht zulassen," she is speaking out of habit as an East German, referring to the citizens of East Germany. Without an East Germany, she begins to fear that there may be a repetition of the horrors of the Holocaust. She asks herself, "…Denn hättest du nicht seit dem Tag, an dem du vor den mit ‚Judensau' beschmierten Grabsteinen von Brecht und Helene Weigel gestanden hattest, auf alles gefasst sein müssen?" (Wolf 2010: 36-37). The presence of the term "Judensau"—an allusion to the racial violence against Jews during the Third Reich—on both Brecht and Weigel's tombstones is striking, because of the married playwright only Weigel was Jewish. The author's memory of this defacement creates a type of triangulation between communist, Jew, and victimhood. The tomb of Brecht, who was not Jewish, is defiled with the same racial slur as Weigel's implying the racial violence of the Third Reich may not only be returning, but could be aimed towards outspoken communists and followers of the Jewish faith equally. Therefore, even though the narrator referred to herself as part of an East German "Wir" dedicated to the prevention of a second Holocaust, she is in danger of being targeted by other members of the former republic, those who defaced the tombs.

The probing and uncomfortable questions of Americans are not the cause of her identity crisis, and the complexity of the emotions of guilt and shame that plague her

become apparent after she chooses to publish an article about her *Täterakte*, in which she admits to having found the file and having committed the act, but denies remembering it. The media retaliation is unforgiving. The onslaught of accusations batters the narrator's sense of self and, already in an emotionally delicate state, she suffers a breakdown. She stops reading the paper and begins withdrawing from social situations to watch *Star Trek*, and on one of the most difficult nights, she sings songs from her life, her childhood, and the former GDR until the sun rises. Although she survives the night, the discovery of her *Täterakte* and the dissolution of her home nation makes it impossible to view the decisions, thoughts, and actions of her former self with the same weltanschauung that the narrator's past-self had when making those decisions.[113] She begins to question everything that she once believed and replays her life on what she refers to as the "mehrspurigen Band" in her head (Wolf 2010: 39). She is never able to turn this tape recorder off, but she is able to find some reprieve in Los Angeles, and more specifically among those characters and personages that are racialized as Black or Jewish.

The first racialized Americans she meets are a group of survivors of the Holocaust who fled to the United States and their offspring, who are referred to as the 'Second Generation'. She is invited to one of their monthly meetings and attends with much trepidation. She acknowledges a sense of guilt she, shared by all Germans, carries for the misdeeds of the past, even if she was only a child during the Third Reich. She arrived to

[113] There are a number of analyses of this novel that focus on the origin of her identity crisis. Clemens Götze presents a psychoanalytical examination of her delusion in his "Nichts vergessen", and in "The Problem of Shame," Kaleen Gallagher analyzes the crisis as a case of shame that results from the disconnect between the media's expectations of the public image of the protagonist and her expectations of herself. The novel lends itself to a myriad of interpretations. I forego any specific explanation of the delusion's origins in lieu of a literary analysis of the scene.

find that her hesitation is misplaced, and she is there to play an important role for the survivors:

> Die Zeit stand für diese Menschen seit Jahrzehnten still, nichts war für sie vergangen, nichts hatte sich gemildert, kein Schmerz hatte sich abgeschwächt, keine Enttäuschung war verblaßt, kein Zorn verflogen. Und die einzige Erleichterung, wenn auch nur für Minuten, war es, manchmal darüber zu reden, es jemandem zu erzählen... . An diesem Abend mußte ich dieser Jemand sein, ohn all mein Verdienst und Würdigkeit, ich, weil ich aus Deutschland kam und weil ich jünger war. Zum ersten Mal erlebte ich das Bedürfnis der Vertriebenen, mit einer Deutschen ihre nie endende Fassungslosigkeit zu teilen, und ich hörte auf, mich dagegen zu wehren, und nahm diese Rolle an. (Wolf 2013: 103)

Her willingness to listen and legitimize the emotions and experiences of the Jewish survivors does not ease her own sense of guilt, but it creates friendships between victim and perpetrator. She is eventually accepted as a member of the group, and members of the 'Second Generation', Judy and John, even try to ease her guilt by drawing comparisons between the Germans and members of the Second Generations stating that they share a silence created by their parents' generation's refusal to talk about the genocide. The protagonist protests:

> Das sei doch etwas ganz anderes. Das sei doch genau das Entgegengesetzte: Ob man Verbrechen verschweige oder ob man zu seinen Kindern nicht über die Untaten und Demütigungen sprechen könne, die einem zugefügt worden seien. Die beiden blieben dabei, dass dieses inhaltlich so unähnliche Verschweigen

> ähnliche Muster in den Beziehungen zwischen Eltern und Kindern erzeugen könne. (Wolf 2010: 128)

The protagonist cannot abide any such comparisons, and she remains outwardly opposed to any remittance of guilt.

Her desire to hold on to her guilt can be explained by a desire to not deceive herself. She admits her conviction in communism was strong because she viewed it as being opposed to everything for which Fascism stood. She laments:

> Und wie lange haben wir gebraucht, „unser" zu sagen, unser Verbrechen.
>
> Und wie lange haben wir, habe ich mich an Angebote geklammert, die versprachen, das ganz Andere zu sein, der reine Gegensatz zu diesen Verbrechen, eine menschengemäße Gesellschaft, Kommunismus. (Wolf 2013: 81-2)

She acknowledges her willingness to be complacent in an ideology, but she desperately desires to be free of this complacency. In a conversation with her upstairs neighbor, Peter, she asks, "Kann ein Mensch sich von Grund auf ändern? Oder haben die Psychologen recht, daß seine Grundmuster in den ersten drei Jahren angelegt werden und dann nur noch auszufüllen, nicht mehr zu verändern sind" (Wolf 2010: 88). When he asks for an example, she replies, "Die Gefahr, immer wieder in Abhängigkeit zu geraten? Von Autoritäten? Von sogenannten Führern? Von Ideologien?" (Wolf 2010: 88). Her ardent disavowal of the absolution her Jewish friends offer represents a desire to avert being lulled in an ideological complacency like the one she accepted for so long in the GDR.

Her outward repudiation of innocence is countered by her inner tape recorder's 'triangular thinking', which is reflective of the GDR's 'victim mythology'. This type of

thinking "allows Germans to create an identification with oppressed peoples against an 'oppressor' without recognizing their own participation in oppressive practices" (Zantop 2000: 190). As the narrator recalls the trials and tribulations she and her comrades faced, she regularly equates Judiasm, or Jewish suffering during WWII, with communism. Her friend Emma had been the target of the SS for her communist activities and narrowly escaped incarceration because a bomb destroyed her home before she could be arrested. The narrator remembers the story of the first communist she had met. He was recently released from a concentration camp and as he passes her home her mother offers him some soup, "…sie fragte, warum er im KZ gewesen sei. Der Mann sagte: Ich bin Kommunist. Aha, sagte deine Mutter. Aber dafür kam man doch nicht ins KZ. Die Miene des Mannes blieb unbewegt. Er sagte: Wo habt ihr bloß alle gelebt" (Wolf 2010: 313-314).

Despite the German guilt she feels for the Holocaust, her pain is slightly alleviated through her triangular thinking. Even though she tries to recognize her role in the Third Reich as one of privilege when compared to racialized victims, her childhood memories of the war combined with years of staunch adherence to the GDR's official stance towards *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (its 'victim mythology') free her from guilt. By identifying herself as a communist, she still sees herself as a victim of the wrath of the National Socialists alongside the Jewish people, even though she feels that she should not. By more closely examining her articulations of German and 'white guilt', I will demonstrate how the 'triangular thinking' created by her internalization of the communist 'victim myth' continues into her contemporary understanding of 'race' relations.

Just as the protagonist suffers from German guilt, she also experiences 'white guilt'. She is very aware of the disparity between whites and Blacks in Los Angeles and the United States as a whole. She always tries to give money to the homeless, who are overwhelmingly African American, and is often brought to tears by the experience. She readily acknowledges white privilege and actively disparages it. For example, after a half-blind Black beggar thanks her for her generosity with a "God bless you," the protagonist replies, "Ich kann nur hoffen, sagte ich, dass es keinen Gott gibt und kein Jüngstes Gericht, denn segnen würde er keinen von uns satten gefühllosen Weißen, es sei denn, er wäre wirklich nur u n s e r Gott" (Wolf 2010: 108).

African Americans are posited as the opposites of white Germans. Similar to Leroy in Völckers' film, Black Americans enjoy a freedom of expression that white Germans are denied. While at the beach, she observes as an African American family plays in the ocean:

> Ich… schaute lange einer schwarzen Großfamilie zu, die sich im Wasser vergnügte, wie die Frauen mit gerafften Röcken immer wieder in die sanften Wellen hineinliefen, vom begeisterten Geschrei der Kinder begleitet, konnte mich nicht satt sehen... Das haben wir nicht, dachte ich, neidisch, Selbstbeherrschung ist auch eine Herrschaft, eben über das Selbst. (Wolf 2010: 121)

She sees in the Black family a freedom that she as a white German does not have. Her association of self-control (Selbstbeherrschung) with the word Herrschaft, which can mean both control and dominance or regime, harkens back to the question she poses to Peter concerning a human being's ability to reprogram herself in order to be free from the

danger of becoming dependent on "Autoritäten." She, as a white German, remains programmed to practice restraint even though she wants to join the African American family.

She grows to admire Black Americans and believes she intuitively creates meaningful bonds with them, despite forming a friendship with only one African American. In one instance, she tosses some money into the hat of an African American living statue performer in a park. The artist is so overjoyed by her contribution that he chases her down to hug her, a show of affection no other white person enjoys. Another time while in line at a Woolworth's, a young Black man hands her candy and some money and asks her to purchase it for him while he goes to the back of the store. She does as he bids, and after some searching, he rejoins her and she describes, "Er war wie verwandelt. Strahlend nahm er beides an sich, drückte mir lange und herzlich die Hand" (Wolf 2010: 252). The narrator describes the situation in the following, "Anscheinend war das ein Test gewesen, und anscheinend hatte ich ihn bestanden" (Wolf 2010: 252).

The reason for these African Americans' affection towards the narrator is left unexplained, but it distinguishes her from other whites, who live in fear of the Black residents of Los Angeles. This is demonstrated when her confrontation with the living statue is contrasted to a later street performance she attends with her friend Theresa. While in Venice, a beachfront neighborhood in LA, they see another male African American performance artist who pulls a white, a Black, a Mexican, and a Japanese woman from the audience to dance with him. The white woman is hesitant to dance with him, but he insists and pulls her against her will into his dancing circle. The narrator describes his interactions with the women as he performs with them:

> [E]r tanzt mit jeder der Frauen nach ihrer Musik, er betanzte sie, wenn es das Wort gäbe, er ließ die Puppen tanzen, nicht daß er ihnen zu nahe trat, und doch fand auf offenerer Szene eine Vergewaltigung statt, die niemand ihm nachweisen, die niemand auch nur erwähnen könnte, ohne sich lächerlich zu machen, nur die schwarze Frau war ihm gewachsen und wirbelte laut lachend mit obszönen Gebärden um ihn herum, bis er sich, auch laut lachend und klatschend, damit abfand und die Abrichtung der Frau in den Tanz eines Paares verwandelte. Kläglich dagegen schnitt die weiße Frau ab, gerade weil der schwarze Mann sie betont höflich behandelte, all ihre Schwächen tanzte er gnadenlos heraus unter dem prasselnden Beifall des überwiegend farbigen Publikums. (Wolf 2010: 283)

The characterization of the dance as a form of rape punctuates the narrator's perception of the helplessness of the women. The white woman was victimized by the performer, and the reference to the racial make-up of the crowd as being mainly "farbig," not white, and the audience's pleasure at viewing the white woman's victimization expresses the narrator's perception of latent African American aggression towards white people. Theresa reinforces this assessment at the end of the performance when she comments, "Der rächt sich," compelling the women to leave (Wolf 2010: 283). The idea had also crossed the narrator's mind during a shopping trip at Woolworth's that the gentleman who handed her the candy might be trying to take revenge on a white woman, but she dutifully did as she was told and passed his "Test". The white woman in the dance performance, however, is forced to suffer the wrath of the Black performer, in the form of

the figurative ‘rape’, and Theresa’s fear of the revenge she might suffer at the hands of a Black man incites them to flee.

The protagonist also presents herself as the only scholar to befriend the CENTER’s one Black scholar, Stewart. He is described as a quiet man who keeps to himself, and her interactions with him help guide her through Los Angeles and her guilt. He leads her to a bookstore that sells books by Jewish and communist refugee authors that are so precious that the narrator-author interrupts the story to describe how the books still sit on her shelf and she looks at them as she composes the novel. It is in a conversation with Stewart that she is also first able to publically and directly speak about her *Täterakte*. Her final encounter with him in a restaurant is perhaps the most significant:

> Stewart sagte zu mir: Ich hoffe, ihr gebt nicht auf. Ich dachte, ich will mir merken, daß ein junger Amerikaner diesen Satz zu mir gesagt hat... . Erst später wurde mir klar, daß Stewart mich zu einem Abschiedsessen eingeladen hatte. Wenige Tage danach war er verschwunden... . Er hatte sich von niemandem verabschiedet. Ich fand in meinem Postfach einen Zettel von ihm: Don’t worry. (Wolf 2010: 342)

Her interactions with him renew her optimism in her former utopian aspirations, and although she only encounters him three times, she is important enough to him to be the only person to whom he says goodbye.

Her final African American guide through her identity crisis is her guardian angel, Angelina. Angelina is introduced as an African immigrant to the US who works as a janitor in the narrator’s apartment complex. After the protagonist attends a service at an

African American church, Angelina reappears as a guardian angel. The human form of Angelina, however, is not aware of the new kinship the protagonist feels towards her.

Her angel accompanies her through the rest of her stay in the US, which she spends in Arizona and on a Native American reservation. It is on the reservation that the narrator begins to notice a change in her identity. The poverty she witnesses on the reservation moves her, and her identity as a white person is both solidified and unsettled. She becomes acutely aware of her white privilege and cannot deny her affiliation within the hierarchal power structure that the 'West' has built through constructs of 'race'. The "we" that the protagonist only hesitantly uttered at the beginning of the novel is now securely defined as "wir Weißen" (Wolf 2010: 387), and the world becomes divided along the racial line of whites and non-whites, the haves and the have-nots.

She cannot deny her white privilege and guilt, but she does try to align herself with the Hopi people against the white Americans. For example, upon reading that the Hopi had developed an agricultural technique that still eludes " 'weiße' Wissenschaftler," she describes, "Ich spürte etwas wie Schadenfreude gegenüber den westlichen Wissenschaftlern, die in das innere Geheimnis dieser in ihren Augen primitiven Kultur nicht eindringen konnten, und ich merkte, daß ich den Hopi wünschte, sie könnten ihre Geheimnisse bewahren" (Wolf 2010: 396).

The narrator is accompanied till the end of her journey in Las Vegas by Angelina, with whom she talks through her difficulties about being white, asking the angel, "ob nicht diese Anasazi ››mehr Mensch‹‹ gewesen seien als wir reichen Weißen" (Wolf 2010: 387), and speaks of spirituality commenting that, "Wir Weißen haben uns am weitesten von ihm entfernt" (Wolf 2010: 398). At the end of the journey, the narrator seems to

spiritually join Angelina by flying with her over Los Angeles, revisiting the city from the heavens.

This conclusion is problematic because it represents a flight of fantasy in a novel that otherwise abjures magical or fanciful plot devices. It is unclear if this scene is the product of a dream or a dissociative experience, but it is presented to the reader as if it were an actual event. Although the narrator's flight with Angelina is preceded by the heavenly creature's appearance and her discussions with the protagonist, the description of the flight represents an abrupt change in narrative technique which delineates the scene from the rest of the novel and demands a more detailed examination. This moment represents one of the few expressions of happiness and lightheartedness that the narrator experiences, and I argue it is significant that she can only experience these feelings through elements of fantasy associated with American Blackness. Wolf's oeuvre has had a long engagement with questions of utopia, and this scene fits into that tradition.[114] Within the novel itself, the narrator repeatedly admits that she believed in the utopian ideals of East Germany although they never came to fruition. However, I agree with Kaleen Gallagher who views the depiction of this euphoric, almost utopian fantasy of the narrator also as the failure her quest for *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (378). Gallagher argues that the narrator resorts to this fantasy as a way of escaping her inability to resolve herself with the shame for her brief work with the Stasi. I argue that by widening the examination of this scene to include questions of 'race' and racism, we see that the

[114] For two extensive analyses of the importance and use of discourses of the utopian in Wolf's works, see: Kuhn, Anna Katharina. *Christa Wolf's Utopian Vision: From Marxism to Feminism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988; and Pak, Schoro. *Probleme der Utopie bei Christa Wolf: Überlegungen zu* Kein Ort. Nirgends *und* Kassandra. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang; 1989.

narrator is unable to come to terms with not only her past actions but also her current standing of privilege as a white person and the accompanying guilt.

Just as she identified communist sufferings in concentration camps with those of the Jewish survivors in order to nullify her personal guilt for the genocide, here too she seems to associate herself with African and Native Americans against unspiritual, rich, evil whites in order to disassociate herself from the racial power structure in which she participates. Although in her fantasy life, she soars through the sky with her African American angel and spirit guide, in the novel's 'real' world, she stays at home drinking margaritas, watching *Star Trek* and sleeping in a comfortable Las Vegas hotel while the Hopi live in poverty. She defines herself as someone who intrinsically bonds with African Americans but has little actual contact with non-white people and believes in some very degrading stereotypes such as relating Native Americans to 'noble savages', or the belief the African Americans naturally have a stronger or freer spiritual self than white individuals.

It is in the fantastical ending that the criticisms of German constructs of 'race' most clearly come to the foreground. The narrator's 'triangular thinking' is exposed, and it becomes obvious that she has not fundamentally changed or escaped the basic patterns of thinking that she fears have been set within the first three years of her life, that is during German Fascism. Instead, a pattern of denial of guilt is established and linked to her National Socialist past. Her flight above the city of Los Angeles is a fantasy, as is her bond to Angelina, who is not an angel gifted to a white woman as her spirit guide, but a human being who labors as a cleaning woman in an unjust society. Her imagined kinship to Angelina is an attempt to emotionally escape her participation in modern racism, just

as her loyalty to the GDR and communism began as an attempt to escape the racism which caused the Holocaust.

Conclusion: Assuaging 'White Guilt'

Stadt der Engel oder The Overcoat of Dr. Freud leaves the reader on an ambiguous note. The narrator's angelic flight and exclamation, "…Und die Farben. Ach, Angelina, die Farben! Und dieser Himmel" (Wolf 2010:414), form an antithesis to the gloomy beginning phrase, "AUS ALLEN HIMMELN STÜRZEN" (Wolf 2010: 9), but she, like Leroy, ends her journey with a battle left ahead of her. Völckers' Leroy is charged with reeducating the most racist sections of German society, and Wolf's narrator, unable to come to terms with the repercussions of her Täterakten, vows to spend the rest of her life combatting white privilege. The logic of the plots foreshadows the strong possibility of tragic endings, but they conclude on optimistic notes and this "breakdown in the logic and machinery of plot construction implies the powerful impact race has on narrative—and on narrative strategy" (Morrison 1993: 24).

In both cases, 'white guilt' disrupts the logic of the story. Wolf and Völckers juxtapose their protagonists with constructs of Blackness in order to find something white German culture cannot grant them: forgiveness. In the case of Leroy, the depiction of Black resistance is deemed unsuitable and too extreme for its audience. The hip-hop ending rectifies this by dismantling the visibility and agency of German Blackness. The bomber jackets, cultural objects of a racist era, remain under the guise of being reconstructed as signs of pop culture. It is unlikely that Germans of Color or of Jewish

background would ever associate these symbols with triviality. By constructing his protagonist as Black and composing a plot in which this Black German then approves of the jacket, Völckers creates a character that, because he originates from outside white hegemony, is capable of forgiving those who enjoy white privilege for the impacts their racism has on Germany's vast populations of Germans of Color. The story reassures white Germans that they can be reformed, thereby assuaging any 'white guilt' felt by the film's viewers.

The constellations of guilt in Wolf's novel are intricately intertwined. The narrator expresses emotions of guilt associated with the nation's National Socialist past and with her 'whiteness'; however, she specifically never expresses emotions of guilt connected to her personal dealings with the Stasi. On multiple occasions, she conveys deep shame for her *Täterakte*, but she explicitly notes that she does not feel guilt. She does not understand this absence, and part of her identity crisis is due to the shock at her own emotional reaction. Her focus on and interrogation of guilt from other areas of her life become a technique of denial and self-redemption. By concentrating on collective forms of guilt, national and white, she is able to deflect any guilt she may feel for her personal deeds.

By engaging in discourses of collective guilt both texts participate in national processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. They interweave the guilt associated with white privilege with actions and ideologies of the Nazi and colonial pasts to alter constructs of collective guilt that are most commonly only reserved for culpability correlated to the Holocaust. Through representations of 'white guilt', they boldly demonstrate racial injustices that persist into the twenty-first century despite the common German practice

of relegating racial violence to the period of the Third Reich. They assert that the guilt with which Germans must come to terms is far greater than just that for their actions during the Second World War. However, the texts also are also in jeopardy of proliferating a form of 'white guilt' against which Steele warned, one that exists for the purposes of assuaging the consciences of white people rather than inciting them to react. Although the stories of *Leroy* and *Stadt der Engel* seem to be on a trajectory for creating white characters dedicated to coming to terms with the racism inherent in their cultures and their relationship to the colonial and Fascist pasts that have created modern racism, they ultimately fail, choosing instead to grant the white Germans of their texts forgiveness through the surrogacy of the Black characters. The expressions of budding guilt for pasts beyond National Socialism harken hope for a more racially self-aware German society, but one cannot wonder if the texts fall short of their anti-racist ambitions.

Conclusion

This project elucidated the ways in which processes of coming to terms with the past have changed within Germany and Austria since the Waldheim affair (1986) and the fall of the Berlin Wall (1990). Nazi successor nations were forced to acknowledge that political processes of 'denazification' had been left incomplete, and the dismantling of the GDR dictatorship revived discourses probing a German predilection for authoritarianism, which is most succinctly demonstrated in chapter five's analysis of Christa Wolf's *Stadt der Engel*. The subsequent increase of violence against racialized individuals under the guise of '*Ausländerfeindlichkeit*' and open protests against this aggression by Germans and Austrians of Color as well as many white Germans further widened discourses of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* to include interrogations of racism—an ideology formally believed to have been almost eradicated.

These voices of protest have been expressed not only through political activism, but—as explained in the first and second chapters—have also entered into discourses of history and culture, leading to numerous studies rediscovering the roles of Germans and Austrians of Color in critical moments of national identity formation throughout the nations' contentious pasts. The texts analyzed in this project demonstrate how this reinsertion of racialized individuals into historical and cultural discourses has provoked many Germans to scrutinize their national histories of racial tensions, connecting modern and historical articulations of racism under the rubric of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung.*

Direct discursive confrontations with 'race' remain censured within Austrian and German public media; however, my analysis demonstrates a relaxing of this once strictly

taboo subject area. I demonstrated how authors and directors succeeded in engaging in these once forbidden discourses through the employment of imagined geographies of Black America. This ability to interrogate constructs of 'race', if only peripherally, exemplifies Aleida Assman's thesis that collective memories can transition from the "social" to the "cultural". As discussed more concretely in chapter three, A. Assmann theorized that memories of German suffering had been relegated to social forms of memory transmission—within families—only to resurface in the twenty-first century at the level of cultural memory transmission—through various forms of media. As a whole, this project demonstrates a similar transition concerning discourses of racism.

Although the concept of 'race' had been officially refuted, memories of racial persecution remained conveyed through social discourses and are only now able to be engaged culturally. This is particularly evident in the fourth chapter's analysis of novels which depict racism as a family secret. The (auto)biographies of Hügel-Marshall and Kampmann established a prohibition against the subject during the childhood of *Besatzungskinder*, but the commercial nature of the novels by twenty-first century white authors, Henisch and Boehning, demonstrate that the subject can now be discussed at a more cultural level.

I argue that the transition of the discourse from social to cultural memory was possible because collective memory in political culture exists, in Olick and Levy's words, "as an ongoing process of negotiation through time" (1997: 921). Olick and Levy observed a similar negotiation of collective memory in their examination of the *Historikerstreit*. As a contest for a usable history, the *Historikstreit* represents a moment in which a once taboo subject—that of comparing the Holocaust to other European

genocides—was able to enter public discourse. This comparison was passionately debated and negotiated in the public media and, although there was no universal acceptance of the conservative scholars' hypotheses, Olick and Levy argue that the contested memories moved from "a field of taboo into a field of prohibition" (1997: 921). My project demonstrates a similar transition of discourses of 'race' into a field of prohibition. As the demands for the recognition of the cultural identities of Germans and Austrians of Color gain prominence, constructs of 'race', such as 'whiteness' and Blackness, will become more frequently negotiated in public media, and the association of 'whiteness' and Germanness will become increasingly volatile.

My project is a testament to the increasing instability of constructs of German 'whiteness'. Within the texts I scrutinize each author's or director's attempts, to varying degrees of success, to bring discourses of 'race' and racism into the foreground of cultural memory. Through their texts, the white authors and directors of my project actively attempt to redefine German and Austrian national identity in terms other than white. Through the Afro-German characters of their texts, they assert the legitimacy of national identities of Germans of Color. Although I demonstrated how certain texts fell short of achieving their anti-racist goals, by evoking Black German characters as individuals who, despite the racisms they face, are distinctly German, these white German novels serve as evidence of the progress made by minority activism.

For example, Peter, the protagonist of Henisch's novel, is unwaveringly depicted as Austrian. The character claims Viennese as his native language and describes his life through the geography of this fair city. His decision to leave his native country is not made because he feels a greater kinship to African Americans, but for reasons of self-

preservation. Völckers' *Leroy* is also careful to construct Black German characters that are not to be equated with African American culture. As embodied in the Afro-German shopkeepers, Völckers creates competing Black German and American cultures. Although Leroy begins his fight against racism by espousing an aggression associated in the film with the US Black Power Movement, ultimately he chooses a more passive style of protest in alignment with Black German activism.

Most interesting is Boehning's character Nelly whose racial identity is left largely undefined. Although her mother is constructed as Black, Nele is constructed neither as Black nor white, simply as German. Furthermore, she is only ever identified as an unracialized German within the text by other white and Black characters. This could potentially amount to a denial of racism, because the character expresses no personal experiences with racism despite her racialized familial history. Gudrun, the grandmother, recalls dealing with issues of race as the white mother of a Black daughter and, therefore, one would assume a parallel experience to be found in Nele even if she were identified as white within German society. Race, however, plays no role in Nele's character development. Racism is relegated to older generations. On the other hand, it should not be overlooked that Nele's character remains completely plausible even though her German identity is markedly unracialized. My study is evidence of the great strides made by Black Germans in gaining recognition of their German national identities. Although Wright characterized Black Germans as "Others-from-Within-from-Without" in the early 1990s, the texts of my study demonstrate that within contemporary German culture there are spaces for Black German identities (although they are almost always constructed in

association with racism) and even demonstrate the ability to construct a German character with an absence of both whiteness and otherness.

Examined as a whole, my project uncovers an interesting impediment to the integration of Black German identities into collective constructs of German national identity: Nazi successor nations' relationship to their National Socialist past. Although the Black protagonists are constructed by the white authors and directors as 'German', their cultural identity is consistently called into question within the text by depictions of pervasive racism within German society. Within the texts, the white German authors and directors attempt to embrace a new, multicultural Germany, but their efforts are consistently halted due to their identification of "Germanness" with the historic persecution of racialized 'others'. Although each text attempts to create a cultural space in which Germans of Color can be conceived of as 'average' Germans, ultimately these characters are relegated to literary and cinematic devices for the exploration of white German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. This was most directly expressed in the examination of the ending of Roehler's film in the third chapter. The biracial baby of Lulu and Jimi is a symbol of hope for the future of West Germany and of reconciliation between racially victimized individuals and the children of their persecutors. The scene's hopefulness is tempered, however, by the foreboding expression of Richard, and the audience must question the future of the baby, wondering if he too will become another victim of the long tradition of white German racial hatred.

Although these texts boldly examine the long neglected relationship of contemporary German racism to its history, most importantly to racial persecution before the Third Reich, one must wonder if the consistent definition of Germanness in relation

to its past of white, racially motivated aggression does not necessarily exclude Germans of Color from ever truly being considered 'German'. As long as German society is understood in the black and white terms of 'white German persecutors' and 'racialized, victimized 'others', Germans of Color will forever be linked to constructs of victimhood and denied their German national identity by German society as a whole. How can the identities of Germans of Color be recognized as 'German', as long as membership to 'German' national identity is defined by a person's biological relationship to racial persecutors?

The texts of my project, by connecting the history of the Third Reich to other histories of racial aggression, demonstrate one process through which Germans can challenge the identification of Germanness solely with racial persecutors without relativizing its historical importance. The white German authors and directors do not ignore their past; rather, by analyzing the persistence of racism beyond the Third Reich through constructs of African Americans, they are able to locate the mechanisms that enabled this genocide within a greater historical and global context. Parallels can be drawn between American and German racisms because the nations share histories of racial persecution. The authors and directors analyzed in my project concede Germany's participation in a longer European history of racial persecution for which the Germans must atone and challenge the traditional understanding of the racism of the Third Reich as a uniquely German phenomenon, viewing it instead as the pinnacle of a larger history of racial persecution. This was most concretely demonstrated through the fifth chapter's analysis of 'white guilt', in which white German characters were able to synthesize guilt for the Third Reich with a more universal 'white guilt'.

My project has demonstrated how white Germans are widening the processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* through explorations of racism in an attempt to destabilize the assumed 'whiteness' of 'Germanness', and I would suggest that an area of study which could possibly further this endeavor would be analysis and integration of Black German articulations of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. While concluding this project, I became increasingly aware of a form of racialization of the project of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* itself. Because the violence of the Third Reich is so closely tied to constructs of white German aggression, the relationship of Germans of Color to this past are largely ignored, or assumed to be that of 'victims'. Bärbel Kampmann's biography, however, challenges this assumption by depicting her ties to both her Diasporic Black identity and her white German ancestors who were convinced National Socialists and before that proud colonizers. Her struggle to reconcile these conflicting sides of her identity need to be understood as a part of national processes of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. This is most directly demonstrated through the question she poses to her dead mother in the article quoted in her biography, "Wie kannst du eigentlich deine Nazi-Überzeugungen damit vereinbaren, daß du mit einem Schwarzen geschlafen hast? Und wie kommst du da mit mir zurecht, der Konsquenz (Gerunde 2000:31)?" Isn't this question of her mother's ability to so abruptly convert from a racist ideology to falling in love with a racialized individual not reminiscent of the questions posed by members of the Student Movement to their parents? Shouldn't the questions white and Black Germans have concerning their familial past be examined together?

I believe that the next step for the progression of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* scholarship is the analysis of Black Germans' engagements with coming to terms with

the German racial crimes. Of particular interest are those Black Germans who white German familial ancestry. Although Kampmann's questions to her mother represent one of the first articulations of Black German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung,* with the increase of Black German texts, there is also an increase of Black Germans interrogating their familial relationships to the Third Reich. For example, in Mo Asumang's latest documentary film, *Die Arier* (2013), the director attempts to understand global racism by directly confronting some of the world's most well-known white supremacist groups. In one scene, she speaks to a neo-Nazi about her familial history, showing him the passport of her grandfather who had been a member of the SS.

Mo Asumang's film opened a few months ago and, therefore, was not able to be included in my larger analysis, but it attests to this project's significance to the field of German studies. My project represents the first step in a new interrogation of German articulations of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* which must begin acknowledging racism's role in contemporary and past German societies in order to challenge German national identity's ties to 'whiteness' and ensure that Germans of Color can live in a nation that recognizes their contributions to the nation's history and culture as an integral component of German society.

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